

**MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD  
ON MONDAY 22<sup>nd</sup> SEPTEMBER 2008 at 7pm**

<b><u>PRESENT</u></b>	Councillor	T. Bloomfield	
		P. Collins	
		Mrs P. Desorgher	
		D. Isham	
		A. Mahi	
		H. Mordue	(Mayor)
		Ms. R. Newell	
		M. Smith	(Chairman)
		Mrs P. Stevens	
		R. Stuchbury	
	W. Whyte		
Town Clerk	Ms. P. Heath		

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors Mrs. G. Collins, P. Hiron, G. Loftus, and M. Try.

**599/2008 DECLARATION OF INTEREST FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

There were no declarations of interest for items on the agenda.

**600/2008 RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Members accepted the minutes of the last meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2008, which were ratified at the Council meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2008. A question on the wording was raised; the Member was informed that as the minutes had been ratified they could not now be changed.

**601/2008 RECEIVE ACTION REPORTS AND UPDATES ON ITEMS NOT ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA AS PER ATTACHED LIST**

The Town Clerk circulated a report at the meeting on the following action items:

**601.1 (433.2) Cemetery Extension Consultant**

2 Consultants had been contacted and they had given verbal advice about developing the extension to the cemetery. Although designated as cemetery land the feasibility study, environment reports and surveys would still need to be carried out. The cost estimated by both Consultants is in the region of £5000. It was **AGREED** to arrange an on-site meeting to discuss the project in detail and obtain estimates for their costs to oversee and manage the extension creation, plus design and layout of the new section. This is a specialist job requiring in-depth knowledge of cemetery law.

**ACTION THE TOWN CLERK**

601.2 (433.2) Spoil heap levelling

A quotation from contractors had already been received and considered by Members. Grendon Prison had been contacted and they are going to consider if this was a feasible use of the work force before contacting the Clerk. To date, no contact had been made.

**ACTION THE TOWN CLERK**

601.3 (486) DPPO Signs

3 signs had been obtained from AVDC and given to the ground staff to install in the proximity of the Grand Junction, the Old Goal, and the White Hart. They are flat signs with no fixing mechanism, so ground staff were currently exploring the best way to display them.

601.4 (544.2) Bourton Road Car Park speed hump

The Town Clerk reported that these had been installed.

601.5 (545) Badgers Way dog bin

The order to move the dog bin to the Bourton Road end of Badgers Way had been placed with AVDC, and the complainant had been notified. The Chairman reported that as AVDC were changing contractors, there may be some delay in moving the bin.

601.6 (573) Fire Risk Assessments – Tennis Club, Bowls Club

The Tennis Club Fire Risk Assessment had been received; the Town Clerk would chase the Bowls Club Fire Assessment.

**ACTION THE TOWN CLERK**

601.7 (581) Chandos Park Pump House repair

The Ground maintenance staff had been requested to repair the pump house roof.

601.8 (581) Chandos Park Bowls Club painting request

Members received the information from the Bowls Club on the area and cost of the painting. After discussion it was proposed by Cllr. Stevens, seconded by Cllr. Isham, and **AGREED** to allow up to £100 for the painting of the outside wood areas of the Pavilion, payment on production of receipts. Cllr. Isham undertook to inspect the pavilion to ascertain the areas requiring painting, and to check the work on completion, reporting to the Town Clerk.

**ACTION CLLR. ISHAM**

601.9 (583) Parks Policy Group updates into Action List

Members were informed that these had been added to the Action list.

601.10 (589) Notice re the replacement of watering cans and the removal of plastic bottles

The Chairman and the Town Clerk would agree the wording before obtaining 3 prices as per the Financial Standing Order 11.3.3

601.11 (590) Expedite the production of the Buckingham Partnership Minutes

The Town Clerk explained that, as the minutes were produced by AVDC, she had asked for them to be produced as soon as possible after each meeting. It was also

anticipated that the Buckingham Town Council representatives on the Partnership could chase the early production of the meetings minutes.

601.12 (591) List of completed and proposed Devolved Services Work

This would be covered under minute no 612/2008 below.

601.13 (591) seek AVDC policy on Damage to verges/cars parked during mowing. The Town Clerk reported on discussions she had held with AVDC. The contractors report when they cannot undertake a grass cut due to parked vehicles, and if this is also recorded on subsequent cuts a request is made of householders or county to remove the vehicle. There is no policy to make good damaged verges as this is County Highways land. The contractors have the order to cut the verges a set number of times a year and will allocate a set period for this to be carried out, although variables such as the weather, grass height, and ease of access will determine when the cut is actually undertaken. Members felt that by advance warning any vehicles parked could be removed prior to the grass being cut. The Town Clerk was requested to ask AVDC to provide notification of grass cutting to affected areas.

**ACTION THE TOWN CLERK**

601.14 (593) The shopping trolley policy

The Town Clerk reported that the policy had been circulated to local stores.

601.15 (598) Update on SALTEX exhibition

The Chairman and Clerk reported to Members about the visit to the SALTEX exhibition. There were several good ideas on playground and maintenance equipment seen and further details would be provided as necessary for individual projects.

**602/2008 TO RECEIVE ITEMS ON THE MANAGEMENT OF CHANDOS PARK AND ITS FACILITIES**

602.1 To receive details of design, specification for the Chandos Park Footpath alterations, to discuss and agree action plan

The Chairman, Cllr. Whyte and the Town Clerk had met with Mrs. Simone Williams on site to discuss ideas for the footpath between the main gate and the river walk, including relaying of the pathway, re-aligning the path to the toilets, the shortcut path by the 'roundabout', and a featured inlay at the main gate. Unfortunately the drawings, specification and budget figures had not been provided prior to this meeting; the Town Clerk would chase.

**ACTION THE TOWN CLERK**

602.2 (543) To receive details of replacement heads for sprinkler systems and response from Bowls Club

Members discussed the quotation received for the replacement heads as requested by the Bowls Club. The Town Clerk reminded Members that the original report had recommended complete replacement of the system and electrics. Members expressed concern at the lack of public access and felt that the payment for the

heads should be conditional on the arrangements for public access being advertised.

Proposed by Cllr. Isham, seconded by Cllr. Stuchbury, and **AGREED** that the invoice for the new heads be agreed subject to an undertaking by the Chandos Park Bowls Club to advertise the means of public access in time for the 2009 season.

It was proposed to organise a Council versus Bowls Club match in the spring to launch the new season and to publicise public access.

**ACTION THE TOWN CLERK**

602.3 (581) To receive an update on the refurbishment of Chandos Park

Members were informed that the information requested from Julie Brandon about the suitability of the play area, and from Simone Williams on the proposed path improvements, had yet to be received.

**603/2008 TO RECEIVE ITEMS ON THE MANAGEMENT OF BOURTON PARK AND ITS FACILITIES**

603.1 (582) To receive comments and reports on the problems of dogs in the parks

The Town Clerk informed Members that information had been sought from the Police, PCSOs and the Dog Warden on whether there had been any reports of problems with dogs off the lead in any of the parks. None had been forthcoming. Members commented that the extending thin leads were in fact a problem to others using the park as the dog would often be some distance from the owner and the lead was so thin it created a trip hazard. They asked that, notwithstanding enforcement problems, a dog order for Bourton Park and Chandos Park stating that all dogs must be kept on non-extending leads be investigated.

**ACTION THE TOWN CLERK**

603.2 (528.3) to receive an update on the repair of Bourton Park Penstock – Cllr. Hirons

In the absence of Cllr Hirons, this was deferred to the next meeting.

603.3 To receive information on the presence of Himalayan Balsam and its eradication

Members were informed that Himalayan Balsam had been discovered in Bourton Park which the Council has a legal duty to remove. The Town Clerk had received advice from BTCV and instructed the Groundsmen to spray and clear the weed; Members confirmed this action retrospectively.

**604/2008 TO RECEIVE REPORT FROM THE PARKS POLICY GROUP**

604.1 (585) To receive a review of proposed BCWP projects in relation to the Parks Policy

There was no report from the Parks Policy Group. The notes from the meeting with the Buckingham Wildlife Project Manager had been circulated with the agenda. Members discussed the points raised, in particular whether to lay the hedges, or cut and lay them; and agreed the dates for the BCWP parks projects.

**605/2008 TO RECEIVE AND DISCUSS REPORT ON THE HELD WITH AVDC, AND DISCUSS FOR RECOMMENDATION A LIST OF PRIORITIES OF PROJECTS FOR FUNDING REQUESTS**

Notes from the meeting with AVDC officers to discuss the s106 monies held by AVDC, monies expected from future developments, their use and accessibility by the Town Council, had been circulated.

Following a discussion it was proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. Whyte, and **AGREED** that Chandos Park refurbishment including replacement of the play area should be the first priority.

Members also **AGREED** that once the play value audit has been received and needs established, the Chairman and Clerk would work with the AVDC Play Officer to work-up a specification for design and quotation to replace Chandos Park Play Area, the design and quotations to be tabled at the next available meeting.

**ACTION THE CHAIRMAN, THE TOWN CLERK**

**606/2008 TO DISCUSS PRESS RELEASE CONCERNING THE REGENERATION OF AYLESBURY TOWN CENTRE AND ITS FINANCES FROM PRINCIPAL AUTHORITIES**

The Town Clerk explained that Aylesbury has a Town Centre Manager who is employed by a partnership group made up of Principal Authorities, Traders and local businesses. The group raises money via the business rates under a BIDS scheme; it is this money that is paying for the regeneration. There was no impact on monies that might be earmarked for Buckingham.

**607/2008 TO RECEIVE REPORT FROM BTCV WILDLIFE PROJECT MANAGER – SUSAN LE**

Ms. Le gave a verbal report to Members on the current projects and updated the Members on the bid to extend her contract, which Members briefly discussed.

**608/2008 TO RECEIVE LETTER AND WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE FRIENDS OF RAILWAY WALK**

A copy of the letter from the Friends of Railway Walk had been circulated with the Agenda. Members discussed the letter and felt it was regrettable that a section of the population could find nothing more useful to do than throw dog faeces at the notice board; the Ground staff had been requested to clean the board. The bench recovered from the brook was one that used to be at the bypass end of the walk and had been reported lost by the previous caretaker; it has now been put in the storage unit, it has been damaged and the staff will try and repair it.

It was reported by a Member at the meeting that the sign for St. Rumbold's Well had gone missing from the Scenic Walk; as this had been installed by the Buckingham Society the Member was asked to report it to them.

The difference between the Railway Walk and Scenic Walk was explained.

**609/2008 TO RECEIVE THE WEEKLY MAINTENANCE REPORT AND AGREE ACTION PROPOSED**

Members were informed that the Notice board at Chandos Park had been vandalised; replacement parts had been ordered and these would be fitted by the ground staff.

The table in the Ken Tagg play area had been vandalised; the Contractors have been requested to replace the top.

It was reported that anti-social behaviour in the Ken Tagg Play Area was causing problems for nearby residents; the PCSO had been asked to visit the site regularly.

**610/2008 TO RECEIVE REPORT ON BRACKLEY ROAD CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION**

610.1 (597) To discuss and agree the future use of Cemetery Lodge

The Members discussed the future use of the Cemetery Lodge, including that it would be required for the Council whilst the offices were being rebuilt. The Town Clerk explained that the building had been designed as a residence and not for business use in respect of telephone and electrical points, and that the move would cause problems for staff.

Proposed by Cllr. Collins, seconded by Cllr. Stevens, and **RECOMMENDED** by 12 votes to 0 that the Council makes provision to move the office to Cemetery Lodge.

610.2 (589) To discuss the provision of water supply to the Cemetery

Members decided that the supply currently in the Cemetery was adequate.

610.3 (589) To discuss the draft policy for family organised burials

This item was deferred to the next meeting

**ACTION THE TOWN CLERK**

610.4 (589) To receive an update on ICCM advice on removing kerbs in the old section of the Cemetery

The Town Clerk again explained the issues surrounding ownership of the deed of a grave and the restrictions this placed on the Council under law. Currently, the Council can only authorise the cutting of grass within kerbed graves under a Health & Safety notice. Advice had been sought from the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Managers, which is the recognised authority of Cemeteries and the law relating to them. To remove the stones, due notice and publicity had to be given to the owners of the grave deed, and reasonable measures taken to contact them.

Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. Mordue, and **AGREED** by a vote of 9 to 2 that the Ground staff be ordered to spray the graves with a chemical weed killer on a regular basis.

Before the vote was taken the Town Clerk advised the Council that they had no legal authority to undertake the spraying of the graves and that it could lead to a legal challenge by a grave deed owner; Members noted the advice of the Town Clerk but agreed to proceed with the resolution.

**611/2008 TO RECEIVE THE BUCKINGHAM TOWN AUDIT REPORT AND AGREE ANY ACTION PROPOSED**

The Chairman explained the new town audit areas and system and Members were invited to indicate their preferred area. It was **AGREED** that the town audit would now be conducted quarterly.

**612/2008 TO RECEIVE REPORT ON WORK UNDERTAKEN UNDER THE BUCKS COUNTY COUNCIL DEVOLVED SERVICES**

A copy of Schedule A of the agreement, which details what the Council can do under devolved services, was circulated to Members.

**613/2008 (596) TO RECEIVE AND RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL THE ACQUISITIONS TRANSFER POLICY**

A copy of the draft policy had been circulated to all Members with the Agenda. Following discussion, Members amended the draft document which was then: Proposed by Cllr. Isham, seconded by Cllr. Collins, and **RECOMMENDED** that the Council adopts the amended Acquisitions Transfer Policy document as attached to the minutes.

**614/2008 (443.2) TO RECEIVE, DISCUSS AND MAKE RECOMMENDATION - THE NOTES FROM THE MEETING WITH AVDC OFFICERS TO DISCUSS THE CLEANER NEIGHBOURHOOD ACT HELD ON 1<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER 2008**

A copy of the notes had been circulated with the Agenda. The points raised in the notes were discussed and Members agreed that the Council was not currently in a position to take on any aspects of the act.

**615/2008 (555) TO DISCUSS COMMENTS MADE IN THE ABOVE NOTES CONCERNING THE CLEANING OF PUBLIC TOILETS IN BUCKINGHAM**

Members discussed the aspect of the notes which related to public toilets. The Town Clerk confirmed that AVDC had the contract with the cleaners and that the Town Council buys into that contract which AVDC manages. Members agreed that as only one expression of interest had been received by the meeting date, and that had been the company with whom AVDC were contracting, it would not be cost beneficial to the residents to have a single unit contract for Chandos Park. Proposed by Cllr. Isham, seconded by Cllr. Collins, and **RECOMMENDED** by 12 votes to 0 that the Town Council buys into AVDC's toilet cleaning and maintenance contract for Chandos Park Toilets and for the proposed toilets in the new extension. Members asked to see the contract, service agreement and have details of the price before the signing the contract. The Town Clerk reminded the Chairman that this was a confidential document and may not be available until after it is signed.

**ACTION THE TOWN CLERK**

**616/2008 TO RECEIVE INFORMATION ON THE ALLOTMENTS, THE LEGAL STANDING, THE AVAILABILITY AND WAITING LIST.**

The Town Clerk explained the history of the allotments and their provision at Bourton Road, including the current administrative arrangements and funding; and the legal requirement of the Council to provide allotments.

A Member asked about the allotments on Tingewick Road and if there were any vacant plots. The Town Clerk had no record or contact details, and Cllr. Bloomfield agreed to provide details to the Town Clerk.

**ACTION CLLR. BLOOMFIELD**

**617/2008 [591] TO RECEIVE UPDATE ON THE DE-SILTING OF "THE FORD" IN FORD STREET AND THE WORK ON THE BANKS OF "THE FORD".**

Members were informed that following a meeting with Environment Agency personnel a limit to the works had been set by the operatives which would be put in writing to the Town Council; the letter had not yet been received despite several chases.

Cllr. Stevens confirmed that the EA had not responded to concerns raised by residents.

**618/2008 TO DISCUSS THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO EMBLETON WAY PAVILION, AND MAKE RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL AS TO A RESPONSE.**

The Town Clerk explained the history of the pavilion and reminded Members of recent decisions taken concerning the letting of the pavilion to the Scouts group; this had been subject to seeing the plans for the "minor" alterations. A copy of the proposed alterations and the letter from the Scouts group had been circulated with the Agenda. Members expressed concern that the proposed alterations were far from minor and would completely change the interior of the pavilion. They would remove the changing room provision, thereby detracting from their original intention for use in conjunction with the adjacent sports field. Concern was also expressed about who would fund the extensive alterations and what effect the changes would have on future use of the building.

Members asked that AVDC Planning be required to enforce the use of the building and sports field as per the original planning conditions, including requiring the developer to bring the field up to an agreed standard; the Town Clerk reminded Members that the developer was Persimmon Homes.

Proposed by Cllr. Whyte, seconded by Cllr. Newell, and **AGREED** that this Council requests AVDC to enforce the planning conditions in relation to the s106 agreement on the site, ensuring that all sections have been completed, and to pressure AVDC Leisure Department to bring the site into its intended use as per the planning agreement. Members would not accept the change to the building as proposed by the Scouts group.

**619/2008 TO RECEIVE AND MONITOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND PROPERTY BUDGET, AND MAKE SUCH ADJUSTMENTS AS NECESSARY**

A copy of the budget had been circulated at the meeting, and the Chairman confirmed that he had worked through it with the RFO and was satisfied.

Following expressions of concern that the budget had been circulated late, it was agreed that in future the budget would be issued with the Agenda even if the figures had not been fully updated.

**620/2008 CHAIRMAN'S / MAYOR'S ITEMS FOR INFORMATION.**

620.1 Playing Field Association Diary

Members were informed that the Buckinghamshire Playing Field Association AGM would be held on 29th September.

Meeting closed at 10.15 pm

CHAIRMAN ..... DATE .....