

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

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

ON MONDAY 17 JANUARY 2022

Present: Councillors Gloria Martin (Town Mayor), Liz Jones (Deputy Town Mayor), Lisa Bird (Chairman), Matthew Brennan, Alan Corkhill, Philip Crawley Pamela Ghent, Gladys Sanders, and Johnson Tamara

In Attendance: David Ashlee (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), John Crawley (Head of Grounds and Environmental Services), Mary Dobbs (Cemetery Manager – via Teams), Ian Reed (Democratic Services Manager) Dimi Sopisz (Grounds Operations Manager – via Teams), Kathy Doyle, James Slack (Sports and Leisure Facilities Manager – via Teams), Kelley Hallam (Business Support Manager) and Jemma Candy (Corporate Marketing and Communications Officer).

Apologies: Councillors Greg George and Kenson Gurney

Public: None

13. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of Grounds and Environmental Services Committee held on 8 November 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

14. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no specific declarations of interest.

15. PLANS-SUB COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meetings of Plans Sub-Committee held on 16 November, 7 December 2021 and 4 January 2022 be received.

16. CREASEY PARK COMMUNITY FOOTBALL CENTRE AND SPLASH PARK UPDATE

The Sports and Leisure Facilities Manager presented the report that had been circulated to the Committee.

The Committee noted with interest that leading up to the Christmas break Luton Town Youth section hired Creasey Park for 3 days of fixtures. In addition, Creasey Park was likely to be a training centre for the Women's Euro 2022 Championships commencing in July 2022 and could host either Germany, Spain or Denmark.

It was further reported that income was up by 69% compared with the same time last year. Furthermore, a recent brewery tendering process had resulted in an improved deal with Greene King for a further four-years.

Members congratulated officers on the report and the exciting news that Creasey Park could host an international football team in the Summer.

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

The Chairman welcomed the new Grounds Operations Manager, Dimitrisz Sopisz, to his first Committee meeting. The Committee received 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 2021 along with the profiled income and expenditure figures as at the end of November 2021. These indicated a positive variance of £19,714.

b) **Allotments**

Members were advised of the impact the Committee's decision to close the waiting list to non-residents had had on the waiting list. Furthermore, the Council had informed non-residents of the potential opportunity to secure a plot at the new Houghton Regis site.

c) **Recreation Grounds**

Since the last report there had been one incident of vandalism to play equipment. It was reported general wear and tear repairs have been carried out as part of general maintenance work.

Discussion took place on various issues raised by Members relating to play area maintenance including the French's Avenue play area and the skate park. Site meetings would be arranged with Members where site maintenance concerns had been raised. The Committee also noted the reports on new woodland and tree planting. **In relation to the Luton Road bowling green, officers were asked to continue discussions with Dunstable Town Bowls Club on its possible relocation to Luton Road. It was noted that a detailed report on the proposal would be submitted to a future meeting. In addition, Members requested that the previous reports submitted to the Committee in September 2016 and January 2017 be circulated to all Members for information.**

d) **Town Centre Area**

The Committee noted a report embracing the designing of planting plans, winter works including grass edging abutting pathways and the submission of Green Flag applications for Priory and Grove House Gardens and Dunstable Cemetery.

e) **Dunstable in Bloom**

The Committee was informed that the Council had been contacted by Anglia in Bloom asking if Dunstable would represent the Anglia region in the Britain in Bloom finals 2022. The Council along with Dunstable in Bloom had been delighted to advise the organisers that they would be honoured to do so.

Members were very impressed with the completion of phase 1 of The Square Methodist Garden Project, the Committee was further advised about Phase 2 of the project and that the Council would assist the Church in applying for further CBC Ward Councillor grant funding.

f) **Town Ranger Service**

The Committee noted that over the next few months the Rangers would be cleaning litter bins and pressure washing pavements and other routine maintenance works. Members noted that the Ranger team was in the process of purchasing a new electric utility vehicle using funding from the CBC Public Realm Scheme grant.

18. **PURCHASE OF REPLACEMENT MOWING EQUIPMENT**

The Committee considered a report that recommended the replacement of the ageing ride on mower with a multi-cut mower attachment. It was noted the new equipment would be pulled and operated by the recently purchased tractor. It was further noted that the ride on mower was worth £3,250 as a trade-in against the cost of the Wessex CRX multi-cut mower. Members noted the balance of funding available from the Vehicle and Equipment Reserve currently at £34,874.

RESOLVED: That the Committee recommends to Finance and General Purposes Committee the release of up to £14,870 from the earmarked Vehicle and Equipment Reserve to purchase the equipment detailed in the report.

19. **BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2022/23**

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive presented the budget proposals for 2022/23. He explained that this had not changed significantly since the draft budget had been presented to Members and if the Grounds and Environmental Services budget, as presented in the report, was adopted, it could be accommodated within the anticipated proposed increase in council tax charge.

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

20. **REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

CBC Development Management Committee:
No report.

The meeting closed at 20.00