

E/04/23

Minutes of a meeting of the **Environment Committee** of Buckingham Town Council held on Monday, 20th November 2023 at 7pm in the Council Chamber, Cornwall's Meadow, Buckingham.

Present: Cllr. F. Davies Chair
Cllr. M Gateley
Cllr. J. Harvey
Cllr. L. O'Donoghue
Cllr. A. Ralph
Cllr. A. Schaefer
Cllr. R. Stuchbury
Cllr. R. Willett

Also present: Mr. L. Phillips Estates Manager
Ms. C. Molyneux Town Clerk
Ms. P. Cahill Committee Clerk
Cllr. H. Mordue

Absent: Cllr. R. Ahmed Vice Chair

No members of the public attended and so there was no public session.

426/23 Apologies for Absence

Members received and accepted apologies for absence from Cllr. Ahmed

427/23 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

428/23 Minutes

Members agreed the minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on 2nd October 2023.

429/23 Support for volunteer recruitment – Waste Busters

Members received information from Viv Stein, Buckinghamshire Waste Busters Coordinator. She summarised the programme:

The aim is to encourage residents to reduce the amount that they throw away through composting, recycling, reducing food waste, reusing, and repairing. The group is looking to recruit volunteers who will host stalls and give talks offering advice and support with the aim of changing people's behaviour towards waste. The first volunteer training took place today and further training will be available throughout 2024. Volunteers sign up for a minimum of 30 hours per year. Ms. Stein thanked Buckingham Town Council for their support in putting posters in noticeboards and said that any ideas to help promote the group further would be welcome.

Members commented:

- A new monthly repair café, based in Buckingham, is due to launch in February 2024.
- Local supermarkets offer food to Jedidiah and the Community Lunch that would otherwise be wasted.
- Perhaps approach the University.

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PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY 2010/CRIME AND DISORDER ACT, 1988: the decisions made during the course of the meeting were duly considered and it was decided that there were no resulting direct or indirect implications in respect of crime and disorder, or equalities considerations, other than those stated in the minutes.

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- Target Housing Associations as some residents are not offered food waste bin collections.
 - Ask the Communications Strategy Group to consider putting an article in our newsletter about the Waste Buster Programme. **ACTION DEPUTY TOWN CLERK**
 - Talk to the edible garden organisers.
 - Perhaps host a stall at our Spring Green Fair. **ACTION ESTATES ADMINISTRATOR**
- Ms. Stein thanked Members for their suggestions and asked if Members could forward any contacts that they may have from the above comments.
Cllr. Harvey Proposed that Buckingham Town Council praise and support the Waste Busters Programme. Seconded by Cllr. Gateley and unanimously **AGREED** by Members.

430/23 Open spaces in Linden Village and Page Hill

Members noted the open spaces map.

Cllr. O'Donoghue asked who is responsible for the mowing the school. The Town Clerk will check this. **ACTION TOWN CLERK**

Cllr. Schaefer noted that some Linden Village residents are concerned that a management fee would try to be raised or planning permission submitted. The trees are also not being maintained and may pose a danger.

Cllr. Harvey noted that this could happen in other estates around the town and Proposed that we should formally research what has happened elsewhere in the country in similar circumstances by asking the Town Clerk to contact NALC and the LGA to find out what has been done. Cllr. O'Donoghue Seconded and Members unanimously **AGREED**. **ACTION TOWN CLERK**

Members received a verbal update from Cllr. Mordue:

When Buckinghamshire Council changed contractors digital mapping threw up anomalies. Page Hill is now on its way to being resolved.

Linden Village is a more complex issue. The administrators of Federation Homes sold the green spaces to Blue Sky Properties, a development company who specialise in building and/or selling on land. This means that Buckinghamshire Council cannot mow the land as they would not be insured.

The Town Clerk has written to Blue Sky Properties asking what their intentions are regarding the open spaces, but no response has been received.

Cllr. Mordue left the meeting at 20:00.

Members received and noted a report from the Town Plan Officer.

It is recommended that Members note this report and that if the Environment Committee identify any new land that it would wish to see so designated to inform the Town Plan Officer and the Working Group on the Neighbourhood Development Plan recommending inclusion, with appropriate reasons provided, in the new BNDP.

The Town Clerk drew Members attention to 3.5 in the report to offer reassurance that designated Local Green spaces are permanent unless reversed by a future plan.

Members offered suggestions for designated Local Green spaces. The Chair asked Members to send a list of suggestions to the office.

The Town Clerk explained that we cannot designate everywhere as a Local Green Space and pointed Members to section 6 of the report; any suggestions must fulfil the criteria

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listed and will be sent to the Buckingham Neighbourhood Development Plan Working Group to cross reference.

Members thanked the Town Plan Officer for the report.

431/23 Budgets

431/23.1 Members received the latest figures.

431/23.2 Members received a report from the Town Clerk.

It is recommended that Members review, discuss and agree to send the attached Environment budget 2024-2025 to the Precept Meeting via the Resources Committee.

The Town Clerk explained that this is a draft budget. Wages costs have been pencilled in; this will go to the Resources Committee before it is cemented in so may change. Predictions for interest rates cannot be guaranteed. The Town Clerk and Estates Manager have carefully considered all predictions but there have been a lot of changes in the past 18 months, and this is a prudent budget based on the information available. Election costs will be brought to Resources or Full Council when the bill is received.

Members thanked the Town Clerk and Officers for putting together the budget.

Cllr. Stuchbury Proposed, Cllr. O'Donoghue Seconded and Members unanimously **AGREED** the recommendation.

431/23.2 Members received proposed budgets for 2024/25.

432/23 Motion: Cllr. Harvey

- This committee notes that [recent government figures](#) indicate that Buckinghamshire suffers from four times the national average in CO2 remissions from transport.
- This committee is concerned about what this might indicate about atmospheric pollution from vehicles in the county (e.g. particulates from vehicles & Nitrogen Dioxide).
- This committee notes that [the number of Air Quality Management Areas](#) in the county is heavily biased in favour of the South.
- This committee notes that the [Air Quality Action Plan](#) for the former Aylesbury Vale district area features no specific action in Buckingham whatsoever.
- This committee notes that the [2023 Air Quality Annual Status Report](#) from Bucks Council features no action or measurements relating to Buckingham (merely a list of sites where there is some monitoring).
- This committee therefore resolves to ask the Shire council to reveal all the information it has about vehicular pollution in our town (in the light of the new figures) and ask:
 - what action is being taken to measure road sourced pollution in Buckingham - especially areas near the main roads (A421, A413 and A422) **although we understand that there is currently some monitoring taking place.**

- what their specific plans are to reduce air pollution in our town and
- what local action is being taken to mitigate the impact on road sourced pollution on the health of our local population.

Cllr. Stuchbury informed Members that measurements are taking place on the A421; we will not know the results until March 2024. He Proposed an amendment to the motion to reflect this. The Chair suggested adding the following to the first bullet point of the final paragraph: 'although we understand that there is currently some monitoring taking place.' Members unanimously **AGREED** the Motion with the amendment.

ACTION TOWN CLERK

433/23 Tingewick Road Green Spaces updates

Members received a verbal update from the Estates Manager:

We are still awaiting a response to questions from Barratts. Adaptations requested for the footpath to Railway Walk to make it more accessible are progressing. The Town Clerk reminded Members that nothing has currently been agreed; the Council is in negotiation with Barratts, and we are awaiting their proposal and looking at due diligence.

434/23 Updates from representatives on outside bodies

Members received verbal updates from Councillors and noted the following links to Buckinghamshire Council's website as requested by Cllr. Stuchbury:

[Written Question Response](#) on maintaining trees in Buckinghamshire
[Rapid review on dementia care in Buckinghamshire](#).

435/23 Buckingham Community Wildlife Project

Members received notes from the meeting held on 18th October 2023.

436/23 Lace Hill Community Centre - fees review

Members received a report from the Town Centre and External Facilities Manager.

- 1.1 It is recommended that Members agree the increased room hire rates as proposed below from April 2024 and continue to offer '10 for the price of 9' as a long-term booking incentive.
- 1.2 It is recommended that Members note the pitch fees will rise by 4% as per the hire agreement.

Cllr. Harvey Proposed, Cllr. Davies Seconded and Members **AGREED** the recommendations (Cllr. O'Donoghue did not vote as she left the meeting from 20:56 - 21:01).

437/34 Cemetery Fees

Members received a report from the Estates Manager.

It is recommended that Members agree to the uplift in the cemetery fees for Brackley Road Cemetery.

Cllr. Harvey Proposed, Cllr. Stuchbury Seconded and Members **AGREED** the recommendation (Cllr. O'Donoghue did not vote as she left the meeting from 20:56 - 21:01).

438/23 Grass cutting

Members noted a report from the Estates Administrator.

Members requested that this report is added to the website – to be considered by the Communications Strategy Group.

ACTION DEPUTY TOWN CLERK

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439/23 Shrub Bed at Community Centre

Members noted a report from the Estates Administrator.
The Chair agreed to add this to the action list.

ACTION COMMITTEE CLERK

440/23 Climate Emergency Action Plan

Members received and noted updates to the Climate Emergency Action Plan.

441/23 Action report

Members received the report and note the updated information.
Regarding the Lace Hill fire exit doors, the Town Clerk explained that it will have to be restarted; the architect who was to put the plan together has now left and we currently do not have officer time available to push forward on this action. It will be restarted when possible.

442/23 News releases

None.

443/23 Chair's announcements

No announcements.

444/23 Date of next meeting: Monday 19th February 2024.

COMMITTEE IN PRIVATE SESSION

Exclusion of public and press

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

445/23 Community Centre Fire Alarm

Members received a report from the Estates Manager.
Cllr. Harvey Proposed that recommendation 1.3 is amended to add: 'This will be brought back to the Environment Committee'. Cllr. O'Donoghue Seconded and Members unanimously **AGREED**.
Cllr. Gateley Proposed, Cllr. Willett Seconded and Members unanimously **AGREED** the recommendations.

446/23 Motion from Cllr. Davies

Members debated a confidential motion from Cllr. Davies on a legal matter.
Cllr. Stuchbury Seconded and Members unanimously **AGREED**.

ACTION TOWN CLERK

Meeting closed at 21:49

Chair

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