



BUCKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

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Town Clerk: Anne L. Wilson BA (Hons) FILCM AIH



Minutes of a meeting of the **Environment and Property Committee** of Buckingham Town Council held on **Tuesday 1st September 2009** in Room MB1, Masons Building, University of Buckingham, Hunter Street, Buckingham.

Present: Cllr. M. Smith – in the Chair

Cllr. P. Collins

Cllr. P. Hirons

Cllr. D. Isham

Cllr. M. Try

Cllr. W. Whyte

In attendance: Anne Wilson Town Clerk

381/09 Apologies for Absence

RESOLVED to receive and accept apologies from Councillor G. Loftus and Cllr. R. Newell, and Cllr. Stuchbury who was at another meeting but planned to attend later.

382/09 Declarations of Interest

Councillor M. Try declared a personal interest under the Parish Councils (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2001 in relation to agenda item no.: 8 - Guiding Centenary Flower Bed as his wife was District Commissioner.

383/09 Minutes

RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the Environment and Property Committee meeting held on Monday 13th July 2009 and approved at Full Council on the 21st August 2009.

384/09 Action Report

RESOLVED that members received the report and note the updated information.

In addition Members noted the following:

- Chandos Park Bowls Club website was now linked to ours
- Cllr. Smith felt that there was adequate information about public access to the Bowls Club but asked the Town Clerk to contact them and ask that a notice be posted on the website for access details other than Seahawks
- The repairs to the lamp posts in Chandos Park had been completed
- Cllr. Whyte asked that the repair of the War Memorial be added
- The Town Clerk and Cllr. Smith would be reviewing the action report with a view to removing all items that had been completed.

385/09 PARKS AND PARKS POLICY**385.1/09 Parks Policy Group**

The meetings due to be held in August had been postponed due to be lack of information. It was agreed that the Town Clerk would suggest a selection of dates for the next meeting as previous proposals for the 8th or 24th September were unavailable for some Members.

385.2/09 RoSPA report

Members noted the synopsis of the Annual RoSPA report and agreed that all “High Risk” items should be dealt with. Members noted that the Lookout Crows Nest in Bourton Park has been removed and the balance beams on the Junior Multi-Play Unit in Bourton Park are to be removed.

Chandos Park**385.3/09 Chandos Park Path**

The Town Clerk had been asked by the Chairman of this committee, given minute no. **245/09**, to seek names of possible consultants to forward this project. It was agreed that she would speak to AVDC about possible consultants and also see who other local councils had used.

385.4/09 Chandos Park Play Area

The play equipment has been removed from Chandos Park but in doing this it has exposed the old paddling pool. It was felt that removal of the old paddling pool was the only option as some of the base and foundations of the equipment removed could not be taken out and it would cause issues for the installation of new equipment.

RESOLVED to accept the quote from Playground Facilities to break up the paddling pool and remove all concrete from site at a cost of £2100. From budget 401/4601 Repairs and Maintenance Chandos Park.

Members noted that the project to replace the equipment is moving forward and Councillor Smith and the Town Clerk have been liaising with Julie Brandon of AVDC as to the brief and proposals for tenders, and public consultations. It was hope to hold a further a meeting during mid-September to progress proposals for a new brief for tendering.

Bourton Park**385.5/09 Friends of Bourton and Heartlands BTCV Group**

Members noted that Jane Craven of the BTCV was not able to be present at the meeting as she is on annual leave. Members considered the reports and agreed to the proposed tree works outlined for the Friends of Bourton and Heartland BTCV Group

RESOLVED that in association with the above, and in view of the fact that Jane Craven was having difficulty in attending Environment & Property Committee meetings, that Cllr. Ms Newell be the link Councillor between the BCWP/BTCV and the Town Council, as she is already the Town Council representative on the BCWP.

385.6/09 Penstock

RESOLVED that Members consider the report and quotes to repair the Penstock but agreed that it was a new part that was required, not a complete replacement. It was agreed that Cllr. Stuchbury and Cllr. Hirons would meet with the Deputy Down Clerk to discuss this further.

385.7/09 Himalayan Balsam

Members noted that there was a considerable amount of Himalayan Balsam in Bourton Park. Whereas last year the Town Council maintenance staff had managed to cut back and spray some of it, this was very time consuming work and it had grown back.

RESOLVED to accept the quote from CGM to be taken from budget 402/4604 Bourton Park River and Pond Maintenance:

- To apply glyphosate to the Himalayan Balsam growing on the river bank throughout the length of Bourton Park, once in the autumn and two further applications in the spring of 2010 and 2011.
- 1st application £680 + VAT
- 2nd and 3rd applications £450 + VAT each

386/09 SIGNAGE

386.1/09 Safety Signs

Following an audit of works that need carrying out in Bourton Park, it has come to the attention of the Town Clerk that there were no notices advising of the river or warning about deep water. Members considered quotes for notices for the bridges plus additional larger notices for the river banks, some of which are disguised due to the planting in front of them.

RESOLVED that following lengthy discussion, although it was appropriate to consider the matter, no river warning notices be placed in Bourton Park, and that the Town Clerk and Committee Chairman look at the cutting regime for the river banks. Risk Assessments of the river bank were being considered by the Parks Policy Group.

386.2/09 Fingerpost outside the Old Gaol

Members noted that the Town Clerk has been in consultation with the County Council with regard to the finger post scheduled to go outside the Old Gaol. It can be placed where we like and AVDC had confirmed that planning permission was not required. Once the Trustees of The Old Gaol had been consulted, as a matter of courtesy, it was hoped that our staff could install it during the next few weeks.

386.3/09 Coach Park Signs

Members noted there had been a change, allegedly for health and safety reasons, in the way that the new coach parking signs can be installed, and that new signs and posts would be required instead of just adding them to existing signs. It may also be that some partnership funding from the Town Council would be required.

386.4/09 Van Door Signs

RESOLVED that the Town Council would accept quote B for two vehicle strength rubber signs for the new van doors, subject to this being agreeable with the leasing company, as it was acknowledged that these may leave marks when removed. If this was not agreeable then Members agreed to accept quote C for two magnetic signs at a cost of £27.50 each from budget 203/4603 Vehicle purchase and running costs. Then signs would have the town crest and "Buckingham Town Council" on them.

386.5/09 Fingerpost by the Ford

Members noted that the old wooden fingerpost will be put back in by the Ford on Chris Nichols Walk as it has been located in the works garage.

387/09 NEW PLANTING AROUND THE TOWN

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk and Cllr. Smith arrange to meet with the Friends of Buckingham Cemetery to discuss new floral provision in Buckingham Cemetery, as Members felt that the Friends should be involved in the long-term vision for the cemetery.

Although Members liked the idea in principle, it was **RESOLVED** that the proposal for a Marie Curie Field of Hope be deferred for discussion by the Parks Policy Group.

388/09 GUIDING CENTENARY FLOWER BED

Although Members liked the idea in principle it was **RESOLVED** that the proposal for a centenary bed in the town be remitted to the Parks Policy Group.

FURTHER RESOLVED that Members noted the application from the Buckinghamshire Girl Guiding with regard to the possibility of a centenary bed in their name. The outline plan suggested in the letter did not have to be used and something much simpler could be considered. As part of their community involvement the Guides would like to help plant it. The Town Clerk circulated pictures of a Centenary bed that she had worked with previously. There may be some money forthcoming from the Guiding Association, augmented by fundraising and local funds, but they could also apply for a Town Council grant towards the cost.

Consideration was given to a location – perhaps in one of the parks, or in Heartlands, opposite the bridge from Cornwall's Meadow Car Park. This could then be used each year for a commemoration or celebration within the town, although not all Members considered this location particularly desirable or suitable.

389/09 BOURTON ROAD ALLOTMENT HOLDERS SOCIETY

Members noted the synopsis of the reply received from the Bourton Road Allotments Association and the current situation.

390/09 THE HEARTLANDS

Members noted that the Town Clerk had been expediting the transfer of the Heartlands to the Town Council. No response had been received to two emails, despite expediting, although the Town Clerk and Cllr. Smith would be meeting with AVDC to discuss the matter further in late September.

RESOLVED that although Members were interested in having the Heartlands transferred to the Town Council it was essential that the Town Clerk obtains all the necessary information on the site including services under the site, covenants, asset listing and maintenance carried out and needed in the future etc ,before any further consideration be given by the Town Council.

391/09 CEMETERY

391.1/09 Benches in the cemetery

RESOLVED that the Britannia Style Bench would be the Town Council's standard bench selection for those wishing to place a commemorative bench in the cemetery or elsewhere.

Members noted that the current cost was £598.98 to include up to 50 engraved letters, bench anchors and tools for fitting. Delivery was free for flat-pack delivery, although for an additional £14.95 delivery fee and £25 installation charge, the bench can fully be installed at the chosen location.

Further **RESOLVED** that members wished to agree any wording to be engraved on such benches, and that an administrative fee of £100 be made per installation to cover officer time and as a contribution towards the future maintenance costs etc.

Cllr. Try suggested that there be a policy agreed by Members for the placing of benches in the cemetery.

391.2/09 CGM Cemetery Contract

Members considered the report from the Deputy Town Clerk on the meeting that Councillor Smith, the Town Clerk and the Deputy Town Clerk attended on site with David Elkington of CGM. There was also a short note about the contract in relation to Bourton Park included in this report.

Members were very disappointed at the standard of service being received and understood the issues being brought to their attention. Cllr. Smith pointed out that there were no dedicated CGM staff for the Buckingham contract and the CGM staff seem to dip in and out of each contract that they hold which meant that there was no continuity of service. The Chairman observed that, even allowing for staffing on-costs, the current cost of the contract with CGM could be replaced by three additional staff and suitable equipment hire, and still show savings.

Members noted that a review of the contract revealed that up to £17,337.25 of work had not been carried out that would be investigated and money withheld where necessary.

Cllr. Smith explained the legal quagmire that the Council found itself in with regard to the maintenance of kerbed graves. To assist with the issues arising and the unrest by some residents Members it was **RESOLVED** to accept the following quotes:

- To cut, remove and dispose of all vegetation from graves which are enclosed and overgrown. This includes grass, brambles, self-set and shrub woody weed growth. All woody weed stumps to be poisoned to prevent/reduce re-growth. Cost £1200 + VAT
- To cut these areas at the same frequency as the rest of the cemetery per cut. £140 + VAT

The money from this work would come from budget 403/4601 Cemetery Repairs and Maintenance. It was acknowledged that the initial cut needed to be done for health and safety reasons. Cllr. Smith would liaise with the Deputy Town Clerk to advertise the fact that the Council intends to carry out regular cutting down of the weeds and brambles in the kerbed headstones. This would give anyone the opportunity to indicate their wish to take over the maintenance of a family grave.

The Garden of Rest was difficult to manage and maintain to an acceptable standard as it was difficult to get to the grass in between the ashes plots tablets. Members were therefore invited to agree to the grass areas being removed and replaced with shingle for ease of maintenance.

RESOLVED to accept the quote from CGM to remove turf between memorial head stones, supply and replace with stone shingle to match existing pathways. All arisings to be disposed of. Plus to lay a fabric membrane to reduce the amount of weed growth. Cost £460 + VAT from the budget 403/4601 Cemetery Repairs and Maintenance.

391.3/09 Criteria for residents and non-residents being buried in the Cemetery

RESOLVED that Members agreed that Cllr. Smith would adjust the proposed wording for the criteria for residents and non-residents being buried in the cemetery, circulate it to members for consideration and then liaise with the Town Clerk to confirm the policy.

392/09 Town Audit

The Town Clerk reported that she had attended an officer Buckingham Partnership meeting that morning at which it was agreed that the current June/July Town Audit would be acknowledged and received including all the matters that have been on there for some considerable time, in some cases years. The audit had been split into responsibilities for AVDC, BTC, BCC and others and the Town

Clerk would be highlighting the top 5-10 high priority matters to each authority. The other matters relevant to each authority would be sent to the relevant officers with the BCC and AVDC partnership officer receiving details of these as well in order to be able to bring back an update to each full meeting of the partnership.

Cllr. Smith explained that a new format for the Town Audit was being implemented. A line was to be drawn under the existing reports and a fresh look at each area was to be implemented by Members. A couple of Members requested that they also received the information on their old sheets but Cllr. Smith explained that the town needed a fresh look. The information from the June/July report was attached to the agenda of this committee and Members could use that if they required. The same priority and bringing matters to the attention to the relevant officers was to be used with the new format after the results had been put into a synopsis for each authority.

393/09 CAR PARKING – UPDATE

For information only, the Town Clerk reported that no response had been received to a letter sent to Steven Harding at AVDC a few weeks ago. The Town Clerk has also complained about the condition of the car park, the broken speed humps and the general lack of maintenance.

394/09 BUCKINGHAM FLOOD PROTECTION GRANT

As Members were aware DEFRA had at long last made the official announcement about the flood grants that have been awarded. AVDC would be holding a public event in the Community Centre for Councillors and householders who are eligible for the grant (or may be in the future if new funding becomes available) on the 22nd October.

395/09 SIGNING, LIGHTING AND GUARDING COURSE

Members considered the report with regard to the Signing, Lighting and Guarding Course that had been attended by the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk and the maintenance staff and were unhappy that the staff had been expected to attend such a course given the details in the report.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk write to Jim Stevens and Councillor Letheren at BCC expressing the displeasure of the Town Council and asking for the four £95 fees plus expenses to be repaid by the County Council.

396/09 DEVOLVED SERVICES

RESOLVED that Members considered the circulated report with regard to devolved services, a new way of working and possible additional work that we could do for BCC as part of this agreement. The Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk would liaise with BCC and bring a further report to this Committee for further consideration to extend the devolved services.

397/09 S106 MONIES

397.1/09 Moreton Road

RESOLVED to note that that the Town Council has received notification that the sum of £259,683.50 has been received in respect of the Moreton Road development. This money is to be spent within the next ten years on local sport and leisure facilities determined between the AVDC and the Town Council in accordance with community needs, as identified in the Sports and Leisure Supplementary Planning Guidance.

FURTHER RESOLVED that at the suggestion of Cllr. Isham that the Town Council writes to AVDC for confirmation that this money will all be spent in Buckingham and on projects with the agreement of the Town Council.

397.2/09 Page Hill Estate

Following on from a NAG meeting the Town Clerk has begun to make enquiries about the reason for the lack of play provision on the Page Hill Estate, and what the S106 monies (or equivalent as the estate was built in the late 1970's/early 1980's) had been spent on

To date David Rowley at AVDC had confirmed that "At that time we did not negotiate off-site contributions - the Open Space requirements would have been met by the provision of areas within the development."

Cllr. Smith asked and it was **RESOLVED** by Members that the Town Clerk write to AVDC and ask when the S106 monies would be available from the White Hart development and also the development in Moreton Road. The Town Clerk was seeking quotes to enable the Council and local residents to have an idea of the cost of the installation of a multi-use games area and other facilities on Page Hill. Several local residents are interested in fundraising for this provision but S106 monies could assist with this.

398/09 FAIRTRADE TOWN

RESOLVED that this item be deferred to the meeting of the Town Centre and Events Committee.

399/09 SEAT OUTSIDE THE KINGS HEAD

A couple of requests have been received asking for a bench outside the Kings Head for those people waiting for a bus. There had been chairs and tables outside the Kings Head which the pub had removed because they were used by youths, who some found intimidating. Those who regularly wait for the bus would like a replacement.

RESOLVED that the Town Council would write to BCC who were installing sponsored bus shelters in other towns and ask them to install one in Buckingham, especially as with the new Moreton Road development the stop was likely to get even busier.

400/09 ENVIRONMENT AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE BUDGETS

Members noted the budget information for codes relevant to the Environment and Property Committee.

401/09 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**401.1/09 Bowls Match**

Councillor Smith read out the names of Members and Officers who had agreed to play bowls at the annual bowls match against Chandos Park Bowls Club on Friday 18th September at 6pm. The Town Clerk sent her apologies.

401.2/09 Planting of a Tree at Otters Brook

RESOLVED that Members have no objection to the planting, in conjunction with AVDC, of a disease free variety of Oak Tree at Otters Brook in memory of a local resident.

Cllr Stuchbury arrived.

402/09 **Date of Next Meeting:** Monday 19 October 2009

403/09 COMMITTEE IN PRIVATE SESSION

Exclusion of Public and Press

In accordance with Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, the following items will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment and contractual matters. It is therefore **RESOLVED**, pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, that the public and press be excluded.

Chairman..... Date.....

~~COMMITTEE IN PRIVATE SESSION~~

~~Environment and Property Committee~~

~~Tuesday 1st September 2009~~

~~404/09 Confidential Minutes~~

~~RESOLVED to receive the confidential minutes of the Environment and Property Committee meeting held on Monday 13th July 2009 and approved at Full Council on the 17th August 2009.~~

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~~Chairman..... Date.....~~