

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
LEISURE FACILITIES & OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE  
HELD ON MONDAY 11<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2010  
IN THE PARISH CENTRE, LOCKLEYS DRIVE WELWYN  
COMMENCING AT 7.30 PM**

**PRESENT:** Chairman, Cllr. L. McLusky and Councillors M Benson, J Blackburn,  
S Butler, I Colpitts and H Ober.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** A S Pack (Acting Parish Clerk)

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors B McKay

**2010/001** **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.** There were no Declarations of Interest.

**2010/002** **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2009**

**RESOLVED** "that the Minutes of the Leisure Facilities and Open Spaces Committee meeting held on the 9<sup>TH</sup> November 2009 be approved and signed"

**Unanimously Agreed**

**2010/003** **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF 9<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2009**

**2009/109** **Christmas lighting.** Although several compliments had been received from members of the public regarding the new Christmas lighting in the village centre, Councillors considered that the overall appearance was not pleasing, looking haphazard; better creative positioning and more thoughtful hanging of lights should be in evidence next year. The Acting Clerk to discuss this matter with the contractor who supplied and erected the lighting.

St Mary's Church congratulated the Council on the superbly decorated Christmas tree which the Council had positioned in the church grounds.

**2010/004** **CEMETERY**

Weal Architects have been instructed to produce working drawings, a specification and advice on appropriate building design in order to obtain competitive quotations, for a total cost of £ 900 plus VAT. Report of progress to be made at the next meeting.

**2010/005** **SECURITY ISSUES**

**1. Pavilion.**

**Steps on the car park side of the Pavilion.**

A grant to cover the cost of removing the steps and the low wall at the side of the Pavilion and to install a sloping roof to the electricity box for a total cost of £ 1,200 is being sought from the Police Authority.

**Signage**

Two free standing signs have been ordered to position at the entrance to Ottway Walk and on the green area in front of the Whitehill Centre and are to be installed shortly

**2010/006** **CIVIC CENTRE**

**1. Meeting with Grant Shapps MP.** A meeting with Grant Shapps took place on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> January in the Parish Office, to obtain his support with the Council's bid to acquire ownership of the Civic Centre. Councillors explained

*Leisure Facilities & Open Spaces Committee meeting 11<sup>th</sup> January 2010*

that Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (WHBC) charge Welwyn Parish Council £ 30,000 per annum rent for the Civic Centre and then pay this amount back to residents via Special Expenses through the Council Tax levied on residents. Grant was very surprised at this arrangement and advised he would look into this procedure. Councillor Skidmore to provide literature explaining this process. Following discussion a further meeting has been arranged to take place on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2010. The Acting Clerk to invite the five WHBC Councillors who represent the Welwyn Parish to attend the meeting also.

2. **Roof Repairs.** WHBC permission to repair the roof leaks of the Civic Centre using a felt overlay system has been sought. A response is still awaited.
3. **Flooding in the boiler room.** Investigations into the flooding of the boiler room concluded that the pipework was very badly blocked. A tanker had to be brought on site to remove 1 ton of silt from the pipework. The pipe work leads to two soak-a-ways which are also clogged up with silt. A report to be made at the next meeting.

#### **2010/007 WELWYN ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION (WAA)**

1. **WAA Annual General Meeting (AGM).** Councillors Blackburn, Butler, McLusky, Benson and Mr Butler to attend the WAA AGM being held on Friday the 26<sup>th</sup> February commencing at 8pm which will be followed by light refreshments
2. **Allotment Inspection.** Notes of the Inspection which took place on the 15<sup>th</sup> November 2009 were circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 2. The pipework being undertaken by Hertfordshire Highways, partly on the Allotment site, will be completed when the one-way system is removed in the High Street and Church Street, as to complete the work, Lockleys Drive will need to be closed. Compensation has been sought from Hertfordshire Highways for damage caused to two allotment plots.

#### **2010/008 NOTICE BOARD AT OAKLANDS**

Quotations are being sought to replace the Oaklands Notice board with a larger board to enable use by the Council and the Community.

#### **2010/009 WELWYN BOWLING CLUB RENT REVIEW**

A review of the Welwyn Bowling Club rent is being undertaken and will be reported at the next meeting.

#### **2010/010 ST MARY'S CHURCH WALL**

Albion Building Surveyors has met several members of St Mary's church in order to obtain permission to repair/re-build the church wall which in some cases is very near old grave stones. However the church representative has advised it could take three months to obtain the necessary permissions. In the interim the Surveyor has requested that improvements are made to the safety barrier/warning in front of the wall adjacent to the Public House which is in a precarious state. The church representatives to investigate this matter.

The Structural Engineer's report was circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 3. The report recommends 80 metres of new walling and special piled foundations. In order to design the foundations the engineer wants a subsoil investigation to be undertaken. This involves three boreholes being drilled in the churchyard and then the bearing capacity of the soil can be determined. The Church representative wants detailed

information on the depth of the foundations and this is only possible if the soil investigation is carried out. This work has been completed, report awaited.

The Church representative wants the absolute minimum of mechanical plant used on the work which could mean the project has to be completed using hand digging which will be costly. The Church representative also wants the walls replicated so the existing bricks and copings are to be re-cycled wherever practicable.

As several residents of St Mary's Close will be affected, a letter explaining the proposed works is to be delivered to all houses abutting the wall.

Minutes of a meeting with representatives from the Church were circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 4

Councillors considered that St Mary's Church representatives were being unreasonable requesting the minimum of mechanical plant. When the church built the new church hall they used mechanical plant which was also near graves. Following discussion it was agreed that Councillors Blackburn and McLusky would be involved in future meetings. Councillors congratulated the Acting Clerk for progressing this project.

#### **2010/011 REVIEW OF CEMETERY CHARGES**

Existing charges detailed below:-

Burial	Grant of Right	£ 225
Garden of Remembrance	Grant of Right	£ 165
Headstone and /or Inscription fee		£ 65
Burial of Ashes	Existing Grave	£ 85
Burial of Ashes	Garden of Remembrance	£ 55
Preparation of Opening of Grave		£ 240 (standard coffins only)

The Acting Clerk to ascertain charges made by other Council's providing the same service for discussion at the next meeting.

#### **2010/012 REVIEW OF TENNIS CLUB AGREEMENT.**

A copy of the Tennis Club Agreement was circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 6. The Tennis Club to be requested to provide details to include financial information re the letting of the Parish Council owned courts to the general public as specified in the agreement.

#### **2010/013 DIGSWELL PLAYING FIELDS**

A report of a meeting held with WHBC and Finesse Leisure Partnership (FLP) was circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 7.

Following the meeting Councillors McLusky and Neville met the Contracts Manager, of FLP on site to inspect the Digswell Playing fields to include the children's play area. It was concluded that the Children's play equipment is sited in the wrong place, in a hollow which is also very shaded, the area is covered in moss and inclined to be muddy. Families would need to cross the field to reach the area also, which in inclement weather is very difficult. The Contract Manager advised that the football pitch had not been laid correctly; however, the Council noted that the pitch was used for football regularly up to a few years ago. The pitch is now not maintained to a suitable level to enable football clubs to use the area. FLP advised the pitch is only maintained in its present condition, if the Council want the pitch maintained to a better standard then they would have to employ FLP to enhance maintenance of the area.

WHBC suggested that a 'Digswell Playing Fields Association' be established to qualify for funds to undertake enhanced maintenance of the area. Councillor Neville advised

Digswell Residents Association which is already an established charity could undertake this task. Andrew Carr suggested that FLP would be willing to lead a group of volunteers to clear the area near the river bank, thus opening up a wonderful view. Following discussion it was agreed

- a) that FLP be requested to provide a schedule of work and the estimated cost of what is required to bring the football pitch back to playing standard
- b) that a team leader be provided by FLP to head up a group of 'friends' to clear shrubbery along and around the river bank.

#### **2010/014 PROPOSED YOUTH CLUB**

A report of the meeting with pupils at Bishops Hatfield School attached as **APPENDIX 1**. The Bishops Hatfield pupils would like a Youth Club set up in the village; however, finding a suitable venue which could also offer secure storage would prove difficult. Churches often offer youth facilities and this could be investigated. Also the Library could be encouraged to offer facilities for youth groups. Facilities such as football, tennis etc are already available in the village and could be encouraged to offer facilities to youth groups. This matter to be discussed in detail at the next Youth Sub-Committee meeting. Councillor Butler agreed to write to the Bishops Hatfield School on the Council's behalf.

#### **2010/015 OAKLANDS PLAYGROUND**

Investigations into three possible sites for a playground in the Oaklands area have been unsuccessful. Following discussion Councillor Blackburn agreed to include in his article in the Parish Newsletter a request for information on any suitable site within the Oaklands area that might be converted for a children's play area.

#### **2010/016 TENDERS FOR THE GROUNDWORK CONTRACT**

Three tenders for Welwyn Cemetery and St, Mary's churchyard were received by the closing date of 11<sup>th</sup> January 2010. The tenders were opened by the Acting Clerk in the presence of the Leisure Facilities and Open Spaces Chairman, Councillor McLusky in the order they arrived. A copy of the groundwork specification is attached as

#### **APPENDIX 2**

To complete works as detailed in the specification March to October 2010, approximately 12 cuts.

**Company A** St Mary's Churchyard £ 2,730, Welwyn Cemetery £ 5,500 **Total £ 8,230**

**Company B** St Mary's Churchyard £ 2,879, Welwyn Cemetery £ 7,739 **Total £ 10,618**

**Company C** £ 275 per cut = St Mary's Churchyard and Welwyn Cemetery based on 12 cuts, **Total £ 3,300**

Following discussion it was proposed by Councillor McLusky, seconded by Councillor Benson and

**RESOLVED** "that the groundwork contract, for approximately 12 cuts at £ 275 per cut, for the 2010 year be awarded to John O'Conner Grounds Maintenance Contractors".

**Unanimously agreed.**

#### **2010/017 CLOSE OF MEETING.**

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.50pm

Signed:.....

Chairman of the Leisure Facilities and Open Spaces Committee.

Date: 8<sup>th</sup> February 2010