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Date: 24 January 2020

Dear Councillor,

You are summoned to attend a meeting of Dunstable Town Council to be held in the Council Chamber, Grove House, 76 High Street North, Dunstable on **Monday 3 February 2020 at 7.00pm** when the following business will be transacted.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. To authorise the Chairman to sign as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 2 December 2019 (enclosed at page 1)
3. Specific Declarations of Interest
4. Chairman's Remarks – (including Civic Events and Mayoral Activities as detailed in the report of Democratic Services Manager) (see page 4)
5. Public Question Time
6. To answer questions under Standing Order 16
7. To receive reports of the undermentioned Committees:

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Page</u>
Dunstable Joint Committee	9 January 2020	6
Community Services	6 January 2020	11
Grounds and Environmental Services	13 January 2020	14
Finance and General Purposes	20 January 2020	18

Yours faithfully

David Ashlee
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

To: All Members of Dunstable Town Council
Copies to: Central Bedfordshire Councillors for Dunstable for information

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

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

ON MONDAY 2 DECEMBER 2019

Present: Councillors Sid Abbott (Town Mayor), Wendy Bater, Lisa Bird, Alan Corkhill, Philip Crawley, Greg George, Pamela Ghent, John Gurney, Kenson Gurney, Peter Hollick, Gloria Martin, Lee Roberts, Gladys Sanders and Johnson Tamara

In Attendance: David Ashlee (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), James Slack (Head of Community Services), John Crawley (Head of Grounds and Environmental Services), Kelley Hallam (Business Support Manager) and Sharon Long (Democratic Services Manager)

Apologies: Councillors Liz Jones (Deputy Town Mayor), Mark Cant and Cameron Restall

Public: None

Before the commencement of the meeting, the Town Mayor requested the Council to stand for a moment of silence for the victims of the London Terror attack. The Chaplain, Dr Johan Schoeman, then led the Council in prayer.

Sharon Long was introduced and welcomed to the Council.

187 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held 7 October 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

188 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no specific declarations of interest.

189 TOWN MAYOR'S REMARKS

The Town Mayor referred to the report detailing his attendances at a variety of events since being the last meeting of the Council. He also gave an overview of the Social Media training Members had received and reminded Members that tickets were still available for his next charity event, Pudding Night at Priory House.

190 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions put to the meeting.

191 QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 16

There were no questions put to the meeting.

192 DUNSTABLE JOINT COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meeting of the Dunstable Joint Committee held on 13 June and 12 September 2019 be received.

193 COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

a) Grove Corner and Community Engagement (Minute 165/2019)

Councillor Martin informed the Council that Molly Firth, the Grove Corner volunteer who had been nominated for a Youth Award, had in fact won.

b) Dunstable Town Centre Services (Minute 168/2019)

Members asked for an update on the Ashton Square Toilet refurbishment. The Head of Community Services informed them that the works were now completed, and the toilets were fully open.

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 4 November 2019 be received.

194 GROUND AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

a) Recreation Grounds (Minute 175c/2019)

The Council were informed that the York stone Play Stack, which was to replace the fire-damaged Geo Boulder at Bennett's Adventure Play, was too heavy for the site and that The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services was looking for alternatives.

b) Creasey Park Community Football Centre and Splash Park (Minute 176/2019)

Members congratulated all the officers and staff at CPCFC on winning the Best Bar None Award.

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meeting of the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee held on 11 November 2019 be received.

195 FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 18 November 2019 be received.

196 DRAFT BUDGET 2020/21

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive presented a draft, revenue budget summary for the Council for 2020/21 that asked Members to consider the strategy they would like to adopt in order to determine a balanced budget at the Council meeting planned on 3 February 2020.

The Council were informed that the largest impact on the year on year budget was the increase to staffing costs. This year it was estimated that the growth in costs for staffing would be £111,017. This figure was made up of a 3% predicted pay award and two additional posts; HSHAZ Programme Manager and Parks Development Officer. It was noted that as yet, the pay award had not been confirmed.

It was also noted that the Dunstable tax base had increased by 280, which secured £48,237 of additional income through the council tax charge.

In summary the identified budget growth items totalled £173, 488 and the revenue savings totalled £154,605 which gave an overall deficit figure of £18,883. It was therefore proposed

that a 1% increase on the current Band D council tax charge would result in an additional £23,417 which would more than balance the budget.

RESOLVED: that the Council work towards a maximum of a 1% increase on the 2020/21 council tax charge.

197 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS AND STANDING ORDERS UPDATES

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive presented copies of the new versions of the Financial Regulations and Standing Orders to the Council for information.

The Standing Orders had been updated to remove the Accounts Sub-Committee from the document as this now ceased to exist as previously agreed by the Council. Councillor Hollick reminded Members that he and other Member volunteers would meet with the Head of Finance regularly to check the accounts and requested that if any Member wished to view them at any time, to contact Lucy Salim.

The Financial Regulations document highlighted the new rules that had been added and amended.

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**MONDAY 3 FEBRUARY 2020****CIVIC EVENTS AND MAYORAL ACTIVITIES****1. GENERAL INFORMATION**

Purpose of Report: For information

1.1 The Town Mayor attended the following functions during December 2019:

04.12.19	Signposts Charity Awards Night, Stopsley Baptist Church	The Mayor and Mayoress attended this prestigious event where recognition of outstanding performance at Signposts during the year was awarded to the selected recipient.
05.12.19	Visit by the 4 th Dunstable Beavers to Grove House	The Mayor and Council Leader enacted a Full Council Meeting agenda to the Beavers. They gave a brief history of Grove House and the Mayoral role. Questions from the Beavers included whether there was a sword in the Mace. Refreshments were provided and the Beavers were given mementos of their visit.
07.12.19	Dunstable Town Council's Mistletoe and Magic, Priory House Gardens	The Mayor and Mayoress attended this Council event. Staff dressed as elves and children with their parents enjoyed meeting Santa.
ditto	Dunstable Ladies Choir Christmas Concert at St Augustine's Church, Dunstable	The Mayor and Mayoress attended this event where Dunstable Ladies Choir performed a repertoire of Christmas Carols. They had a very enjoyable afternoon listening to the ladies singing.
08.12.19	Christmas Concert in aid of the Alzheimer's Society, St Mary's Church, Dunstable	The Mayor and Mayoress attended this event by the Caritas Harmony Ladies Choir Society. The concert was a very enjoyable night of singing Carols and Hymns.
13.12.19	Pudding Night, Priory House Gardens Tearooms, Dunstable	This Mayoral event was attended by 43 guests who tucked into a variety of puddings accompanied by a glass of wine. The chef and staff are thanked for the food and service provided, as where the guests who helped raise over £240 for the Mayor's four charities.
17.12.19	Bedfordshire Police Carol Service at All Saints Church, Clifton, Shefford	The Mayor and Mayoress attended the Annual Police Carol Service. Readings were given by Chief Constable, Police Officers and Staff in this well organised event to celebrate Christmas.
18.12.19	Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service Christingle	The Mayor and Mayoress attended the Annual Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service's Carol Service, Readings were given by Chief Fire Officer, Fire Service

	Christmas Celebration, St Mary's Church, Woburn	Officers and Staff in this well organised event to celebrate Christmas
21.12.19	Charity Christmas Concert St Mary's Church, Dunstable	The Mayor and Mayoress attended this well organised Christmas Concert on behalf of NOAH Enterprises, a charity who support and find accommodation for homeless people. The concert was given by Vauxhall Male Voice Choir, Luton Concert Orchestra and Luton Ladies Choir, all of whom gave a superb evening's entertainment.
23.12.19	Christmas Concert at the Priory Church of St Peter, Dunstable	The Mayor and Mayoress attended the Christmas Concert along with other Dunstable Town Councillors, local business representatives and residents. The Mayor gave a reading. The Priory Choir were in good voice and it was a joyous occasion to welcome in Christmas.
24.12.19	Christmas Eve Party, Saracens Head, Dunstable	The Mayor and Mayoress attended a Christmas Eve exclusive Dinner & Buffet Party where they were entertained by a lively Jazz Group. The food & atmosphere was very good, and the Mayor gave a short speech on promoting Dunstable shops and business and wished the owners Kelvin & Sam every success for the future.

2. AUTHOR

- 2.1 Sharon Long – Democratic Services Manager
sharon.long@dunstable.gov.uk

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF DUNSTABLE JOINT COMMITTEE
HELD AT WATLING HOUSE, HIGH STREET NORTH, DUNSTABLE
ON 9 JANUARY 2020**

- Present:** Central Bedfordshire Councillors: Cllr C Hegley, (Dunstable Joint Committee Chairman), Cllr N Young, Cllr Sanders, Cllr Chatterley, Cllr Tamara
- Dunstable Town Councilors: Cllr P Hollick, Cllr S Abbot, Cllr L Jones (Dunstable Joint Committee Vice Chairman), Cllr Lisa Bird, Cllr G George
- In Attendance:** E Harrison, J Gelder, H Garrod, S Knott, S Warboys, A Sparrow, R Graveson, D Ashlee, S Hughes, S Sherwood, Officer C Gurr, J Slack, P Coker, S Patel, N Costin, 5 Members of Dunstable Town Council.
- Apologies:** Cllr G Martin – Cllr George as Substitute
Cllr Mc Vicar – Cllr Tamara as Substitute
Cllr T Stock
- Members of the public:** 7 Members of the public

SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Hegley's husband has a street trader licence.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

- Concerns about damage outside market cross by HGVs and the cost to repair. Highways colleagues answered that a scheme is in design to trial a HGV lane and change the road layout but this is costly and will take time. In the meantime the area team will continue monitoring to keep it safe whilst the scheme is developed.
- Lack of prosecution for HGVs for entering Dunstable contrary to restrictions. Highways responded that this would require police enforcement. Cllr Young elaborated that the police maybe stretched by dealing with other issues at present. CBC has asked for transfer of powers to be able to enforce the restrictions, at present this request has been declined by the Department of Transport. The use of

CCTV to enforce restrictions was discussed but this maybe something to look into in the future as it is difficult to distinguish vehicles breaking restrictions. It was reported that HGV's through Dunstable have been reduced by 80% by the current restrictions and hope to reduce it further once the powers can be transferred.

- Concerns about white markings on the Highways not lasting very long. Cllr Young replied that Highways are aware of the issue and it will get fixed in the near future.
- Concerns about the junction in Catherines drive with vehicles driving the wrong way down the road. Highways responded that they will look at the site to consider signage. Cllr Chatterley has been in touch with Highways about this issue. It was asked that residents contact the Town Council or Ward Member to deal with future issues.
- Concerns were raised about the new Health Hub siting due to the distance of travel to get there and the associated traffic issues with the area. Parking queries were also raised along with the perceived lack of need for the hub. This will be addressed later in the meeting under the Hub Item, along with the two points below. It was reported that there will be a public engagement event on the hub where comments can be registered along with the formal planning process.
- Further concerns were raised on behalf of NHS colleagues about the need for the Health Hub with reportedly only 1 GP surgery signed up to the hub.
- Parking issues were raised about vehicles that maybe using the hub using the neighbouring estates for parking. This could also compound the lack of open space in the neighbouring estates.

CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 SEPTEMBER 2020

The Minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting.

HIGH STREET HERITAGE ACTION ZONE

David Ashlee from Dunstable Town Council, presented an update.

Members noted the content of the presentation which will be made available with the minutes. It detailed the use of the £1.14m grant achieved from Historic England and other funding to make extensive improvements to the area.

Members discussed the following points:

- Members asked about the co-operation of the shop owners who will benefit from the grant money allocated to them. It was clarified that the owners will have to enter into

a contractual arrangement with the Town Council to get the buildings back into productive use. If the owners are not interested in the scheme nothing can be enforced unless the building is unsafe. It is hoped that the scheme is incentive enough that co-operation will be given.

- In answer to a question about the quality of work carried out, it was noted that all the work done on this project will be overseen by Historic England which will require all building and planning regulations will be adhered to as required.

HIGH STREET REGENERATION WORKS – PHASE 2 UPDATE

Councillor N Young from Central Bedfordshire Council, presented an update:

Members noted the content of the presentation which will be made available with the minutes. It detailed the next phase of works and improvements to take place along the High Street including new crossings, cycle lanes, traffic lights and planting. The presentation also noted the flood prevention measures proposed to mitigate previous flooding issues.

Members discussed the following points:

- Concerns around proposed changes to the crossing on Church Street (to remove signalled crossing), Cllr Young responded that there would be a safety audit before any decisions are made.
- Bus lanes and cycle lane positions were discussed and clarified as shown in the presentation. Final designs are yet to be made but the scheme is very focused on pedestrian and cycle safety.
- Clarification over the colour contrast proposed for the High Street were given.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES GRANT & COMMUNITY COUNCILLOR GRANTS

Sarah Hughes from Central Bedfordshire Council, circulated an update on the grant within the Agenda. Members noted the content of the report and Sarah gave the following Highlights:

- Two new schemes are up and running with 30 applications for ward councillor grants.
- There are now three opportunities for organisations to apply for funding for various reasons (depending on criteria). The Committee encouraged groups to apply.

COURT DRIVE – HOUSING AND HEALTH HUB UPDATE

Members noted the content of the presentation which will be made available with the minutes. Nick Costin from Central Bedfordshire Strategic Housing gave a presentation on new housing and housing need within Dunstable. Two schemes, Court Drive and Vernon place were discussed.

Court Drive is intended to be 100 apartments for older people and a health hub with a third of the site being retained as open space with landscaping. There is due to be public engagement 28 February, before the application goes to planning.

Vernon Place is intended to be 40-44, 1 bedroom apartments over 4 storeys, allocated to people who do not own or use a car, and are local residents who are currently in unaffordable private rented accommodation. Up to 10 apartments could be available for residents with low level disabilities.

Patricia Coker from Central Bedfordshire Council Social Care, Health and Housing gave a verbal presentation on the health hub. It was reported that the hub will help local people access some hospital and GP services.

It was reported that with the growing population and housing growth in the area, the ambition of the hub is to provide health care services that can support the already oversubscribed GP practices and hospital services to give residents better access to a wider range of services. This will potentially be a community building including a café as well as Health facility.

It was reported that issues around parking and transport to the hub will be assessed by designers and will be part of the planning process. The outcome of this will be shared at the public consultation in February.

Members discussed the following points:

- It was reported that there is high air pollution in the area causing concern that the proposals may cause an increase in this. This should be taken to the public and planning consultation.
- It was reported that two GP practices have signed up to move to the hub.

REPORTS FROM COOPTED OUTSIDE BODIES

Members noted reports from Ann Sparrow on updates on activities of Dunstable in Bloom.

Members noted a report from Hugh Garrod on the Priory celebrating 800 years.

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL – UPDATE ON SERVICES

Members noted the report from Dunstable Town Council.

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL – UPDATE ON SERVICES

Members noted the report from Central Bedfordshire Council.

- It was asked that the Housing part of the report should be made more robust in future as there are significant schemes within Dunstable to be updated on.

WORK PROGRAMME

Members proposed the below items for the work programme:

High Street Regeneration Update
Public Space Protection Orders
Pub Watch report
Project Eleanor Update
HIF & Dunstable Master Plan Update
Development Company/Magistrates Court Update
CBC Economic Insight
Dunstable Parking (Study, Strategy & Enforcement)

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members noted the date of the next meeting as 12 MARCH 2020.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 21.20

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

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

ON MONDAY 6 JANUARY 2020

Present: Councillors Sid Abbott (Town Mayor), Liz Jones (Deputy Town Mayor), Gloria Martin (Chairman), Gladys Sanders (Vice-Chairman), Wendy Bater, Lisa Bird, Gregory George, Pamela Ghent and John Gurney and Peter Hollick

In Attendance: David Ashlee (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), James Slack (Head of Community Services), Kelley Hallam (Business Support Manager), Sandy Coyle (Community and Young People's Services Manager) and Sharon Long (Democratic Services Manager)

Apologies: Councillors Cameron Restall and Lee Roberts

Public: Two

1 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 4 November 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no specific declarations of interest.

3 EVENTS AND MARKETING

The Head of Community Services presented an update report on the 2019/2020 events programme and also updated members on the usage of the Council's website and social media. It was noted that Facebook and Talk of the Town are the Council's most successful marketing routes.

Members also received the results from the events survey. It was noted that 99% of residents were satisfied or very satisfied with the Town Council's events programme.

Councillor Jones recorded her thanks to staff for the organisation of the Christmas Carols and Torchlight Procession event. She noted that the market stalls and shops had benefitted from the event given the numbers of people it has attracted.

It was noted that in future the events survey would be conducted in relation to each individual event rather than all events. This should mean an increase in the number of participants in the survey.

4 GROVE CORNER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Community and Young People's Services Manager reported on recent attendance figures and activities at Grove Corner and reported on recent community engagement activities.

The Committee were informed that Sorted had given three months' notice to quit. More will be reported on this at the next meeting but there is no financial implication.

A new group organised by Mind- BLMK "Minds Matter" will be starting on 13 January for 17 to 25-year olds, and a further group for hoarders is also planned.

5 OLDER PEOPLE'S DAY CARE SERVICES

The Community and Young People's Services Manager reported on attendances, activities and outings for the Good Companions Club and the Creasey Park Community Football Centre over 55s Lunch Club.

Councillors discussed the popularity of the Good Companions Club and over 55s lunch club took place, and the benefits of these sessions to the community were noted by them. Councillors questioned officers if there was any opportunity for further over 55s lunch club sessions to be accommodated either at Creasey Park or at other venues. The Community and Young People's Services Manager explained that whilst officers were keen to try and put on other over 55s lunch club sessions, regrettably at the present time Creasey Park does not have the availability to be able to accommodate another group. Further, whilst officers have tried to find another suitable venue, they had not been successful in doing so. This was though a matter under regular review.

Those that attended the trip to the pantomime at Grove Theatre on 19 December enjoyed it.

The second Rock and a Roll event is being planned for 11 February 2020.

6 PRIORY HOUSE

The Head of Community Services presented a report on recent operations and activities at Priory House, including trading account figures and Priory House maintenance.

There are six confirmed bookings for weddings in the Jacobean Room and several provisional bookings.

The Torchlight event saw an increase in trade in the Tea Rooms, which remained open to serve hot and cold beverages and festive cakes, and in the shop where there were good sales on glow products.

Councillor Jones commented that the staff all did a fantastic job over the busy Christmas period and that the event was very well attended and received by the community.

7 DUNSTABLE TOWN CENTRE SERVICES

The Head of Community Services updated the Committee on Town Centre Services including Ashton Square Toilets and the themed and craft market trader figures.

There were 25 shops entered for the Christmas Window Competition.

The Christmas Magic event organised by the Town Centre Services Officer and the events team had been very popular and traders had reported a positive two days.

The Dunstable Joint Committee Shop Front Improvement Scheme had been extended and

has received 12 applications, of these, five had completed the works to their shop fronts.

8 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

South Bedfordshire Dial-a-Ride:
No report

Dunstable Town Band:
No report

9 BUDGET PROPOSALS

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive presented the Budget Proposals for 2020/21. He explained that this had not changed significantly since the draft Budget had been presented to Members and that the slight increase to the Community Services budget could still be accommodated within the anticipated one per cent increase in council tax the Council would be requesting in the 2020/21 Precept request.

Councillor Gurney suggested that it might help the public understand what was involved in putting on community events if an article explaining the steps, time and costs that went into to organising an event appeared in Talk of the Town.

Councillor Abbott said he would like to see the return of the Beer Festival. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive indicated he was willing to revisit this if a different model was available as experience to date indicated that an event run on the model the Council had previously used was not financially sustainable.

RECOMMENDATION: the Committee recommend the draft Community Services budget as presented with no amendments or further recommendations, to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: that, in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting.

10 REVIEW OF YOUNG PEOPLES SERVICES

Following a full discussion on the proposals to partially restructure the Community and Young People's Services team the following was approved:

RESOLVED: that all proposals as detailed in the covering report to the Community Services Committee be recommended to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

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 13 JANUARY 2020

Present: Councillors Sid Abbott (Town Mayor), Liz Jones (Deputy Town Mayor & Chairman), Lisa Bird (Vice-Chairman), Matthew Brennan, Mark Cant, Philip Crawley, Greg George, Pamela Ghent, Kenson Gurney, Gladys Sanders and Johnson Tamara

In Attendance: Councillor Peter Hollick, David Ashlee (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), John Crawley (Head of Grounds and Environmental Services), Mary Dobbs (Cemetery Manager), Sharon Long (Democratic Services Manager) Ian Swinnerton (Grounds Operations Manager) and Lisa Vincent (Sports and Leisure Facilities Manager),

Public: None

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

2 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings of Grounds and Environmental Services Committee held on 11 November 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no specific declarations of interest.

4 PLANS-SUB COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meetings of Plans Sub-Committee held on 12 November and 3 December 2019 be received.

**5 CREASEY PARK COMMUNITY FOOTBALL CENTRE AND SPLASH PARK
UPDATE**

The Sports and Leisure Facilities Manager presented a detailed progress report on recent operations at the Centre, including pitch and function hire and marketing and trading account figures.

The availability of coffee grounds for use for gardening was to be advertised in *Talk of the Town* and was proving popular, particularly with allotment holders. Councillor Abbott asked if other Council venues were handing out coffee grounds and the Sports and Leisure Facilities Manager confirmed the Centre was being used as an initial trial

venue. If the scheme proved successful it would be rolled out across more of the Council's venues.

Staff had recently redecorated the centre and a new sound system had been installed enabling users to use their own playlists rather than having to hire DJs. Councillor Cant asked about the implications in relation to performance rights and the Sports and Leisure Facilities Manager confirmed the Centre held an appropriate licence.

6 CEMETERY, ALLOTMENTS, RECREATION GROUNDS, TOWN CENTRE GARDENS AND RANGER SERVICE INFORMATION AND UPDATE REPORT

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

a) Dunstable Cemetery

Members received the burial figures for November to December 2019 along with the profiled income and expenditure figures as at the end of November 2019. These indicated a positive variance of £7,205. The Cemetery Manager indicated that January burials were expected to deliver over £20,000 of income.

b) Allotments

Members received the detail of the waiting list in a new and improved format.

c) Recreation Grounds

Since the last report it had become evident that installation of the York stone play stack, which was to replace the fire damaged Geo Boulder at Bennett's Adventure Play, was impractical due to its weight. Accordingly, an order for a new climbing tower had been placed and was to be installed week commencing 3 February. The fire damaged boulder had no residual value and has had to be scrapped.

The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services is investigating the provision of insurance cover on larger items of the Council's play equipment.

The trial of the use of the second hand G26 ride-on mower had been successful.

d) Town Centre Area

The annual bedding plant displays had been modified to reflect the theme of Dunstable in Bloom's 2020 campaign, 'Pollinating Insects and Wildflowers' and the plants had been ordered.

e) Dunstable in Bloom

Dunstable is to represent the Anglia region in the 2020 Britain in Bloom finals and Members were reassured that the works to extend the car park at Grove House will be completed prior to judging. Members questioned whether the High Street Improvement plans would impact upon the Britain in Bloom or Anglia in Bloom judging and were advised that these works were not likely to commence until after judging had taken place.

f) Town Ranger Service

The Ashton Square toilets are now fully operational.

7 PRIORY GARDENS CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT STATEMENT

The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services explained that as Members had decided to seek Green Heritage status for Priory Gardens, it was necessary to put in place a Conservation Management Statement. A draft of the proposed Conservation Management Statement was made available as an appendix to the report.

Councillor Hollick had provided the Head of Grounds and Environmental Services with some additional detail for inclusion in the statement and also suggested that the equipment and allocated reserves the Council intends to use to deliver its conservation management objectives should be included in the Statement to demonstrate the Council has the resources to achieve them.

RESOLVED: that the draft Conservation Management Statement be adopted, subject to the amendments suggested by Councillor Hollick.

8 RESERVE SPENDING PROPOSAL

The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services presented a report detailing various spending proposals to be funded from a number of allocated reserves including the Vehicle and Equipment Reserve, the Cemetery Building Reserve, the Fencing Reserve and Parks and Open Space Reserve.

The proposals included the acquisition of an electric van and a second hand G26 ride-on mower, repair and maintenance works to the cemetery building, fencing, footpath repairs and new park benches. They amounted, in total, to £95,425. The Chief Executive and Town Clerk confirmed that the proposed works and equipment purchases would be fully funded by the identified reserves, and there were sufficient other reserves to ensure the Council's finances were healthy enough to proceed with the spending proposals.

Members were pleased to note the acquisition of an electric vehicle and agreed that the reuse of the second-hand G26 ride-on mower was a more environmentally sustainable option than acquisition of a new vehicle.

RESOLVED: that the Committee recommends to Finance and General Purposes Committee the release of up to £95,425 of earmarked reserves as outlined in the appendix to the report.

9 PARKS AND GREENSPACE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services presented a detailed report that requested approval for the creation of a Parks and Green Space Development Officer post.

Councillor Ghent noted that the Head of Grounds and Environmental Services currently carried out a number of the tasks that the post was anticipated to cover. The Chief Executive and Town Clerk explained that the transfer of the tasks would

free the Head of Grounds and Environmental Services up to pursue opportunities for grant funding and related matters that were currently being missed as he did not have sufficient time and resource to do so. He also explained that the draft Corporate Plan for 2020 to 2023 contained aspirations that fell under the new post.

Councillor Abbott noted that the post included a requirement to promote the use of the parks to the public that clearly fitted with the government's *healthy living* agenda.

Councillor Gurney asked about the Council's policy on charging for use of park and green spaces. The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services explained that the charge was £10 per hour for those running such activities as a business. Each case was taken on its merits. Users were required to demonstrate that they hold appropriate public liability insurance and provide a risk assessment to the Council.

RESOLVED: that the Committee recommends to the Finance and General Purposes Committee the creation of the new post of Parks and Green Space Development Officer as detailed in the report and further recommends the revenue budget allocation contained within the draft revenue budget paper.

10 BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2020/21

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive presented the Budget Proposals for 2020/21. He explained that this had not changed significantly since the draft Budget had been presented to Members before Christmas and that the Grounds and Environmental Services budget could still be accommodated within the anticipated one per cent increase in council tax the Council would be requesting in the 2020/21 Precept request.

RECOMMENDATION: the Committee recommend the draft Grounds and Environmental Services budget as presented, with no amendments or further recommendations, to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

11 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

CBC Development Management Committee:
Members had no updates to give.

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

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

ON MONDAY 20 JANUARY 2020

Present: Councillor Sid Abbott (Town Mayor), Liz Jones (Deputy Town Mayor), Peter Hollick (Chairman), Philip Crawley (Vice-Chairman), Wendy Bater, Gloria Martin, Cameron Restall, Lee Roberts and Johnson Tamara

In Attendance: David Ashlee (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), Lucy Salim (Head of Finance and Support Services), Lisa Scheder (Finance & Procurement Manager) and Sharon Long (Democratic Services Manager)

Apologies for Absence: Matthew Brennan, John Gurney, Kenson Gurney

Public Attendance: None

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 18 November 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no specific declarations of interest.

3. REFERENCE FROM COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive introduced the report regarding the partial restructuring of the Community and Young Persons Services Team. Councillor Martin commented that current staff were aware of the proposals and had had an opportunity to comment on them. Aside from the Manager of the function, who had taken the decision to retire, no staff were to lose their jobs.

RESOLVED: that the partial restructuring of the Community and Young Persons Services Team be approved.

4. BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2020/21

The Head of Finance and Support Services presented the report detailing the Council's Budget proposals for 2020/21.

The Chairman confirmed that the tax base had increased as the number of houses in the area had. He also confirmed that the Council had a clear idea about its income liabilities. The only uncertainty was around the staff pay award, which had yet to be determined.

The licence of Creasey Park from Central Bedfordshire Council was discussed. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive indicated he had attempted to talk with the relevant officer at Central Bedfordshire Council about renewal of the lease, which is due to expire in 2022, but it was not yet on their horizon.

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive confirmed that he anticipated that the external contracts that terminated in 2020 would be renewed.

The Head of Finance and Support Services indicated that the budget allowed for the offices at Grove House to be vacant until September 2020.

The loans from the Public Works Loan Board were discussed. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive confirmed that investigation had shown that early repayment of the loans was unlikely to be in the Council's best interest.

A query regarding the water bill for Grove House arose. The Finance & Procurement Manager indicated that there had previously been a high estimated usage and that the account was currently in credit.

RECOMMENDED: i) that the proposed budget for 2020/21 be presented to Council for approval (as enclosed);

ii) that the Town Clerk and Chief Executive be authorised to incur the various items of expenditure detailed in the budget, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations;

iii) that the revised scale of fees and charges, set out in the report, be approved with effect from 1st April 2020 or the start of the 2020/21 winter playing season, as appropriate; and

iv) that, in consequence of the foregoing recommendations, the Town Council issue a precept upon Central Bedfordshire Council in the sum of £2,369,323, resulting in a Dunstable Town Council Tax (Band D) at the rate of £181.11 per annum.

5. DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2020 TO 2023

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive introduced the report and explained that the stated objectives are those that arose in two workshops previously held.

The issue of whether the Council should commit to being carbon neutral, and the timeframe for achieving this, was discussed at length. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive indicated that a new working party was soon to be established to look at the issue in more detail, and that this would be the subject of a report to the next Finance & General Purposes Committee in March. Councillor Abbott expressed the view that the objective should be sought to be achieved sooner than the ten years provided for in the draft Corporate Plan.

RECOMMENDED : that the draft Corporate Plan be recommended to Council for approval at the full Council meeting on 3 February.

6. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

The Head of Finance and Support Services presented the financial monitoring report. She noted the underspend currently is nearly as reported at £32,771 but there will be more clarity on the figure as year end approaches. Councillor Martin asked if it was possible for the deep dive to take place immediately before the Finance & General Purposes Committee meetings. The Head of Finance and Support Services indicated this could be

looked at for the next financial year but due to the manner in which month-end closes and the timings of the availability of previous month's actuals and the period it takes for managers to work on their forecasts it would most likely not be possible to report sooner.

It was noted that the internal auditor had come in last week and was very happy with his findings and issued no recommendations in the second interim report.

7. UPDATED FLEXIBLE WORKING REPORT

The Head of Finance and Support Services presented the report detailing the proposed update to the Council's Flexible Working Policy. She explained that the update was to ensure the Council's existing policy was in line with current guidance and working practice.

Councillor Jones stated she was pleased to see the policy being reviewed as flexible working brought many benefits to the individual and employer if properly managed. Councillor Crawley commented on its benefits for staff retention.

Councillor Martin raised the issue about the need to ensure telephones are answered. The Head of Finance and Support Services indicated that all the Council's landlines could be diverted to mobile phones, and those that needed a work mobile phone had been issued with one. She also explained that eligibility for home working was dependent on the role being undertaken.

RESOLVED: that the updated Flexible Working Policy and Procedure and updated Flexible Working Application Form be adopted.

8. REFERENCE FROM GROUNDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Members considered the report and approved the two recommendations made from Grounds and Environmental Services Committee on 13 January 2020.

RESOLVED: i) that Members release up to £95,425 of earmarked reserves as outlined in the appendix to the report to the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee; and

ii) that Members approve the creation of the new post of Parks and Green Space Development Officer as detailed in the report to the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee and further recommends the revenue budget allocation contained within the draft revenue budget papers.

9. ARRANGEMENTS FOR ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING 2020

Members considered the report, discussed a possible topic and agreed that a presentation was not necessary unless there was a significant public presence.

RESOLVED: that that a presentation was not necessary unless there was a significant public presence, in which case the Town Clerk & Chief Executive should present the Council's new Corporate Plan, assuming it is adopted at the full Council meeting on 3 February 2020.

10. REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

- a) CAB Management Committee – Councillor Bater had nothing to report. It was noted that the CAB sign was still on display at Grove House and needed to be removed.
- b) DITA – Councillor Hollick reported that a meeting was due to take place on 22 January. DITA are arranging an event for the summer to mark 50 years of twinning under the auspices of DITA and would be publishing a brochure to mark the event.
- c) Hospice at Home Management Committee – Councillor Jones indicated there was nothing to report by way of update at present.
- d) Ashton Almshouses Charity – Councillor Hollick reported that there had been no meetings recently.

