

**REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE AMENITIES COMMITTEE OF BUNTINGFORD TOWN COUNCIL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, MANOR HOUSE, BUNTINGFORD ON 1ST DECEMBER 2022 AT
7.00PM.**

Membership: Councillors B. Lemay (Committee Chairman), M. Furness (Deputy Committee Chairman), G. Waite S. Bull, D. Wallace (Town Mayor) and Mrs P. Furness (Deputy Town Mayor).

Present: Councillors B. Lemay, M. Furness, G. Waite, D. Wallace & Mrs P. Furness.

Officers in attendance J. Jones (Town Clerk) & A. Georgiou (Admin Officer)

275. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies from Councillor S. Bull, apologies approved.

276. TO RECEIVE MEMBERS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

No declarations.

277. TO RECEIVE A REPORT AND UPDATE FROM THE CHAIRMAN.

The Chairman stated that he may have to take an important phone call during the meeting and apologies in advance.

Updates will be covered under agenda items.

278. TO APPROVE AS A TRUE RECORD AND AUTHORISE THE CHAIRMAN TO SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AMENITIES COMMITTEE HELD ON 3RD NOVEMBER 2022

Following a proposal, second and a unanimous vote it was

RESOLVED

That the minutes are a true record and the Chairman was authorised to sign them.

279. NORFOLK ROAD - TO DISCUSS ISSUES RELATING TO PAVILION, SKATE RAMPS AND ALL OTHER ISSUES RELATING TO NORFOLK ROAD PLAYING FIELD.

Nothing to report.

280. SWCC - TO DISCUSS ISSUES RELATING TO THE SETH WARD COMMUNITY CENTRE GROUNDS, PITCHES AND PLAYGROUNDS.

It was reported that the pitches were fertilised today.

Councillors had been to investigate the footpath between the car park and the field. It was reported that roots from a tree on Town Council land are growing underneath the path and is causing it to bulge.

It was suggested that the tree, or at least the root, may need to come out.

The Chairman agreed to contact contractors to investigate options.

It was reported that Council have now approved a celebration event for the coronation of King Charles III to take place on 7th May 2023 at the Seth Ward Community Centre. Dates for pitch maintenance were discussed. The Clerk agreed to contact AT Bone to discuss options for pitch maintenance in 2023.

281. HARE STREET ROAD PLAYING FIELD - TO DISCUSS ISSUES RELATING TO FIELD, PLAYGROUND AND WILDLIFE AREA INCLUDING UPDATE ON PLAYGROUND REFURBISHMENT.

It was reported that the playground upgrade is progressing well. It has also been kept relatively tidy considering the weather.

It was asked if the Council are going to fence the opening that was created as an access point for the playground upgrade. It was reported that the Council have already told residents that the opening will be fenced off once the contractors leave.

It was suggested that the Council purchase 4 panels of Heras fencing, and that this should not cost more than £150 and will be useful to have in the future.

Following a proposal, second and a unanimous vote it was

RESOLVED

That this Council purchase 4 panels of Heras fencing.

282. LAYSTON COURT GARDENS - TO DISCUSS AND CONSIDER ANY MATTERS RELATING TO LAYSTON COURT GARDENS.

It was reported that Buntingford Live (previously Summer Arts) have issued an article in the Buntingford Journal which implies that they have permission to use Layston Gardens for a festival in 2024, similar to that of the 2022 Summer Arts Festival. It was stated that this would be subject to another request and approval from the standing council at the time. It was also suggested that any request should go to Full Council, not just the Amenities committee.

There was concerns that a bigger event would mean more people and therefore a greater risk of damage to the gardens.

It was also noted that the licence has a maximum capacity of 499.

The Clerk agreed to contact Buntingford Live to remind them that the use of the gardens is not granted, and this would need to be approved by the council following a formal request.

It was reported that the Queen Elizabeth II commemorative trees are due to be planted in the gardens next week. Councillor Lemay agreed to meet with the gardener to finalise the tree position prior to the contractor's arrival.

It was suggested that the contractors are asked to look at the fir tree in the Manor House car park to establish if the lower branches can be lifted. The dead tree should be removed and the protective cage used on one of the new trees in the gardens.

It was asked if the Mayor intends to have photos taken with the commemorative tree to mark the event. It was agreed this will be done and put on the Councils website and social media.

283. BOVIS AMENITY LAND - TO DISCUSS ISSUES RELATING TO ALL AREAS OF THE AMENITY LAND.

The Council have received a letter from a resident in Nut Slip Road who is concerned that the footpath behind his house is not safe due to a damaged railing and a steep bank. It was noted that the footpath, although the responsibility of Rights of Way, is on Town Council land.

It was suggested that members of the Environment Agency and Rights of Way should have a meeting to look at what can be done.

Discussion took place to look at potential ways to prevent future erosion, however it was stated that the priority is to make Rights of Way aware that the footpath is not safe and encourage them to rectify immediate issues.

The Clerk agreed to contact Rights of Way.

284. LAYSTON CEMETERY - TO DISCUSS ISSUES REGARDING LAYSTON CEMETERY.

It was reported that the River works contractors are now off site and their equipment has been removed from the cemetery.

It was reported that one cremated remains plot has a number of butterfly decorations on which are not in line with Council policy. There was concerns that this could lead to further plots having unsuitable decorations.

285. UPDATE ON PROGRESS OF TREE SURVEYS (QUOTES FOR SURVEY AND QUOTES FOR REQUIRED WORK

The Council have received a quote of just over £7,000 to complete all the tree work highlighted in recent tree surveys of 4 areas in the town.

The Clerk is currently seeking a further quote for one area so that the quotes can be compared.

It was suggested that time is of the essence and the Council should approved £7,500 for all the work required. This can then be discussed between the Chairman and the Clerk once quotes are received.

Following a proposal, second and a unanimous vote it was

RESOLVED

That this Council approved £7,500 (ex VAT) to undertake all the tree work as highlighted in the 2022 surveys of four Council owned areas. The decision to be delegated to the Clerk following discussion with the Chairman of the Amenities Committee.

286. SECOND CONSIDERATION OF 2023/2024 BUDGET.

No Changed.

It was noted that the tax base has not been received. The budget should be finalised in Jan 2023.

287. TO HIGHLIGHT ANY ISSUES OF CONCERN AROUND THE TOWN.

It was reported that the new bin has been installed in the High Street, however it was noted that there are very few bins in the northern end of the town.

The Clerk agreed to contact East Herts and ask if there was any possibility to have more bins installed.

It was also reported that there is a damaged rail on the Chapel End footpath. The Clerk stated that she had already reported this some time ago and there were questions over responsibility but agreed to report this again to Rights of Way.

288. TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM MEMBERS OF THE RIVER RIB RESTORATION GROUP.

It was reported that the first phase of work is now complete.

Planting will be done in the Spring. This will be done by volunteers.

It was reported that multiple bird boxes have been installed along the river.

It was suggested that an update should be uploaded onto the Council website to make people aware that planting will be done.

289. TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE S106 OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES WORKING PARTY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE WORKING PARTY.

The Council are still awaiting a decision on the planning application for the proposed pump track.

It was reported that the funding for the playground upgrade has been approved.

It was reported that Freman have applied for planning permission for the proposed 3G pitch.

The S106 group have had multiple meeting with representatives from Freman regarding a service level agreement (SLA). A draft SLA has been received and certain amendments have now been made. It was noted that the pricing structure is competitive for the area, however the football clubs would like it cheaper.

It was noted that the Town Council will have a representative on the Football Management Committee.

It was noted that the SLA will need to be approved by the planning department at East Herts.

290. TO INVITE MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE MEETING.

None present.

Councillors were happy with how well the Christmas market and Lights of Love event went, however there were worries that at one point a small crush occurred in the High Street.

Meeting closed 20:35

Next scheduled meeting of the Amenities Committee Thursday 5th January 2023 7.00pm.