

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF GROUNDS & ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 6 MARCH 2023 AT 7.30 PM

Present: Councillors R Berry (Chair)
 S Jones (Vice-Chair)
 T Morris
 C Palmer
 V Harvey
 P Carberry
 A Gray
 S Owen

Also in attendance: M Saccoccio, Town Clerk
 I Haynes, Head of Grounds and Environmental
 Services
 S Sandiford, Deputy Town Clerk
 M Jahn, Committee Officer

Members of the public: 1
Members of the press 0

227/GE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Spurr and Councillor Snelling (substituted by Councillor Owen).

228/GE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor V Harvey declared a personal interest as a member of South Bedfordshire Friends of the Earth.

Councillor C Palmer declared a personal interest as a member of the Friends of Leighton-Linslade in Bloom and being married to an allotment holder within the parish.

No pecuniary interests were declared.

229/GE QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

A representative of Linslade Tennis Club spoke in support of item 7 on the agenda regarding a request for the club to build a padel Court and replace the existing floodlights with more environmentally-friendly LED lights at its site at Linslade Memorial Playing Fields. It was reported that about 200 court bookings had been made by members of the public during the last year and that padel tennis was a fast-growing sport, with currently some 80,000 players in the UK but predicted to double quickly.

230/GE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

- (a) The Committee received the draft minutes of the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee meeting held on 5 December 2022.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee meeting held on 5 December 2022 be approved as a correct record and were signed accordingly.

- (b) Minute reference 213/GE (Questions from the Public): a member of the public attended the last meeting to speak about a planning application on land under the pylons at Roman Gate. This application had now been resubmitted to the planning authority and was due to be discussed at the Planning & Transport Committee meeting on 8 March.

Minute reference 214/GE (Minutes of Previous Meeting): it was confirmed that the majority of allotments had now been cleared and let out at Alwins Field, with the same process taking place at Weston Avenue.

A question was raised regarding the installation by Central Bedfordshire Council of electric vehicle charging points in the car park at Linslade Memorial Playing Fields. It was confirmed a ticket machine would be installed as a ticket system would enable enforcement by the local authority.

Minute reference 216/GE (Committee Objectives and Work Plan): A question was raised about the Skate Park but it was confirmed no tenders had yet been received for this but a site meeting had been arranged for two weeks' time. It was also confirmed that no response had been received from Central Bedfordshire Council regarding the additional cemetery and allotment land on the eastern development.

Minute reference 218/GE (Anglia in Bloom): no date had been set for the Volunteers Day of Celebration but would be in due course.

Minute reference 224/GE (Climate Emergency Update): a question was raised about promoting and publicising the aims and progress of the Town Council with the climate emergency. It was confirmed that there was an article on this in each edition of About Town, as well as on the council's website and social media platforms.

231/GE COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES AND WORK PLAN

- (a) The Committee received and considered the Committee Work Plan for 2022-2023. A question was raised regarding the computerising of cemetery records and whether the use of existing external volunteer groups could be used to complete this task. Details of the organisations who could possibly assist with this would be passed to the Head of Grounds and Environmental Services.

RESOLVED to note the Committee Objectives and Work Plan.

- (b) The Committee received the draft Workplan for 2023-24. An induction for any new councillors would be included at the next Committee meeting in June 2023 and a general project updates report would be added to each meeting agenda to allow for reporting on ongoing items.

A request for more formal flower planting in the parks was made and the committee agreed this could be considered at the September 2023 meeting.

RESOLVED to note the draft Committee work plan and objectives for 2023-24.

232/GE COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES COMMISSION SIGNS PROJECT

The Committee received and considered a request from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to install a sign at the entrance of Vandyke Road Cemetery to let the public know there were 28 war graves situated there. The Committee suggested a list of the 28 war graves be created in case members of the public wanted more information. The sign would be funded by the Commission and would be located at a site identified by the council.

A query was asked about Linslade Cemetery but it was clarified there were no war graves there; there were however war graves in the adjoining churchyard of St Mary's Church and a plaque was already at that site.

RESOLVED:

- (a) **To note the report.**
(b) **To approve the request from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to install a sign at the entrance of Vandyke Road Cemetery to let the public know there were 28 war graves situation there.**

233/GE LINSLADE TENNIS CLUB UPDATED 5-YEAR VISION

The Committee received a report and considered an updated five year vision put forward by the Linslade Tennis including the potential installation of a Padel Court which would require re-alignment of an existing court by five metres and the replacement of existing floodlights with LED lighting.

Concerns were raised on the cost of the work required and the site of the Padel Court. Whilst generally supportive of the Club's vision, the Committee questioned whether the Tennis Club had explored other potential funding streams and whether more detailed plans and costs could be provided.

An amendment was proposed for officers to work with the Tennis Club to help support them to improve their business case and seek additional

potential funding sources.

A query was raised regarding the Council's approach to any similar requests from clubs/organisations in the past.

RESOLVED:

- (a) To note the report.**
- (b) To support the Linslade Tennis Club's five year vision in principle but to request that town council officers work with the Club to help and encourage them to improve their business case and pursue additional sources of match funding prior to considering any town council financial contribution.**

234/GE NINE-MONTH BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

The Committee received a nine-month budget monitoring report for the period April – December 2022.

A question was raised regarding the high cost of vehicle running costs. It was confirmed these costs were high because four vans needed repair at the same time but there was nothing of great concern at this present time.

RESOLVED to note the report.

235/GE PLAY AREA PROGRAMME

The Committee received an update report regarding the rolling play area improvement and safer surfacing replacement programmes.

RESOLVED:

- (a) To note the report**
- (b) To endorse the updated broader play area improvement and safer surfacing replacement programmes as per Gantt charts.**

236/GE REVIEW OF WASTE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT

The Committee received a verbal update regarding the Council's waste management contract which was in year four, of five years. The amount of waste going to landfill had decreased by 44 tonnes, with 4 tonnes recycled and 16 tonnes having had to go to landfill (mainly dog waste). It was agreed to continue to use council communication platforms to promote more responsible waste management – making people think about their actions and how waste could be reduced. It was felt that people tended to assume waste was manually sorted to be recycled and also that they did not realise the impact of waste contamination.

RESOLVED to note the report.

237/GE OUZEL MEADOW MANAGEMENT

The Committee received and considered a request to extend the long term Higher-Level Stewardship agreement with Natural England for the Greensand Trust to manage the Ouzel watermeadows and to further support the Greensand Trust with additional funding. In addition, it was recommended to renew the perimeter fence to allow the grazing cattle to be safely contained. Members unanimously agreed with this request and supported the high standard of work undertaken by The Greensand Trust.

RESOLVED:

- (a) To approve as landowner the extension of the Higher-Level Stewardship held by The Greensand Trust for up to a further 5 years and contribute £5,000 per annum to The Greensand Trust.**
- (b) To approve the expenditure of £15,000 to renew 1.3 km fence line.**

238/GE VENUE HIRE

The Committee received a report regarding venue hire over the last twelve months, including the number of booked hours, types of activities held in each facility and income generated to support the subsidy for operating the facilities.

It was noted that there had been a gradual decline in the use of the adult football pitches over the past years and in particular during the current season. It was understood that teams preferred use of an all weather floodlit 3G pitch such as the one at Cedars Upper School and the newly opened second 3G pitch at Vandyke Upper School.

A question was raised as to whether a further 3G facility could be needed and it was suggested a paper be brought to the next meeting of this Committee with a cost/benefit analysis. On being put to a vote 7 voted for and 1 against. It was suggested that the report tie into the issue of obesity and need for increased physical activity.

A further question was raised regarding the bookings at Astral Park and why the hours booked were less than the other facilities. This building did not have a regular "anchor" hirer as the other pavilions did and was also used by the Council for full Council meetings.

RESOLVED to note the report.

**239/GE PLEASURE GROUNDS, PUBLIC WALKS AND OPEN SPACES:
BYELAWS**

The Committee received a report to consider updating of the Town Council's byelaws for pleasure grounds, public walks and open spaces. This was predominantly to ensure land acquired since 1999 was included.

The Government guidance including legal framework and process was provided for information.

RECOMMENDED to Council that the byelaws made by Leighton-Linslade Town Council on 26 April 1999 and confirmed by the Secretary of State on 29 July 1999 relating to the ground be revoked and replaced with an adapted version of the HM Government's model byelaws, to be presented to Council for adoption.

240/GE CLIMATE EMERGENCY UPDATE

The Committee received a verbal update on the progress with obtaining baseline carbon footprint data with assistance from Smart Carbon. The process was very time consuming but well underway and final figures should be available by September 2023.

Members were informed that Central Bedfordshire Council was providing carbon literacy courses. The Town Council had previously resolved to support carbon literacy training for officers and councillors and had been awaiting the launch of a specific toolkit for town and parish councils, rather than local authorities which had different and additional responsibilities.

RESOLVED to note the update.

241/GE OUZEL VALLEY PARK STEERING GROUP UPDATE

The Committee received the minutes of the Ouzel Valley Park Steering Group meeting held in February 2023.

RESOLVED to receive the information from the Ouzel Valley Park steering group meeting held in February 2023.

242/GE EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

The Committee may consider it appropriate to consider the following resolution should they consider that any discussion would be prejudicial to the public interests: that, under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded on the grounds of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted which involves the likely disclosure of exempt information. The public and press to withdraw from the meeting during consideration of detailed discussion regarding:

243/GE PARSON'S CLOSE RECREATION GROUND CONCESSION

The Committee received and considered a report to seek endorsement to commence a tender process for the concession from the kiosk within Parson's Close Recreation Ground for a period of five years.

The Committee noted that costs would undoubtedly increase over a five year period so an element of inflation should be built into tenders received.

A question was raised regarding community benefit to help address loneliness/isolation and it was suggested that additional weighting could be given in the tender evaluation to any application which included social values benefits as well as environmental considerations.

A proposal to amend the Motion to include the provision of community benefit as well as refreshments from the kiosk was not carried (2 voted for, 5 against and 1 abstention).

A proposal to amend the Motion to include an annual increase for inflation was carried unanimously.

On putting the amended Motion to the vote, a recorded vote was requested and the Motion was carried (7 for and 1 against).

Name	Vote
Cllr Owen	For
Cllr Berry	For
Cllr Palmer	For
Cllr Carberry	For
Cllr Jones	For
Cllr Gray	For
Cllr Morris	For
Cllr Harvey	Against

RESOLVED

- (a) To note the report
- (b) To endorse that officers undertake a competitive tender for the food and drink concession from the kiosk within Parson's Close Recreation Ground for a period of 5 years, to include an annual increase for inflation.

244/GE ASSET DISPOSAL

The Committee received a report on the correct disposal of assets which had reached the end of their usual life expectancy and considered the recommendations therein. The assets would be offered to community based organisations and if not required officers would undertake correct disposal.

RESOLVED to correctly dispose of assets which had come to the end of their usual life expectancy.

The meeting closed at 9.40 pm.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A CORRECT AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 6 MARCH 2023.

Chair

5 JUNE 2023