

AMENITIES SUB-COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30 pm on 24 MAY 2001

Present:- Councillor Mrs J E Menell – Chairman
Councillors Mrs C D Down, Mrs J I Loughlin, R J O'Neill and Mrs S V Schneider.

Also present at the Chairman's invitation:- Councillor D M Miller

Also present:- N B Newman (Museum Society)

Officers in attendance:- M Dellow, Mrs S McLagan, M T Purkiss, Mrs C Roberts and Ms C Wingfield.

AM47 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs C M Dean, D W Gregory, D J Morson, R C Smith and Mrs E Tealby-Watson.

AM48 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2001 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

AM49 BUSINESS ARISING

Minute AM44 – Parking Strategy Working Party

It was noted that the next meeting of the Working Party was to be held on 31 May 2001.

AM50 BRIDGE END GARDENS WORKING PARTY

The Chairman welcomed Councillor D M Miller to the meeting and asked him to present the minutes of the meetings of the Bridge End Gardens Working Party held on 26 March 2001 and 14 May 2001.

(i) Minute BEG63 – Restoration of Summerhouse

In answer to a question from Councillor R J O'Neill the Committee and Communications Manager informed him that there was concern to vandal-proof the windows and that design work was going on and would be progressed throughout the summer. English Heritage were being consulted and the Property Services Manager in consultation with the Planning Department was preparing the design. Budgetary provision had been made for these works.

Councillor R J O'Neill stated that it would have been useful if an officer with responsibility for the Gardens had been present at the meeting. On past experience he considered the windows would be smashed within a week. He had many questions, including the suitability of the design.

Any further information would be reported at the meeting of the Community Services Committee on 12 June 2001.

RESOLVED that the recommendation contained in this Minute be approved.

(ii) Minute BEG64 – Tasks in the Garden

Councillor R J O'Neill asked whether the roses had been watered during the previous two days and Councillor D M Miller assured him that he would make certain that they were watered on a regular basis.

(iii) Minute BEG66 – External Funding

Councillor Miller expressed his pleasure that Mr Bosworth had managed to obtain substantial funding for the Gardens.

(iv) Minute BEG67 – Review of Closure of Garden

Members noted that the recommendation had been superseded by events in as much as a decision had been taken to open the Gardens for longer periods as shown in Minute BEG78 of the meeting of the Working Party held on 14 May 2001. The recommendation on Minute BEG67 was therefore not agreed.

(v) Minute BEG73 – Byelaws – Progress Report

The Committee and Communications Manager advised Members that the byelaws for the regulation of the Gardens had been confirmed by the Home Office and would take effect on 25 May 2001. He also advised Members about possible methods of byelaw control for dogs in gardens. Members considered what type of control to include within byelaws and it was generally felt that since the Gardens were formal ones they were not the right place for exercising dogs. It was also considered that notice of the Home Office byelaws should be displayed on a board in the Gardens as soon as possible since many of the problems in the Gardens resulted from use of balls.

Councillor R J O'Neill expressed doubt about the enforceability of a total ban on dogs in the garden. Councillor D M Miller informed Members that dog litter bins would be required even if a total ban on dogs within the Garden were implemented, since there was a walking area around the Gardens. With the abstention of Councillor R J O'Neill, Members decided to recommend a total ban on dogs within the formal Gardens.

RESOLVED that the recommendation contained in this Minute be approved.

(vi) Minute BEG76 – External Funding Update

The Chief Accountant informed Members of the proposed arrangements for dealing with professional fees and gave an assurance that this would not involve an addition to the salary bill.

The Chairman and Members asked specifically that their thanks be conveyed to the Head of Local Plan and Conservation and the Officers who had assisted him for their efforts which had resulted in very substantial external funding towards the Gardens.

(vii) Minute BEG78 – Review of Closure of the Gardens

Members noted that it might be necessary to pay an attendant to close the Gardens.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Bridge End Gardens Working Party held on 26 March 2001 and 14 May 2001 be approved and adopted subject to the decisions set out in this Minute.

AM51

MUSEUM MANAGEMENT JOINT WORKING PARTY

The Minutes of the meeting of the Museum Management Joint Working Party held on 21 May 2001 were received.

(i) Minute MM4(i) – Newport Store

The Chairman of the Sub-Committee stressed that lack of attendance at the open morning arranged at the Newport Store had been most disappointing.

(ii) Minute MM4(ii) – Church Street Entrance

The Committee and Communications Manager informed the meeting that the Property Services Manager was reviewing this matter.

(iii) Minute MM5 – Museum Service Strategic Plan 2001-2004

It was noted that this plan would be considered later during the meeting and that consideration of the recommendation in this item would be dealt with at that time.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Museum Management Joint Working Party held on 21 May 2001 be approved and adopted subject to consideration of the Museum Service Strategic Plan later in the meeting.

AM52

USE OF UNSPENT AD HOC GRANTS SCHEME BUDGET

The Sub-Committee considered a report notifying Members of the unspent balance of £4,685 in the Ad Hoc Grant Scheme budget and asking Members to determine use of the budget.

The Head of Community and Leisure Services explained that the Policy and Resources Committee had approved the Amenities Sub-Committee's request that the unspent balance to be carried over to 2001/02. She explained that four organisations had been refused grants, the Rural Community Council of Essex being the only one which had appealed against the refusal.

Councillor Mrs Menell informed the meeting of the content of emails from Councillor Merrion on behalf of the Rural Community Council of Essex and on behalf of Uttlesford Carers and she mentioned the needs of Victim Support whose request for a grant had similarly been refused. Councillor Mrs J Menell also read an email received from Councillor Mrs C Dean. She informed the meeting that Councillor Merrion would wish to declare an interest in this item in so far as he was the Council representative on the Uttlesford Carers Committee and was a representative of the Association of Essex Authorities on the Executive Board of the Rural Community Council of Essex.

It was noted that officers had advised that all such organisations should be considered, and that the organisations had not been advised that they could appeal.

In answer to questions from Councillor O'Neill the Head of Community and Leisure Services confirmed that the original decision of the District Grants Advisory Panel against the application of the Rural Community Council of Essex might have been because they were in any event well funded.

Members considered this matter carefully at length and noted that there were difficulties in the way of altering a decision at the instigation of two rather than the original four applicants.

(Councillor Mrs J E Menell at this point declared a non-pecuniary interest in so far as she was the Chairman of the Buffy Bus Association.)

RECOMMENDED (Councillor Mrs Loughlin abstaining) that the previous decision of the Committee and recommendation to the Policy and Resources Committee be not altered.

AM53

SAFFRON WALDEN MUSEUM AND UTTLESFORD MUSEUM STRATEGIC PLAN 2001 – 2004

The Head of Community and Leisure Services and the Museum Curator explained the Museum Service Strategic Plan which had been prepared following the Curator's review and consideration of what was necessary to be done to continue the Museum's excellent standards and to maintain its Registered Museum status. The Head of Community and Leisure Services stressed that budgetary issues were not being submitted for approval at this

stage. Any budgetary implications would be submitted for Members' approval as and when they arose.

The Museum Curator gave a detailed presentation about the Strategic Plan, emphasising the need for replacement of the off-site store, improved storage and access for collections, development of IT facilities (particularly for remote users), and review of displays in the permanent galleries and of temporary exhibits. She added that the next Strategic Plan would contain further IT development for use within the Museum and more emphasis on internal Museum facilities. She invited Members to visit the Museum to remind themselves of the current facilities.

The Chairman of the Sub-Committee thanked the Curator for an excellent report and Councillor D M Miller expressed his congratulations on the impressive document.

Councillor R J O'Neill commented that since the Museum was an expensive service, he felt it would be advisable for the plan to contain figures.

The Head of Community and Leisure Services explained that the proposed projects were new ones to enable maintenance of Registered status, and the plan was a broad rather than detailed one. If growth proved to be outside the existing budget a report would be brought to Members and in the meantime the operation of the Museum would be subject to a Best Value Review in 2002/03.

In answer to a question from Mr N B Newman she confirmed that the Strategy identified those issues which most funding authorities would look for.

RECOMMENDED that the Saffron Walden Museum and Uttlesford Museum Service Strategic Plan 2001-2004 be approved.

AM54

SWAN MEADOW

The Sub-Committee received the report of the Property Services Manager about problems at the pond, Swan Meadow, resulting from a punctured liner, raised ground water levels and uncontrolled numbers of ducks.

The report listed proposals to remedy the pond structure, landscaping of the perimeter, wildlife information notices and maintenance of the pond and its environs to an acceptable standard in the future. Capital Budget costs were estimated at a total of £27,560 and future maintenance costs at £1,750 per annum. It was noted that the last phase of the Swan Meadow Car Park had been completed within budget at a cost of £170,000 compared with the budget of £240,000.

RECOMMENDED that Policy and Resources Committee be requested that the proposed work be added to the Capital Programme of Works for 2001-02 and that subject to the receipt of satisfactory quotations the works to Swan Meadow pond outlined in the report be carried out and ongoing revenue be allocated for the future maintenance costs.

AM55 2000/01 AMENITIES SUB-COMMITTEE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

The Sub-Committee received the Budget Monitoring Report of provisional outturn for 2000/01 as against the 2000/01 revised budget. The statement of closing accounts would be presented to the meeting of the Resources Committee on 20 September 2001. Currently the Amenities Budget appeared underspent by approximately £76,000, the main component of which related to the Community Transport Budget of which £50,000 was not required to fund projects.

AM56 AMENITIES SUB-COMMITTEE – LAST MEETING

The Chairman of the Sub-Committee informed Members that this was the last meeting of the Amenities Sub-Committee and that on the next occasion Members would meet as the Community and Leisure Services Committee. She thanked Members for their attendance and support to her throughout the municipal year. On behalf of Members, Councillor D M Miller replied with thanks for Councillor Mrs Menell's guidance and leadership as a charming Chairman.

The meeting ended at 9.15 pm.