



BURGESS HILL TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the **PROPERTY COMMITTEE**
held in the Council Chamber
on **MONDAY, 11 FEBRUARY 2008**

Present: Chris Thomas-Atkin - Chairman

Mrs Kathy Dumbovic
Denis Jones*
Mrs Pru Moore*
Mrs Heather Ross
Ian Simpson*
Julian Thorpe*

Also present: Mrs Suzanne Cosgrave, Simon Hicks, Mrs Jacqui Landriani and
Ronnie Paulsen.

Judy Pointing and Jo Whitcombe.

* Denotes non-attendance

(19.32)

1. **OPEN FORUM**

No members of the public were present..

2. **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE PROPERTY COMMITTEE FOR THE ENSUING YEAR**

Nominations were invited for the office of Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year and it was

RESOLVED that:

Julian Thorpe be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Property Committee for 2007/08.

3. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Dennis Jones, Mrs Pru Moore, Ian Simpson and Julian Thorpe.

4. **SUBSTITUTES**

Simon Hicks substituted for Dennis Jones. Mrs Suzanne Cosgrave substituted for Mrs Pru Moore. Ronnie Paulsen substituted for Ian Simpson. Mrs Jacqui Landriani substituted for Julian Thorpe.

5. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Mrs Kathy Dumbovic declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 10 as the Council's representative on the Cyprus Hall Community Association. Mrs Jacqui Landriani declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 13 as the owner of a triple depth burial plot.

6. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Property Committee held on Monday 12 February 2007, having been previously circulated were **AGREED** and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

7. **SIDNEY WEST COMMUNITY AND LEISURE BUILDING**

The Committee received a progress report on the Sports and Community Centre as set out in Agenda Item 7 dated 11 February 2008.

The Chairman informed Members that the Community Centre was owned by Mid Sussex District Council and leased to the Town Council on a 125 year lease. He thanked Councillors and the Management Team for their hard work to date.

Judy Pointing confirmed that Mid Sussex District Council permitted the sale of alcohol at some functions held at District Council owned venues. Members queried whether the licence related to the building or the Cricket Club and it was confirmed that it was to be for the Cricket Club. Members would support any application from the Cricket Club and noted that it was a way of the Club raising funds.

The Committee discussed the 21.00 hours closure and queried whether the Cricket Club would be applying for a late closure licence. It was noted that the Club were approaching the Cricket League for permission to start fixtures earlier to avoid overrunning. If this was not forthcoming the Club could apply for an extension just for themselves and it was felt that light would naturally stop play at a reasonable hour anyway.

Members then enquired about the progression of the management plan and Judy Pointing confirmed that the Town Council was working towards setting

up the Community Trust with solicitors which would be formed initially by Councillors. The Community Centre was due to be completed at the end of April. Members requested sight of the management plan as soon as possible.

RESOLVED that:

- A) a licence personal to the Cricket Club for the sale of alcohol be supported; and,
- B) the management plan be provided to Members as soon as possible.

8. **COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTRE – 38 CHURCH ROAD**

Members received a report summarising the current operation at the Community Resource Centre (“CRC”) at the Town Council’s former offices at 38 Church Road, as set out in Agenda Item 8 dated 11 February 2008.

Details of the lease, rent and charges paid by the Town Council and the rental income received from the tenants were provided in the Agenda for Members information. It was noted that the tenants were:

- Mid Sussex (South) Council for Voluntary Service (CVS)
- Volunteer Information Point (VIP)
- Help at Home Plus
- Mid Sussex YMCA (which rents 2 offices)

The current tenants at 38 Church Road were organisation who worked with Burgess Hill residents who were most in need. The activities of the organisations and their client groups were summarised for Members’ information together with the benefit to the organisations, such as being able to share information and facilities and personal safety. In addition, the CVS liaised with the management agency, Clifford Dann, and other tenants regarding building-related issues as well as co-ordinating fire risk assessments saving the Town Council a considerable amount of management time.

Members noted that the “added value” to the local area contributed by the organisations based at the CRC was considerable. An analysis (based on 2003/04 data) was appended to the Agenda for Members information which illustrated the additional income they generated and the value of the time contributed by volunteers. It amounted to a value of £411,727 to the local area.

Members requested that the Appendix be updated and provided to a future meeting of the Property Committee to reconsider.

RESOLVED that:

- A) the contents of this report be noted; and,
- B) the Appendix be updated and provided to a future meeting of the Property Committee to reconsider.

9. **BATCHELORS FARM**

The Committee received a progress report on recent improvements undertaken at Batchelors Farm. It was noted that during 2007 additional earth was transported to site to carry on with the filling in of the old pond. The aim was to return the site to its natural condition as the previous owner had created a “fishing pond” which continually leaked and caused regular safety problems. An excavator was hired to take away 75% of the bulrushes as they had become very invasive but this had exposed some new steep sides that would have to be re-graded this year. It was noted that trees had been donated by the Sussex Black Poplar Group and the Mid Sussex Tree Group which had all been planted on site. In addition, The Monday Group had been commissioned to make and erect a replacement bridge for the south side of the site over the stream, working in partnership with the Mobile Maintenance Team who assisted.

Jo Whitcombe informed the Committee that today further work to the bridge had been undertaken and remedial work to a second bridge was required to repair holes that had appeared as a result of the recent weather. In addition, the area where the bulrushes had been removed needed re-grading.

It was queried whether any further trees were required as under the “Trees 4 Shade” scheme grants were available for Tree Wardens to apply for new trees which could be sited on any Council owned site or street.. It was suggested that suggestions for appropriate sites could be an item in a future Councillors Briefing Note.

The Monday Group were thanked for their efforts. In addition, it was felt that John Card should be nominated for Mid Sussex District Council’s Garden Party.

RESOLVED that:

- A) the contents of this report be noted; and,
- B) the Monday Group be thanked for their hard work.

10. **CYPRUS HALL**

Members received a report advising them that the Cyprus Hall Community Association, who lease the hall from the Town Council, was planning a major refurbishment of the kitchen. It was noted that the refurbishment was necessary as the current kitchen was a domestic kitchen in a commercial environment and was ten years old. Details of the refurbishment were

summarised together with the quotation process. It was noted that the Association had employed Sandra Lamont as a fund raiser as applying for lottery funding was too time consuming and they were not optimistic that they would be successful. Sandra was applying to many different organisations for small amounts of funding rather than a big amount from one body. Once the Association had a clearer picture of the financial situation they would be formally applying to the Council for landlord's consent and a grant.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Cyprus Hall Community Association would be held on 19 February and to date the project was progressing smoothly.

Members queried whether the Town Council was liable for costs and also the division of labour between the Town Council and the Association.

RESOLVED that:

- A) the contents of this report be noted; and,
- B) a report on the division of labour/costs between the Town Council and the Association be provided to the next meeting of the Property Committee.

11. **SITE UPDATES**

Members received a position statement on current projects/initiatives.

Folders Lane Play Area

The play area had experienced a quiet spell with no reports of anti-social behaviour or criminal damage. The latest scheduled play equipment inspection undertaken by Zurich came back with recommendations for remedial repairs which were in the process of being undertaken and new signage would be placed at the Singleton Way entrance. After the 2007 Traveller incursion onto the site, new security gates had been erected at the south entrance. There had been several complaints about the lack of new play equipment on the site; this was in abeyance until the future of the adjacent site had been decided. Members requested an update on the situation.

West Park Reserve

KPS Contractors had undertaken litter picks, grass cuts and an annual hedge cut. The Mobile Maintenance Team carried out weekly visual audits and then undertook any work required. At present they were cutting back brambles adjacent to properties in Denham Road. As per the Management Plan the Team was currently putting together a project checklist to dig a pond in the south west part of the old allotment site with full community liaison and possible local school involvement. The Committee suggested that Hope 2008 be contacted as a possible organization to be involved in this project.

Allotments

Owing to the long waiting lists there was a procedure in place to ensure that tenants worked their plots consistently or their tenancy agreement would be terminated. The waiting lists were detailed for Members' information. During 2007 a replacement fence was erected on the Leylands Site and a new tap was installed at the Chanctonbury allotment site.

Jo Whitcombe summarised the procedure for Members' information and it was noted the procedure was carried out over a 6 week timescale to avoid any unnecessary upset. Members then requested details of the allotments charges.

Members queried whether there was any land available for further plots and it was noted that there was not. The Core Strategy consultation was underway and it was suggested that additional land was an obvious use for the community fund and the Town Council should be stipulating allotment land in the development of Burgess Hill proposals. It was also queried whether plots could be allocated for special needs groups and raised beds considered for wheelchair users.

RESOLVED that:

- A) the contents of this report be noted;
- B) an update on the future of the Folders Lane Play Area be provided to the next meeting of the Property Committee;
- C) Hope 2008 be contacted as a possible organization to be involved in the creation of a pond at West Park Reserve; and,
- D) details of the allotment charges be provided to the Property Committee.

12. **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

In view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it was proposed that, in the public interest, the public and press be temporarily excluded and they were requested to withdraw from the meeting.

RESOLVED that:

the public and press be requested to withdraw from the meeting.

14. Meeting terminated at 20.19 hours.