

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LEISURE AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE OF
THE WANTAGE TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT THE BEACON, PORTWAY
ON MONDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 2022, AT 7.30PM**

Committee members present: Councillors J T Hannaby (Chairman),
E L Johnson, A C Menzies and S Third.

Others present: A Yates – Town Centre Manager (TCM)
5 members of the public

Deputy Clerk: S Sanders

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors I L Sheldon and J Sibbald.

Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None

To sign the minutes of the meeting held 4 July 2022

The minutes were approved and signed.

11. Statements and Questions from the public

A member of the public spoke about the large leylandii trees at the cemetery shedding needles on surrounding graves. He acknowledged that the trees had been cut back recently, but the extent of the maintenance work had been limited due to the nesting season of birds. He asked for consideration to be given to cutting them back further. It was agreed that the trees would be put into the autumn schedule of maintenance and that they would be cut back as far as was possible. The member of the public was thanked for attending and left the meeting.

Action: Deputy Clerk

A resident and business owner of a property in the town spoke about the negative impact the temporary pedestrianisation in the western end of the Market Place was having on him due to the unavailability of parking in the vicinity of his premises. He felt there was a lack of communication regarding the scheme. He was concerned that the permanent pedestrianisation of the area would lead to empty shops. He was thanked for attending and he left the meeting.

12. Allotment Matters

a) Allotment availability

All allotment plots across the 5 sites had been rented out apart from a recently relinquished half plot at Grove Road. The waiting list had been reduced significantly to 23 Wantage residents following site inspections.

b) Update on anti-social activity Lark Hill - allotments site.

It was reported that there had been no recent incidents.

c) Additional land at Stockham Park – feedback from the site visit

Two councillors, the Deputy Clerk and the Letcombe Brook Project Officer had met at the site. It was agreed that the area would be revisited during the autumn/winter to assess the need for additional fencing to the boundary.

Action: Deputy Clerk

d) Date for the allotment holders' meeting

It was agreed to hold the annual meeting on 31 October 2022 at 6.30pm in The Beacon. Tea/ coffee & biscuits would be supplied. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

e) Request for a litter bin near the bench at Stockham Park play area

It was agreed not to instal a bin, due to difficulties in arranging for it to be emptied.

f) Other allotment matters

It was noted that St Modwen had presented plans of the new proposed location for allotment plots (Central Park East), Kingsgrove Development.

13. Cemetery Matters

a) Development of improvements to the cemetery extension

A site meeting had taken place. A plan of the burial layout had been circulated and it was agreed that it was suitable. The arboriculture survey had not yet been received.

b) Review of the cemetery regulations

There had been some suggested changes/additions to the current regulations. These proposed changes would be presented to the next meeting. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

c) Garden of Remembrance – planting of trees

The trees would be ordered together with the trees planned for other areas.

Action: Deputy Clerk

d) Other cemetery matters

It was noted that a bench had been placed in the cemetery without authorisation. It was agreed that benches should be placed around the cemetery for communal use.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Johnson

SECONDED BY Councillor Third

IT WAS RESOLVED that four benches be purchased (Moulded Forest Saver) from Earth Anchors Ltd and be placed in locations agreed between the Chairman and Deputy Clerk.

Action: Deputy Clerk/Chairman

It was agreed that a new sign with the cemetery regulations should be drafted as the current sign had too much information and needed to be simpler.

Action: Deputy Clerk

14. Town Centre Matters

a) District Council Leisure Strategy (S106 funding) - Feedback from the joint meeting (Grove Parish Council and Wantage Town Council) held 7 July.

There had been no response from the District Council officers who attended the meeting. The Clerk to Grove Parish Council was going to chase a response.

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b) Update on street name plate replacements and QR code information

There were allocated funds available for approximately 8 more replacement signs. It was agreed that a replacement was required for Stirlings Road (on the wall of the old Wheatsheaf PH) and Hans Ave. No others had yet been identified as needing to be replaced. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

c) Manor Road Memorial Park

i) Update on third party planting

The planting planned for autumn 2022 had not yet been carried out.

ii) Update on possibility of taking ownership of the Memorial Park

Costings were being worked on by the District Council.

iii) Picnic tables/benches

Four picnic benches, manufactured from recycled plastic (including two wheelchair accessible) had been ordered. The benches would be installed by the District Council, the cost would be passed to the Town Council. The delivery was due in the next couple of weeks.

d) Update on planting of area of land opposite St Katherines, Wallingford Street

The planting planned for the end of summer had not yet been carried out.

e) Update on telephone kiosk repairs

The replacement door had not yet been installed due to difficulties in removing the existing hinges.

f) Update on request for site meeting with OCC officer at Willow Lane

A site meeting had taken place with the Countryside Access Officer (OCC). The lane is a footpath and access track, which requires some repair work. The first 210m is tarmacked and was due to be assessed by OCC. The remainder of the footpath would not be repaired by OCC as it was deemed to meet the standards of a footpath.

g) Update on Market Square Improvements

The works had been planned for Friday 30 September. Two disabled spaces were to be marked on the south side of the western end of the market square.

h) Update on bus shelter/addition of seat for Charlton Village Road

A bench had been installed. A deep clean had been carried out to the shelter.

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i) Update on regeneration review for Wantage

The TCM had prepared two draft surveys focussing on use of the town's businesses. It was agreed that further questions should be added to the survey before publication.

Action: TCM/Johnson

j) Update on land at Grove Road – Feedback from the site visit

Two councillors, the Deputy Clerk and the Letcombe Brook Project Officer had met at the site. It was agreed that a cost should be obtained for the clearance of fallen and hung trees to make the area more accessible to members of the public. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

k) Update on tree planting in Market Place

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Johnson

SECONDED BY Councillor Hannaby

IT WAS RESOLVED to purchase 5 trees and 3 planters with a £10k budget as follows:

One tree for each of the existing brick planters (It was noted that OCC would need to be consulted and permission granted regarding sight lines).

Two trees on the VC Forecourt in planters and one tree in the western end temporary pedestrianised area in a planter. The species were agreed: silver birch, acer campestre (Queen Elizabeth), acer griseum, acer palmatum and a baytree.

l) Update on Changing Place facility (Portway Car park toilet block)

There was no update. This would be chased.

Action: Deputy Clerk

m) Request for a streetlight in Post Office Lane

Post Office Lane was not a highway and therefore OCC would not be able to install a streetlight on an unadopted lane. The Town Council would need to fund and maintain a streetlight if one could be connected. If no service is present SSE would need to upgrade it, unless solar could work in the area.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Menzies

SECONDED BY Councillor Hannaby

IT WAS RESOLVED THAT subject to funds being available the purchase and installation of a streetlight should be progressed.

Action: Deputy Clerk

n) Maintenance of Alfred's Well

Extensive maintenance work had been carried out. The area had been cleared and was now visible from Locks Lane. Further work was to be carried out including the installation of a new step and railway sleeper.

Action: Deputy Clerk

o) Other town centre matters

None.

The meeting closed at 9.35pm