

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF GROUNDS & ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 7 MARCH 2022 AT 7.30 PM

Present: Councillors R Berry (Chair)
 S Jones (Vice-Chair)
 C Palmer
 R Yates
 V Harvey
 P Carberry (left at 21.28)
 A Gray (left at 21.45)
 P Snelling
 G Perham (substituting for T Morris)

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: 2
Members of the press 0

158/GE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Morris (substituted by Councillor Perham) and Councillor Spurr.

159/GE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Councillor C Palmer declared a personal interest as a member of the Friends of Leighton-Linslade in Bloom.

No pecuniary interests were declared.

160/GE QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Two members of the Friends of Leighton-Linslade in Bloom spoke to the Committee to highlight their concerns regarding the general lack of care and maintenance to the roundabout at the Leston Road/Hockliffe Street junction by the White House, as well as the beds surrounding the roundabout. It was felt that more colourful planting would be more attractive and welcoming at this crucial location. It was felt that the same could apply to other sites in the town, and the Friends would send a list of these. A request was made for

the Town Council to liaise with Central Bedfordshire Council to discuss how this could be resolved and taken forward.

161/GE **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

(a) The Committee received the draft minutes of the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee meeting held on 6 December 2021.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee meeting held on 6 December 2021 be approved as a correct record and were signed accordingly.

(b) Minute reference 142/GE Minutes of the Previous Meeting – it was confirmed a purchase order had been raised for the fence at the rear of Linslade Memorial Playing Field, and it was hoped it would be completed by mid-April.

Minute reference 148/GE (2022-2023 Draft Committee Revenue Budget): a question was raised regarding the workload and capacity of staff in the Grounds Team. The Head of Grounds had no concerns and hoped the team would be at full strength before the main summer season began.

Minute reference 149/GE (Cemetery Update): the Head of Grounds and Environmental Services confirmed that after talking to the relevant department at Central Bedfordshire Council, they were not in a position to consider land for a cemetery but would be dealing with each case in order of need.

Minute reference 154/GE (1937 Coronation Shelter and Bench Replacement): Councillor Harvey requested to be named as voting against this item. Councillor Palmer repeated his suggestion to seek public donations towards this project.

Minute reference 156/GE (Climate Change Emergency Update): the search for a reputable consultant to carry out a carbon assessment was still ongoing, but members agreed it was paramount to obtain this baseline data before being able to determine specific actions and projects to move towards becoming net carbon neutral over the next few years. Officers would continue seeking support with this and hoped to bring further information to the June meeting.

Minute reference 157/GE (Henry Finch Memorial Fountain): a condition survey had been completed, and the results of this were awaited. Once they were received, they would be shared with the Committee.

A request was made to vary the agenda order, moving item 15 earlier due to members of the public being present.

162/GE **THE WHITE HOUSE ROUNDABOUT**

The Committee received a paper from The Friends of Leighton-Linslade in Bloom regarding the comments made in the public session about planting and maintenance of the roundabout and surrounding beds at the Hockliffe Street/Leston Road junction.

The Committee supported the paper and agreed discussions should be held between the Town Council and Central Bedfordshire Council, who, at present, maintained this area.

Members agreed this was an important gateway to the town and required regular maintenance to enhance the area. Discussions were needed to ascertain whether the sponsors of the roundabout were still contributing and whether Central Bedfordshire Council would agree to the Town Council taking over the maintenance of the roundabout and surrounding beds.

Councillor Harvey proposed a motion that the Town Council seek to take over the maintenance of the roundabout and surrounding beds. A slight variation was suggested to this by members that discussions should take place with Central Bedfordshire Council regarding the roundabout and consideration given to any proposals regarding future maintenance.

This motion was taken to a vote with 8 for and one abstention.

RESOLVED to have discussions with Central Bedfordshire Council on the potential options for future maintenance of the roundabout at the junction of Hockliffe Street and Leston Road and the surrounding beds.

163/GE **APPROVED DECISIONS**

The Committee received a record of the decisions taken since the previous discussion meeting by delegation to the Town Clerk with email approval from a majority of the Council members.

RESOLVED to note the report.

164/GE **COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES AND WORK PLAN**

(a) The Committee received and considered the Committee Work Plan for 2021-2022.

RESOLVED to note the Committee Objectives and Work Plan.

(b) The Committee received the draft Workplan for 2022-23 and considered amendments to it. After discussion, it was suggested that the report be amended to add to the next update and last action date for each objective. It was suggested that planning for future planting in the town

should be added to the plan. Cllr Perham raised the possibility of revisiting a former aspiration to create more of a town gateway feature at the Wing Road entrance to the parish.

RESOLVED to note the draft Committee work plan and objectives for 2022-23 with the amendments noted above.

(c) As resolved by Council in November 2021, the Committee considered the Town Council's adopted Five Year Plan and Objectives along with proposed revisions submitted by the Liberal Democrat group. After discussion, it was agreed that completed objectives could be shaded in a different colour, so it was obvious they were no longer being worked on. It was also requested that, where possible, objectives be stated in greater detail in terms of how they would be delivered and measured.

It was proposed and seconded that no changes be made other than those outlined above. On being put to the vote, the motion was carried (6 in favour, 3 abstentions).

RECOMMENDED to the Policy and Finance Committee that no changes be made to objectives 28-48 in the Council's Five Year Plan and Objectives, other than adding some detail/clarification to objectives where possible at a future date.

165/GE FACILITIES AND BOOKINGS

(a) The Committee received and noted a summary report regarding bookings of Town Council venues. The Committee agreed the bookings were generally healthy but wanted to find ways to increase use at Astral Park during the off-peak afternoon sessions. Suggestions were made for promoting this for older people's groups to use, and organisations that had been suspended during COVID and were now beginning to start up again.

(b) The Committee received a verbal update in respect of Leighton Town Boxing Club. The Boxing Club had continued to use Pages Park Pavilion, and no problems had been highlighted. A further update would be given at the June meeting when representatives from the Boxing Club would attend to give a presentation of their activities and achievements. It was strongly felt that the club should continue but should be encouraged to search for more suitable permanent premises. The club could approach the Police Crime Commissioner for suggestions and advice on locating premises as he was known to have supported boxing as an activity for young people.

(c) The Committee received a verbal update in respect of the facilities accessibility audits in late 2021 and considered the next steps to be taken. A meeting would take place with a surveyor to discuss how to proceed alongside planned maintenance and come back to Committee with a combined project. Some proposed improvements were relatively quick and

easy to implement whereas others would require more planning and budget.

RESOLVED to note the report.

166/GE **NINE MONTH BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**

The Committee received a nine-month budget monitoring report for the period April – December 2021. A question was raised about whether figures would need to be adjusted for utilities in light of the expected price rises. It was anticipated that there was sufficient budget to cover these increases but noted that billing was often done in advance on estimates and adjusted after that with actual meter readings. Ways to save on energy costs would be considered as part of the facilities improvements programme and climate change projects.

RESOLVED to note the report.

167/GE **OUZEL VALLEY PARK STEERING GROUP UPDATE**

The Committee received the minutes of the Ouzel Valley Park Steering Group held in December 2021. In addition, a verbal report was given from the meeting held on 2 March 2022. At that meeting, a recommendation had been made from the steering group to the Council to endorse the Buzzcycles Cycling Strategy. The group had also discussed the value of having an annual biodiversity assessment, and scoping work on this would be addressed at the May meeting.

RESOLVED to receive the information from the Ouzel Valley Park steering group.

168/GE **HM QUEEN ELIZABETH II PLATINUM JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS**

The Committee received a verbal update on the plans for the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations. All plans were progressing, including a firework display and beacon lighting on the evening of Thursday, 2 June.

With regard to the proposed reinstated Coronation shelter in Parson's Close Recreation Ground, groundworks had been organised. A reminder of the previous discussion about the possibility of donations from the public towards this project was raised by a committee member.

RESOLVED to note the information.

169/GE **PARSON'S CLOSE RECREATION GROUND INCLUSIVE PLAY AREA UPDATE**

The Committee received a verbal update on the inclusive adventure play area in Parson's Close Recreation Ground. It was anticipated that

groundbreaking would be on 25 April 2022, with completion and handover by the end of the summer school term on 22 July 2022.

A request was made to have banners around the fencing once the work had begun showing the playground's design so members of the public could see what was being built.

RESOLVED to note the information.

Cllr Carberry left the meeting at 2130 hours.

170/GE **PLAY AREA PROGRAMME**

The Committee received a report regarding the play area improvement and safer surfacing replacement programmes. The next play area to receive improvement would be on Derwent Road, Linslade.

RESOLVED

(a) To note the report.

(b) To endorse the updated broader play area improvement and safer surfacing replacement programmes as per the attached Gantt charts.

171/GE **COMMUNITY FORUM YOUTH SURVEY**

The Committee received the results of the Community Forum Youth Survey previously presented to the Partnership Committee and to the Cultural and Economic Services Committee. Responses had been limited, so consideration was given to having a further in-depth survey of young people's needs and ideas about park-based provision undertaken by specialist consultants.

A suggestion was made to purchase chess and board games for use at the TACTIC centre so young people could meet up and socialise with friends who enjoyed the same activities.

RESOLVED to note the information.

172/GE **REVIEW OF WASTE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT**

The Committee received an update on the Waste Management Contract. All agreed progress had been made, and the statistics were considerably improved on previous years.

RESOLVED to note the information.

173/GE **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED that under the Public Bodies (Admission 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 Parson's Close Recreation Ground Concessions.

174/GE **PARSON'S CLOSE RECREATION GROUND CONCESSIONS**

The Committee received and considered a report regarding Parson's Close Recreation Ground concessions. A temporary solution was proposed for the 2022 summer season, and the situation could then be given further consideration. On being put to the vote, the recommendations were agreed (6 voted for and one against).

RESOLVED:

- (a) To note the report**
- (b) To endorse that, LM Ices be awarded a combined concession for the right to sell ice cream and provide catering for one year for the value of £10,500 + VAT.**

The meeting closed at 9.55 pm.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A CORRECT AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 7 MARCH 2022.

Chair

6 JUNE 2022