

22nd May 2018

Minutes of the proceedings of the **AMENITIES COMMITTEE** meeting held on this day in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, WOKINGHAM** from 7:32pm to 9:29pm.

PRESENT

Cllrs N J Campbell-White (Chairman), Mrs A N Drake, Ms L Forbes, C R George (Vice-Chairman), C D Moore, S Odedra, M L Richards and T J Lack

IN ATTENDANCE

Amenities Officer (AO)
Buildings and Grounds Officer (B&GO)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from:

Cllr J P McGhee-Sumner (the Mayor)
Cllr M S Monk

MEMBERS' INTERESTS (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of interests from members.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OR PUBLIC (Agenda Item 3)

There were no questions from councillors or members of the public.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 4)

It was proposed by Cllr T J Lack and seconded by Cllr C R George and it was

**RESOLVED
29738**

that the minutes of the Amenities Committee meeting held on 6th March 2018 (pages 15529 to 15538) be received as a true and correct record and they be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

MONITORING REPORT (Agenda Item 5)

The Chairman, AO and B&GO updated the Committee on how the work to deal with the items on the monitoring report dated 16th May 2018 is progressing.

Item 88: the Chairman said that he has discussed Wokingham Borough Council's (WBC) refusal to allow Wokingham Town Council (WTC) to install a bench on the corner of Clare Avenue and Glebelands Road with other WBC officers. They were supportive of WBC's decision on the grounds that a bench in this location could be a nexus for anti-social behaviour.

On this basis councillors discussed whether it was sensible to continue to pursue this matter. On balance it was felt that it was and the Chairman undertook to discuss it with WBC councillors who have relevant executive roles.

ACTION: CLLR N J CAMPBELL-WHITE

The AO said that the opportunity to install a bench commemorating a past president of Wokingham Horticultural Association has been missed – this bench is now in St. Paul's churchyard, Reading Road.

Item 101: this matter will be considered under agenda item 13.

Item 113: the B&GO said that he is still waiting for a layout plan with specifications from the Events Co-ordinator. The B&GO was asked to pursue this as a matter of priority.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Item 114: following the recent change of grounds maintenance contractor the B&GO will now seek a quotation from the new incumbent for the purchase and installation of reinforced plastic mesh for the Viking Field footpath. The B&GO was asked to obtain this as swiftly as possible.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Item 115: the B&GO said that the work to install a discrete, metered water supply to both the Courtyard restaurant and Piccolo Arco will begin on 6th or 7th June 2018.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Item 116: with regard to the installation of a loft ladder to the Town Hall roof space the B&GO said that the company WTC resolved to engage is struggling to source one which meets WTC's specification. He said it may be that one will have to be made to order.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Item 117: Cllr C R George showed councillors a 16 amp, 200-250 volt industrial power plug with an integral LED indicator. He made this for a nominal cost. He said that one could be plugged into each power socket on street columns and trees around the town centre. This would indicate if the electricity supply was 'live' to each point. In his view this would make the installation of WTC's Christmas motifs and lights less problematic. He said that each LED should operate for around 20,000 hours (2 years).

When asked, the AO said that LITE, WTC's installers, make every attempt to solve power supply issues at the time of installation at no additional cost to WTC. He also drew councillors' attention to the way electricity used by the Christmas lights is charged for.

The AO was instructed to discuss the use of Cllr George's innovative plug/ LED with LITE.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

It is envisaged that LITE could install these plugs when the lights and motifs are removed in January 2019.

Item 118: councillors again expressed their view that the wood used to construct the new play area on Elms Field has to be of the highest quality. Their concern is that if this is not so WTC will potentially be faced with having to rope off some pieces whilst expensive repairs are carried out. This has been the case for WBC for several months at Dinton Pastures.

The AO said that a meeting between WBC and WTC officers about the Elms Field play area is set for Thursday 24th May 2018 and that this issue will be raised.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Councillors said that if robinia wood failed at Dinton Pastures it does not bode well for Elms Field if it is used here. The AO said that robinia is the default wood for play equipment in most countries and has a long, proven track record if properly installed.

Councillors also want WBC to provide substantial funds for WTC to call upon for routine and corrective maintenance for the play equipment to be installed at Elms Field.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

The Chairman said that he intends to speak to the Town Clerk about these points and to suggest he joins the 24th May meeting.

ACTION: CLLR N J CAMPBELL-WHITE

Item 119: this matter will be considered under agenda item 8.

Item 120: this matter will be considered under agenda item 9.

Item 121: this matter will be considered under agenda item 16.

Item 122: the B&GO reminded councillors that Holt Copse Conservation Volunteers have successfully obtained funding to improve the drainage at Joel Park around the avenue of red oaks. He said that £9,000 has been raised of which WTC has contributed £1,000. A contractor has been engaged to install some French drains.

AMENITIES COMMITTEE SPENDING FULL YEAR 2017-18 (Agenda Item 6)

The Amenities budget detail for 2017-2018 was received and considered.

Councillors acknowledged that expenditure has been well-managed by officers over 2017-18.

When challenged the AO said that the over spend on code 101/4100 (allotments repairs and maintenance) is because the £800 contribution from Wokingham Horticultural Association (and some of its individual members) is included on code 101/1256. With this off set, spending on code 101/4100 for the year, is within budget.

The B&GO said that around £10,000 of the actual spend on code 106/4100 (town hall repairs and maintenance) is for investigative work for the replacement boilers and attendant pipework.

The B&GO was congratulated and thanked for the quality of the redecoration of the council chamber and main hall. Councillors noted that the work to revive the finish on the wooden floor in the main hall has also been paid for within the overall redecoration budget.

In view of the successful completion of the redecoration project it was decided to disband the Main Hall Redecoration Working Party as it has successfully concluded its task.

Councillors noted the detrimental effect on wedding ceremonies given the significant overrun to the Market Place improvement works. They said that refunding reasonable amounts of money to 'brides and grooms' was the right course of action in order to protect the public's perception of the Town Hall as a reputable wedding venue.

GRAFFITI WORKING PARTY (Agenda Item 7)

The notes from the Graffiti Working Party's meeting held on 22nd March 2018 were received and considered.

Cllr Forbes said that unfortunately the Holt has withdrawn its participation in WTC's schools graffiti project. However, she is pleased with the efforts of Wokingham town's two other secondary schools. Both are devising programmes to tackle the incidence of graffiti daubing and litter dropping around the town. Their finished programmes will be presented to either the Amenities Committee or Full Council, probably in September 2018.

ACTION: GRAFFITI WORKING PARTY

Councillors felt it was still appropriate to award a first prize of £1,000 with a second prize of £500.

Cllr Ms L Forbes said she has engaged with the Wokingham Schools Federation (WSF) about extending the project to Wokingham borough schools. She said she is engaging with WSF as a private individual not as a town councillor.

It was proposed by Cllr T J Lack and seconded by Cllr C R George and it was

**RESOLVED
29739**

to ring-fence £2,500 from the graffiti removal budget 2018-19 for prizes for the schools graffiti project.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Cllr T J Lack said that he continues to be active removing graffiti from a wide range of surfaces across the town. He was thanked for his work. He explained that a graffiti removal training course he recently attended has given him a better understanding of the processes involved.

Cllr Lack raised the question of obtaining prior permission from premises and structure owners to clean off graffiti. He said that Cambridge City Council has stopped asking for prior permission and he proposes that WTC does the same. He said obtaining consent makes the procedure slow and cumbersome and that graffiti needs to be removed as quickly as possible once it is spotted.

Councillors raised concerns about damage to property. Cllr Lack said his training demonstrated techniques which significantly reduce the likelihood of damage to brickwork and other surfaces.

Councillors discussed whether it was appropriate to have different arrangements for residential and commercial property owners.

The AO said that regardless of whether prior permission is obtained or not WTC would have to make good any damage caused by it removing graffiti.

It was proposed by Cllr C D Moore and seconded by Cllr Ms L Forbes and it was

**RESOLVED
29740**

that it is no longer necessary to ask for permission from premises and structure owners before removing graffiti.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

It was understood that if any premises or structure owners ask WTC councillors, officers or operatives to stop removing graffiti this will be so done instantly.

ACTION: CLLR T J LACK/ AMENITIES OFFICER

The AO asked councillors to advise him as and when they notice graffiti around the town.

PUBLICITY BOARD FOR WOKINGHAM CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS (Agenda Item 8)

The Chairman said that he is still in the process of contacting local Rotary and Lions clubs to gauge their enthusiasm for a sign in the town noting their work for charities – and whether they are prepared to pay for it.

ACTION: CLLR N J CAMPBELL-WHITE

COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD (Agenda Item 9)

The AO offered the apologies of the Town Clerk that because of her heavy workload she has not pursued the installation of noticeboards at the recently constructed Carnival Pool car park. On reflection councillors felt that a more appropriate location for noticeboards for local community groups would be in the redeveloped leisure centre and library complex.

It was decided to hold this matter in abeyance until this development is in train.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER/ TOWN CLERK

The AO was instructed to remove this item from the monitoring report.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL'S ANNUAL COMMUNITY LITTER PICK EVENT MARCH 24TH/ 25TH 2018 (Agenda Item 10)

Cllr T J Lack said that forty black plastic sacks of litter were collected from the town centre during WBC's annual community litter pick on Saturday 24th March 2018. The next day sixty sacks were collected around Evendons ward by local residents. He thanked all of those taking part and noted that similar events took place around Emmbrook and Norreys wards.

He told councillors that he is working with the Wokingham Litter Heroes group. One Saturday a month it organizes a group litter pick around the town.

The committee thanked Cllr Lack for his work and commitment.

REQUEST TO INSTALL A BENCH(ES) ALONG SMITHS WALK (Agenda Item 11)

Cllr T J Lack said that Mrs B Warman, WBC, has agreed that WTC can install a bench in the park off Heron Road, Woosehill. This would replace the bench which was recently set alight and badly damaged.

She has also agreed that WTC can install a bench on Smith's Walk. The AO said that Cllr I L Shepherd-DuBey has contacted him to express her concern that a bench on Smith's Walk would replace one very recently removed at the request

of local residents, police and WBC councillors. It was removed because it attracted groups of youths who, through their anti-social behaviour, caused great distress to nearby residents in the evenings and at night. In the circumstances it was decided not to pursue the installation of a bench on Smith's Walk.

Cllr Ms L Forbes said she was in contact with Wm Morrison Supermarkets plc and is asking it to purchase a bench.

ACTION: CLLR MS L FORBES

Cllr S Odedra said that One Stop Stores has a scheme to offer funding to some local community projects. He suggested that WTC make an online application to this fund for a bench for Heron Park. He said that he will forward a link to the AO for the relevant web page. He also undertook to contact the scheme administrator to discuss timescales between application, decision and award.

ACTION: CLLR S ODEDRA/ AMENITIES OFFICER

Councillors said that if this is too protracted WTC should purchase the bench and use any subsequent award to reimburse its expenditure.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

From the information and price list provided by Mrs Warman councillors selected the KC Seat (Anti-Vandal) 1500 bench at £645. It is likely that a leg extension kit will also be required.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

WOKINGHAM HORTICULTURAL ASSOCIATION'S PLAN TO TWIN WATERLESS TOILET AT ORMONDE ROAD ALLOTMENTS SITE (Agenda Item 12)

The councillors agreed to the request from Wokingham Horticultural Association (WHA) to 'twin' the waterless toilet at Ormonde Road allotment site through the Tearfund toilet twinning website. A certificate noting WHA's contribution from Tearfund will be received and displayed in the toilet.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

UPDATE ON PROPOSED NEW ALLOTMENT SITE AT MULBERRY GROVE (Agenda Item 13)

The housebuilder Crest Nicholson (CN) has advised WBC and WTC that the allotments site at Mulberry Grove will be handed over in June 2018 – much earlier than previously advised.

The AO said that there were a number of substantive conditions which have to be met before both councils can accept the site:

- WTC has to agree the legal transfer of ownership from CN. This is currently being discussed by the respective solicitors
- WBC will not accept the site until the conditions for set-up stipulated as part of the original planning process are deemed to be met
- WTC will not accept the site until all of its detailed specifications for set-up are deemed to be met

One major consideration is the condition and depth of the topsoil. This will need to be fully examined and tested to ensure it is of sufficient depth and quality for fruit and vegetables to grow and thrive.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The AO said that he is arranging a meet and greet evening with prospective Mulberry Grove tenants at the town hall. This will be in conjunction with WHA. Experienced allotment gardeners will be on hand to offer start-up advice to any novice gardeners.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER/ WOKINGHAM HORTICULTURAL ASSOCIATION

It is anticipated that follow-up sessions will be held in the autumn at the allotment site to offer practical, hands-on help.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER/ WOKINGHAM HORTICULTURAL ASSOCIATION

AMENITIES COMMITTEE INFORMATION (Agenda Item 14)

No matters were raised by councillors for inclusion on any subsequent Amenities Committee agenda.

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC (Agenda Item 15)

It was proposed by Cllr N J Campbell-White and seconded by Cllr Ms L Forbes and it was

**RESOLVED
29741**

that in view of the confidential commercial nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable, in the public interest, that the press and public be temporarily excluded and that they are asked to withdraw.

PART II

REQUEST TO PURCHASE A TRACT OF LAND AT GIPSY LANE ALLOTMENTS SITE (Agenda Item 16)

Report 08: 2017-2018 from the AO dated 23rd February 2018 was received and considered.

The Chairman said that he and the Vice-Chairman have visited Gipsy Lane allotments site to inspect the relevant tract of land. They felt that it would not be in WTC's best interests at this time to sell it.

It was proposed by Cllr Ms L Forbes and seconded by Cllr T J Lack and it was

**RESOLVED
29742**

to write to the local resident declining his offer to purchase the small tract of land at the side of Gipsy Lane allotments car park where it abuts his rear garden.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Councillors want the car park to be increased in size once developer funding is obtained via the Montague Park development. Once the car park is expanded this matter could be re-visited.

The meeting closed at 9:29 pm.

CHAIRMAN

