



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE DIRECT SERVICES COMMITTEE OF AYLESBURY TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, 5 CHURCH STREET, AYLESBURY, ON WEDNESDAY 9th JUNE 2021 AT 7 P.M.

Present: Cllr W Raja (Chairman)
Cllr C Hedren
Cllr R King
Cllr S Lambert (from 7.03 pm)
Cllr R Lloyd
Cllr A Morgan

Officers in attendance: Mr K Gray (Town Clerk)
Mr M Broughton (Deputy Town Clerk)
Mrs J Priest (Senior Communities Officer)
Mr A Motyka (Cemetery Manager)

No members of the public were in attendance.

The Chairman formally opened the meeting at 7.00 pm and welcomed everyone present.

1. APOLOGIES

To note and agree apologies for absence.

RESOLVED: None received

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

3. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

To receive nominations and elect a Vice Chairman for the 2021/22 municipal year Nominations were sought. It was proposed by Cllr Lloyd, seconded by Cllr Morgan that Cllr Lambert be elected Vice Chairman. No further nominations were forthcoming.

RESOLVED: On being put to the vote it was unanimously agreed that Cllr Lambert be duly elected to serve as Vice Chairman in 2021/22.

4. MINUTES

To receive, accept and sign the Minutes of 17th March 2021.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes be duly agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

[Cllr Lambert joined the meeting at 7.03 pm]

5. MATTERS ARISING

To receive any matters arising from the Minutes/report from the Clerk
The Town Clerk reported that largely due to the recent local government elections, no progress had as yet been made on the fencing issue at Bedgrove [Minute 7b from the meeting on 17th March 2021 refers] but that in accordance with the committee's wishes, that this matter would now proceed. Since the matter was discussed by committee, no further representations had been received from residents.

6. JONATHAN PAGE PLAY CENTRE

To receive and consider a report from the Senior Communities Officer (SCO) and approve the recommended increase of After School Club pick-up fees as outlined in 4.2.1 in the report and to approve the recommended increase of Holiday Playscheme fees as outlined in 4.2.2

The Senior Communities Officer highlighted her report which had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting and drew particular attention to the proposed revised views.

A councillor asked about children's parties and how these could impact on staffing resource. In response the SCO indicated that such events would be balanced and proportionate to take account of staffing, but holding these parties was a new income stream for the JPPC. A councillor asked about the suggested pricing increases (in paragraph 4.2.1 of the report) and that newly added schools would be pitched at a certain level. The SCO responded that she had looked at the market rates and felt this figure was reasonable.

RESOLVED: It was proposed by Cllr Raja, seconded by Cllr Lambert and on being put to the vote carried unanimously that the recommended increase of After School Club pick-up fees as outlined in 4.2.1 in the report and the recommended increase of Holiday Playscheme fees as outlined in 4.2.2 be duly approved.

7. DEVOLVED SERVICES

To receive an update from the Town Clerk.

The Town Clerk gave an in-depth verbal appraisal on devolved services and covered the works that the town council are responsible for under the Devolved Services Agreement and the town council also being the "Cluster Lead" for several other parish councils

8. CEMETERY

To receive and consider a report from the Cemetery Manager concerning works on cemetery chapels. The report had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting.

The Cemetery Manager briefly introduced his report and asked for any questions. A councillor referred to the two options contained within the report but first wished to clarify alternative approaches. The Town Clerk apprised members of the context and history of the two Grade II listed structures and suggested in view of the potentially significant sums from the public purse that an approach including Bucks Council members/officers with Town Council members to see if a compromise outcome was possible. A councillor queried whether an appeal against the planning notice could be made but it was felt that the deadline for appeal had almost certainly passed. In that case, a fresh planning application

could be submitted. A member asked for background reports on the Cemetery Chapels planning process and decision ought to be circulated to Town Council representatives attending any meeting with Bucks Council and the Cemetery Manager undertook to do so.

More generally on cemetery matters, a member drew attention to a leaking water tap and the desirability of providing four more litter bins. The Cemetery Manager indicated that remedial works to fix the leak were already in hand and that four further litter bins would be sited in the cemetery.

9. ALLOTMENTS

9a) To receive an update on allotment availability.

The report of the Allotments and Devolved Services Officer had been circulated in advance of the meeting which included information on occupancy rates and plot availability per site. The Deputy Town Clerk provided further context and the report was noted.

9b) To consider and agree whether a refundable damage deposit be levied on all new plot-holders to offset the costs incurred in staff time in making-good allotments when a tenant gives up the tenancy.

The Deputy Town Clerk highlighted the growing problem of plots not being left clean and tidy and often strewn with substantial amounts of heavy-duty rubbish when being vacated. Invariably, the impact on the Maintenance Team's workload of ensuring that remedial works were undertaken prior to a new tenant taking occupation was significant and growing. One possible approach to try to ensure that vacating tenants cleared their plots properly and responsibly would be to levy a returnable damage deposit which would be refundable when the tenant gave up the tenancy. Desktop research had indicated that some other local councils had adopted such an approach and the fee was typically in the range of £25 to £50. Members briefly discussed the proposal and recognised that any such refundable fee needed to be at a significant level in order to ensure compliance from vacating plot tenants.

RESOLVED: It was proposed by Cllr Morgan, seconded by Cllr King that the Council adopt a refundable levy £50 on all new tenants with immediate effect and on being put to the vote this was duly carried unanimously.

10. TOWN HALL

To receive an update from the Town Clerk concerning Town Hall matters

The Town Clerk indicated that there were no substantive matters to report concerning the Town Hall however the caretaker had recently resigned after many years' service in post. Whilst daytime hires of the Chamber were not problematic and committee clerks could set out the room for committee meetings, the only concern was in regard to external hires in the evening hours. Staff in other roles had been asked if they wished to accommodate caretaker duties for evening hires but there had been no response. The Deputy Town Clerk indicated that the external evening hires equated to approximately 40 hours per year and paying a basic hourly wage would not be unduly expensive. Members recognised the community service provided by hosting local groups in the Council Chamber and it was agreed that the Town Clerk give further consideration to this matter.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting be held on Wednesday 8th September 2021 at 7.00 p.m.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.00 p.m.

Chairman _____ Date _____