

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LEISURE AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE OF
THE WANTAGE TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT THE BEACON, PORTWAY, ON
MONDAY, 28 FEBRUARY, AT 7.30 P.M.**

Committee members present: Councillor J T Hannaby (Chairman)
Councillors A Duveen, J Sibbald and S Third

Others present: Four members of the public

Deputy Clerk: S Sanders

Apologies for Absence

These were received from Councillors E L Johnson (Vice Chairman), A C Menzies, I L Sheldon, and C Walters.

Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None

To sign the minutes of the meeting held 17 January 2022

The minutes were approved and signed.

15. Statements and Questions from the Public

A member of the public asked if there was a Leisure Strategy and how the S106 funds that had been allocated for the leisure centre, that was no longer being built, were to be spent. She asked which sports groups had been contacted. She wanted to know if Wantage Town Council were looking to take ownership of all of the Memorial Park, and if the items listed under confidential should be heard in the confidential section of the meeting as they were community areas.

The Chairman confirmed that the confidential items related to individual people and were therefore confidential. The other questions would be answered as part of the discussions under the relevant item on the agenda.

16. Allotment Matters

(a) Update on communal bench – Stockham Park site

The bench had been installed at the edge of the play area on an existing concrete base.

(b) Update on additional water trough – Lark Hill site

The water trough was due to be installed the following day.

(c) Allotment availability

There were currently 33 people on the waiting list and a few plots available at the Naldertown site.

(d) Request from Sustainable Wantage to set up a community allotment

The Deputy Clerk was to arrange a meeting at the Naldertown site between a representative of Sustainable Wantage and the Chairman.

Action: Deputy Clerk

(e) Recent anti-social behaviour at allotment sites

It was noted that there had been some sheds broken into at the Lark Hill site. The husband of a tenant was attacked by a group of boys when he went to look at the damage. The police had been informed and had visited the tenant and her husband. It was noted that incidents of theft, damage and assault are all police matters. It was agreed that the Deputy Clerk would look at the possibility of signage indicating access to allotment sites was for allotment tenants only.

Action: Deputy Clerk

(f) Other allotment matters

None.

17. Cemetery Matters

(a) Update on Garden of Remembrance – planting of trees

The grounds maintenance contractor had been unable to source suitable trees in time to be planted before spring. The trees would be purchased and planted in the autumn.

(b) Update on the clearing and cutting back of areas at the cemetery

The clearing of the thickets had been completed and had created the desired effect - a safer environment for the public due to improved visibility in the cemetery. The improvements have also encouraged more people to wander around looking at graves. It was agreed that further areas of the lower (older) parts of the cemetery should be cleared later in the year and this should be an on-going project over the next few years.

(c) Development of improvements to the cemetery extension

The full report of the site assessment had been received and circulated. The outcome was that the site was considered suitable to be developed as a cemetery site. The Deputy Clerk was to arrange a meeting with CDS Group to discuss the next stages of the process.

Action: Deputy Clerk

(d) Grounds maintenance contract for the 2022 season

It had been agreed at the Council meeting on 14 February that the contract with White Horse Horticulture should be renewed.

(e) Request to install a memorial bench next to an existing grave

It was agreed that a memorial bench could be installed along the line of conifers at the top of the cemetery, but it would not be permitted next to the grave.

(f) Other cemetery matters

There had been two interments since 17 January 2022

18. Town Centre Matters

(a) District Council Leisure Strategy (S106 funding)

The report from the consultant working for the District Council had still not been received. It was understood that the draft report had been presented to the District Council for its consideration.

(b) Street name plates

This item was to be discussed in the confidential session.

(c) King Alfred's Statue full clean

The statue was due to be cleaned on 5 April 2022.

(d) Manor Road Memorial Park

i) Third party tree planting

There had been no update.

ii) Possibility of taking ownership of the Memorial Park

There had been no update.

iii) Picnic tables/benches

The Council would like to install picnic benches in the Memorial Park. The Deputy Clerk was to write to the District Council to seek permission. A quote for suitable furniture had been received a few months ago. The Deputy Clerk was to seek confirmation that the price was still valid. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

(e) Update on Planting of area of land opposite St Katherines, Wallingford Street

The planting that was due to be carried out by the District Council during the winter, had not yet been carried out. The Deputy Clerk was to chase. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

(f) Update on telephone kiosk repairs

The Deputy Clerk had not yet progressed the repairs; she was waiting to hear from BT to see if they could make improvements to the adjacent kiosk which is still owned by them.

(g) Update on request for scalpings at Willow Lane

The Chairman, Councillor Crawford and the Deputy Clerk had met a resident of Willow Lane at the site to discuss the request for scalpings. The quantity of scalpings that would be required to make necessary improvements would not be covered by the amount of scalpings the Council agreed to consider purchasing. There would also be a need for the materials to be scattered by someone.

(h) Removal of wooden post/sign on VC Forecourt

The Deputy Clerk had not yet informed The Rotary Club of the intention to remove the post and sign. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

(i) Resurfacing of the Market Square

The Deputy Clerk had met with a contractor to assess the condition of the Market Square. The contractor thought that the condition was very good and he did not think a complete resurface was needed, however he would provide a quotation for the works. A further meeting was to be agreed at a time when the Market Square could be closed off, this would enable a better view of the area so that a quotation could be prepared for repairs instead.

Action: Deputy Clerk

(j) Bus shelter for Charlton Village Road

It was agreed that a cost to add a seat to the existing shelter should be sought and a deep clean of the shelter would be acceptable rather than a new shelter. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

(k) Arrangements for weedkilling 2022/23

A quote had been received from Charlton Environmental for the spraying of weeds. The Deputy Clerk was to seek a quote from another contractor. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

(l) Arrangement for flower displays 2022/23

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Hannaby
SECONDED BY Councillor Sibbald

IT WAS RESOLVED to keep the same arrangement for the planting as last year. The cost for summer 2022 £4214.00 and for winter/spring £2637.00. The Deputy Clerk was to request that where possible pollinator friendly plants should be used. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

(m) Provision of play areas

An email had been received from a member of the public regarding the play areas in Wantage and the loss of the play area at The Wharf. It was noted that The Wharf play area was the responsibility of the District Council and that a legal issue regarding the ownership had not been resolved, meaning the area could not be opened. It was noted that all play areas in Wantage were not the responsibility of the Town Council.

(n) Other town centre matters

It was agreed that the addition of trees in and around the Market Place should be investigated.

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.

19. Other Business

a) Cemetery

A request for a donation to PACT (Parents and Children Together) was considered but not agreed.

b) Street name plates

There had been some recent organisational changes within the District Council which delayed the progression of the replacement street name plates. This was now in hand and would be progressed soon.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm
