

## 5<sup>th</sup> September 2018

Minutes of the proceedings of the **AMENITIES COMMITTEE** meeting held on this day in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, WOKINGHAM** from 7:30pm to 10:09pm.

### **PRESENT**

Cllrs Mrs A N Drake, Ms L Forbes, C R George (Vice-Chairman), T J Lack and C D Moore

### **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 N J Campbell-White (the Chairman)  
Cllr J P McGhee-Sumner (the Mayor)  
Cllr S Odedra  
Cllr M L Richards

In the absence of Cllr N J Campbell-White, Vice-Chairman Cllr C R George was chairman of the meeting.

### **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 Ms L Forbes and seconded by Cllr Mrs A N Drake and it was

**RESOLVED  
29794**

that the minutes of the Amenities Committee meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2018 (pages 15618 to 15624) 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 28<sup>th</sup> August 2018 is progressing.

Item 88: the AO said that Cllr N J Campbell-White has not contacted Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) councillors about WBC Highways department's refusal

to allow Wokingham Town Council (WTC) to install a bench on the corner of Glebelands Road and Clare Avenue.

Councillors considered some different approaches which could be taken to break this impasse. However, these came back to the need to persuade Highways officers to reverse their decision.

Councillors felt that Cllr Campbell-White could make a final attempt to discuss this matter with WBC councillors before the November 2018 Amenities Committee meeting.

**ACTION: CLLR N J CAMPBELL-WHITE**

Item 101: this matter will be considered under agenda item 9.

Item 113: the B&GO said that in addition to the single quotation received for the refurbishment of the Town Hall public kitchen he has passed contact details of four further companies to the Events Coordinator (EC). Cllr C R George said that he will meet with the EC when the latter returns from annual leave in two weeks' time to expedite this matter.

**ACTION: CLLR C R GEORGE/ EVENTS COORDINATOR**

Item 114: this matter will be considered under agenda item 18.

Item 115: the B&GO said that two additional mains water supplies have been connected to the Town Hall. These feeds are for the Courtyard and Piccolo Arco restaurants respectively. In order to connect a separately metered water supply to each of these businesses a contractor will carry out internal plumbing work shortly.

**ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER**

Item 116: the B&GO said a wooden loft ladder has been successfully installed at the Town Hall. A safety catch will shortly be affixed to the first section of the ladder.

**ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER**

This ladder provides a much easier and safer means of accessing the roof void. The B&GO said that four members of WTC staff have been instructed how to use the loft ladder correctly and safely.

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

**ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER**

Item 117: the AO said he will meet with Gary Davie of LITE and his installer within the next ten days. This will enable us to plan the installation of WTC's Christmas motifs. During this meeting the AO will demonstrate the power indicator socket Cllr George made with a view to establishing the cost of connecting one to all relevant power outlets.

**ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER**

Item 118: this matter will be considered under agenda item 8.

Item 119: the AO said that Cllr N J Campbell-White has told him that from the conversations he has had with some local charitable organizations there does

not appear to be an appetite among them to financially contribute towards the cost of the purchase of a standalone publicity board for such groups.

Councillors discussed the possibility of using the Wokingham Society noticeboard which is affixed to an external wall of the Town Hall for this purpose. It was decided that this idea, whilst interesting, is not practicable.

The AO confirmed that he has written to Mr P Allen, Wokingham Lions Club, who initially prompted these discussions, to advise that the installation of a discrete publicity board for local charitable organizations was unlikely to be pursued.

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

**ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER**

Item 122: the B&GO said that the French drain by the avenue of red oak trees at Joel Park has been successfully installed. How effective it will be in improving water drainage around the trees will be assessed when heavy or persistent rain falls.

He reminded councillors that financial contributions from the Wokingham Society and former High Sheriff of Berkshire, Lady Elizabeth Godsal, means that WTC's financial contribution to the work is £1,000.

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

**ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER**

Item 123: this matter will be considered under agenda item 11.

Item 124: the B&GO said that he has received details of the gas boiler contractor Cllr M S Monk used at his hotel and that he has contacted the company.

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

**ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER**

Item 125: the discussion about the leasing of an electrically powered van by WTC will be reported under agenda item 10.

### **AMENITIES COMMITTEE SPENDING 2018-19 (Agenda Item 6)**

WTC's budget detail dated 31<sup>st</sup> July 2018 was received and considered.

Cllr T J Lack expressed surprise that the recorded spending against budget code 101/4411 hanging flower baskets was particularly low. The AO said that this was because WTC is in dispute with the provider. Two monthly invoices have not been settled because the provider has significantly overstated the number of baskets on display. The AO walked the town with the provider's operations manager last Friday. Corrected invoices are expected to be raised shortly.

Cllr C D Moore asked why receipts against budget code 106/1003 letting fees Courtyard are so low. The B&GO said that WTC has resolved to levy a much reduced letting fee because of the disruption to businesses from the Market Place improvement works.

### **GRAFFITI WORKING PARTY (Agenda Item 7)**

The notes from WTC's Graffiti Working Party meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2018 were received and considered.

The AO said that Cllr T J Lack is continuing to clean off graffiti around the town in his own time. Councillors thanked him and applauded his efforts.

The AO said that a contractor has removed graffiti from the large brick wall flanking Luckley Path and that many street cabinets and signs have also been cleaned. He said that an area which is heavily graffitied is the wooden fence panels which flank both sides of the remainder of Luckley Path. Discussion is ongoing with WBC's Highways department seeking permission for either Cllr Lack's or a contractor's vehicle to park on this footpath to undertake the removal of the graffiti.

**ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER**

He told councillors that one panel along this footpath is daubed with an obscenity and that following WTC's prompting WBC has finally agreed to clean it off.

**ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER**

The AO said that some brick walls near Heron Park play area, Woosehill, will have the graffiti on them painted over in the near future. He was instructed to tell the contractor not to cut back the foliage covering some of the brickwork as this is a very effective anti-graffiti barrier.

**ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER**

Cllr Lack said that he has been asked to clean off the recently daubed graffiti at WTC's King George V play area. He confirmed that he will ask Graffiti Removal Ltd for the most effective method of removing it from the wet pour ground surface. It is likely that a small, unobtrusive area will be tested before any large scale removal is undertaken.

**ACTION: CLLR T J LACK**

Cllr Ms L Forbes said that invitations to the presentations by the Emmbrook School and St. Crispin's School will be circulated to school leadership teams, participating students, their parents and guardians and all councillors in the near future once an agreed date has been set. She encouraged councillors to support the students when they present their ideas for reducing the incidence of graffiti around Wokingham town. She reminded councillors that it is planned to award half the prize money initially, with the remainder following if, and when, their schemes are fully implemented.

**ACTION: CLLR MS L FORBES/ AMENITIES OFFICER**

Cllr Forbes told councillors that Wokingham Borough Schools Federation is interested in extending this project to secondary schools across the borough. She thinks that up to six schools could take part in the next eradication of graffiti project. She appreciates that her involvement with schools which lie outside WTC's boundary is as a resident not a town councillor. She anticipates pursuing funding opportunities with the appropriate town and parish councils.

**ACTION: CLLR MS L FORBES**

She expressed her pleasure with the local newspaper coverage given to the awarding of interim prizes to some students.

Cllr C R George thanked Cllr Forbes and the Graffiti Working Party for her and its endeavours.

### **NEW PLAY AREA AT ELMS FIELD (Agenda Item 8)**

The AO reminded councillors that Danielle Hammond from All-Play Ltd presented the proposed design, layout and play equipment for the new Elms Field play area to town councillors on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2018.

The AO has been advised that the play area design submission to WBC's Planning department will be made in the near future.

Cllr Ms L Forbes challenged the lack of involvement of the Amenities Committee in regard to discussions with WBC about its provision of funding for ongoing routine and emergency maintenance at the play area. Cllr C R George said that the Strategy Working Party will undertake these discussions with WBC on behalf of WTC. Cllr Forbes expressed her dissatisfaction with this course of action on the basis that the Amenities Committee will be responsible for maintaining the equipment, surfacing and fencing after installation. Cllr George suggested that Cllr Forbes attends forthcoming Strategy Working Party meetings to raise her concerns with it.

**ACTION: CLLR MS L FORBES**

### **UPDATE ON PROPOSED NEW ALLOTMENT SITE AT MULBERRY GROVE (Agenda Item 9)**

The AO said that he regularly visits the site of the Mulberry Grove allotments to monitor the progress of its construction. He confirmed that storage sheds, the entrance gate, some of the exterior fencing, the main haulageways and pipes for water taps are in place.

He said he has contacted Ms D Lingam, WBC, about the condition of the soil which has been brought onto the site by Crest Nicholson, the developer. The surface is littered with bricks, rubble, boulders and other detritus. It clearly does not meet the specified requirement for topsoil – British Standard 3882. Ms Lingam has instructed Crest Nicholson to rectify this.

**ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER**

Within the last few days large mounds of earth have been brought onto the site and piled in a corner. The AO informed councillors that he has been unable to visually inspect its quality because of wide perimeter heras fencing preventing access onto the site. However, from a distance this does not appear to be good quality topsoil.

The AO explained that the legal transfer of the site from the developer to WTC was in train. However, WTC will not conclude this until the site specific requirements are fully met. These requirements include the quality of the topsoil. The ground is now overrun with annual and perennial weeds.

**ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER**

### **POTENTIAL PROJECTS AND FUNDING REQUESTS FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2019-20 (Agenda Item 10)**

The amenities plan and pp.15622-23 of the minutes of 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2018 Amenities Committee meeting were received and considered.

The councillors were content to have the seven itemized requests for funding consolidated onto a prioritized list at the November Amenities Committee meeting. These are listed on p.15662 of the minutes of 3<sup>rd</sup> July.

Councillors wanted the following work to be added to this list:

- re-pointing of the external cement courses on the Town Hall brickwork from ground level to around 8 feet high. The B&GO estimates a cost of between £10,000 and £20,000 as working to that height will not require scaffolding
- redecoration of both sets of halls, landings and stairs in the Town Hall for approximately £15,000
- installation of external lighting for the upper floor of the Town Hall for up to £45,000. It was noted that as part of the Market Place improvement works a detailed specification already exists.

**ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER**

In regard to his request for WTC to lease a small van to enable the groundsman to carry out his duties the B&GO was asked to provide a report detailing the comparison monthly and annual costs to WTC for the use of the groundsman's personal vehicle and the lease of a small electrically powered or hybrid fuel van.

**ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER**

The B&GO said that from initial discussions he has been quoted £980 plus a monthly rate of £260 for an electrically powered van. Councillors said that at this price WTC could reduce its annual transport expenditure by around a half.

Councillors want information about a range of leasing plans and prices to consider at the 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018 Amenities Committee meeting.

**ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER**

It was suggested that a leasing arrangement could be supported by the leasing company or third parties via sponsorship and advertising on the vehicle.

**ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER**

### **BENCH AT HERON PARK PLAY AREA (Agenda Item 11)**

The AO said that WTC paid for and WBC installed a metal bench near the Heron Park play area. He drew councillors' attention to the photographs of the bench in situ in their agenda pack.

He also said that the application WTC made to One Stop Stores' (OSS) community projects fund has been successful and that £850 has been received by WTC.

He told councillors that a condition of the award is that a small plaque acknowledging the funding from OSS must be attached to the bench. The AO was instructed to arrange this.

**ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER**

Cllr Ms L Forbes reported that she is still in discussion with the store manager at Morrisons supermarket, Woosehill, regarding the grocer providing some funding.

### **REVISED WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL STREET MARKETS' REGULATIONS (Agenda Item 12)**

The existing regulations governing the operation of WTC's markets and the draft regulations to replace them were received and considered.

When asked, the B&GO said that from January 2019 all traders at WTC markets must sell their goods from 'pop-up' style gazebos.

**ACTION: MARKET AND BLOOM OFFICER**

He also confirmed that WTC does not bar the sale of alcohol on its markets. Any such sales must, of course, comply with the relevant national legislation.

When asked, the B&GO said that the abbreviation 'GMO' in the draft regulations refers to genetically modified organisms.

Councillors felt that that the sale of fireworks, knives and similar products, which are age restricted by market traders is permissible providing all relevant national legislation and safeguards are followed.

**ACTION: MARKET AND BLOOM OFFICER**

It was proposed by Cllr C D Moore and seconded by Cllr T J Lack and it was

### **RESOLVED 29795**

that the draft general and farmers' markets regulations are adopted providing the following changes are made:

- regulation 3 (general) to be : (2pm for farmers' markets) and not 1:30-2:30pm
- regulation 15 (general) to be: WTC prohibits the sale of products wholly or partially made with real fur and the selling of counterfeit or illicit goods
- fifth regulation (farmers): GMO to be defined as genetically modified organisms

### **ALLOTMENT RENTAL RATES FOR 1<sup>ST</sup> NOVEMBER 2019 TO 31<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER 2020 (Agenda Item 13)**

Report 01/2018-19 dated 8<sup>th</sup> August 2018 from the Amenities Officer was received and considered.

The AO said that the committee needs to resolve on the rate of increase to WTC's annual rent charges for its allotment tenants from November 2019 to October 2020. There is a legal requirement to give twelve months' notice of any rent increase and tenants will be informed of the decision via WTC's annual allotments newsletter in November 2018.

The AO said that he recommends holding the 2019-20 rental rate at 2018-19 levels. The weather conditions over many months in 2018 have been very challenging. Not imposing an increase would reflect the difficulties many allotment gardeners have experienced this year in tending their plots because of the weather.

Councillors discussed whether this would set a binding precedent and lead to allotment gardeners expecting a similar concession in future years if weather conditions are unfavourable. The AO said this was not the case.

It was proposed by Cllr C D Moore and seconded by Cllr A N Drake and it was

**RESOLVED  
29796**

to hold all allotment rental rates for 1<sup>st</sup> November 2019 to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020 at the 2018 -19 level because of the wholly exceptional weather conditions which have prevailed for much of 2018.

**ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER**

#### **WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL'S GROUNDS MAINTENANCE REVIEW (Agenda Item 14)**

A copy of Wokingham Borough Council's grounds maintenance contract review document was received and considered.

Cllr C R George asked councillors to consider WBC grounds maintenance standards in their respective wards. Issues and concerns should be sent via email to the AO who will circulate the consolidated list to Amenities Committee councillors for their approval. The approved list will then be submitted by the AO to WBC to inform its contract review.

**ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER**

Councillors were asked to send comments to the AO within the next two weeks.

**ACTION: AMENITIES COMMITTEE COUNCILLORS**

Cllr Ms L Forbes noted that details of this review have already been reported by local newspapers. Cllr C D Moore felt that WBC oversight of the operational management of the contract was fundamental to its success and that WBC and the contractor should react quickly to all feedback.

#### **NATIONAL ALLOTMENTS WEEK 2018 (Agenda Item 15)**

The AO said that WTC participated in national allotments week by opening its Ormonde Road allotments site on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> August 2018 to the public. It was attended by the town mayor and was an enjoyable afternoon. Two enquiries were made about renting a WTC allotment plot.

#### **AMENITIES COMMITTEE INFORMATION (Agenda Item 16)**

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

#### **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC (Agenda 17)**

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

**RESOLVED  
29797**

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**

### **FOOTPATH FROM LESLIE SEARS PLAYING FIELD TO TANNERS ROW (Agenda Item 18)**

Report 01/2018-19 dated 24<sup>th</sup> July 2018 from the Buildings and Grounds Officer was received and considered.

The B&GO said that the scheme to reinforce the route taken by pedestrians from Tanners Row across Viking Field to the entrance of Leslie Sears playing field involves laying sturdy plastic mesh and filling the spaces in it with soil. Once this is accomplished the soil will be seeded with grass.

When asked, he indicated that the plastic mesh products recommended by the three contractors are similar and that in his view all of the products will achieve WTC's aim of reinforcing the path. He confirmed that the entrance by Tanners Row and Leslie's Sears can be particularly boggy after heavy rain.

He confirmed that company A's proposal is based on using Park 40 Gridforce Mesh.

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

**RESOLVED  
29798**

to engage contractor A to install reinforced mesh from the entrance to Tanners Row, across Viking Field, to the entrance to Leslie Sears playing field for £5,687.77 plus VAT as per its quotation dated 20<sup>th</sup> June 2018.

**ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER**

The B&GO said that contractor A is Atlands Landscapes and that the work will be carried out as soon as possible.

**ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER**

### **ENGAGEMENT OF CONSULTANTS FOR PROVISION OF A DESIGN AND SPECIFICATION BRIEF FOR REPLACEMENT OF TOWN HALL HEATING BOILERS (Agenda Item 19)**

Report 02/2018-19 dated 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2018 from the Buildings and Grounds Officer was received and considered.

The B&GO said that the replacement of the large boilers at the Town Hall will be a complex undertaking from both a design and engineering standpoint. As the cost of the products and their installation will be substantial, quotations must be sought via central governments contracts finder website. Therefore, in order to provide interested contractors across the country with a detailed design and specification for the work, a properly qualified consultant is to be engaged to produce it.

Councillors compared the four proposals received.

It was proposed by Cllr C D Moore and seconded by Cllr T J Lack and it was

**RESOLVED  
29799**

to engage consultant C to provide a detailed design and specification brief for the replacement of the Town Hall boilers at a cost of £5,160.00 plus VAT as detailed in its quotation 1362.01/PSB/02.

**ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER**

The B&GO said consultant C is PSB Consulting Engineers (Oxford) Ltd.

The meeting closed at 10:09 pm.

**CHAIRMAN**