

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

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

**HELD AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GROVE HOUSE, HIGH STREET NORTH,
DUNSTABLE**

ON MONDAY 10 JUNE 2024 FROM 7 pm

Present: Councillors Louise O’Riordan (Town Mayor), Sally Kimondo (Deputy Town Mayor), Richard Attwell (Chair), Phillip Crawley (Vice-Chair), Matthew Brennan, Matthew Neall, Kenson Gurney and Mark Davis

In Attendance: Councillors Liz Jones and Peter Hollick with Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), John Crawley (Head of Grounds and Environmental Services), Dimitrisz Sopisz (Grounds Operations Manager), James Slack (Corporate Performance & Compliance Manager), Lauren Swinnerton (Splash Manager), Mary Dobbs (Cemetery Manager), Katherine Doyle (Parks and Green Space Development Officer) and Georgia Pearson (Democratic Services Manager)

Apologies: Councillor Trevor Adams

Public: 2

119/24 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Richard Attwell declared an interest in item 12 of the agenda as the Council’s representative on Men in Sheds.

120/24 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of Grounds and Environmental Services Committee held on 11 March 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

121/24 PLANS-SUB COMMITTEE

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive updated members regarding the Vernon Place planning application; this application will be reviewed at the Development Management Committee of Central Bedfordshire Council on 26 June 2024. Dunstable Town Council will be having an additional meeting of the Plans-Sub Committee to discuss this application.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meetings of the Plans Sub-Committee held on 4 March 2024, 26 March 2024, 15 April 2024, 7 May 2024 and 28 May 2024 be approved.

122/24 ACTION TRACKER

Members received and noted the updates on actions from previous meetings.

123/24 BENNETTS SPLASH PARK

The Splash Manager summarised the report provided to members.

The Splash Manager has been in contact with Central Bedfordshire Council's parking enforcement team to ensure plans are in place to work together to respond to pressures regarding parking around the area through the season.

Councillor Hollick suggested selling items from the Priory House shop within the Splash Park as well as advertising each service within both locations. The Splash Manager will explore this.

ACTION: Splash Manager

Councillor Attwell mentioned the signage in the Splash Park's car park. The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services undertook to investigate the quality and visibility of this signage to ensure it is clear for users.

ACTION: Head of Grounds and Environmental Services

124/24 GROUNDS – INFORMATION REPORT

Members received the report circulated.

Cemetery

The Cemetery Manager summarised the report.

The Council were advertising for a full time Cemetery Assistant, with the closing date for applications to be on Monday 17 June 2024.

Allotments

The Cemetery Manager summarised the report.

A request was made to investigate the upkeep of grass at the entrance of Maidenbower Allotments due to overgrowth along the access.

ACTION: Grounds Operations Manager,

The tone of the first warning letter to tenant holders of allotments was raised. The Cemetery Manager offered to review this.

ACTION: Cemetery Manager

The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services mentioned to members that there will be a new tenancy agreement in January 2025 which will include a clearer explanation of the cultivation requirements.

Recreation Grounds – Play Areas

The Grounds Operations Manager summarised the report.

Sports Pitches and General Grounds Maintenance

The Grounds Operations Manager updated members on the key parts of the report. Members discussed the non-mown areas of the Council's recreation grounds and gardens. Members requested that Officers review the communications issued about the Council's approach to see whether any additional information could be provided.

ACTION: Grounds Operation Manager

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

The Grounds Operations Manager summarised the report noting that all works were now completed.

Town Rangers

The Grounds Operations Manager summarised the report.

Green Space Projects

The Parks and Green Space Development Officer summarised the report.

125/24 BIODIVERSITY POLICY

The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services summarised the report to members and highlighted the key points.

Councillor Brennan asked whether the policy could include a preference for using native species, and whether the Council's Procurement Policy can be extended to mention that any procurement contracts must adhere to this biodiversity policy.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive advised members that the proposed policy includes a reference to Neighbourhood Planning already.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: to adopt the proposed Biodiversity Policy and the action plan provided with the amendments discussed.

126/24 SPENDING PROPOSALS

The Grounds Operations Manager summarised the report.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: To recommend to the Finance and General Purposes Committee the release of £214,337 from the following reserves:

- Vehicle and Equipment Reserve
£ 92,337
- Developers Contributions Reserve
£ 11,723
- Open Spaces Improvement Plan Reserve
£ 10,277
- Grounds Depot Extension Reserve
£100,000

Total
£214,337.

127/24 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

CBC Development Committee – Cllr Nicholas Kotarski

Nothing to report.

128/24 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: in terms of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, the following item will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment and contractual matters and therefore, pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

129/24 LEASE OF MEADWAY STORE

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: to approve the draft lease terms for the lease and to authorise the Town Clerk and Chief Executive to finalise the lease in accordance with the recommendations made.

130/24 PERGOLA AND KNEE RAIL PROJECT

Members raised concern over the possible use of the knee rail by skateboarders and requested that officers investigate the possibility of amending the design to take account of this risk.

ACTION: Head of Grounds and Environmental Services to consult with designer for a suitable solution.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: to approve the pergola and knee rail designs and to recommend to the Finance and General Purposes Committee the release of monies from the Open Spaces Improvement Plan reserve for the pergola and knee rail.

The meeting closed at 9:39 pm