

Minutes of a meeting of the **Environment Committee** of Buckingham Town Council held on **Monday 9<sup>th</sup> February** in the Council Chamber, Cornwall's Meadow, Buckingham at 7.00 pm.

**Present:** Cllr. T. Bloomfield  
 Cllr. H. Cadd  
 Cllr. Mrs. G. Collins  
 Cllr. P. Collins  
 Cllr. J. Harvey  
 Cllr. P. Hirons  
 Cllr. D. Isham (Vice Chairman)  
 Cllr. A. Mahi  
 Cllr. Ms. R. Newell  
 Cllr. Mrs. L. O'Donoghue - Mayor  
 Cllr. M. Smith (Chairman)  
 Cllr. Mrs. C. Strain-Clark  
 Cllr. R. Stuchbury  
 Cllr. W. Whyte

**In attendance:** Mr. L. Phillips Green Spaces Manager  
 Mrs. C. Bolton Committee Clerk

**Invited Guests:** Mr D. Lett Stewkley Community Enterprise Agency

The Chairman informed Members that Cllr Mrs G. Collins had requested to join the Environment Committee. Members **AGREED**.

**699/14 Apologies for Absence**

None

**700/14 Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Stuchbury declared an interest in item 6, Devolved Services, as a County Councillor.

**701/14 Minutes**

**RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2014, ratified at Full Council on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2015.  
**Agreed.**

*Cllr Whyte arrived during the following item*

*Members **AGREED** to move to item 6 for the convenience of the invited guest.  
 Members **AGREED** to suspend standing orders for Mr Lett to speak.*

**702/14 Devolved Services**

To receive a written report from the Green Spaces Manager  
 Mr Lett introduced himself as representing the Stewkley Community Enterprise Agency. The Agency had formed 2 years ago to take on devolved

services from Bucks County Council and had grown from providing 6 to 28 part time roles for local people, covering Stewkley and 5 neighbouring villages. Mr Lett informed Members that he had met with the Green Spaces Manager, The Chairman of the Environment Committee and officers of Bucks County Council with a view to offering the same service for devolved services to Buckingham. By taking on the Stewkley initiative there would be no changes to the precept for the works before 2018; up to 18 local work opportunities could be created – Mr Lett had held conversations with groups in Buckingham such as job club, project street life and PC Graham Brigginsshaw the Aylesbury Vale Schools Officer. Members of the initiative would be responsible for carrying out their assigned areas to mow, invoice, gain feedback from residents, time management, and carrying out health and safety and risk assessments – encouraging skills that would be required in any modern workplace.

Members asked the following questions, responses in italics:

From what point of view are you speaking?

*From a personal point of view, business to me is about setting up local enterprises. Stewkley enterprise agency is a limited company, no one is actually employed.*

If members are not employed, what do they do?

*Out of 28 people who work for us only 2 have other employment, the remainder earn less than £10,000 per annum so don't have tax implications.*

*For those that do we have a local accountant to help.*

Are you insured?

*Yes, please see the table in the information provided, our insurers tell us an extension to the premium is not necessary to cover Buckingham.*

With regards to local job opportunities, how exactly would that work?

*Workers would be assigned an area to mow; the town would be split into 16 areas, each person mowing up to 3000 square metres in a period of 6 hours. Each person is given a fortnight to complete a cycle within their area, equipment (standard petrol mowers) would be delivered throughout the town for workers accordingly.*

How many hours per year?

*There would be 9 cuts, and average of 6.5 hours in each section with additional incidental works such as siding out, cleaning up footpaths, sign cleaning. The cycle would be middle of March to October. Workers would fit in their work around their other commitments – some may be at school or college for example so would work at weekends or early evenings.*

Would there be any voluntary work available?

*With the current set up we have 6 voluntary co-ordinators ensuring work is carried out satisfactorily – the same would be the case for the Buckingham areas.*

Do we get to specify the required standards?

*Yes the standards would be agreed with the Green Spaces team.*

Mr Lett was thanked for his input, Members **AGREED** to re-instate standing orders.

The Chairman reminded Members that the devolution of services was for the area inside the bypass only. The Town Council's existing contractors would continue with the works on and outside the bypass.

Members briefly discussed their view both for and against the changes proposed by BCC to the devolution of services and the impact it could mean for the town.

Proposed by Cllr Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr O'Donoghue and **AGREED** that the Town Council take on the Devolution of Maintenance Services with the social enterprise group undertaking the grass cutting within the bypass, and the grass cutting on the bypass being undertaken by the Town Council's current contractor and other maintenance services being undertaken by Town Council staff.

For: 13

Against: 1

Abstentions: 0

*Mr Lett left the meeting*

**ACTION: GREEN SPACES MANAGER**

#### **703/14 Budgets**

Cllr Harvey queried 4603 Chandos Park water account as it was showing 184% of the budget.

**ACTION GREEN SPACES MANAGER**

Cllr Whyte queried whether there would be any cost to the council when the realignment of Railway Walk took place. The Green Spaces Manager replied that nothing had been agreed or requested.

#### **704/14 Action Reports**

To receive the report and note the updated information.

(329/14) Ken Tagg Play area - The Chairman asked for an update – the Green Spaces Manager said that initial prices are being sought from a play equipment supplier, prior to funding being sought.

(877/13) Community Centre lease – completed; delete from list.

**ACTION: GREEN SPACES MANAGER**

#### **705/14 Cemetery burial space**

To receive a verbal report from the Green Spaces Manager

The Green Spaces Manager reported that on the most recent dig further bedrock at a shallow depth had been found – much sooner than hoped. There were now only 19 usable plots which would be used in a maximum of 2 years. The issue of what to do for new burial space would become more urgent much sooner than previously thought.

Members discussed options including extending the existing cemetery, closing the facility when full, purchasing a new piece of land, carrying out a geophysical survey of the site and investigating re-burial over very old and unidentified areas.

Members **AGREED** that the Green Spaces Manager bring back a report to the committee as soon as possible with options as above.

**ACTION: GREEN SPACES MANAGER**

**706/14 Request to Provide a Grit Bin**

To receive, discuss and agree a request from a resident

Members **AGREED** the purchase of a further 2 grit bins for Embleton Way.

**ACTION: GREEN SPACES MANAGER**

**707/14 Tree Works Required**

To receive quotes to carry out the tree works required

Members **AGREED** the recommendation to proceed with company B.

**708/14 Wooden Bollards for verge on Western side of the Church**

To agree to the purchase of 20 low wooden bollards to be installed along the grass verge to discourage parking.

Members discussed the requirement for bollards and **AGREED** they should be positioned the full length of the verge, from gate to gate – high enough to be clearly visible and too narrow for vehicles to park in between. The Green Spaces Manager would seek prices.

**ACTION: GREEN SPACES MANAGER**

**709/14 Solar Panels Tender – Buckingham Community Centre**

To receive and agree a tender document to be issued

Members were concerned that asbestos was referred to in the tender document and commented that Aylesbury Vale Estates had a duty of care to test the roof to ascertain whether it was present prior to issuing a tender for the solar panels.

Members **AGREED** that conclusive evidence be sought before going to tender.

**ACTION: GREEN SPACES MANAGER**

**710/14 Town Centre Audit**

(583/14) To receive results of the first audit round from Members

Members briefly discussed the audits carried out and **AGREED** that the Green Spaces Manager should group the lists, prioritise and push important issues to the relevant county/district officers and departments. Those items picked up on privately owned properties/land to be notified to owners.

Cllr Whyte commented that BCC funding may be available for the less urgent, or non-reportable issues.

**ACTION: GREEN SPACES MANAGER**

**711/14 Access Awareness**

To receive a verbal update from Cllr Strain-Clark

Cllr Strain-Clark commented on the recent difficulties for any disabled person visiting the chamber for the public consultation meetings for the BNDP.

Proposed by Cllr Strain-Clark, seconded by Cllr O'Donoghue and **AGREED** that whenever the Town Council are holding an event involving public participation that it endeavour to use the small hall at the Community Centre rather than the Council Chamber.

**712/14 BCWP**

712.1 To receive a verbal update from Cllr Newell  
 Cllr Newell drew Members attention to the issue of Maids Moreton Avenue woodland walk access and the meeting held with Ian Hopcraft to try and resolve the matter for all concerned parties. The matter had been referred to Joyce Rance at Bucks County Council for a decision.  
 Railway Walk Group had requested £90 funding for a new owl box and labelling trees. Members **AGREED** the request.  
 Members went on to discuss the historical and industrial artefacts from the old railway line and platform at Railway walk; that it would be preferred to preserve them and that an inventory should be taken, as they were being put at risk by current building works at Station Terrace. Members suggested the Buckingham Society and the local Bucks Railway Centre may be able to offer help and advice.

**ACTION: GREEN SPACES MANAGER**

712.2 To receive an email from Buckingham Primary School for information  
 712.3 To receive the Minutes of BCWP meeting held 15/12/14  
 Both noted.

**713/14 News Releases**

Grit bins on Embleton Way.

**714/14 Chair's Announcements**

**715/14 Date of Next Meeting:** Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2015

Meeting closed at: 8.15pm

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