

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LEISURE AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE
OF THE WANTAGE TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN THE BEACON, PORTWAY, ON
MONDAY, 3 JULY, 2017, AT 7.30 P.M.**

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

Others present: Abigail Brown – Arts Development Officer VWHDC (part)
One member of the public (part)

Deputy Clerk: Mrs K Buckingham

Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Mrs C E C Dickson, C S Dickson and Mrs M Gradwell.

Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None.

Minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2017

The minutes were approved and signed.

9. Statements and Questions from the Public

None.

10. Briefing from Arts Development Officer, Vale of White Horse District Council

Abigail Brown was present to discuss some funding available through the S106 agreement from the Croudace site on Chain Hill. The funds were allocated for a work of art such as a sculpture, statue or some other form of artistic representation. There is little public and secure open space on the Croudace development, which is visible to the wider general public, and therefore the developer had agreed for the sum to be spent in a more public location reasonably near the development site. This has been suggested as being the Chain Hill Cemetery.

One suggestion was for the remodelling and enhancement of the entrance to the Cemetery. This could be fences or gates, some sort of gatepost finial or sign or an archway. The process followed would be for a steering group to be formed initially, to put together the specification for the piece of art. It would then be advertised for artists to prepare a brief before being interviewed and commissioned for the design stage. The history of the site opposite an iron foundry was discussed as being drawn into the design. It was also suggested that there be some way of incorporating work by the late Lendon Scantlebury or his students.

It was noted that access would need to be kept clear to a certain height to allow skip vehicles onto the cemetery and also to allow any construction vehicles for the future expansion.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor McCarthy
SECONDED by Councillor Mabbett

IT WAS RESOLVED to support the project at the cemetery and to form a working group to take this forward including Councillor Goodman, Councillor Mabbett and Councillor Mrs Dickson.

This would be set up via email, potentially starting with a site visit.

Action: Deputy Clerk

Miss Brown also mentioned that Betjeman Park were looking for assistance with Art in the Park going forward and were always happy to house events at the park itself.

Miss Brown left the meeting and was thanked for attending.

11. Allotment Matters

(a) Report on Councillors' allotment inspection visit

The Councillor's allotment inspection had taken place on Saturday 1 July and the report had been circulated (attached).

The track at the Larkhill site was discussed in terms of the ruts that were worsening due to the use by vehicles. It was requested that it be checked whether vehicular access was specifically mentioned within the Tenancy Agreement and, if so, a sign should be placed as soon as possible at the site identifying the risk of using the access and confirming that there would be action taken.

Action: Deputy Clerk

For the Stockham Park site, it was discussed that one tenant present at the visit had expressed concern at the differing plot sizes between this site and others and whether there needed to be a review across all of the sites in terms of the relevant rental amount due. It was agreed that an audit of the size of the plots be looked into and mapped.

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

IT WAS RESOLVED to review the sizes of the plots and to initially map these across all sites.

Action: Sibbald

The two plots of land with large areas of vacant plots which were now long grass at Naldertown and Stockham Park were discussed as needing to be addressed going forward.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor McCarthy
SECONDED by Councillor Goodman

IT WAS RESOLVED to offer plots to Sustainable Wantage to take on as potentially a wild flower reserve, as it has done with the site adjacent to Mably Way.

Action: Deputy Clerk

There were several areas that needed strimming/ cutting back that were outside of a plot but within the allotment area.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor McCarthy
SECONDED by Councillor Goodman

IT WAS RESOLVED to request that the ground area at Naldertown adjacent to plot 12 and at Letcombe Fields adjacent to plot 109 be cleared as soon as possible.

Action: Deputy Clerk

It was requested that the overall spend on the allotments for the year to date be prepared and made available at the next Policy, Management & Finance Committee meeting.

Action: Clerk

(b) Resurfacing of pathway at Naldertown

The Deputy Clerk had requested one quote for re- surfacing the path and would seek further quotes. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

(c) To consider review of allotment rents from September 2018

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Mrs Nunn-Price
SECONDED by Councillor Goodman
IT WAS RESOLVED that there be no change in the allotment rents for the following year.

It was discussed that a review of the policy for the allotments be considered in relation to whether they continued to be self funding or whether further budget should be made available for their care. It was suggested that this should also be discussed at the next allotment holders' meeting.

It was discussed whether there could be a nominated point of contact from each of the sites for general issues and that there should be the aim to try to encourage Allotment Associations. It was suggested there be a speaker at the next allotment holders' meeting from the Grove Road Allotment Association. The legislation for allotments and the levels of care that should be provided was requested to be collated, to review the policy as soon as possible. **Action: Goodman/Deputy Clerk**

(d) Other allotment matters

There had been a request received that the allotment site at Grove Road be considered as an Asset of Community Value. Consideration would be given to both the Grove Road and the Larkhill site as both of these had ownership outside of the control of the Council. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

The member of the public left the meeting.

12. Cemetery Matters

(a) Memorial garden – benches and bins

It was noted that the benches in the memorial garden area had now been fixed back into place but were in need of some refurbishment. There was one additional bench that had been removed to potentially be repaired and this would be chased up. **Action: Clerk**

In relation to the bins, it had been agreed previously for three new bins – two on the path and one in the memorial garden. Following the Councillors' visit to the Cemetery, it was suggested that all of the bins across the cemetery be considered for replacement as the open form of the bins and the amount of rubbish that collected in a short timeframe made for a very untidy appearance.

It was therefore agreed to look into the cost of potentially a further five bins across the site with the costings made available for the next Policy, Management and Finance meeting. **Action: Trinder/Deputy Clerk**

(b) Tree cuttings at cemetery

Many of the larger logs and cuttings had now been removed by a local forest school but for the remaining tree cuttings it was felt that these were unlikely to mulch down in a short timeframe. It was agreed, therefore, that the contractor be asked to chip these and

distribute around the site as necessary. It was also suggested that Grove Parish Council may have a chipping machine that could be used and they should be contacted prior to the contractor. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

(c) Other cemetery matters

The report on the cemetery visit had been distributed. The Sgt Green Hut needed clearing out of leaves. The pathway from Chain Hill to the C of E Primary School had many bumps and dips on the surface which needed addressing and this would be reported on Fix My Street. The gate at the pedestrian entrance to the cemetery did not close correctly and would need to be repaired. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

The post that blocked vehicular access down the pathway at the cemetery was permanently left flat and it was considered that this did not perform the task of deterring any vehicles, even when in the up position. It was therefore suggested that this be removed permanently going forward.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor McCarthy
SECONDED by Councillor Goodman
IT WAS RESOLVED to remove the post and make good the area when the paths were fixed. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

13. Town Centre Matters

(a) Update on benches

The inventory of benches around the town had been circulated. It was agreed that the additional bench in Portway between the Seesen benches be removed and that refurbishment costs be obtained for the benches at Maryfield, Ormond Road, Grove Road and the two at the cemetery. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

A request was made by Councillor Harris in relation to sponsoring a bench. The requirements for this would be looked into. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

(b) Update on Market issues and Market Place licensing

Discussion had been had at a recent Town Team meeting in relation to signage and cones and whether these would be replaced. The priority would be that the cones were highways appropriate rather than any particular branding. It was requested that the costings be taken forward to the Policy, Management & Finance meeting to be discussed. **Action: Clerk**

A request had been received from the Moreva coffee van as to whether it could increase its presence on the market by potentially locating on the cobbled area adjacent to the statue and the pedestrian crossing. Consideration was, however, in the process of being given to the stall layout. It was agreed that this could set an unwelcome precedent at this time and therefore the status quo should be maintained. **Action: Clerk**

The Market Place licensing would be investigated and progressed in due course.

(c) Update on defibrillators

The defibrillator on the side of The Beacon had now been installed. The defibrillator was not yet in place at the Memorial Park. The conversion of the listed phone box for defibrillator use had not yet been pursued and costs would be chased up from the Community Heartbeat Trust. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

(d) Update on VC Forecourt and statue area

The work for the VC forecourt had been instructed, including the small repair to the statue, and a timescale would be chased up from the contractor. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

(e) Litter and weeds

The “whole town” weed killing treatment had taken place and there was now a fortnight grace to go back to the company with any areas which had not been successfully treated.

A letter had been sent to the member of the public regarding the litter around the town. It was discussed that the locks on the bins on the VC forecourt were in need of attention, and Snob & Lock would be asked to look at these. **Action: McCarthy**

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

The Inspector was still awaiting a commitment from SSE to put together a total cost for consideration by the Council. This was not yet available but would be chased up.

Action: Deputy Clerk

(g) Other Town Centre Matters

The use of magnets rather than Blotak in the noticeboards had been taken forward. The Belmont noticeboard would be cleaned and the Perspex sheets would be replaced with those taken from the Barnard’s Way triple fronted noticeboard. It was suggested that costs be put together for refurbishing this noticeboard or replacing it going forward.

Action: Deputy Clerk

The flower planters were now in place at both ends of the Market Place.

14. **Other matters**

(a) Repair of bandstand at Manor Road Memorial Park

The Clerk had replied to the District Council in relation to the costs suggested for the refurbishment of the bandstand. It was stated that the Town Council was interested in coming to an arrangement concerning its refurbishment but, from a cursory inspection, there was scepticism about the amount of work and costs involved in returning it to a suitable condition. It had therefore been requested that the schedule of works and costs be revisited.

15. **General correspondence**

None

16. **To sign the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2017 and consider matters arising**

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.

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

The meeting closed at 9.30 p.m.

Notes of visits to allotment sites on Saturday 1st July 2017 at 2pm

Present: Councillors J Goodman (part), B Mabbett, C McCarthy and S Trinder and the Deputy Clerk, Mrs K Buckingham.

General actions since last year's visit

Introduction of a 'half way' letter where cultivation is taking place but parts of the plots need strimming/ clearing.

Signs erected at Grove Road (to beware of cycles) and Stockham ("no dog" signs).

High grass and brambles had been cleared from the front verge of Grove Road and the hedge had been planted along the boundary.

The track at Grove Road had been infilled with scalplings.

The pile of scalplings infected with Mare's Tail in the parking area of Grove Road had been removed.

A general letter had been sent to the tenants at the Stockham site relating to Great Crested Newts.

A combination lock was now in use at Stockham.

The fence alongside Plot 22 at Naldertown had been fixed.

The water pump had been replaced at Letcombe Fields.

A letter had been sent to the tenants of Letcombe Fields reminding tenants that no weapons were allowed to be used on site.

Larkhill

Plot 22/23 was partly overgrown and would be checked in a months time. If still overgrown, a letter would be sent suggesting one plot is dropped.

Plots 6a, 7a, 37b and 40 were only partly cultivated and would be checked in a months time.

Plots 7a/7b and 8a/8b had very overgrown areas in between and would be sent letters relating to keeping paths trimmed.

Plot 11, 12 and 41 - these plots were overgrown/ poorly cultivated and would receive a letter in relation to non cultivation.

19a and 6b were now overgrown with areas of long grass and would be asked to be strimmed by the contractor shortly if not let out.

A complaint was made from a tenant regarding the access track becoming rutted and often having long grass in the areas between the track. The surfacing would be looked into, and whether vehicular access was permitted in the tenancy.

The area alongside the laid hedge was becoming overgrown with grass, and this was to be communicated to the District Council (i.e. that this should be being mowed at the same time as the rest of the verge).

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The idea of a 'contact details sheet' being sent out with the renewals letter was discussed, to try and increase the level of interaction with tenants by email.

Grove Road

It was noted that Plot 32a would need to be strimmed shortly by the Contractor if not let out (plot 32b had recently been let). The parking area would also need mowing shortly and the Mare's Tail near the entrance would need treating and the contractor would be asked to do so.

Plots 7b, 8b and 25 were overgrown and would be checked in a months time.

Plots 12a and 20b were overgrown and did not show signs of active cultivation and they would be sent a non-cultivation letter.

Stockham Park

Plots 1 and 19b showed no signs of cultivation and had already been sent a non-cultivation letter. They would now be contacted to have their tenancy terminated.

Plots 7, 12, 26a, 30a and 30b had some signs of cultivation but would be checked in a months time as to whether active cultivation had taken place.

Plot 16 and 26b had limited activity evident and would be sent a non-cultivation letter.

The Hawthorn hedge along the boundary of the site was becoming overgrown in places and was difficult to maintain. The contractor would be asked to attend to this.

The tenant of Plot 35 was present and confirmed they were likely to relinquish their plot at the end of the year.

A letter would be sent to Plot 28 to strim the parts of the plot currently not cultivated.

The contractor would be asked to strim the plots and treat for Mare's Tail from 38/39/40 down and Sustainable Wantage would be contacted about taking on an area here to look after.

Plot 34/33a had been offered out but would be strimmed down if work was not carried out shortly.

Naldertown

A non-cultivation letter had already been sent to Plot 4 hence a termination letter would now be sent, as this continued to be left un-cultivated.

The contractor would be asked to clear the brambles adjacent to Plot 12 to ground level and to strim Plot 14b which was vacant.

A letter would be sent to Plot 19b to strim those areas not currently being cultivated.

Plots 15 and 24 would be checked in a months time.

Contact would be made with Plot 18 in relation to when work would be taking place and this would be checked in a months time.

Consideration would be given to the material used for the path alongside the site and to the area adjacent to the triangle of land, which was very overgrown (plots 29-37 in particular).

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It was noted that the triangle of land was currently in the process of being sold by the District Council to a neighbouring dwelling. This land had already been cleared.

Letcombe Fields

A non-cultivation letter would be sent to Plots 105b and 106. A personalised non-cultivation and termination letter would be sent to Plots 111 and 115.

A letter requesting that areas be kept trimmed would be sent to Plots 105a, 112 and 110b.

A termination letter would be sent to Plot 110c as an earlier non-cultivation letter had already been sent.

Plots 110c and 120 would be looked at together if both relinquished in the autumn, to potentially make 110c larger and 120 smaller, before being let out.

The contractor would be asked to clear the verge area by Plot 109 and to clear the badger plot. It was also asked whether it could be tried to ascertain whether the badger was still using the area

Notes of Chain Hill Cemetery site visit on Saturday 1 July 2017 at 5.30pm

Present: Councillors B Mabbett, C McCarthy and S Trinder and the Deputy Clerk, Mrs K Buckingham.

It was noted that the Sgt Green's hut railings were still in place but that the hut may need some leaves clearing out and a general clean up. This would be attended to.

Lamp posts and railing to frontage

The railings to the front of the site had been cleaned and re-painted. The damaged lamp post had been straightened and all five lamp posts had been repainted. The glass still needed to be replaced in two.

Paths and trees

The work to repair the paths had been instructed. It was noted that next to the Butler Memorial were also some small holes in the path that would need filling.

The tree cuttings which had been left were substantial in places and the contractor would be asked to shred these down if possible. Some material had been removed for a local Forest School.

A tap on one of the lower paths had its top missing and was not useable.

The path that led from Chain Hill to the Cof E School was very bumpy in places and this would be reported on Fix My Street.

Bins and skips

It was noted that all of the bins across the site were very full and generally had a very untidy appearance. It was suggested that these be replaced at the same time as the three new bins be installed on the path and in the Memorial Garden. This would be potentially 8 to 9 bins in total.

Post to prevent vehicular access

The post was left permanently down and it was discussed that there may be more difficulties in trying to keep this in place than to just leave the status quo.

Gate at base of site

The gate at the base of the site did not swing back into place – the contractor would be asked to look at getting a new spring