

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LEISURE AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE OF
THE WANTAGE TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT THE BEACON, PORTWAY
ON MONDAY, 15 JANUARY 2024, AT 7.30 PM**

Committee members present: Councillors J Hannaby (Chair), S Third and L Todd
Members of the public: One member present (part)
Deputy Clerk: S Sanders
Town Project Coordinator (TCM) J Mitchell

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Kirby- Harris, P O’Leary and A Menzies

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

None

21. Statements and Questions from the public

None

22. Allotment Matters

- a) To receive the answers to the questions raised by Grove Road Allotment Association at the meeting held on 30 October 2023

The answers to the questions and the income/expenditure had been circulated to all members of the council and Grove Road Allotment Association prior to the meeting.

- b) Allotment availability and waiting list

9 people waiting for a plot at Letcombe Fields, 6 for Lark Hill and 1 for Grove Road. 4 half plots available at Lark Hill, 2 full plots available at Naldertown and 7 half plots available at Stockham Park.

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

Following a site visit it was agreed that the existing barbed wire should be removed, and a hedge planted instead of installing a fence. The wooded area needs to be tidied. A quote was to be obtained.

Action: Deputy Clerk

- d) Update on tree planting - Grove Road

Oxfordshire County Council had confirmed that there were funds available following a successful bid (Coronation Living Heritage Fund). It was agreed that a plan would be produced showing the location of the planting and sent to the landowner of the allotment site for approval.

Action: Third/Deputy Clerk

e) Update on tree planting – Stockham Park

It was agreed that a few fruit trees would be planted in the play area by volunteers. There is currently a mound where assorted allotment waste etc has been dumped which will need to be cleared prior to planting. A quote for the clearance was to be obtained.

Action: Deputy Clerk

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

Following a site visit it was agreed that some work to the pear tree was required. A further site visit would be made, and a quotation sought for the work.

Action: Deputy Clerk/Chair

g) Update on review of the allotment policy

The review had not yet been completed.

Action: Third

h) Site visit to Letcombe Fields (rutted access track and water pump issues)

A site visit had not yet been made, however it was agreed that Wantage Town Council were not responsible for the pump. It had been bought and installed by allotment holders using a grant. It was noted that the pump does work but requires several pumps to draw water. It was noted that a complaint had been received about the condition of the recently resurfaced Willow Lane (FP16). It had been arranged that OCC will assess the footpath.

Action: Deputy Clerk

i) Other allotment matters

It was noted that the lack of water to the Grove Road allotment site and the water leak on the highway adjacent to the site entrance had been reported to Thames Water and Fix my Street on a few occasions, but the issues had not been resolved. It was also noted that the pump used to ensure water does not run down the hill on to Grove Road had failed but was now operational. A second pump had also been installed by St Modwen. The pumps will be required until the surface water outfall leading to Letcombe Brook is constructed and in use.

23. Town Centre Matters:

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

It was agreed to invite a tree officer from the district council to offer his view on possible planting options.

Action: Deputy Clerk

b) Update on historical information boards

It was agreed that the TPC and the Chair would meet to look at the locations that had been suggested for two boards to be installed. This would help members to decide if the boards should be introduced – concerns were raised about the market place becoming too cluttered with street furniture.

Action: Chair/TPC

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

The working group had not yet been agreed. Councillor Hannaby and the TPC had agreed to be members and hoped that others would join.

Action: Chair

d) Update on leisure facilities assessment

A meeting was to be held at Old Mill Hall, Grove on 31 January 2024. It was expected that the report would be presented at the meeting.

e) Update on the Changing Places Facility – Portway toilets

The works had been completed and the toilets were open. The Changing Place facility had not yet been registered and could not be opened until the registration had been completed.

f) Update on town warden recruitment

The recruitment process had not started.

Action: Clerk

g) To review the Christmas decoration arrangements for 2024

It was noted that one of the canopy poles that hold the icicle lights had been hit by a vehicle in the early hours of New Years Eve. The pole was damaged which brought the lights down into the market square. A discussion took place about the safety of the poles and lights and it was agreed that further discussion would take place at the next meeting.

Action: All

h) Other town centre matters

It was noted that there had been some anti-social behaviour (ASB) on New Years Eve. It was agreed that Matthew Barber (PCC) should be invited to a meeting to give an update on the developments since he last attended a committee meeting in July 2022 and to comment on the current situation about the lack of police officers on the Wantage Neighbourhood Team.

Action: Clerk

Members noted the information that the Deputy Clerk gave about Public Spaces Protection Orders which could be applied for, and which gave PCSOs more powers relating to ASB. Further information was to be circulated. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

24. Cemetery Matters:

a) Update on development to the cemetery extension

The EA had insisted that groundwater monitoring should be carried out.

Action Deputy Clerk

b) Other cemetery matters

None

25. Items for the agenda of the next meeting 26 February 2024

None noted.

The meeting closed at 8.48 pm