

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LEISURE AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE
OF THE WANTAGE TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN THE BEACON, PORTWAY, ON
MONDAY, 11 SEPTEMBER, 2017, AT 7.30 P.M.**

Committee members present: Councillors S Trinder (Chairman), Mrs C E C Dickson,
C S Dickson, J Goodman, Mrs M Gradwell,
Mrs J T Hannaby, K A Harris, B Mabbett,
C McCarthy, P O'Leary and Major J Sibbald.

Others present: Councillor Mrs J Reynolds
PCSO Tom Walcott-Smith – Thames Valley Police (part)
One member of the public (part)

Deputy Clerk: Mrs K Buckingham

Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors E C Goldsmith and Mrs J E Nunn-Price.

Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None.

Minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2017

The minutes were approved and signed.

17. Statements and Questions from the Public

None.

18. Briefing by representative of Thames Valley Police

Recent incidents across the town were discussed, including various issues in the Post Office square and Market Place, at two of the allotment sites and at the Chain Hill Cemetery. PCSO Walcott-Smith stated that the youth causing issues on the Market Place were known to the Thames Valley Police (TVP) and had been given Acceptable Behaviour Contracts. Should sufficient additional crimes be reported, this could be altered to a Criminal Behaviour Order. Due to the age of those concerned, there were safeguarding issues to consider and increased difficulty in tackling the issues.

It was reiterated the importance of any issues being reported to 101 to get a crime reference and for the incident to be logged. This would have to be reported by phone rather than by email. This helped to build a case against those that were commonly perpetrating crime in the area.

The issue of a body camera for a member of staff was discussed and it was noted that it was unlikely that this would be funded by TVP. Kings Park had experienced similar issues and their security officer had been using a body camera. Whether temporary CCTV could be used in problem areas, particularly at the Cemetery, would also be looked into by TVP. It was suggested that a briefing be given to the Youth Town Council and that the dates would be sent to TVP for the upcoming meetings.

Action: Deputy Clerk

Tom Walcott-Smith was thanked for attending and left the meeting.

19. Allotment Matters

(a) Track/surfacing at Larkhill and Naldertown allotments

A quote had been received for either dragging and rolling the access track at Larkhill (£760), or for a digger to in-fill and spread scalplings (£2180). A further quote was still awaited. It was reported that the grass on the track had been recently strimmed and that in terms of the Allotment Tenancy Agreement, no reference was made to vehicular access being made available. It was agreed that no work be carried out at this time but that information be added to the rental letter regarding liability, such as “the vehicle access tracks at the allotments are used at the tenants own risk”. The track at Larkhill would be monitored. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

In terms of the Naldertown allotments, quotes were still awaited for the resurfacing of this path and would be chased up. It was suggested that there may be landscape contractors that would be interested in the work. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

(b) Use by Sustainable Wantage of land at Stockham/Naldertown

Discussion had taken place with Sustainable Wantage who were willing to take on some of the problem areas at Stockham and Naldertown which were currently not rented out and were overgrown. This would be on the proviso of the Council taking responsibility for initially clearing and rotovating the site. Sustainable Wantage would then take on the plot and plant it with wild flowers and be responsible for it going forward. It was agreed that quotes be obtained for the clearing and rotovating of both sites. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

(c) Audit of plot sizes and Letcombe Fields plot division

It was agreed that based on current resources, an audit of plot sizes across all of the five allotment sites was a future aspiration. Instead, it was suggested that Letcombe Fields be concentrated on due to a larger plot having become available. This could be subdivided into smaller plots and would be an opportunity to re-consider the numbering across the whole site. With the current waiting list being made up mainly of people specifically waiting for Letcombe Fields, it was also agreed that more stringent inspections should take place on this site to try and bring this up to standard and free up any under-cultivated plots. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

(d) Review of allotment policy

The current allotment policy stated “Costs of operating allotments should be covered by the rent received from the allotment holders”. There was discussion on whether this should continue to be the case. It was agreed that it should be clarified whether there was a statutory duty for a certain number of allotment plots based on population. It was believed that the requirement was for a ‘reasonable number’ but this would be confirmed. **Action: Clerk**

It was discussed whether there should be a general fund for environmental works or that the costs that the Council are legally obligated to provide (i.e. rental costs, water) be separated out from the rental received/ spent.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Mabbett
SECONDED by Councillor Goodman

IT WAS RESOLVED that the wording of the current policy be re-considered, including the first line, and that this be brought back to the Committee to consider further.

Action: Deputy Clerk/Clerk

(e) Clearance/trimming of communal areas and vacant plots

The current allotment policy did not allow significant funds towards regular clearing of communal areas and vacant plots. This would be considered further once any alteration to the allotment policy was agreed.

It was noted that work had been carried out at Letcombe Fields in relation to communal areas being trimmed and that the area adjacent to a plot in Naldertown had been instructed to be cut back and cleared.

(f) Allotment sites as Assets of Community Value

It was requested that the applications still be submitted for two of the allotment sites to become Assets of Community Value. It was noted that OCC would shortly be looking at a review of its assets and, therefore, that this should be prioritised. **Action: Clerk**

(g) To agree date for holding of annual allotment tenants meeting

It was agreed that this be held on Monday 23 October before the next meeting and that it be held at 6.30pm to allow extra time for the meeting which normally over ran.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Goodman

SECONDED by Councillor McCarthy

IT WAS AGREED that the meeting be held at the suggested time and date. The Grove Road Allotment Association would be asked if they would like to speak at the meeting about having an Allotment Association. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

(h) Other allotment matters

None.

The member of the public left the meeting.

20. Cemetery Matters

(a) Memorial garden – benches and bins

A bin had been ordered for the path at the base of the cemetery, this was due to arrive shortly. For the benches in the memorial garden, one of the benches had been fixed and concreted back into place but had already been pulled out, damaged and relocated. This had been reported to the police on more than one occasion. It was agreed that there was little point in continuing to try and fix the bench with current circumstances and therefore that two of the benches be removed. This would leave only the one still fixed into position. Consideration should also be given to raising public awareness of the issues that were taking place at the cemetery and generally across the town.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Goodman

SECONDED by Councillor Major Sibbald

IT WAS AGREED to prepare a press release or discuss with local newspapers the current issues taking place and the need to call 101. **Action: Trinder/Deputy Clerk**

(b) Tree cuttings at cemetery

Quotes had been received for the work at the cemetery to chip the tree cuttings that were left behind. The larger trunks had been moved by a local forest school. For those

remaining, Grove Parish Council would hire out its equipment and contractors for £600 or the contractor already working at the cemetery could do the work for £500 which would also include the spreading of material. The other option was a bonfire to burn the chippings.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Goodman

SECONDED by Councillor Mabbett

IT WAS RESOLVED for the contractor already employed by the Town Council to chip the material and spread this around the cemetery. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

(c) Cemetery Art Project

It was noted that the working group had now met and that the Arts Officer had confirmed an update would be given in October as to how this was progressing.

(d) General maintenance

The broken tap had now been fixed, Sgt Green's hut had been cleared out of leaves, the lamp posts on the site had been painted and the gate at the base of the cemetery had been fixed. The paths across the cemetery had yet to be fixed and these would be chased up.

Action: Deputy Clerk

(e) Vegetation adjacent to 16 Winslow Terrace

Following a request from a resident of Winslow Terrace, the foliage adjacent to the boundary of the Cemetery with Winslow Terrace had been cut back. Unfortunately, subsequent to this the Council had been advised that there had been a recent crime incident relating to the property nearest to the Cemetery. The Council would be allowing the foliage to grow back as a deterrent but would keep the height under review.

(f) Other cemetery matters

None.

21. Town Centre Matters

(a) Update on benches

Quotes had been received for updating the benches at Maryfield, Ormond Road and Grove Road, with £435 for materials and labour for both Maryfield and Ormond Road and £230 to repair, rub down and paint the bench at Grove Road. The additional bench in Portway, between the Seesen benches, had been removed.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Goodman

SECONDED by Councillor Mabbett

IT WAS RESOLVED that the three benches be repaired. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

(b) Update on Markets including layout

The email from the Clerk was noted in relation to recent changes to the Market traders attending. Two of the long standing Market traders had now left but there would be a new trader on a Wednesday with cheeses, a new trader of cards on a Saturday and a new trader on some Wednesdays and Saturdays serving tray-bakes. There would also continue to be the Kombucha tea stall at the Farmer's Market.

With the recent changes, it was agreed that the layout not be re-assessed at this time and that the procedures be relaxed in relation to existing Market traders as suggested by the Clerk. The flip down signage was not considered to be the best way forward and it was requested that A boards be purchased as discussed, provided these were to be on Wantage Town Council land. It was also requested that the new cones be purchased as soon as possible. **Action: Clerk**

(c) Update on defibrillators

There had now been a defibrillator installed on the Beacon and the one in Manor Road Memorial Park was now in place. It was requested that a press release be prepared to promote the new equipment and that town maps be updated to include them if possible. **Action: Trinder/Deputy Clerk**

It was asked that the defibrillator in the phone box next to the Post Office Vaults still be pursued although this was not an immediate priority. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

(d) Update on VC Forecourt and statue area

The contractor had confirmed that the cigarette bin was now in place and that the plaque on the statue had been stained. Some of the preparatory work had taken place on the bollards and bins and work would continue the following week.

(e) Litter and weeds

The latest weed treatment had taken place, although it was noted that the Market Place had shown considerable regrowth and the date for the next treatment would be looked into. The weeds still present along the Letcombe Brook path were unable to be sprayed so close to a water course and OCC were looking into whether these could be manually dug out.

The work on the broken lock on the bin had not yet been looked into and it was confirmed that this was the one outside of the Bear. Snob and Lock would be asked to look into the matter. **Action: McCarthy**

(f) Update on street lighting on footpath 14 (Belmont)

There was no progress in relation to this matter, with a quote still awaited and this would be chased up. It was also noted that the lights 1 and 4 on Coopers Lane were still not working and this would be reported back to the OCC Electrical Engineer.

Action: Deputy Clerk

(g) Refurbishment/replacement of the Belmont noticeboard

It was agreed that the noticeboard had reached the end of its useful life. As this was an area that would soon have an increased footfall, it was agreed that a new, two sided noticeboard be purchased. If this was under £1000, it was requested that this be ordered.

Action: Deputy Clerk

(h) On street parking enforcement

This matter had been discussed at length at the Traffic Advisory meeting. Parking generally across the Town was considered to be an issue, not just in relation to the contractor vehicles and on street parking, but also in relation to the lack of parking generally for businesses and visitors. It was reported that a review was taking place by the District to potentially use more space on Limborough Road for long stay parking. A

further update in this regard would be given at the Planning Committee and Traffic Advisory Committee meetings.

(i) Disabled access to Arbery Arcade and VC Gallery

The area concerned was on private land and any disabled access could take up a considerable amount of space on the VC forecourt. The question would be put to the District Council and their Disability Officer in terms of the necessary requirements for a disabled ramp so that the impact could be assessed. **Action: McCarthy**

22. Other business

It was reported that positive feedback had been received from many parties in relation to the flower planters across the Town.

Further correspondence had been received in relation to the Manor Park bandstand. It was noted that the cost could be slightly lower than originally suggested; perhaps in the region of £8,000 to 10,000. This could be on the basis that a lease be granted if the works were procured by Wantage Town Council and then the District Council pay 50% of the tender sum by way of a dowry, with a cap.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Mabbett
SECONDED by Councillor Goodman

IT WAS RESOLVED that it be reported back that the Town Council did not wish to contribute to the repair of the bandstand based on the current proposals but would revisit this should a different solution be brought forward.

Confidential Items

ON THE PROPOSITION of the Chairman

IT WAS RESOLVED that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it was advisable in the public interest that the public and press be temporarily excluded and they were instructed to withdraw.

23. Consideration of arrangements regarding the May and October Fairs

24. Anti-social behaviour in the Town Centre

ON THE PROPOSITION of the Chairman

IT WAS RESOLVED that the resolutions made in confidential session be adopted.

The meeting closed at 9.33 p.m.
