

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

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

ON MONDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2022

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

In Attendance: Councillors Sid Abbott, John Gurney and Peter Hollick, Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), John Crawley (Head of Grounds and Environmental Services), Ian Reed (Democratic Services Manager), Dimitrisz Sopisz (Grounds Operations Manager), James Slack (Sports and Leisure Facilities Manager), Mary Dobbs (Cemetery Manager) and Kathy Doyle (Parks and Open Spaces Development Officer).

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

Public: Three

181. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of Grounds and Environmental Services Committee held on 13 June 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

182. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no specific declarations of interest.

183. PLANS-SUB COMMITTEE

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the Committee notes that the meeting of the Sub-Committee set for 13 September was not held due to the death of HM The Queen
 2. That the Minutes of the meetings of Plans Sub-Committee held on 4 October and 25 October be received

184. CREASEY PARK COMMUNITY FOOTBALL CENTRE AND SPLASH PARK UPDATE

The Sports and Leisure Facilities Manager presented the report that had been circulated with the agenda.

The Splash Park was now closed for the season. Works were being undertaken to the sewage and waste system in preparation for the next season.

The Sports and Leisure Facilities Manager was thanked for his work. He was also requested to report to the next meeting of the Committee on further options for increasing income from the Splash Café.

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

The Chairman expressed her delight in reporting on the successes of the Town Council this Summer relating to retaining two Green Flag awards and receiving gold awards for Britain in Bloom and Anglia in Bloom. She noted that the successes recorded was a result of officers' ability to secure and develop partnership working with Dunstable in Bloom and many other groups and organisations. The contributions made by the Grounds Team were acknowledged.

The Committee received a detailed information report covering all areas of the Council's grounds maintenance responsibilities.

a) Dunstable Cemetery

The Committee was advised that 369 burials had taken place in the lawn section of the cemetery extension since February 2016. Grass cutting and grounds maintenance operations continued throughout the summer and into autumn. The floral displays had been well maintained with plenty of colour showing this year. The grounds team are currently preparing for the winter / spring displays. The Friends of Dunstable Cemetery met on a number of occasions to carry out light grounds activities. During the summer the Friends continued to meet every two weeks. The Friends also welcomed a number of new volunteers to the group. Several volunteers from the Church of The Latter-Day Saints met in September for a half day work activity in the Cemetery, to help clear overgrown graves and carry out general maintenance duties.

The stonework repairs to the chapel complex previously approved by this committee have been largely completed. Memorial safety works were ongoing.

b) Allotments

Members noted that there were 265 people on the waiting list. It was noted that fencing works at the Catchacre site and the extended section of fencing at Meadway were completed.

c) Recreation Grounds – play areas

Since the last report there had been no reported incidents of vandalism to play equipment. Following the site meeting with CBC Councillors at Frenchs Avenue public open space to discuss the use of CBC Estate Regeneration funding quotations had been received for safety surfacing and fence repairs. CBC Ward Councillors had received recommendations on the appointment of contractors. A decision was awaited.

d) Sports pitches and General Grounds Maintenance

The Committee was advised that the final mowing of longer grass areas had almost been completed following the trial on differential mowing regimes.

e) Tree Planting at Mentmore Recreation Ground

The Committee received an update including securing funding through CBC for the creation of a 'tiny forest' promoted by Earthwatch. The planting of trees will be undertaken before Christmas.

Hedge row planting along the eastern boundary of the site using Woodland Trust funding was being planned for January 2023. In relation to woodland planting and following advice from the Woodland Trust and other specialists it was now planned to create a number of small copse areas and also to plant box trees that were a specialist Chiltern species.

f) Town Ranger Services

The Committee noted with satisfaction that the service was celebrating ten years of service to the town. It was agreed that Officers would look at adding information to the Council's website to celebrate the 10 years and it was noted that a social media post had already been made.

g) Priory and Grove House Gardens and the Town Centre

Bedding plants and floral displays had now been removed across the town. The winter/spring bedding planting would soon be installed. It was noted that the Council was moving towards more permanent drought tolerant, open pollinating and colourful planting at some locations.

h) Dunstable in Bloom

The Committee noted the achievement of the Town collecting a Gold Award at the Britain in Bloom UK Finals as well as winning the Best Large Town in the UK category. For the Anglia in Bloom competition Dunstable was awarded a Gold medal overall and received recognition in eleven other judging categories.

The Committee noted with satisfaction that a Civic Reception would be held this month to celebrate these achievements and thank all those that participated.

It was agreed that the Committees' appreciation be passed on to all the staff involved in these achievements.

186. LUTON ROAD MULTIPLE GAMES AREA (MUGA) KICK ABOUT AREA AND PLAYGROUND

The Committee received a report on progress with the installation of a MUGA kick about area and the refurbishment of the play area at Luton Road Recreation Ground.

Members supported a suggestion to include local children in the consultation process once the designs for the MUGA and refurbishment of the play area had been obtained.

A member asked about the CCTV coverage in the area. The Committee was advised that there was no coverage at Luton Road but that Members might like to consider this for inclusion in a future Corporate Plan.

RESOLVED (1) that Councillors Bird, Crawley George, K Gurney and Jones be appointed to the Member/Officer Panel and the Panel be authorised to determine the most suitable design and tender.

(2) that the Head of Grounds and Environmental Services be authorised to let a contract in accordance with the decision of the Panel

(3) that the Finance and General Purposes Committee be recommended to release £80,000 from the monies received from the sale of land at Meadway to part fund this project

187. BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2023/24

The Committee noted the budget proposal would be also considered at the meeting of the Committee in January. It was noted that officers had already undertaken during the Community Services Committee to provide a separate report regarding the current ear-marked reserves and any possible savings for the coming year with the next round of committee papers.

188. REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

No reports

189. 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;

- i. Creasey Park Community Football Centre(CPCFC).-Future
- ii. Current and Future Cemetery Provision

190. UPDATE ON DISCUSSIONS REGARDING THE FUTURE OF CREASEY PARK COMMUNITY FOOTBALL CENTRE (CPCFC)

The Committee received a report from the Town Clerk and Chief Executive on the extended negotiations on the future management of (CPCFC)

RESOLVED: that Central Bedfordshire Council be asked to consider extending the current contract by twelve months to allow the Town Council to further review options.

191. CURRENT AND FUTURE CEMETERY PROVISION

The Committee received a report which updated Members on the remaining capacity for burial within Dunstable Cemetery and progress to date with finding new burial space.

RESOLVED: (1) that the Council continues to accept non-resident burials during the financial year 2023/24 and allows the new Council in 2023 to review the situation taking account progress and timescales for securing new burial land.

(2) that the Finance and General Purposes Committee be recommended to create a Cemetery Development Reserve utilising £75,000 from the sale of land at Meadway.

The meeting closed at 21.00