

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 9 SEPTEMBER 2024 FROM 7 pm

Present: Councillors Louise O’Riordan (Town Mayor), Sally Kimondo (Deputy Town Mayor), Richard Attwell (Chair), Trevor Adams, Matthew Brennan, Robert Blennerhassett, Michelle Henderson, Matthew Neall and Johnson Tamara

In Attendance: Councillor Peter Hollick, John Crawley (Head of Grounds and Environmental Services), Dimitrisz Sopisz (Grounds Operations Manager), James Slack (Corporate Performance & Compliance Manager), Lauren Swinnerton (Splash Manager), Mary Dobbs (Cemetery Manager), Katherine Doyle (Parks and Green Space Development Officer) and Georgia Pearson (Democratic Services Manager)

Apologies: Councillors Trevor Adams, Philip Crawley, Mark Davis and Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive)

Public: Nil

176/24 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no specific declarations of interest

177/24 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of Grounds and Environmental Services Committee held on 10 June 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

178/24 PLANS-SUB COMMITTEE

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meetings of the Plans Sub-Committee held on 10 June 2024, 8 July 2024, 5 August 2024 and 19 August 2024 be received.

179/24 ACTION TRACKER

Members received and noted the updates on actions from previous meetings.

The Splash Manager updated members that now the peak Splash Park season is over, discussions are taking place with the Priory House team to continue working together on selling products across both venues.

180/24 BENNETTS SPLASH PARK

The Splash Manager summarised the report provided to members.

Councillor Brennan asked if the venue could continue to provide a Santa's Grotto as it did last year. The Splash Manager advised that an approach had already been made to an external provider about the idea to encourage some further use of the space.

The Splash Manager gave members an update on the current bookings already scheduled and how the Café will be running throughout the rest of the off-peak season.

Members were advised on a rebranding for the off-peak season noting that the venue will become Bennett's Café and Community Hub. Members were asked to choose between two new branding logos.

181/24 GROUNDS – INFORMATION REPORT

Members received the report circulated.

Cemetery

The Cemetery Manager summarised the report.

The Cemetery working group along with The Cemetery Manager, the Head of Grounds and Environmental Services and the Grounds Operations Manager had visited crematoriums at Berton, near Aylesbury, and the new Oakfield Gardens, near Flitwick earlier in the day. The visits were very beneficial and both members and officers have come away from the visits with some thought-provoking ideas for future new burial grounds within Dunstable.

Councillor Brennan asked if there was an update on when the Council will hear back from the Environmental Agency regarding the proposed new cemetery land. The Cemetery Manager advised that once they have reviewed the report the Council may receive a report within a minimum of 21 days however this could take longer.

Allotments

The Cemetery Manager summarised the report.

Recreation Grounds – Play Areas

The Grounds Operations Manager summarised the report. It was advised that fortunately there have been no further vandalism incidents since the last report.

Sports Pitches and General Grounds Maintenance

The Grounds Operations Manager updated members on the key parts of the report.

Town Centre and Town Rangers

The Grounds Operations Manager summarised the report.

Green Space Projects

The Parks and Green Space Development Officer summarised the report.

Since writing the Priory Gardens Pergola and knee rail project report, scheduled monument consent had been granted by Historic England. However, unfortunately the Friends of Priory House and Gardens were not successful with their bid for a £20,000 grant from the Awards for All lottery fund. Fortunately, funds are available within approved reserves to complete the project. The public will be made aware before any work starts in Autumn 2024/Winter 2025.

Officers have sought quotes for the refurbishment of the red phone box. Initial quotes have come in over the original budget. Further quotes will be obtained to seek a reduction in costs.

Dunstable achieved another Gold award this year at Anglia in Bloom in the Large Town category. A number of other awards were also given for Dunstable projects and open spaces. Members complimented all those involved.

182/24 MAINTENANCE OF PRIORY CHURCHYARD

The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services summarised the report to members and highlighted the key points.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: to note the Council's responsibilities associated with maintaining the Priory Churchyard, the current reserve balance and the future contributions which the Council will make

183/24 FRENCHS AVENUE FOOTPATHS

The Grounds Operations Manager updated members on the current situation regarding the Frenchs Avenue footpaths including the shortfall in funding.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: to continue with the proposed footpath works as originally approved.

To recommend to Full Council the release of a further £11,960 from the Open Space Improvement Plan Reserve.

184/24 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services summarised the report to Members. Members discussed each proposal in depth.

Councillor O’Riordan asked if it would be possible to look into pairing the 40 social media posts with handing out packets of seeds that could go out with Talk of the Town to encourage people in the Town to get involved with the celebrations.

ACTION – The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services to investigate further.

Councillor Henderson left the chamber at 8:43pm

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: that officers bring forward the following options to the next Committee meeting: the planting of 40 trees, the planting of 40,000 bulbs and a rose named after Dunstable for inclusion in the draft budget for 2025/26. Members also requested information on a combined tree and bulb planting project.

185/24 SALTING AND GRITTING IN DUNSTABLE

The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services summarised the key points of the report.

Councillor Tamara requested details of the financial implications for the Town Council taking on more responsibilities with gritting and salting the footpaths within Dunstable Town Centre. Members also requested information about any possible risks or liabilities for the Council associated with slip and fall claims.

ACTION – The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: that officers further investigate the options for partnership working with Central Bedfordshire Council including regular salting and gritting of the Town Centre pathways and public areas by the grounds service with a view to providing a further report to this Committee.

186/24 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

CBC Development Committee – Cllr Nicholas Kotarski

Councillor Kotarski attended the Development Management Committee on Wednesday 26 June 2024 and presented Dunstable Town Councils objections to the proposed redevelopment of the old library site at Vernon Place.

The planning application was nonetheless approved by the committee.

187/24 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: in terms of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, the following item will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment and contractual matters and therefore, pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

188/24 DUNSTABLE BOWLS CLUB RELOCATION

The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services gave a verbal update to members.

The meeting closed at 9:23 pm

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