

**REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE AMENITIES COMMITTEE OF BUNTINGFORD TOWN COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, MANOR HOUSE, BUNTINGFORD ON 2<sup>ND</sup> FEBRUARY 2023 AT  
7:00 PM.**

**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, D. Wallace, G. Waite, S. Bull, Mrs P. Furness & M. Furness.

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

**Also Present:** 2 members of the public.

**375. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

No apologies.

**376. TO RECEIVE MEMBERS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

No declarations.

**377. TO RECEIVE A REPORT AND UPDATE FROM THE CHAIRMAN.**

The Chairman stated that he will not be standing for election in May. The Chairman explained that he joined the Council with a main concern of the environment of the town, and now that the River Rib project is well underway he feels that his job is done, this is one of the reasons for the Chairman's decision to not stand for election, the other being poor health.

Thanks were given to Councillor Lemay for his input to the Council.

**378. TO APPROVE AS A TRUE RECORD AND AUTHORISE THE CHAIRMAN TO SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AMENITIES COMMITTEE HELD ON 5<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2023**

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.**

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

It was stated that it was lovely to see children enjoying the newly installed interactive football wall.

The Council have received 2 quotes to fix a broken bench in the playing fields, one quote was £150 to replace missing slats, and the second quote was £238 to replace the missing slats and to sand and treat the wood. It was suggested that the job should be done in full.

Following a proposal, second and a unanimous vote it was

**RESOLVED**

**That this Council accept the quote of £238 from CGS to replace the missing slats and sand and treat the wood on the damaged bench in Norfolk Road Playing Field.**

It was reported that the contractors to install the pump track will be on site from Monday 6<sup>th</sup> February. It was suggested and agreed that the Clerk should send letters or emails to the houses opposite the site.

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

It was reported that the football pitches are extremely muddy at the moment. There was a question as to whether the football should have gone ahead over the weekend.

It was suggested that S106 funding could be used to resolve the drainage issue on the playing fields. It was agreed that a solution should be looked at during the next pitch maintenance programme.

The Council has received a quote of £565 to cut down and grind out the stump of the cherry tree that's roots are lifting the path. It was noted that once this tree is removed the portacabin will become much more visible. It was also noted that this quote did not include removing the root that is causing the

problem, this will need to be done by another contractor as well as re-laying the path. It was suggested that the work needs to be done as the path will continue to lift, and become more of a trip hazard.

Following a proposal, second and a vote of 5 in favour and 1 abstention it was

**RESOLVED**

**That this Council accept a quote of £565 to remove and grind out the stump of the cherry tree and a further quote is sought to remove the root and re-lay the path.**

**381. HARE STREET ROAD PLAYING FIELD - TO DISCUSS ISSUES RELATING TO FIELD, PLAYGROUND AND WILDLIFE AREA.**

The required tree work has been undertaken by Oakleaf.

There was a recent meeting with Proludic to look at the new play area. It was stated that the grass is beginning to come back, another meeting will be scheduled in March to see if any areas needs to be reinstated.

It was mentioned that some time ago the Council accepted a quote to install a liner in the pond within the wildlife area. The work has not been done as it was stated that if there is no water in the pond the lining will crack. Potential ways to fill up the pond were discussed. It was suggested that the Fire Brigade is contacted to see if they can fill it when they empty their tanks.

It was reported that £350 worth of emergency tree work was completed by Oakleaf. The Clerk and Chairman agreed the quote as the works were considered an emergency.

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

It was reported that Council had received a letter from Buntingford Live stating that the festival will not go ahead in 2024. The two reasons stated in the letter was the perceived little appetite from Council to allow the use of Layston Gardens and also the lack of volunteers and committee members for Buntingford Live.

It was stated that the Council never had concerns with the festival itself and all concerns were over the venue. It was also stated that there is no guarantee that current members will be members after the May elections, it was suggested that Buntingford Live should request use of the gardens from the new committee following the elections.

The paving slabs will be laid for the installation of the new bench prior to its arrival on Monday.

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

It was reported that there are 2 trees low down that are leaning across the river. Councillor Lemay agreed to investigate this.

**384. LAYSTON CEMETERY - TO DISCUSS ISSUES REGARDING LAYSTON CEMETERY.**

It was reported that Highways have resurfaced some of the Causeway but have missed some areas and will be coming back to complete the work.

Following the last meeting Councillor Bull contacted Rev Kirsty Wainwright to inform her that the pedestrian gates in the Churchyard need some attention. It is believed that the church may come to the Council for a grant to repair the gates in the near future.

There is no update on the dead trees that need to be replaced. Councillor Waite agreed to chase this up with ATB.

It was reported that the bulbs that were recently planted are beginning to look very nice. It was also suggested that the Gardeners club could plant their spare daffodil bulbs in the grounds of the

cemetery.

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

It was reported that Blue Tree Company will be coming to undertake work at the Seth Ward Community Centre and Norfolk Road Playing Fields at the end of February.

The work on the Monks Walk cherry trees and Hare Street Road Playing fields were recently undertaken by Oakleaf.

The oak tree and cherry tree have now been planted in Layston Court Gardens.

It was stated that tree surveys should be done every 3 years to ensure that the trees are safe. This will also allow the Council to undertake cheaper maintenance work rather than expensive emergency work.

**386. TO DISCUSS FUTURE LOCATION OF THE ANNUAL FUNFAIR.**

It was stated that irrespective of the new pump track the fair has outgrown the current site. Possible locations were discussed, it was believed there was not enough room around the cricket boundary at Norfolk Road Playing Field. There are access issues at Hare Street Road Playing Field, this area is also surrounded by housing on 3 sides. The only other option for the Council is the Seth Ward Community Centre (SWCC) playing fields.

It was asked if residents close to the SWCC playing fields should be consulted, and what would the Council do if there was huge opposition to this location.

It was suggested that if the fair use the SWCC then it means the fair can increase in size. It was believed that the SWCC lends itself to community events and has held other successful events in the past. It was also stated that if the fair comes in June, the ground will be hard and there will be no football fixtures.

It was suggested that the fair is contacted to make sure they would be happy to use the SWCC grounds.

It was again asked what the Council would do if there were complaints from residents.

It was suggested that there would be complaints regardless of where the fair is placed, however it is a fantastic event for the youth of the town and only once per year.

It was agreed that the Council will organise a meeting with the fair to discuss the SWCC as a possible location. If the fair are happy with the location a letter will be drafted to residents explaining that all available sites have been looked at.

**387. TO HIGHLIGHT ANY ISSUES OF CONCERN AROUND THE TOWN INCLUDING REPAIRS TO THE CAGE.**

A revised quote had been received for £1150 + VAT.

It was suggested that the work is needed and if not done soon then the cage will deteriorate even further.

Following a proposal, second and a unanimous vote it was

**RESOLVED**

**That this Council accept a quote of £1150 to repair the cage.**

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

There was a recent meeting with the steering group, provisional dates have been set to begin planting. This should be 26<sup>th</sup> / 27<sup>th</sup> April.

Reach 3 from the London Rd Bridge to the Weir has a bank that is slowly falling into the river. Sarah Perry is coming on 28<sup>th</sup> March to walk reach 3. There is also concern that some areas of the bank behind Rib Way are also falling into the river.

It was noted that the Environmental Agency did not give permission to undertake any work to the river in reach 3, however tree work can still be done. The group do not have funding for this, however it is hopeful that Sarah Perry can source this.

It has been agreed that when the contractor is on site to attend to a tree on the river bank opposite Pigs Nose, the brush will be chipped along with a pile that was left in the gardens by the contractor when undertaking previous work.

It was suggested that Nicholas Maddox is asked to come out and look at the banks on Chapel End / behind Rib Way. It was agreed that the group will take advice from Sarah Perry first.

Reach 4 (Luyes Rise - Aspenden Bridge) has already received permission for berms. Permission from land owners is needed before work can go ahead. Sarah Perry will draft appropriate wording and the Town Council will be writing to land owners.

It was reported that samples had been taken from the river downstream of the sewage treatment plant. It was stated that it is difficult to do anything with the results as much of the legislation is in place to protect the water companies. It was noted that Thames Water do have to report what they discharge to the Environment Agency. It was also noted that in 2025 there will be new legislation regarding phosphate levels that water companies will have to adhere to.

It was noted that Thames Water are currently putting in a new filtration system.

It was suggested that the recent work on the river has made a difference.

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

The S106 group have not met for some time due to the ongoing planning application for the pump track. The application for the 3g pitch at Freman has been submitted. Freman could not submit it themselves, the Council had to do it on their behalf.

**390. TO INVITE MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE MEETING.**

A question was raised regarding the situation at the medical centre.

It was explained that the issue regarding the lease was raised at a previous meeting, in response the Council wrote to the medical centre asking for an update. The Council and the medical centre had previously looked at potential new sites together, however it was explained that unfortunately it is not a Council issue, but the whole council are concerned with it. It was also explained that land was offered to the doctors as part of the Redrow development, but the doctors declined.

It was asked if Sir Oliver Heald was aware of the situation. It was stated that he is aware of the issues.

A question was asked regarding the waste disposal site in Buntingford. It was stated that the County Council could not afford a new site in Buntingford and it is not looking likely that the town will get a new site.

Meeting closed 20:45

Next scheduled meeting of the Amenities Committee Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023 7.00pm.