

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LEISURE AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE
OF THE WANTAGE TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN THE BEACON, PORTWAY, ON
MONDAY, 23 OCTOBER, 2017, AT 7.40 P.M.**

Committee members present: Councillors S Trinder (Chairman), C S Dickson,
E C Goldsmith, J Goodman, Mrs M Gradwell, K A Harris,
B Mabbett, Mrs J E Nunn-Price and C McCarthy.

Others present: PCSO C Ratcliff – Thames Valley Police (part)
Five members of the public (part)

Deputy Clerk: Mrs K Buckingham

Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Mrs C E C Dickson, Mrs J T Hannaby,
P O'Leary and Major J Sibbald.

Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None.

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2017

The minutes were approved and signed.

25. Statements and Questions from the Public

None.

26. Briefing by representative of Thames Valley Police

An update was given on recent incidents across the town and it was confirmed that there was one particular group for which there had been 13 calls in the last month with incidents involving them. One of the offenders had received a Public Order Offence and all were being monitored to prevent reoffending. Two had been escalated from Acceptable Behaviour Contracts to Court proceedings.

Reported incidents with vehicles and anti-social behaviour at Manor Road Park appeared to have been resolved but this had now moved on to the Mably Way doctor's surgery and there had been many calls received relating to noise concerns here. This had now been added on to the list of areas to patrol. It was noted that there had been considerable theft in the area from motor vehicles and, in particular, trade vans. This was taking place across the district, not just within Wantage. There had been three arrests made for these crimes and some tools had been recovered. There had also been a spate of burglaries that may or may not be linked to the motor vehicle thefts.

It was discussed that CCTV was an option at the cemetery if considered necessary. The two requirements would be that the CCTV was advertised as being used in the area and also that the Information Commissions Office would need to be informed. This would be the case whether it was temporary or permanent CCTV.

PCSO Ratcliff was thanked for attending and left the meeting.

27. Allotment Matters

(a) Track surfacing at Naldertown allotments

A further quote had been requested for the resurfacing of the path at Naldertown.

Action: Deputy Clerk

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

It was reported that quotes had been obtained for the clearing and rotovating of both pieces of land. For the land at the base of the Stockham allotments the cost would be £850 for the spraying, clearing and rotovating although the spraying may not be possible due to the Great Crested Newts. For Naldertown the cost would be £600 which included clearing, rotovating and removing the dumped items on the site. It was agreed to discuss these two options further with Sustainable Wantage.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Goodman
SECONDED by Councillor Mabbett

IT WAS RESOLVED to offer Sustainable Wantage both pieces of land or to state their preference if they only wished to proceed with one and then to instruct the contractor to clear and rotovate as necessary.

Action: Deputy Clerk

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

Once the rent renewal process was completed, it was agreed that the Letcombe Fields plots be reconsidered with one larger plot being split down into an increased number of plots and for renumbering of the whole site. This would be taken forward in the winter months.

Action: Deputy Clerk

(d) Review of allotment policy

A memo from the Deputy Clerk had been distributed prior to the meeting detailing the statutory requirements relating to allotment provision and the current Allotment Policy, current Tenancy Agreement and proposed Allotment Policy.

Following considerable discussion it was agreed to refer to a working group and liaise with allotment tenants concerning the proposed changes to the Allotment Policy and to come to a consensus.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Mrs Nunn-Price
SECONDED by Councillor McCarthy

IT WAS RESOLVED to consider the draft Allotment Policy in a working group which would include allotment tenants, one from the Grove Road Allotment Association and one from the Larkhill site, and Councillors Harris, McCarthy and Trinder.

Action: Deputy Clerk

(e) Allotment sites as Assets of Community Value

Applications were intended to be submitted for two of the allotment sites to become Assets of Community Value - Larkhill and Grove Road. This would be prioritised going forward.

Action: Clerk

(f) Other allotment matters

It was requested that the question and answers from Grove Road Allotments Association be made available to the Committee.

Further discussion would be needed on how the changes to the Allotment Policy would be consulted with allotment tenants prior to being confirmed as new policy. This could involve notices being put up at each site and copies being made available in the office and on the website.

Action: Deputy Clerk

The remaining members of the public left the meeting.

28. Cemetery Matters

(a) Memorial garden – benches and bins

The bin for the path at the base of the cemetery had now been obtained and quotes had been received for installing the bin of £240 and £70. The contractor with the lower quote had been instructed to install this as soon as possible.

Two of the benches from the Memorial garden had been damaged and continued to be moved, despite having been fixed back into place with concrete. To avoid further issues, these had now been removed and temporarily stored elsewhere. This left only one bench in the Memorial garden. The Councils contractor had also cleared the area of rubbish and the area looked generally tidier. This would be monitored going forward.

Action: Deputy Clerk

(b) Cemetery Art Project

There was no update from the Arts Officer as to how this was progressing.

(c) Consideration of temporary CCTV at cemetery

Several calls had been received in relation to anti social behaviour by youths at the cemetery, the level of rubbish and alleged incidents of vandalism. It was agreed to look into costings for CCTV on site and the various options that could be available. There were concerns that, due to the nature of visits to the cemetery, the placement of cameras would need to be carefully considered. The provision of CCTV would be reviewed in the New Year based on any further incidents.

Action: McCarthy

(d) Other cemetery matters

The tree cuttings being chipped had now been instructed and these would be spread around the site.

It was discussed that there had been some recent requests regarding ashes plots reservations and whether these would be allowed. The current policy does not allow reservations for burial or ashes plots unless immediately adjacent to a recent burial. It was agreed to retain the current policy as is.

It was reported that there was a gate at the base of the cemetery, near to the pedestrian path off Chain Hill, which had been removed and placed alongside the wall creating a large gap in the boundary. It was requested that this matter be looked into.

Action: Deputy Clerk

29. Town Centre Matters

(a) Update on Markets/Market Place matters

The new signs and cones were now in use. It was requested that the old cones be cleared away where possible and put back into storage. It was suggested a working party be put together to potentially move old equipment into the less used storage areas and to discuss matters such as the trolley being replaced which was currently used for distributing cones.

Action: Clerk

It was noted that adjustments had been made to the forms sent out to new market traders. In cases of new traders where they were already operating at other markets, it would only be necessary to show the relevant documents to the market inspector who would record this accordingly.

(b) Update on defibrillators

No further work had been completed on the defibrillator in the phone box next to the Post Office Vaults. However, the new equipment that was available elsewhere would be marked on to the updated town maps and a list would also be made available for the new website.

A press release would be considered in terms of alerting people as to where defibrillators were available.

Action: Trinder/Deputy Clerk

(c) Update on VC Forecourt and statue area

The cobbled area had now been cleaned and infilled where necessary. This work had taken longer than anticipated which had been suggested up front by the contractor that this may be the case. There was an allowance in the budget set aside for cleaning the VC Forecourt to provide for added budget for such work, should it be necessary. The next work to be completed would be the painting of the benches, noticeboards and bollards.

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

There was no progress in relation to the matter. A quote was still awaited and was continuing to be chased. This would be escalated if possible through the County Council. The lights 1 and 4 on Coopers Lane had also been re-reported as needing to be fixed and this was in hand.

Action: Deputy Clerk

(e) Replacement of Belmont noticeboard

The costs of the noticeboard had been looked into and did fall slightly over £1000.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor McCarthy

SECONDED by Councillor Mrs Nunn-Price

IT WAS RESOLVED that the order for the noticeboard proceed even over the £1000

Action: Deputy Clerk

(f) Disabled access to Arbery Arcade and VC Gallery

The requirements for a disabled access had been looked into and there appeared to be no workable solution onto the VC Forecourt, particularly with the Listed Buildings adjacent and the historic nature of the cobbles. It would essentially involve rebuilding the entire entrance way and as this was outside the ownership of Wantage Town Council it was not considered that this could be taken forward any further.

(g) Christmas arrangements

The lights on the shop fronts would start to be put in place from 7 November with the trees to be installed on 19 November. The poles for the canopy would be put in place on 20 November and the canopy and the trees would be decorated and ready for 1 December. It had been previously agreed that the lights would only include the canopy lights and white lights; there would be no coloured motifs this year.

30. **To consider suggestions from bus companies about bus stop arrangements in Market Place (see Clerk's memorandum of 18 October 2017)**

The memo from the Clerk had been distributed and it was noted that the meeting had taken place between the Highway Engineer and the bus companies without the Town Council officers being present. There was a request that, for any future meetings

regarding public transport changes, the Parish Transport Representative be invited to attend. It was agreed that work should proceed as suggested by the OCC engineer.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Mrs Nunn-Price
SECONDED by Councillor Mabbett

IT WAS RESOLVED to accept the changes which included a bus stop being added into the disabled layby in front of Nationwide, for the stop and stand to be swapped if possible so that the bus stand was in front of Nationwide as opposed to the VC Forecourt and the disabled spaces lost outside Nationwide would be moved to the bus stop which was no longer needed on Newbury Street. It was not considered that there were any further disabled spaces needed to be provided in replacement.

It was agreed that this work was necessary as a minimum due to the buses double parking. Alterations were needed to the geography of the road layout such as alterations to the new bus stop layby and to the island adjacent to the taxi rank.

31. District Council grant schemes

There were grants currently available from the District Council for community groups. There was a scheme still available for events and it would be investigated whether this was applicable to Armed Forces Day. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

32. Estimates for 2018/2019

Amendments were suggested to the estimates as follows; increasing the budget of the parking attendant to allow for more hours/days as necessary (increase to £7,000); returning the Market Square attendant back to its earlier level of £9,250 (unless there was a reason for its reduction); to increase the statue clean and clarify the actual cost for the most recent clean; and to retain last year's budget for street furniture and bus shelters (take forward £5,000). It was also agreed to ensure that the budget at least matched the income on the allotments if this varied with the final rent renewals that came in.

33. Other business

None.

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.

34. Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2017 and matters arising

ON THE PROPOSITION of the Chairman
IT WAS RESOLVED that the resolutions made in confidential session be adopted.

The meeting closed at 9.10 p.m.
