



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DIRECT SERVICES COMMITTEE
OF AYLESBURY TOWN COUNCIL HELD THROUGH THE ZOOM VIDEO
CONFERENCING SYSTEM, WEDNESDAY 17th MARCH 2021 AT 7.00 p.m.**

Present: Cllr W Raja (Chairman)
Cllr S Lambert
Cllr A Huxley
Cllr Mrs S Morgan
Cllr A Morgan

Cllr M Winn

Officers in attendance: Mr K Gray (Town Clerk)
Mr M Broughton (Deputy Town Clerk)
Mrs J Priest (Senior Communities Officer)
Mr S Webb (Maintenance Team Manager)
Ms K Colbeck (Direct Services and Allotments Administrator)

Three members of the public were in attendance.

The Chairman invited members of the public to speak.

A member of the public referred to agenda item 7b and stated his concerns as Chairman of the Bedgrove Residents Association that either proper hedging or a wooden fence be provided and also drew attention to difficulty of emergency services access to the site.

Another member of the public referred also to item 7b and indicated that he had submitted comments in advance of the meeting. The Chairman of Committee confirmed that these comments had been circulated to members of the Committee.

Cllr Lambert addressed the Chairman of the Bedgrove Residents Association regarding a clarification of which type of fencing would be preferred and this was duly outlined.

The Chairman formally opened the meeting at 7.07 pm.

1. APOLOGIES

To note and agree apologies for absence.

RESOLVED: To accept apologies from Cllr T Hunter-Watts (work commitments).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

3. MINUTES

To receive, accept and sign the Minutes of 21st January 2021.

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

4. MATTERS ARISING

To receive any matters arising from the Minutes/report from the Clerk

The Town Clerk reported that there were no matters arising from the Minutes. He brought to members' attention that a request from The Aylesbury Society for a blue plaque had been given permission to be erected at the Cemetery, along with a similar plaque on behalf of the War Graves Commission.

5. DEVOLVED SERVICES

To receive an update from the Town Clerk.

The Town Clerk gave a brief verbal update and indicated that the grass cutting season had now commenced. He reported that financial support at the same level as past years had been received from Bucks Council for devolved services to be undertaken by the Town Council in the 2021/22 municipal year.

6. CEMETERY

6a) To receive a verbal report from the Town Clerk on cemetery operations

The Town Clerk advised that there were no new issues to report but reminded members that the Tring Road allotments were part of the land allocation for future cemetery expansion. Further information was contained in the report under agenda item 6b.

6b) To receive and consider a report from the Cemetery Manager concerning burial trends and cemetery capacity.

The Town Clerk drew members attention to the informative report and highlighted the anticipated 15 years capacity for burials in the cemetery before there would likely be a need to draw on allotment land. Members duly noted the report.

7. ALLOTMENTS

7a) 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, fees charged, and plot availability per site. The report was noted.

7b) To receive, consider and decide on re-fencing at the Bedgrove site.

A report and comments received from the public had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

The Town Clerk highlighted the Council's legal responsibilities as the landowner and in relation to security and trespass, access, health and safety, insurance and duty owed to both allotment tenants and the wider local community.

A wide-ranging discussion followed including observations by the ward member, and centred on key concerns of site security and the potential impacts of different types of fencing and hedging. The Town Clerk stressed there was no existing legal access to the site from the new development as governed by the Bedgrove covenants and thus the gaps which had been forced through were illegal. On the advice of the Maintenance Team Manager, it was recognised that hedging alone would not constitute a workable solution. There was a consensus that community consultation would be a worthwhile exercise given the sensitivities involved and in the interim Heras fencing could be erected to bolster site security.

RESOLVED: It was proposed by Cllr Lambert, seconded by Cllr Mrs Morgan that the Council erect sturdy security fencing along the boundary ditch with the new development and that a consultation exercise with residents of Beaufort Close setting out the different fencing/hedging options over a period of four weeks be undertaken to inform the decision of new fencing and that in the meantime temporary fencing be erected at the site boundary. On being put to the vote there were For 4, Against 0 and one abstention. The proposal was thus duly carried.

The Town Clerk sought clarification on the consultation process to be followed and suggested that two options be put to the residents at Beaufort Close, 1) a wooden fence and 2) a light metal fence with hedging to soften the visual impact. Members agreed with

this approach and also that the matter be dealt with through email communication with members by the Town Clerk rather than formally in Committee.

8. JONATHAN PAGE PLAY CENTRE

To receive a verbal update from the Town Clerk on JPPC operations

The Town Clerk invited the Senior Communities Officer to update members and she highlighted the difficulties of the past year due to the Covid pandemic but stressed the dedication and flexibility of JPPC staff in adapting to the changing regulations governing the childcare sector. Presently the Centre is operating at less than 50% of its capacity, due to the government guidelines in place and operating a COVID-19 safe environment. Attendance within the limited operation is increasing now the vaccination roll-out was progressing and After-School Club interest was also rising for September.

Communication Plans were now in place and the Centre was in compliance with cleanliness and sanitation requirements. At present it was not known how long the restrictions would remain in place but it was expected operate with full capacity of 65 children per day from the summer playscheme onwards.

Cost savings have been made throughout the year where possible and collaborative working is continuing with Buckinghamshire Council Social Services, who book spaces for vulnerable children at the playschemes to give children and parents respite.

The Centre was appealing for several different materials to be donated and at the request of the Chairman, this list would be sent to all councillors by email shortly.

Members thanked the Senior Communities Officer and noted her report.

9. 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.

Members noted the position.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the date of the next meeting would be decided following the May annual meeting of Full Council.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.56 p.m.

Chairman _____

Date _____