

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL

GROUNDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MONDAY 6 DECEMBER 2021 AT 1930 HOURS

Present: Councillors: R Berry (Chair)
S Jones
T Morris
J Silverstone (substituting for B Spurr)
V Harvey
R Goodchild (substituting for A Gray)
P Snelling
P Carberry
C Palmer

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

Members of the public: 2

139/GE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Gray (substituted by Councillor Goodchild), Councillor Spurr (substituted by Councillor Silverstone) and Councillor Yates.

140/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.

141/GE QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

A member of the Croquet Club spoke to thank the committee for the recent improvements and highlight how the club was a well-used popular facility across the town with an increasing membership, clubhouse and three lawns available for use. The lawns were in need of re-laying to provide an improved playing surface, and the club requested assistance from the town council in achieving this. The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services confirmed he had spoken to consultants regarding this and would obtain costed proposals for consideration at a future date.

142/GE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

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

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

(b) Minute reference 122/GE (Minutes of the Previous Meeting) – there was no update as yet regarding the fence at the rear of the Linslade Memorial Playing field. Still, a meeting had been set up with a fencing contractor after the first estimate of costs had been rejected by the Canal & River Trust.

Minute reference 131/GE (Multi-Use Games Area) confirmed that the goalposts would be taken down and reinstated at the eastern side of the park.

Minute reference 134/GE (Allotments Update) – there had been no correspondence received from Central Bedfordshire Council regarding the transfer of any assets, including the allotments on the eastern development.

143/GE COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES AND WORKPLAN

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

A question was raised to ask whether an update could be given at the next meeting regarding waste recycling after the new contract was awarded in October 2019. It was confirmed this could be presented at the March meeting.

It was noted that the recycling bins in Parson's Close would be discussed at the March meeting.

A further question was raised regarding the computerisation of the cemetery records, which showed as ongoing but unlikely it would ever be completed. The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services confirmed that not all the historical documents were available, and access to the computer system to update these records would prove difficult for volunteers as only one person could access it at any one time.

RESOLVED to note the Committee Objectives and Work Plan.

144/GE SIX MONTH BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

The Committee received a six-month budget monitoring report for the period April – September 2021.

Utility use was questioned at Parson's Close. Still, it was confirmed this would balance out as most billing was estimated and paid by direct debit enabling any credit to be returned.

Overall the income should be on par with the budget predictions by the end of the year.

RESOLVED to note the report.

145/GE PARSON'S CLOSE RECREATION GROUND

The Committee received a verbal update on the play area refurbishment project. It was confirmed the loan application would be resubmitted this week. Additional costs had been incurred by the delay in the planning application being approved. To keep the project's total cost the same, officers suggested that minor amendments to the plans be made. This would include some parts of the equipment being amended or shelved and an alteration in the method of resurfacing in the play area. The changes would not affect the overall scheme design or play value but would ensure the project could be achieved within the budget set by Council.

RESOLVED to note the information and the minor amendments to the scheme to ensure the project could be delivered within budget.

146/GE OUZEL VALLEY PARK STEERING GROUP UPDATE

The Committee received the minutes of the Ouzel Valley Park Steering Group held on 2 September 2021.

The Committee were informed the Canal & River Trust had now agreed to carry out an upgrade on the towpath, between south of Leighton Bridge and north from Leighton Lock. The timescale would be May to July 2022, with the closure of the towpath in sections so the public could still have access to the canal. A request had been made to the Canal & River Trust to avoid the closure of the towpath around Tiddenfoot when the Canal Festival would be taking place at the end of July 2022.

It was also noted that Councillor Harvey and Jon Balaam of the Greensand Trust had set up a meeting with the Head of External Affairs on 16 December regarding the discharge of sewerage into the River Ouzel which had caused a decline in wildlife along the river.

RESOLVED to receive the minutes of Ouzel Valley Park Steering Group 2 September 2021.

147/GE LEIGHTON TOWN BOXING CLUB UPDATE

The Committee received a verbal update from a representative of the Boxing Club regarding club use of Pages Park Pavilion.

A question was raised as to whether the 50% discount given for one day of their hire per week could be extended to two days. This was outside the

scope of the fees and charges agreed by the Committee, but consideration could be given to the request.

No alternative, permanent premises had been found at present, with Central Bedfordshire Assets Team unable to offer a venue and the Boxing Club unable to source any suitable premises.

Members of the Committee were informed that the Boxing Club Committee meeting would be held on the 12 January 2022, and councillors would be welcome to this meeting. Officers and members were also invited to attend a club night to see how the club runs.

RESOLVED to note the information.

148/GE 2022-2023 DRAFT COMMITTEE REVENUE BUDGET

The Committee received and considered the draft Committee budget for 2022-2023.

Members were informed the next ten years would be complicated, given the recent Council resolution to achieve a net carbon neutral status by 2030 and the lack of certainty regarding the open spaces, play areas, allotments and other community facilities on the development to the east of Leighton-Linslade. There was potential for a significant increase in workload for Grounds Team, so the option of recruiting more staff or outsourcing certain areas of the work might need to be considered. A planned approach would be needed to become net carbon neutral with the purchase of electric equipment, increased tree and shrub planting and maintenance, and the usual jobs carried out by the Grounds Team.

On being put to a vote, it was agreed to recommend approval of the draft budget to Policy & Finance Committee (7 in favour, 1 against and 1 abstention).

RECOMMENDED to the Policy and Finance Committee to approve the proposed budget for Grounds and Environmental Services for the financial year 2022-2023.

149/GE CEMETERY UPDATE

The Committee received an update report on the cemetery service. The town council's burial capacity should continue to be classed as "problematic", with some virgin space remaining but insufficient to meet the demand for the next twenty years. In order for the Town Council to remain a burial authority, additional capacity would be required. The land likely to come forward as part of the land east development would be limited in size, and its future management was uncertain. The Committee agreed that Central Bedfordshire Council should keep to their commitment to assist the Town Council in securing burial land.

RESOLVED to note the report.

150/GE PAVILION HIRE REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES FROM 1 APRIL 2022

The Committee received a report in respect of the fees and charges for Pavilion hire. Although bookings had increased significantly in the second half of 2022, there remained a lack of certainty about the pandemic and its continuing impact. It was suggested that no increase be made to the previously agreed fee structure in view of this.

RESOLVED that no change be made to the existing fees and charges for pavilion hire for the financial year 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023.

151/GE INSTALLATION OF INTERPRETATION PANELS IN THE PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

The Committee received a report regarding the installation of interpretation panels in Linslade Memorial Playing Field and considered the recommendations therein. The Committee approved the proposed design and colours and noted that the exact wording was still to be finalised.

RESOLVED:

(a) to note the report.

(b) to endorse that £6,374.00 to be taken from budget line 9024/950 (with available funds of £28,197) to fund the delivery and installation.

152/GE ROTARY FIREWORK DISPLAY

The Committee received a verbal update regarding the annual bonfire event in the town. The Rotary Club of Leighton-Linslade had agreed not to hold the event in 2020 and 2021 as a result of the pandemic and had expressed an intention not to organise this event in future years due to the financial risks involved. The Committee agreed that if another organisation took over the running of the display, it would not be automatically assumed the Town Council would underwrite any future displays.

RESOLVED to note the information.

153/GE HM QUEEN ELIZABETH II PLATINUM JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

The Committee received a report to consider the funding and endorse that the Grounds and Environmental Services lead on the delivery of the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations, including a parade, lighting a beacon, and augmented reality tree planting and firework display.

RESOLVED

(a) To endorse that, the Grounds and Environmental services would lead the delivery of the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations, including a parade, lighting a beacon, augmented reality trail tree planting and firework display.

(b) That up to a maximum of £8,000 be taken from the cost centre 4110/230 (with an available budget of £54,675) for the purposes of delivering the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations.

154/GE 1937 CORONATION SHELTER AND BENCH REPLACEMENT

The Committee received a report to consider the replacement of the 1937 Coronation Shelter and bench in Parson's Close Recreation Ground and considered the recommendations therein.

A concern was raised whether the shelter would become a focal point for anti-social behaviour in the park. The shelter would be narrow with a transparent rear panel to prevent this, but the possibility of having CCTV focussed on it could also be explored. The original shelter had been paid for by public subscription, and it was suggested this, or crowdfunding could be a possible option to contribute to the costs for the new structure.

On being put to a vote, the recommendations were agreed (8 in favour, 1 against).

RESOLVED

(a) To endorse the funding of a wooden replacement structure for £17,323, including delivery and installation, to be funded from budget line 9024/950 (available funds of £28,197).

(b) To purchase wooden benches to be financed from the revenue budget 4503/230.

155/GE ALWINS FIELD PLAY AREA REFURBISHMENT

The Committee received a presentation of the preferred design for the refurbishment of Alwins Field Play Area. This was the next scheduled play area refurbishment as part of the ongoing programme, to be funded from the Future Projects/play area refurbishment earmarked reserve.

RESOLVED to note the information.

156/GE CLIMATE CHANGE EMERGENCY UPDATE

The Committee received and considered a report in response to the resolution made by Council regarding becoming net carbon neutral by 2030. It was proposed that the first steps would be to obtain baseline data on the Council's current operations, undertake carbon literacy training, and await guidance from the National Association of Local Councils and Central Bedfordshire Council. It was noted that CBC's newly adopted Sustainability Plan included training of councillors and staff, embedding sustainability in project management, council operations, investing in renewable energy infrastructure, electric vehicle charging infrastructure and working with the broader community, including town and parish councils.

The Committee noted that the town council had already commenced communications to the public regarding climate change and how they could contribute by making small changes in daily life.

It was proposed a consultant carry out an assessment into the carbon footprint of the town council. At the same time, as part of the scheduled tree condition survey, an i-Tree Eco assessment could be undertaken. The evidence obtained from these reports would provide essential baseline data as a starting point and could also be helpful if applying for grant funding.

On being put to a vote, the recommendations were agreed (8 in favour, 1 abstention).

RESOLVED:

- (a) To note the report.**
- (b) To recommend to Policy & Finance Committee approval of the new revenue budget line included in the draft budget for 2022-2023 with respect to the climate change agenda.**
- (c) To endorse that quotations be received for a carbon assessment of Town Council operations to provide baseline evidence on which to take forward the move towards being net carbon neutral by 2030.**
- (d) To endorse that, an i-Tree Eco assessment be incorporated in our latest tree condition survey, with the combined cost of £4,500 (to be taken from 9024/950) with available funds of £28,197.**
- (e) To support the undertaking of carbon literacy training as an organisation for both staff and councillors.**

It was proposed and seconded that in order to continue the meeting past 2200 hours, Standing Order 3(x) be suspended until the conclusion of the next agenda item (Henry Finch Memorial Fountain).

RESOLVED to suspend Standing Order 3(x) until the conclusion of the next agenda item (Henry Finch Memorial Fountain).

157/GE HENRY FINCH MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN

The Committee received a report to consider the funding of a condition survey of the Henry Finch Memorial Fountain in Linslade Recreation Ground to allow informed decisions regarding any improvement to be made.

RESOLVED:

- (a) To approve the funding of a condition report (£1,872.00), which would include detailed feasibility and possible recommendations.**
- (b) Included in the above costings would be for the appointed experts to meet up with Officers and two named Councillors, Councillor Harvey and Councillor Palmer, to discuss further the expectations of possible adaptations.**

The Committee considered a motion by Councillor Palmer for restoration of the Henry Finch Memorial Fountain in Linslade Recreation Ground. It was not proposed that the fountain be restored to its original state but that a modest restoration take place, including cleaning, re-highlighting the inscriptions on the fountain, and restoring the missing lion's head would be

adequate. In addition, the provision of flower beds or planters on both sides of the path and perhaps some seating could enhance the area.

RESOLVED to support the Motion for restoration of the Henry Finch Memorial Fountain in principle, subject to the findings of the condition survey. The survey report and costed recommendations to come back to the Committee for consideration in due course.

The meeting closed at 2207 hours.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6 DECEMBER 2021.

Chair

7 MARCH 2022

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