

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LEISURE AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE OF  
THE WANTAGE TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT THE BEACON, PORTWAY  
ON MONDAY, 30 OCTOBER 2023, AT 7.30 PM**

Committee members present: Councillors JT Hannaby (Chair), R Fitzjohn, P Kirby-Harris, L Todd and S Third.

Other councillors present: Councillor K Morris

Members of the public: Two members of the public

Deputy Clerk: S Sanders

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P O’Leary and A C Menzies

**Declaration of disclosable pecuniary interests, other registrable interests and any non-registerable interests.**

None

**To sign the minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2023**

The minutes were approved and signed.

**15. Statements and Questions from the public**

The Grove Road Allotment Association submitted the following questions prior to the meeting. The Deputy Clerk was to respond to these in writing.

1. Can the Council please tell us which tenancies (by plot number) at Grove Road were not renewed by the annual review date this year?
2. How many plots are vacant at Grove Road?
3. Can the Council please inform us what is the income from rents and expenditure for allotments in Wantage for the previous 12-month period?
4. Can the Council please inform us what is the breakdown of expenditure on allotments for the previous 12-month period?
5. Can the Council tell us how many people are waiting for an allotment at Grove Road and how long they have been waiting?
6. In 2022 the Council agreed to a trial of quarter size plots: how has that trial turned out for everyone involved?
7. Grove Road Allotments is registered as an Asset of Community Value until 26 November 2023. Can the registration be extended or re-registered?

**Action: Deputy Clerk**

**16. Allotment Matters**

- a) Allotment tenancy renewals 23/24

The renewal process was almost complete.

- b) Update on additional/replacement fencing – Stockham Park

A site meeting for councillors had not yet taken place.

**Action: Chair**

c) Update on tree planting - Grove Road

Councillor Third had met with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) to discuss the possible tree planting. He agreed to find out if there was funding from OCC for trees.

**Action: Third**

The Deputy Clerk had contacted the landowner about permission to plant trees. This would be discussed further once a plan/proposal had been agreed by the committee.

**Action: Third**

d) Update on tree planting – Stockham Park

A site meeting had not yet taken place.

**Action: Chair**

e) To consider maintenance work to a pear tree – Stockham Park

A resident of Saxon Place had concerns that a pear tree that overhangs their rear garden could be dangerous. White Horse Horticulture had visited the resident to assess the condition of the tree and reported that it was healthy. He had prepared a quote to carry out maintenance work to the tree. It was agreed that members of the committee would attend the site to determine if any pruning of the tree was deemed necessary.

**Action: All**

f) Update on review of the allotment policy

The review had not yet been completed.

**Action: Third**

g) Feedback from the allotment holder's meeting held on 30 October 2023

The meeting was well attended.

It was noted that the water pump at Letcombe Fields was not functioning properly. A drain company had visited the site with a view to flushing the borehole as it is possible silt had built up over the years. On inspection he did not agree that there was a problem with silt build up and suggested the problem might be a worn seal. The company were unable to get the machinery to the pump location due to access problems. It was noted that the pump was not owned by Wantage Town Council. It was agreed that the issue be investigated further.

**Action: Chair/Deputy Clerk**

There had been some recent vandalism at the Stockham Park site. A piece of the bench had been sawn off and the pipe to the water butt had been cut. The Deputy Clerk was to report the incident to Thames Valley Police.

**Action: Deputy Clerk**

An allotment tenant had commented that he was unable to access the Letcombe Field site because the track was rutted. It was agreed to have a site visit to assess the problem.

**Action: Chair/Deputy Clerk**

h) Kingsgrove allotments/toilets

It had previously been agreed that the council did not want to take responsibility or contribute towards the community toilets. It was agreed that the original proposal from St Modwen for a compostable toilet should remain.

**Action: Clerk**

i) Other allotment matters

None.

**17. Town Centre Matters:**

a) Update on trees for Market Place – to consider planting in the market square parking area

It was agreed that due to engineering requirements it would not be feasible to plant around the market place. Consideration was given to planting in the market square parking area. It was agreed that further discussion would be needed. **Action: All**

b) Update on historical information boards

The Town Centre Manager had applied for £5000 from the Shared Prosperity Fund towards the cost of the boards. Further information about the boards was needed regarding the proposed location, style etc before the committee could agree the purchase and installation. **Action: TCM**

c) To consider a quote for the painting of hanging basket and finger signposts

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Hannaby  
SECONDED BY Councillor Kriby-Harris  
IT WAS RESOLVED to accept a quote to repaint Thirty Six posts at a cost of £2480.  
**Action: Deputy Clerk**

d) To agree the members of the S106 Public Art working group

The working group had not yet been agreed. **Action: Chair**

e) Update on leisure facilities assessment – due October 2023

The assessment had not yet been received.

f) Update on Oxfordshire County Council tree planting project

This item had been discussed during items 16) c & d and 17) a

g) Update on the Changing Places Facility – Portway toilets

Work to the toilets had commenced with a completion date of the beginning of December 2023.

h) Parking in the market square

There continues to be an issue with cars parking in the market square causing obstruction for stall holders. A job advertisement for a town warden had been placed in August, which included parking enforcement for the council owned car park. The recruitment was not successful. It was agreed that the job should be re-advertised. **Action: Clerk**

i) Little Lane – tree issues

It was noted that a tree on the footway at Little Lane needed attention. The tree roots had lifted the tarmac causing issues for mobility scooters and pushchairs etc to pass safely. This was to be reported on Fix My Street. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

j) Other town centre matters

None.

**18. Cemetery Matters:**

a) Update on development to the cemetery extension

The Deputy Clerk was to chase a response from the Environment Agency regarding the photographs that had been sent showing an area of the field that had recently been dug to 10m. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

b) Update on purchase of a noticeboard

It had been agreed at the Council meeting on 16 October 2023 that an aluminium noticeboard be ordered for the installation at the cemetery. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

c) To consider a request to increase space between ashes plots for access

A request that larger spaces between each ashes plot, to allow easier access had been received. It was noted approximately four new ashes plots were allocated per year. It was estimated that the space for ashes plots would run out in around 10 years but if larger spaces were to be introduced this would be halved.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Hannaby  
SECONDED BY Councillor Fitzjohn

IT WAS RESOLVED to not introduce larger spaces between plots.

d) To receive an update on remaining grave space

The number of burials between 2019 and 2022 were noted.

2019 - burials and 6 ashes interments, 2020 - 9 burials and 3 ashes interments

2021 - 9 burials and 5 ashes interments, 2022 - 13 burials and 3 ashes interments

It was estimated, based on the above, that the available burial plots will be used within 5 years and ashes plots within 10 years.

e) Other cemetery matters

None.

**19. Ground maintenance contract**

It was agreed that the current contract should be renewed without seeking quotes for 2024/25. The current contractor is White Horse Horticulture. **Action: Clerk**

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**20. Estimates 2024/25**

The Financial Statement and Estimates Worksheet had been circulated. Discussion took place and it was agreed that the estimates would be worked on by members prior to the budget setting meeting in December.

**Action: All**

The meeting closed at 9.52 PM

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