

Minutes of a meeting of the **Environment Committee** of Buckingham Town Council held on **Monday 26th October 2015** in the Council Chamber, Cornwall's Meadow, Buckingham at 7.00pm.

Present: Cllr. Ms. J. Bates
 Cllr. T. Bloomfield
 Cllr. J. Harvey
 Cllr. P. Hirons
 Cllr. D. Isham Vice Chair
 Cllr. A. Mahi Mayor
 Cllr. M. Smith
 Cllr. Mrs. C. Strain-Clark
 Cllr. R. Stuchbury

In attendance: Mr. L. Phillips Green Spaces Manager
 Mrs. K. McElligott *for the Committee Clerk*

Cllr. Isham took the Chair in the absence of Cllr. Newell.

495/15 Apologies for Absence

RESOLVED to receive and accept apologies from Cllrs. G. and P. Collins, and Cllr. R. Newell (Chair).

496/15 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at this point. Cllr. Hirons declared an interest during the discussion about bollards at the Church (min.497).

497/15 Minutes

Item deferred due to an agenda error.

DECEMBER MEETING

498/15 Action Reports

The GSM updated Members on the following:

709/14 (Solar panels, Community Centre): Permission had been sought from AVE for the installation of the panels.

344/13 (Cemetery paths): Bad cracks would be repaired and all paths surface dressed. In answer to a question, paths damaged by tree roots would be taken back to the base layer and re-done.

830/14 (Bourton Park ponds): The proposed fish passage requires a feasibility study. The EA had originally offered help; they would be chased up, and it may be that the Town Council would eventually decide on a separate project. The passage would still involve the penstock, but the proposed pond remodelling and deck would require permission. In answer to questions, the large weir would not be touched – it was too high; the route via the ponds was a suitable diversion. AVDC had no record of voles within the town area, though there was evidence for each side of the town. The large holes in the bank by the cricket ground noticed during the recent River Rinse were crayfish burrows.

330/14 (Ken Tagg Play Area): contractors had been agreed, and work would start in January, allowing the play area to be available over the school holiday period. Lead time was 2 weeks, then work would take about 6 weeks

580/14 (New premises): an offer has been made on a property on the Industrial Estate. A survey has shown the building to be generally fine, with no asbestos and only needing some small repairs.

218/13 (Burial space). A report will be submitted to the next meeting.

DECEMBER AGENDA

92/15 (Pitch provision): the Town Clerk would be holding meetings after Christmas to discuss the purchase of land with s106 funds.

Members suggested a private briefing meeting be arranged, to pool information on contacts, etc.

ACTION TOWN CLERK

255/15 (Green Flag Status): the Deputy Town Clerk was looking into this via Keep Britain Tidy.

ACTION DEPUTY TOWN CLERK

(Cllr. Hirons declared an interest during the following discussion)

87/15 (Bollards at the Church):

The GSM reported no progress: the Church did not want bollards. Another solution was being sought. Members suggested that the Church be asked to maintain the grass area, including re-seeding as necessary and restoring damaged areas, if they would not countenance protective measures. The feeling of the discussion was that it was Council land, and if the Church did not wish to protect it, then the Council should take such measures as it saw fit.

498.1 Grounds Maintenance Contract: a two-stage tender process had been started. 25 companies had responded to the Pre-Tender Questionnaire; these would be reviewed, and the Tender brought to the next meeting.

DECEMBER AGENDA

498.2 Lace Hill Community Centre & Pitches. An update would be provided under Agenda item 6 (Min.500.2).

498.3 BMX track: Cllr. Smith pointed out that the provision was dependent on the s106 attached to Moreton Road Phase III, which does not yet have approval. Another source of s106 monies should be considered.

ACTION GSM UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

499/15 Budgets

Cllr. Strain-Clark asked whether the roundabout showing £0 expenditure to date was the London Road one: it was, and the GSM reported that he had recently met the BCC officer overseeing the s278 works, and there was a little replanting to be done, then the signs could be replaced.

Cllr. Stuchbury recommended that the Chair and Vice Chair meet to discuss budgets for 2016-17, in light of this year's over- and under-spends.

ACTION CHAIR/VICE CHAIR/GSM

500/15 Lace Hill Community Centre

500.1 Members discussed various names, Cllr. Harvey feeling that including 'Lace Hill' in the name emphasised the isolation of the estate from the rest of the town.

Proposed by Cllr. Hirons, seconded by Cllr. Mahi, and defeated 2:5 that the building be called John Bercow Hall;

Proposed by Cllr. Smith, seconded by Cllr. Strain-Clark, and **AGREED** that the building be called Lace Hill Community Centre.

The GSM then gave Members a verbal update on the acquisition of the building: the building was almost completed, and the MUGA and play area should be ready in January. The Council's solicitors were checking over the handover agreement.

There were some issues with the building, and a complete snagging list would be drawn up by a firm of surveyors. However he had already noted that 2 of the 5 changing rooms had no privacy screens so that it was possible to see through to the shower area, the walls and floors were not finished to Sport England standards, the earth mounds were not completed and a footpath has not been installed. The building would not be accepted until all the faults were rectified, and certain manuals – for example on the underfloor heating system – would need to be supplied.

A nursery linked to the school had applied to use the Committee Room of the building 9am-5pm, Monday-Friday, and AVDC had been approached for advice based on the nursery at Buckingham Park. There was a large storage cupboard for their equipment, and the main Sports Hall would remain available for other groups to use.

When the opening date was settled, the facilities available would be advertised. For the time being, bookings would be managed by Council staff, and a facilities company would be appointed to look after maintenance.

Cllr. Stuchbury reported that the school had found a number of defects on moving in, and recommended the GSM contact its building manager to find out how swiftly faults were rectified. Other Members expressed concern at the proposed nursery use tying up one of the rooms and suggested two or three days a week might be better.

The letting and other details of centre management would be brought to a future meeting.

501/15 Permission to hold fitness sessions in Chandos Park

Members felt that Chandos Park was unsuitable for such classes, and suggested Bourton Park, with its Fitness Trail, be offered as an alternative. Vehicle access for equipment and lighting was available.

Proposed by Cllr. Isham, seconded by Cllr. Bloomfield, and **AGREED** that the use of Bourton Park be offered as a more suitable venue.

502/15 Access Awareness

Cllr. Strain-Clark had discussed the improvements to the main entrance with the GSM before the meeting. However, the Community Centre's door was still problematical, Cllr. Smith concurring that turning the new knob was difficult, especially in the wet. A better/safer/compliant solution should be sought; a formal request from the Committee was suggested, seconded by Cllr. Harvey. Cllr. Isham felt the matter could be solved when Cllr. P. Collins was fit again and he and Cllr. Mrs. Collins could attend a meeting.

Cllr. Strain-Clark expressed her disappointment at the rejection of the Council's move to take on the Red Cross building. Cllr. Stuchbury regretted that the opportunity for the Town Council to meet with the Cabinet Member to discuss the matter had been missed.

Members then discussed the Chamber WC, suggesting the small office could be turned into a toilet facility. It was **AGREED** that expert advice on proper provision should be sought.

Cllr. Strain-Clark then reported that it was impossible to get into the Church area from the Church Street end due to the high step; perhaps a ramp could be installed. Members pointed out this might entail cutting into the Church side of the boundary to enable a shallow enough slope to be provided. The step and bollards prevented vehicles cutting through from Castle Street to Church Street though the Church land. The matter would be discussed with BCC as it owned the land. **ACTION GSM**

503/15 Commemorative Tree request

Buckingham WI had requested permission to plant a tree to commemorate their centenary.

The GSM reported that the Church green had no space at present if the open space was to be maintained, and suggested Chandos Park – there was a boggy area which would suit a Swamp Cypress, a deciduous tree. The Council could source the tree and facilitate the planting. Members agreed that this offer be made to the WI, specifying only that it be a substantial tree to avoid casual damage. **ACTION GSM**

504/15 BCWP

The minutes of the BCWP meeting of 20th July 2015, and the agenda for the meeting on 14th December 2015 had been circulated with the agenda. Members noted both, and asked that letters of thanks be sent to the conservation groups for the work they did. **ACTION GSM**

505/15 News Releases

Members advocated preparing a release for the opening of the Lace Hill Community Centre and circulating it for agreement. It should include the reasons for the Council's acquisition of the building and associated open space and ambitions for the future. **ACTION GSM**

506/15 Chair's Announcements

None.

507/15 Date of Next Meeting: Monday 14th December 2015

Meeting closed at: 8.02pm

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