

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LEISURE AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE OF
THE WANTAGE TOWN COUNCIL HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM, ON
MONDAY, 26 OCTOBER 2020 AT 7.30 P.M.**

Committee members present: Councillor J T Hannaby (Chairman)
Councillors E L Johnson, P O'Leary, A C Menzies, I L Sheldon and
Major J Sibbald

Others present: Three members of the public

Deputy Clerk: S Sanders

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Goodman.

Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None.

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2020

The minutes were approved.

16. Statements and Questions from the Public

None.

17. Allotment Matters

(a) Current status of allotment plot availability

The Deputy Clerk reported that the renewal process had not yet been completed for the 2020/2021 season and therefore it was not known how many plots were currently available for rent.

(b) Report from the allotment holders meeting.

The annual allotment holders meeting had taken place virtually, by Zoom at 6pm 26 that day and was attended by five councillors and five allotment holders. A list of questions had been received prior to the meeting from the Grove Road Allotment Association. Answers would be provided at a later date when the information was available. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

Stockham Park

It was suggested by an allotment holder that trees could be planted in the bottom area of the site that is not currently being used for allotment plots. The Chairman explained that the Climate Emergency Sub Committee was currently looking at areas within the Council's ownership where tree planting could be planted.

Another allotment holder suggested that a communal bench for retired allotment holders to use and remain part of the allotment community would be welcomed. It was agreed that the Deputy Clerk would obtain a price for a suitable bench. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

Lark Hill

An additional water trough was requested for the Lark Hill site. It was agreed that the Deputy Clerk would research the costings for supply and installation. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

It had previously been agreed to purchase two bulk bags (800kg) of scalpings for use at the Lark Hill site. The allotment holders were now ready to receive the scalpings. The Deputy Clerk was to organise this. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

Grove Road

A question was raised from an allotment holder regarding the care home development adjacent to the allotments experiencing problems with excess water run-off from the Crab Hill fields. He mentioned the impact on the bottom area of the allotment site which floods. He asked if Wantage Town Council had made any arrangements to mitigate this. The Chairman reported this was a planning issue and the responsibility lies with the planning department of the District Council. The Deputy Clerk had requested an update from the contractor responsible for the building of the care home who had agreed to look into this matter.

Action: Deputy Clerk

(c) Other allotment matters

A complaint had been received from a tenant of Grove Road allotments regarding a delivery of manure to the site. The vehicle had encroached onto plots and caused damage. The Deputy Clerk was contact the secretary of Grove Road Allotment Association regarding this incident.

Action: Deputy Clerk

18. Cemetery Matters

(a) Maintenance of hedge along the new cemetery land border

The Deputy Clerk had met with a volunteer from The Tree Conservation Volunteers (TCV) to assess the growth of the hedge that was laid in 2017. It was suggested that the failed trees (approximately 80-120) should be replaced, and an additional line of planting be created along the border with Wantage C of E school. The species that had survived well were: hawthorn, blackthorn, dogwood, hazel, dog rose, cherry and field maple. The labour would be provided free of charge and tree guards and canes to be included. Aftercare would be provided consisting of a couple of visits to replace any guards or canes and pull back any competitive grass/vegetation inhibiting growth. A donations towards the trees of £150-£200 was suggested by TCV.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Johnson

SECONDED BY Councillor Sheldon

IT WAS RESOLVED TO Instruct TCV to replant the trees that had failed and plant additional trees along the border with Wantage C of E school and to make a donation of £150 towards the cost of the trees with a further £50 if needed.

Action: Deputy Clerk

(b) Arrangement for seeking quotes for ground maintenance contract in 2021 season

Currently the ground maintenance contract was given on a yearly basis that can be renewed without competitive quote, subject to satisfactory performance and prices being increased no more than RPI as at 1st March, for a further year. It was agreed that contractors submitting a quotation be asked to make a statement regarding their policies on environmental protections and reducing the carbon footprint.

ON THE PROPOSTION OF Councillor Hannaby

SECONDED BY Councillor Johnson

IT WAS RESOLVED TO extend the contract period to three years.

(c) Other cemetery matters

The Garden of Remembrance previously had benches that have been vandalised. Trees had also been damaged.

It was agreed that the Deputy Clerk should obtain quotes for two anti-vandal benches and two trees that would provide shade to the area. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

19. Town Centre Matters

(a) District Council Leisure Strategy

Work on the leisure strategy had been delayed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, but was now being progressed. A survey had been carried out during the pandemic to find out what types of leisure activities people were taking part in. The results from a consultation carried out by Wantage Town Council a few years ago was to be referred to. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

(b) Salt/grit bins

No requests for additional salt bins or for bins to be re- filled had been received or reported to Oxfordshire County Council.

(c) Relocation of town entry sign – A417 east of town

The location that was agreed by Oxfordshire County Council had not taken into account the new road that was yet to be built. A new position was suggested, however the location doesn't appear to be adopted public highway and permission was awaited from the road agreements team.

(d) Build a Better Wantage Project

It was agreed that the project would be better placed within the Promotion, Communications and Events Committee.

(e) Audit of street furniture/maintenance required.

The Deputy Clerk reported that the bench located at Maryfield needs replacing. Noticeboards need to be assessed for replacement/repair and quotes obtained. The Chairman reported that a lot of the street signs around Wantage were in need of replacing and it was noted that this fell within the responsibility of the District Council. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

(f) Date for installation of Christmas trees/decorations

The Christmas tree was to be installed on 22 November and the decorations to follow a few days later.

(g) Other town centre matters

The Deputy Clerk was to investigate the possibility/cost of planting bulbs within the area of Alfred's Bath, Locks Lane. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

20. Estimates 2021/2022

The Clerk had circulated the estimates worksheet for the Leisure and Amenities Committee. Amendments were suggested to the estimates as follows:
Street Furniture increased to £6,000. To retain last year's budget of £3000 for weedkilling and to add a budget of £500 to 'other' to include costs for vandalism if these cost were not covered elsewhere.

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm.