

Minutes of a meeting of the **Environment Committee** of Buckingham Town Council held on Monday, 19th February 2024 at 7pm in the Council Chamber, Cornwall's Meadow, Buckingham.

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

Also present: Mr. L. Phillips Estates Manager
Mr. S. Beech Compliance and Projects Manager
Ms. P. Cahill Committee Clerk

Absent: Cllr. R. Ahmed
Cllr. R. Willett

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

615/23 Apologies for Absence

Members received and accepted apologies for absence from Cllr. Ahmed and Cllr. Willett.

616/23 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

617/23 Minutes

Members agreed the minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on 20th November 2023.

618/23 Budgets

Members received and noted the latest figures.

619/23 Motion: Cllr. Gateley

This Committee seeks to work with local schools to promote and establish "no idle zones" in the areas outside all schools in Buckingham.

Cllr. O'Donoghue Seconded.

Cllr. Gateley informed Members that Buckinghamshire Council passed a motion about this in December 2023 and that there a number of factors to consider in supporting this:

- The Climate Emergency Action Plan.
- Air pollution which particularly affects younger and older people, and those with respiratory problems; air and noise pollution would decrease with no idle zone.

E/05/23

Members supported the Motion and raised the following points:

- Insufficient enforcement officers to deal with this issue.
- Encourage children to help to educate parents/carers, perhaps through a school poster competition.
- Could the local Community Board help?
- Focus our efforts on educating young people about why idling is bad.
- Liaise closely with schools which will have travel plans and may already have acted.

Cllr. Gateley offered to draft a letter to be sent to schools. The Compliance and Projects Manager recommended that the letter is agreed by the office who will approach schools initially to seek engagement. Following this Cllrs. Gateley, O'Donoghue, Davies, Draper and Stuchbury offered to engage with schools to move forward with this Motion. Members unanimously **AGREED** the Motion. **ACTION TOWN CLERK**

620/23 Motion: Cllr. Harvey

This Town Council is committed to the well-being of everyone who lives, studies, visits, plays and generally enjoys being in our town. This Town Council is well aware that for a whole array of reasons there are people in the town who can feel lonely or who might like or need someone to talk with. The idea of yellow park 'friendship' benches emerged a few years ago - whereby some benches are painted yellow to indicate that these are places where people can expect to have a conversation with anyone who happens to sitting on the same bench. (Further details can be seen here: <https://getactiveabc.com/chatty-benches/> & <https://yellow-bench.com/> & <https://calgary.ctvnews.ca/bright-yellow-bench-brings-calgarians-together-to-talk-about-mental-health-1.4410350?cache=yes%3FautoPlay%3Dtrue%3FclipId%3D89578>) The Town Council asks that the Town Clerk bring back a discussion paper to determine where a few of such benches might be created in the green spaces we own and elsewhere in the town (in partnership with the Shire Council).

Cllr. Harvey suggested that a report is brought to Committee to decide if we do or do not want to do this. Cllr. Harvey has tried to implement this himself with notices, but they kept getting removed.

Members discussed the motion:

- May help to tackle loneliness.
- Councillors happy to paint benches.
- Look at best practice in other parishes.
- Notices on benches rather than painting them may be preferable.
- 'Chatty benches' may be an appropriate name.
- Signs on benches must be fixed and this should be in the report.
- Cllr. Harvey will circulate to Members information that they have received regarding joint work with a GP practice and Town Council.
- QR codes for 'chatty benches.'

Members unanimously **AGREED** the motion.

ACTION ESTATES MANAGER

19th February 2024

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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.

Initial

E/05/23

621/23 Motion: Cllr. Stuchbury

That Buckingham Town Council write to Villiers and request that we take ownership of the two benches previously located outside the Old Town Hall. The benches should be placed somewhere appropriate in our town centre for residents to enjoy.

Cllr. Draper Seconded and Members unanimously **AGREED**.

ACTION TOWN CLERK

622/23 Tingewick Road Green Spaces update

Members received a verbal update from the Estates Manager:

Both legal teams are dealing with the handover and updates will be given. As part of the s106 agreement and the Open Space Land Scheme, Buckinghamshire Council must issue a provisional certificate; this means that an inspection has to take place. There is no update on planning permission for the path.

Cllr. Harvey asked whether the kissing gate can be replaced as it would pose difficulties for people with buggies and bikes etc. The Estates Manager is awaiting a response on this and also on the drainage issues.

Cllr. Stuchbury reminded Members that the path will not be lit.

Cllr. Davies thanked the Estates Manager and team for the work that they have been doing on this and hopes that we will soon have a resolution.

623/23 Tree Management Policy

Members received a report from the Estates Manager and Estates Administrator.

Recommendation: Members agree to approve the Tree Management Policy, to be reviewed triennially.

Cllr. Harvey Proposed that under 2.6 'individuals' medical conditions' is removed. Members discussed and **AGREED** the following amendment:

Move the first sentence of 2.7 to follow the first sentence of 2.6:

The above is not an exhaustive list but is representative of a number of customer enquiries.

Remove the last bullet point of 2.6 'Individuals' medical conditions.'

Cllr. Stuchbury Proposed that the Estates Manager looks at the system of adding a value to trees. The Estates Manager explained that part of the policy is planting more trees than we fell each year. Following a discussion, Cllr. Harvey Seconded the Proposal and Members unanimously **AGREED**.

ACTION ESTATES MANAGER

Members unanimously agreed the report recommendation with the amendments.

ACTION ESTATES MANAGER

624/23 Commonwealth War Graves Signage at Brackley Road Cemetery

Members received a report from the Estates Administrator.

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Initial

E/05/23

Members agree to apply for a standard sized CWGC war grave sign to be fixed to the metal railings out the front of Brackley Road Cemetery.

Cllr. Harvey Proposed, Cllr. Schaefer Seconded and Members unanimously **AGREED** the recommendation.

625/23 Compliments and complaints log

Members received and noted the Green Spaces compliments and complaints log.

626/23 Devolved Services Agreement

Members received a verbal update from the Estates Manager.

The Estates Manager explained that we had hoped to bring a report, but that we won't receive the information about how much will be received for devolved services until Wednesday 21st February.

Cllr. Stuchbury Proposed that we recommend to Full Council that we ask how we deal with Buckinghamshire Council and devolved services. Seconded by Cllr. Davies. The Compliance and Projects Manager explained that this is not on the agenda and suggested that this is taken back to the Clerk. Cllr. Schaefer agreed and said that as Chair of Full Council, this can be suggested as an agenda item.

627/23 Climate Emergency Action Plan

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

Cllr. Stuchbury suggested that we start recording the amount of times that the river is up and floods; this will build evidence of climate change. Members discussed the importance of keeping an accurate record of the degree of flooding. The Estates Manager will request historic data from the Environment Agency initially.

ACTION ESTATES MANAGER

628/23 Health

628/23.1 Members discussed a Committee response to the Swan Practice Partner Survey:

Question 1

- We value working in partnership with the Swan Practice.
- We value their commitment to the north Buckinghamshire population.

Question 2

- In 2017 the community hospital ran 27 clinics, it now runs 18 clinics, a reduction of 33% of clinics available.
- There is a big gap in dental treatment.
- Major gap in mental health services – to have to travel to Aylesbury for this service is not good enough.
- Difficulties in accessing GP appointments.
- Difficulties caused by hospital appointments that are miles away from Buckingham; treatment often takes place at several hospitals.

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Initial

Question 3

- Work together on the development of the new Lace Hill Health Centre.
- Work with the Town Council on how we can help and support the Swan Practice in an open way.

Members **AGREED** that the Compliance and Projects Manager drafts a response from the above points and submits the response.

ACTION COMPLIANCE AND PROJECTS MANAGER

628/23.2 Members noted the [review on health provision/GP surgeries](#). Cllr. Stuchbury encouraged Members to read the review. Cllr. Davies thanked Cllr. Stuchbury for bringing this to Committee.

629/23 Action report

Members received the report and noted the updated information. Cllr. Davies noted that the rent review for the Bowls Club is still outstanding – the Estates Manager will chase up.

ACTION ESTATES MANAGER

Pollution monitoring – data should be available from March when this is completed.

630/23 News releases

No mow May.

631/23 Chair’s announcements

None

632/23 Date of next meeting: Monday 15th April 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**.

633/23 Buckingham Community Centre advice following the motion from Cllr. Davies

Members received and noted a report from the Compliance and Projects Manager. Cllr. Davies Proposed, Cllr. Stuchbury Seconded and Members unanimously **AGREED** the recommendations.

Meeting closed at 9:22pm

Chair

Date