

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GROUNDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

ON MONDAY 14 MARCH 2022

Present: Councillors Gloria Martin (Town Mayor), Liz Jones (Deputy Town Mayor), Lisa Bird (Chairman), Alan Corkhill, Philip Crawley, Greg George, Pamela Ghent, Kenson Gurney and Gladys Sanders

In Attendance: Councillor Peter Hollick, John Crawley (Head of Grounds and Environmental Services), Ian Reed (Democratic Services Manager), Mary Dobbs (Cemetery Manager), Dimitrisz Sopsis (Grounds Operations Manager), James Slack (Sports and Leisure Facilities Manager – via Teams) and Jemma Candy (Corporate Marketing and Communications Officer).

Apologies: Councillor Matt Brennan

Public: None

50. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of Grounds and Environmental Services Committee held on 17 January 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

51. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no specific declarations of interest.

52. PLANS-SUB COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meetings of Plans Sub-Committee held on 25 January and 15 February 2022 be received.

53. CREASEY PARK COMMUNITY FOOTBALL CENTRE AND SPLASH PARK UPDATE

The Sports and Leisure Facilities Manager presented the report that had been circulated separately to the Committee. The Committee noted with interest that due to the very wet February, numerous games had been called off on the main pitch which resulted in a congested March. The February half term week had been very busy with holiday camps festivals and pay and play. The Committee noted that Creasey Park would not be a main training hub for the Women's Euro 2022 championships. However, Creasey Park had been selected as a training centre for the semi-final stages of the competition. The Committee also noted the average monthly attendance for AFC Dunstable and Dunstable Town FC. The Committee also noted the average monthly ATP player usage and total monthly usage in hours.

It was further noted that secondary spend continued to perform very well. February was particularly high due to the very busy school half term events. Creasey Park was

potentially forecasting a very healthy £30,502 year end surplus as reported. The recent high winds had not affected Creasey Park.

The contract talks with Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) had stalled because of CBCs proposals to impose financial implications which were not in the best interests of the Town Council. As a result, and in order to allow for negotiations to continue a one-year extension of the current contract had been proposed and was awaiting confirmation from CBC.

In relation to Bennett's Splash and Splash Side Café it was noted the operation would open on Bank Holiday Monday 2 May 2022 seven days a week until Sunday 11 September 2022. Meetings with the Splash Park contractors had been held to ensure the Splash Park operated with no issues at peak times. The Committee discussed the parking issues at Bennetts that were an issue in previous seasons. The Officer agreed to prepare media and signage that provided visitors with information on car parking and car parking enforcement. **It was agreed that the Committees' appreciation of the services at Creasey Park be passed on to officers and all the staff based at Creasey Park.**

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

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 January to February 2022 compared for the same period in 2021. It was noted that the lawn section of the cemetery extension had been used for 336 burials since February 2016. It was also noted that the Cemetery Chapel was now once again available for hire. The wooden fence at the entrance to the cemetery had been severely damaged in the recent storms and a temporary fence had been put in place until a new wooden fence was erected. The Committee further noted that DTC was likely to be working with other local burial authorities to discuss best practice and adopt a strategic approach to future burial provision. A new flora and fauna information lectern had been installed in the cemetery. Its installation was in line with actions contained within the Green Flag management plan for the site. As a result of the mild weather grass cutting operations were underway, the yew trees were being shaped and the spring floral displays looked impressive. The general view of Members and Officers was the cemetery was looking in very good condition.

b) Allotments

Members noted the waiting list. 118 non-residents had been removed from the waiting list leaving only 10 non-resident names on the list. **The Members wished to recognise and thank staff for the work involved in reducing the waiting list.** The Cemetery Manager also reported an arson incident and criminal damage that occurred that morning at Catchacre Allotments which affected three tenants.

c) Recreation Grounds

Since the last report there had been no reports of vandalism to play equipment. It was reported general wear and tear repairs had been carried out and the balancing beam had been replaced at Mentmore Recreation Ground. Further to discussions at the last Committee meeting about Frenchs Avenue play area officers and a ward councillor had undertaken a site visit. Following the visit, it had been agreed that the existing grass matting would be lifted again in a few places and re-laid as the weather improved. Following on from the receipt of requests for benches at Mentmore Recreation Ground the Committee was advised that it was likely a couple of benches would be installed towards the end of the current financial year. Hedge cutting had almost been completed and preparations were in hand for the 2022 grass cutting season.

d) New Woodland and Tree Planting

The Committee received a report on the successful planting of 20 trees at Mentmore Recreation Ground as part of the Queens Platinum Jubilee Green Canopy initiative. **The Mayor, Councillor Gloria Martin, wished to record her thanks to the officers and staff involved, for the way the event had been organised.**

e) Multiple Use Games Area (MUGA)

The Committee was advised that the working group had looked at two potential sites and it was the view of the group that the Luton Road Recreation Ground was the preferred site for a kickabout style MUGA adjacent to the existing play area. Further research, costings and funding opportunities would be ascertained so that a comprehensive report could be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

f) Town Ranger Service

The Committee noted that the Rangers were continuing with good works across the town and would soon be starting the periodic pressure washing of pavements as well as other routine maintenance works. It was further reported that the Rangers had now taken delivery of a new electric utility vehicle and would also be obtaining various battery-operated equipment secured from the CBC Public Realm Scheme grant. The Ashton Square toilets cleaned by the Ranger Service had been awarded Platinum standard in the National Loo of the Year Awards.

g) Priory and Grove House Gardens and the Town Centre

Bedding plants and floral displays had been ordered for summer 2022. Winter works had been completed in Priory and Grove House Gardens in preparation for the spring and future Green Flag and In Bloom judging.

h) Dunstable in Bloom

The Committee was informed that the Council had been selected to participate in the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Britain in Bloom Competition 2022 in the Large Town Category. The Town Council and Dunstable in Bloom were meeting regularly to plan the activities and the campaign. It was further noted that Dunstable would also compete in the Anglia in Bloom competition in 2022.

In recognition of the very busy summer being faced by everyone involved in the competitions Officers were invited to call upon Members if they needed assistance.

i) Elephant Sculpture Donation

Officers verbally updated the Committee on the elephant sculpture, Flame, donated by Councillor Alan Corkhill stating that it would be installed on a plinth in Grove House Gardens in the coming weeks and details would be included in the next information report to this Committee.

It was agreed that the Committees' appreciation of all the services listed in the report be passed on to officers and all the staff involved

55. REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

CBC Development Management Committee:

No report.

The meeting closed at 19.37