

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GROUNDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
COMMITTEE**

**HELD AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GROVE HOUSE, HIGH STREET NORTH,
DUNSTABLE**

ON MONDAY 12 JUNE 2017

Present: Councillors Gloria Martin (Town Mayor), Liz Jones (Chairman), Sid Abbott (Vice-Chairman), Lisa Bird, Jeannette Freeman, Peter Hollick, Ann Sparrow, Nigel Warren and Andy Whayman

In Attendance: David Ashlee (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), John Crawley (Head of Grounds and Environmental Services), Mary Dobbs (Cemetery Manager), James Slack (Sport and Leisure Facilities Manager) and Ian Swinnerton (Grounds Operations Manager)

Apologies: Councillors John Kane (Deputy Town Mayor) Jessica Castle, Des Moffatt, Steve Elliott and Emma Simmons

114 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of Grounds and Environmental Services Committee held on 13 March 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

115 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no specific declarations of interest.

116 PLANS-SUB COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meetings of Plans Sub-Committee held on 7 March, 28 March, 18 April, 9 May and 30 May 2017 be received.

117 CREASEY PARK COMMUNITY FOOTBALL CENTRE

The Sports and Leisure Facilities Manager presented a detailed report on recent operations at the Centre.

Creasey Park had again played host to numerous end of season cup finals, both youth and adult and AFC Dunstable had won the Bedfordshire Senior Cup final. There had been a total of 115 games played on the main pitch last season and the good condition of the pitch at the end of the season was a credit to the grounds team.

An interim Chairman from the DTFC Executive had stepped in to ensure that the Club could continue to operate in the 2017/18 playing season.

The kitchen extension was in the final stages of completion with the internal works completed and the kitchen was now in use. Members questioned the reason for the delay and it was explained that this was due to problems with the as-built drawings

for structural steels and poor client management by Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC).

The Committee received the profiled income and expenditure report as at the end of March 2017. The facility had performed well in 2016/17 and a contribution of £5,321 had been made to the Creasey Park reserve.

The Manger reported that the Centre had its first break-in on Thursday 1 June but nothing had been taken and only minor damage was caused to windows, the alarm and the till.

118 MARKET TOWN REGENERATION FUND UPDATE

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive presented an update report on Market Town Regeneration Fund projects relating to this Committee.

a) Enhanced Town Centre Cleansing

The new service remained fully operational and officers had met with CBC officers to discuss the impact of the service on existing street cleansing activities and how the two organisations could work more closely together to improve the town centre environment.

b) New Splash Park and Associated Café Provision

Contractors were still on site and work was progressing well and on target with handover to the Council likely to take place on 19 June. This would be followed by a soft opening to the public before the end of June and Members agreed that the official opening would take place on Friday 21 July 2017. It was noted that Beecroft Academy would be attending the opening with their students and Members requested that both Icknield and Watling schools also be invited to attend the opening ceremony.

Members sought clarification on security arrangements, information on IT, on-going maintenance of plant and equipment and mounding and fencing arrangements.

c) New Entrance Features for Priory Gardens

Following further advice from Central Bedfordshire Council the Head of Grounds and Environmental Services had prepared a detailed brief for the project to assist with securing the services of a design specialist. The brief takes into account the very specific requirements of erecting an overthrow and associated modifications to the entrance within the curtilage of Grade 2* listed building and Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Preliminary discussions with a local design company, including a review of fee and project costs, suggested that a more realistic budget for the project, at today's prices, would be £40,000.

In order to move the project forward Members were asked to consider the release of an additional £10,000 from the General Reserve.

RESOLVED: that the Committee recommend to Finance and General Purposes Committee the release of up to £10,000 from the General Reserve as a contingency to support the implementation of the Priory Gardens entrance overthrow.

119 RECREATION GROUNDS, TOWN CENTRE GARDENS, CEMETERY AND ALLOTMENTS

The Grounds Operations Manager and the Cemetery Manager presented a detailed information report covering all areas of the Council's grounds maintenance responsibilities.

a) Recreation Grounds

Since the last report to this Committee there had been no incidents of vandalism in the play areas or Grove Skate Park. It was noted that arrangements were in hand to replace the play equipment at Willoughby Close and Members sought assurances that the play equipment at Mentmore Recreation Ground was now fully operational.

Football pitch reinstatements were ongoing across all sites including Creasey Park and the BMX track had also been resurfaced.

b) Town Centre Area

Floral display planting was reported as being well in hand and various works in Priory Gardens were reported as being completed.

Members noted that the Anglia in Bloom judges would be visiting Dunstable on Monday 17 July and the Council continued to work with Dunstable in Bloom to prepare for the visit.

c) Town Ranger Service

The Town Centre Ranger had been working with the Town Ranger every third week of the month to make significant progress on jet washing large areas of paving along West Street, and re-staining 7 benches in the same area. The Town Ranger had also been working with volunteers from Dunstable Community Church to paint the fence around St Mary's car park.

d) Dunstable Cemetery

Members received the burial figures for March to May 2017 along with the profiled income and expenditure figures for April 2017. Members noted the positive income variance of £20,013 against the target for the month and it was explained that this was due to the purchase of two bricked lined vaults by non-residents along with associated pre-purchased grave spaces.

Members were advised that the Green Flag judges would be visiting the Cemetery on Wednesday 14 June and that the outcome of the judging would be known by mid-July.

Memorial stability testing was currently underway across the whole cemetery as part of the Council's risk management arrangements. To date there had been no significant causes for concern.

Members briefly discussed the future provision of burial land, taking account of housing and population growth in the area including Houghton Regis. Members noted that CBC would be required to consider this matter within the overall strategic context of future burial provision for the region.

e) **Allotments**

There were currently 36 people on the waiting list which was comparable to figures reported to the Committee in January. Members received the detail of the make-up of the waiting list.

There were currently 13 vacant plots and these were in the process of being re-let.

120 DUNSTABLE WAR MEMORIAL

The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services presented a report proposing the establishment of a working group of Members, officers and other organisations to consider and prepare a brief for the refurbishment and improvement of the town's war memorial in Priory Gardens.

RESOLVED: i) that Councillors Gloria Martin (Town Mayor), Liz Jones (Chairman), Lisa Bird, Ann Sparrow and Nigel Warren be appointed as Member representatives on the working group with support from the Head of Grounds and Environmental Services and representatives of the organisations listed in section 3.2 of the report.

ii) that the working group be authorised to approve the brief so that the Head of Service can submit, if appropriate, pre-application forms to the War Memorial Trust for grant funding.

121 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

CBC Development Management Committee:

It was reported that the next meeting of this CBC Committee would be considering the Dukeminster Estate and Cllr Abbott agreed that he would attend the meeting.