

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

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

HELD ON MONDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 2021

Present: Councillors Gloria Martin (Town Mayor), Liz Jones (Deputy Town Mayor), Lisa Bird (Chairman), Philip Crawley, Greg George (Vice-Chairman), Matt Brennan, Pam Ghent, and Kenson Gurney.

Apologies: None

In Attendance: Councillors Peter Hollick, John Gurney (remotely) and Gladys Sanders (remotely), David Ashlee (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), John Crawley (Head of Grounds and Environmental Services), Mary Dobbs (Cemetery Manager, remotely), Ian Reed (Democratic Services Manager), James Slack (Sports and Leisure Facilities Manager, remotely) and Katherine Doyle (Parks and Green Space Development Officer, remotely).

Public: None

133. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee held on 14 June 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

134. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no specific declarations of interest.

135. PLANS-SUB COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meetings of Plans Sub-Committee held on 22 June, 13 July, 3 and 24 August 2021 be received.

**136. CREASEY PARK COMMUNITY FOOTBALL CENTRE AND BENNETT'S SPLASH
PARK UPDATE REPORT**

The Committee considered a report that covered the performance of the Creasey Park Community Football Centre and Bennett's Splash Park. It was reported that the football season was extended to the end of June. As a result, both ATPs were in regular use and the additional ATP income was £34,000 compared with the same time in 2020.

A pay and play scheme during the summer offered the hire of ATP1 for £2.00 a day (10am – 4pm). The scheme had brought in income of £1,000. The football season was underway, and income was improving with most sessions on ATP1 and 2 booked.

Creasey Park now possessed International Hockey Accreditation for ATP2.

Dunstable Town FC had set up a walking football club. The group was recently visited by the Member of Parliament, the Deputy Town Mayor, and the Chairman of this Committee.

Now that football operations have fully resumed and functions were being booked, it is anticipated that income levels will soon get back to pre-Covid levels. A successful football festival and pre-season friendlies have also helped this situation.

Operationally, Creasey Park had struggled with Covid related staff absences. The outside canopy had been installed and was being used well. The Dunstable Road Runners Group was using the Centre as its base for weekly sessions. Function bookings were increasing with 14 bookings made up to Christmas.

In relation to Bennett's Splash and the Splashside Café, it had re-opened on 21 June with Covid restrictions in place. However, it had faced operational issues including mechanical breakdowns and sewage / drainage issues as well as staff shortages. During a discussion on operational issues Members commented on the need for better signing to local car parks.

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

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

a) Dunstable Cemetery

Members noted that 310 burials have taken place in the lawn section of the cemetery extension since February 2016.

Action - the Cemetery Manager and other staff members be thanked for their high levels of service to the community during the Covid – 19 restrictions.

b) Allotments

Members were advised that the waiting list was growing significantly; there were 333 people on the waiting list; 208 were residents and 125 non-residents. It was noted that non-residents would only be allocated plots once resident demand for plots had been addressed.

RESOLVED - that the waiting list be temporarily closed to non-residents and Officers be asked to write to existing non-residents on the list to advise that it might be many years before they could be offered a plot and to ascertain if they wished to remain on the list. Officers were also asked to promote the 'Lend and Tend' website to those on the waiting list.

c) Recreation Grounds

Since the last report, there had been no acts of vandalism to play equipment. A general discussion took place on budgeting for maintaining play areas in the future

Action - the Head of Grounds and Environmental Services be asked to circulate his report, previously presented to this Committee, on play area improvements.

d) Town Centre Area

The floral displays throughout the town had been commented on as they improved the look of the town. It was noted that the Council was now maintaining town centre flowerbeds and large planters installed during Phase1 of the High Street improvement works.

e) Dunstable in Bloom

It was reported that the Parks and Green Spaces Development Officer had worked with Dunstable in Bloom and other partners to submit entries to the Britain in Bloom and Anglia in Bloom virtual campaigns. The results of both competitions would be announced by the end of September. The Committee was informed that Dunstable in Bloom was meeting monthly and had worked on projects with support from the Council including free floral baskets and containers for High Street shops and neighbourhood centres. In Bloomers had continued dead heading floral displays.

f) Town Ranger Service

The Rangers had twice recently removed extensive graffiti from a brick wall at Newton Recreation Ground. The Rangers continued to provide a reactive and responsive service across the town.

138. MULTI USE GAMES AREA (MUGA) FEASIBILITY STUDY

Members received a report detailing the results of a desktop feasibility study on site suitability for the installation of a multi-use games area (MUGA) on Council owned land. The report included a detailed feasibility study and maps showing available space at recreation grounds.

RESOLVED: that the Committee agrees to set up a Working Group comprising Councillors Lisa Bird, Phil Crawley, Greg George, Kenson Gurney and Liz Jones to undertake site visits and report back on possible option sites and information on the type of MUGA to be installed with estimated installation costs.

139. RESERVE SPENDING REPORT – DUNSTABLE CEMETERY

Members received a report detailing essential repair works required at the cemetery office and chapel.

RESOLVED: that the Committee recommends to the Finance and General Purposes Committee the release of up to £58,342 from the General Reserve to undertake all of the works identified and instructs the Head of Grounds and Environmental Services to obtain competitive tenders for the masonry, stonework and footpath repairs identified in the report, in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations.

140. UPDATE ON TREE PLANTING AND ASSOCIATED GRANT FUNDING APPLICATIONS

Members received a detailed report on progress made to date with plans for tree planting across the Council's estate and associated grant applications to help fund the project. Members noted with disappointment, that the bid to Trees for Cities had been unsuccessful but an increased bid to the CBC tree grant scheme will be made to help fund the shortfall.

141. REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

CBC Development Management Committee:
Members had no updates.

The meeting closed at 20.29