

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GROUNDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

ON MONDAY 16 JANUARY 2023 FROM 19:00

Present: Councillors Liz Jones (Town Mayor), Lisa Bird (Deputy Town Mayor and Chairman), Alan Corkill, Greg George (Vice-Chairman), Sid Abbott, Matt Brennan, Kenson Gurney, Pamela Ghent and Johnson Tamara.

In Attendance: Councillors John Gurney and Peter Hollick, Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), John Crawley (Head of Grounds and Environmental Services), Dimitrisz Sopisz (Grounds Operations Manager) and James Slack (Sports and Leisure Facilities Manager).

In Attendance: Kathy Doyle (Parks and Open Spaces Development Officer).
(Via Teams)

Apologies: Councillors Mark Cant, Cameron Restall and Gladys Sanders.

Public: One, via Teams.

24/23 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of Grounds and Environmental Services Committee held on 7 November 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

25/23 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no specific declarations of interest.

26/23 PLANS-SUB COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meetings of the Plans Sub-Committee held on 15 November and 6 December 2022 and 3 January 2023 be received.

27/23 CREASEY PARK COMMUNITY FOOTBALL CENTRE AND SPLASH PARK

Members noted the report and emphasised that officers should make the maximum effort to raise income from the Splashside Café and to explore hiring of the premises outside the summer season. The Sports and Leisure Facilities Manager updated Members that officers had prepared leaflets and other communications to promote additional use of the café in the following year. Members agreed not to seek an external contractor to operate the café at this time.

Members discussed the lack of effective shade at the Splash Park. In previous years the use of gazebos had only benefitted a small number of people. Officers are investigating strategic tree planting to create additional natural shade in future years.

Officers were asked to investigate costs and practical considerations for offering parasols or sails for installation or hire in the future.

28/23 CEMETERY, ALLOTMENTS, RECREATION GROUNDS, TOWN CENTRE GARDENS AND RANGER SERVICE

Members noted the report.

a) Recreation Grounds – play areas

Members noted their thanks for all the efforts to arrange works including play area resurfacing and fencing at Frenchs Avenue public open space.

b) Tree Planting at Mentmore Recreation Ground

The Chairman and Mayor had joined in with the planting and reflected how lovely it had been to see so many children and others involved on the day.

c) Dunstable in Bloom

Members were informed that the volunteering planting day at St Mary Gate is scheduled for 2 February and will be supported by members of the Baptist Church.

29/23 DUNSTABLE CEMETERY AND BENNETT'S GREEN FLAG MANAGEMENT PLANS

Members noted the report. The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services advised Members that the Cemetery Management Plan was a revised version of the plan that had previously led to a Green Flag, whereas the Bennetts Memorial Recreation Ground plan was the first version of a plan for that area and would enable the first application for a flag for Bennetts to be submitted.

RESOLVED (1) that the Council adopts the Cemetery Green Flag Management Plan and associated action plans detailed within this report in support of the application for Green Flag status in 2023.

(2) that the Council adopts the Bennetts Memorial Recreation Ground Green Flag Management Plan and associated action plans detailed within this report in support of the application for Green Flag status in 2023.

30/23 RENAMING LUTON RD AND BENNETTS MEMORIAL RECREATION GROUNDS

Luton Road Recreation Ground

Members noted that Dunstable residents most often refer to this area as Kingsbury Park rather than Luton Road. Several works are planned for the land in the near future which will enhance the Ground, including the installation of the new MUGA and play area.

Bennetts Memorial Recreation Ground

Members noted that the park was named for a previous Mayor who had donated the funds for the purchase of the land and that residents still associated the Ground with the name Bennetts Memorial Recreation Ground. Members were keen to retain the

title recreation ground as this better described the nature and use of the Ground. Members felt strongly that the name should not be changed.

RESOLVED (1) to rename Luton Rd Recreation Ground as Kingsbury Recreation Ground, but not to incur any immediate costs, and rather only make formal changes when works are due to be carried out.

(2) NOT to change the name of Bennett Memorial Recreation Ground to Bennett's Park.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive advised Members that the Corporate Plan would be updated to clarify that the name of Bennett Memorial Recreation Ground would not be changed.

31/23 CORPORATE PLAN UPDATE

Members noted the report. Councillor Jones noted that the completion of so much of the plan was a credit to the Council, and particularly to the Head of Grounds and Environmental Services and his team. Members reiterated their thanks for the team's work.

32/23 RESERVE SPENDING PROPOSALS

RESOLVED to recommend to the Finance and General Purposes Committee the release of up to £31,013 from the relevant earmarked reserve for the following purposes:

Articulated Dumper	£19,985
Typhon swing at Mentmore Rec. Ground	£10,048
Replacement gate at Newton Rec. Ground	£980
TOTAL	£31,013

33/23 2023/24 BUDGET PROPOSALS

Councillor Kenson Gurney thanked officers for their efforts in reducing the budget from the initial proposal. Councillor Tamara expressed concern about the proposed budget in difficult times for residents. Councillor Jones noted that the proposed budget was a lower percentage than many neighbouring councils.

RESOLVED i) that the Committee recommend the draft Grounds and Environmental Services 2023/24 budget and fees and charges, as well as the indicative budget for the following three years, as presented, with no amendments or recommendations to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

34/23 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

No update

35/23 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED In terms of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public and press in accordance with Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1961 S1.2 to allow discussion on establishment and contractual matters relating to the following item.

36/23 FUTURE USE OF LUTON ROAD BOWLING GREEN AND ASSOCIATED SPORTS PAVILION COMMUNITY FOOTBALL CENTRE

Members received a confidential report. The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services summarised the report. Members noted that the current pavilion roof needs attention and that any new development should have robust security measures in place.

Members requested a breakdown of costs just to refurbish the Council's current property, to enable Members to understand the difference between the proposal and the Council's minimum requirement to maintain its own asset.

Members expressed concern about the challenge of managing car parking and access when footballers are using the pitches.

RESOLVED: i) That the Council gives in principle approval to a second lease arrangement that incorporates an extension to the existing sports pavilion and a lease of part of the building to Dunstable Town Bowls Club as outlined in Option 2.

ii) That the Council authorise the Town Clerk and Chief Executive to negotiate a second lease arrangement with Dunstable Town Bowls Club.

Members requested that a further report be provided for the following meeting with additional information and deferred making a decision on the proposed funding allocation pending further discussions.

The meeting closed at 21:04