

12th September 2017

Minutes of the proceedings of the **AMENITIES COMMITTEE** meeting held on this day in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, WOKINGHAM** from 7:30pm to 9:24pm.

PRESENT

Cllrs M A Ashwell (Vice-chairman), C R George, Ms L Forbes, T J Lack, C D Moore and M L Richards

IN ATTENDANCE

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

In the absence Cllr N J Campbell-White the meeting was chaired by Cllr M A Ashwell.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from:

Cllr N J Campbell-White (Chairman)
Cllr P M Lucey (the Mayor)
Cllr S Odedra

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)

The AO was instructed to re-draft the minutes of the Amenities Committee meeting held on 4th July 2017 (pages 15395 to 15400) with particular regard to the detail of the 'main hall redecoration working party' p.15400.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The re-worded minutes are to be re-presented at the Amenities Committee meeting set for Tuesday 7th November 2017.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

MONITORING REPORT (Agenda Item 5)

The AO and B&GO updated the Committee on how the work to deal with the items on the monitoring report dated 6th September 2017 is progressing.

Item 88: this matter will be dealt with under agenda item 15.



Item 100: the B&GO said that subsequent to an inspection visit to Woosehill Community Hall by several amenities committee councillors he can report the following:

Main Hall

- a contractor has advised that the heating system in the building is working well and does not need to be replaced
- the cost of installing a better air conditioning system could be up to £18,000; it is suggested that this is added to the amenities plan
- a quotation will be sought to install lighting in the storage cupboards
- the floor surface could be stripped and polished if sufficient money can be found from the existing in-year maintenance budget
- a quotation of £1,853 to replace the fluorescent lighting and wall-mounted uplighters has been obtained. The B&GO is to investigate the terms of WTC's lease with WBC
- a quotation for painting the inside of the storage cupboards is to be obtained
- a replacement fridge will be purchased if sufficient money can be found from the existing in-year maintenance budget

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Downstairs Committee Room

- the skirting boards will be repaired in-house
- the vinyl flooring will not be replaced at this time. It has been stripped and polished.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Stairs and landing

- A quotation of £1,800 for painting the stairs and landing has been received. The work could potentially be funded from the 2017-2018 maintenance budget

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

External

- a new security camera will only be purchased when the existing model fails
- the colour of the hand rail will not be changed at this time

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Entrance porch

- the B&GO will investigate the terms of WTC's lease with WBC in regard to remodelling the entrance porch

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

The B&GO told councillors that 60 chairs and 12 tables have been recently purchased to make it easier for more elderly users to set up the rooms they have hired.

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

Item 103: this matter will be dealt with under agenda item 6.

Item 104: the AO said that he has obtained comparable prices for either hiring wooden picket fences for one Christmas period or purchasing them outright. Twelve 1 metre tall by 1.8 metres long white, free-standing interlocking fences can be purchased for around £800 nett. Transportation and storage can be



provided by LITE for £150 per annum if WTC staff assemble and dismantle the fences. On this basis the AO was instructed to purchase the fences for use around the main Christmas tree.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Item 105: the B&GO said that he has not received any further information from Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) Cleaner and Greener about potential funding for a footpath behind Morrisons supermarket, Woosehill.

The councillors want this matter pursued and to remain on the monitoring report at present.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Item 107: this matter will be dealt with under agenda item 18.

Item 108: the B&GO said he is still in discussion with WTC Information Centre staff about the practicalities of using multiple codes with the main entrance doors keypad and how this can most easily be administered.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Item 109: this matter will be dealt with under agenda item 11.

Item 110: this matter will be dealt with under agenda item 13.

Item 111: the AO said that he has engaged with WBC Cleaner and Greener and through their good offices it is hoped that WBC's contractor ISS will provide practical support with the preparation and planting of the hawthorn et al whips. He confirmed that the whips will be planted on Barkham Recreation Ground adjacent to the Ormonde Road allotment fence. Mrs T. Austen, Ormonde Road allotment tenant is driving this project on behalf of the allotment tenants and is obtaining the whips from the Woodland Trust. Councillors observed that ongoing maintenance as the hedge grows and matures is essential. The AO said that in years to come when the hedge is well established cutting it back will be an expense for WTC. The hedge will provide an additional security barrier for the site.

GRAFFITI WORKING PARTY (Agenda Item 6)

Cllr C R George said that in the interests of full disclosure he wanted it noted that he has lent WTC a CCTV system to be used to deter graffitists from bespoiling walls on Luckley Path.

Cllr Ms L Forbes said that she met with the headteacher at the Emmbrook School to discuss WTC's schools graffiti project. She is very pleased with the positive response she received. Meetings have been arranged at St. Crispin's and the Holt schools. Cllr Forbes is encouraged to discover that the WTC's initiative chimes with the social responsibility agenda of these secondary schools.

The Vice-chairman congratulated Cllr Forbes on the progress she has made in a relatively short time and he thanked Cllr Lack for his work and support.

Cllr Forbes said that the Graffiti Working Party (GWP) wants to protect a sizeable proportion of the graffiti budget to enable the schools project to be properly funded. The structure of the project is to be fully established alongside the rewards scheme at the next meeting of the GWP (5th October 2017).



**RESOLVED
29596**

It was proposed by Cllr Ms L Forbes and seconded by Cllr T J Lack and it was to ring-fence £2,500 from the 2017-2018 £7,500 graffiti budget to fund WTC's schools graffiti project this year.

Cllr T J Lack said that the GWP instructed the AO to contact six Woosehill residents regarding graffiti on their external boundary walls or fences. This will be followed through by offering practical advice and some help with the cost of removal.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The AO said that practical support and help with the cost of removal was given to Ms S Jeremy, Albert Road. With the help of her brother she removed some graffiti from the side of her external wall bordering a public footpath. A contractor employed by WTC completed the task. Ms Jeremy contributed £100 towards the cost of employing this contractor. The AO said that unfortunately the eight metre long wall has been covered again with egregious graffiti. This probably occurred on Monday evening 11th September. Providing Ms Jeremy agrees the councillors instructed the AO to arrange for offenders serving unpaid work orders to paint over the graffiti on her wall.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The AO informed the councillors that earlier today he received permission from Network Rail to allow WTC to clean off the graffiti on the railway bridge on Reading Road.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

**RESOLVED
29597**

It was proposed by Cllr Ms L Forbes and seconded by Cllr T J Lack and it was to instruct the AO to employ a contractor to carry out this work, on a best value basis, providing the nett cost is less than £1,000.

The AO explained that street cabinets containing electrical equipment are a favourite target for graffiti artists. He said that strenuous efforts continue to be made to discover the ownership of these disparate cabinets across the town. Particular attention has been paid to the one on the junction of Oxford Road and Barkham Road by the railway station. In short WBC has now admitted that it holds equipment for the nearby traffic lights. WBC has issued a seven day work order for the removal of the graffiti on this cabinet.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Cllr M A Ashwell congratulated Cllr Forbes and Cllr Lack on their graffiti newsletter and welcomed their initiative to provide this to all town councillors at the next Full Council meeting.

ACTION: CLLRS MS L FORBES & T J LACK

AMENITIES COMMITTEE SPENDING 2017-18 YEAR TO DATE (Agenda Item 7)

The relevant extract from the 2017-2018 budget detail by centre report dated 31st August 2017 was received and considered.

The following queries were raised by Cllr T J Lack:



Code		£ Annual budget	£ Spend to 31.08/17
101/4411	Hanging flower baskets	11,500	3,140
103/4105	Maintenance contracts	19,500	919
103/4107	Trees	23,000	6,560
106/4135	Town hall water	5,150	(489)
106/4120	Security	5,000	1,532
106/4330	IC/ hirer misc. costs	750	1,369

101/4411: the AO said that the disproportionate underspend against the full year budget is due to a significantly reduced number of hanging flower baskets displayed from April 2017 because of the disruption caused by town centre improvement works.

103/4105: the B&GO will investigate why spending is recorded as only £919.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

103/4107: the B&GO assured councillors that work to the value of the annual budget has already been committed by WTC.

106/4135: the B&GO said that the large budget was because it includes the cost of the clean and dirty water used by both restaurants in the town hall building. He assured councillors that the water costs incurred by the restaurants are recouped from them by WTC. He was asked to inform the councillors about the mechanism to accomplish this and why spending to date is a negative amount.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

The B&GO said that work has begun to provide both caterers with a discrete, metered water supply.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

106/4120: the B&GO said that this cost centre was used to pay for the external security contractor who inspects and locks the town hall building at around 11:30pm.

106/4330: the B&GO said that he will investigate this significant overspend.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL'S BUILDINGS CONDITIONS SURVEYS 1ST MARCH 2018-28TH FEBRUARY 2021 (Agenda Item 8)

The B&GO reminded councillors that an annual inspection of the town hall to determine the condition of the building is carried out by an appointed contractor. A triennial condition survey is undertaken by the same contractor at Woosehill Community Hall. WTC's three year contract with Ridge & Partners LLP ends on 28th February 2018.

The B&GO said that Ridge has been awarded the contract over the previous nine years – both because of its inherent expertise and its very competitive charges.

He suggested that to circumvent a time consuming tender process which in all likelihood would have a predictable outcome the buildings condition contract from 2018-2021 could be awarded directly to Ridge.

It was proposed by Cllr Ms L Forbes and seconded by Cllr C D Moore and it was
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**RESOLVED
29598**

to award WTC's building conditions surveys contract for 1st March 2018 to 28th February 2021 to Ridge & Partners LLP.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER/ RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER

**WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL'S HANGING FLOWER BASKETS
CONTRACT: END DATE 31ST MAY 2018 (Agenda Item 9)**

The AO said that WTC's triennial hanging flower basket contract with Windowflowers Ltd ends on 31st May 2018.

He suggested that the tender process for 2018-2021 would be complicated by the disruption caused by the ongoing town centre improvement works. The effect of which is to remove and in some instances temporarily relocate other hanging basket positions. Windowflowers have already proven adept at responding to these changes.

Windowflowers is prepared to extend the contract for one year by which time the newly laid out town centre should be largely established. This will enable existing and new locations for hanging baskets to be confirmed and to be properly incorporated into future tender documentation.

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

**RESOLVED
29599**

to engage Windowflowers to provide planted and fully maintained hanging flower baskets around the town centre from 1st June 2018 to 31st May 2019. A 3% increase on the 2015-2018 contracted price will be applied to the actual number of baskets provided.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER/ RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER

The AO was instructed to ensure that a full tender process is employed for the June 2019 to May 2022 period.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

TEMPORARY RELOCATION OF WOKINGHAM'S MARKETS RELOCATION FEES (Agenda Item 10)

The B&GO confirmed that WTC's markets have been temporarily relocated to the Plaza, off Denmark Street.

He reminded councillors that a number of market traders took holidays in August so he expects an uptick in the number of traders going forward. He said that the relocation has been well advertised by the extensive use of street signage and heavy use of social media.

He reported that due to the relocation and the attendant disruption in the town centre three traders have left the market although one has since indicated the intention to return. He indicated that trading appears to be mixed. Some stallholders have said business is good and some have said the opposite.

The B&GO said that the manager and staff of the Gig House public house have been extremely supportive during and since the market relocation. The pub provides electricity, storage and toilet facilities which are all invaluable.



The B&GO was asked to write to the Gig House on behalf of WTC to formally record the Committee's gratitude.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

AMENITIES COMMITTEE'S OBJECTIVES 2017-2018 (Agenda Item 11)

The proposed Amenities Committee objectives for 2017-2018 were received and considered.

Cllr T J Lack was thanked for his work in extending the scope of these objectives to incorporate the Committee's involvement with entry into Thames and Chilterns in Bloom, the provision of Christmas lights and motifs, and graffiti removal.

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

**RESOLVED
29600**

to adopt the objectives for 2017-2018 as now presented to the Amenities Committee.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

ALLOTMENT RENTAL RATES FOR 1ST NOVEMBER 2018 TO 31ST OCTOBER 2019 (Agenda Item 12)

Report 02/2017-18 dated 17th August 2017 from the AO was received and considered.

The AO assured councillors that the removal of the 25% concessionary rate for allotment tenants from November 2016 did not apply to any tenant already in receipt of it.

It was proposed by Cllr C R George and seconded by Cllr M J Richards and it was

**RESOLVED
29601**

to apply a 1.5% increase to the November 2017-2018 allotment rates as detailed in the AO's report.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER/ RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER

NEW ALLOTMENT SITE AT MULBERRY GROVE, WOKINGHAM (Agenda Item 13)

The AO said that the Town Clerk has begun the work to transfer ownership of the Mulberry Grove allotment site to WTC.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

The other major work strand is to ensure that the site is handed over to WTC by the housebuilder Crest Nicholson in a 'fork' ready condition. To this end the AO is to meet with Ms S Morris, Senior Planning Officer, WBC, next week to reiterate WTC's detailed requirements. These will be measured against agreements struck between WBC and Crest Nicholson as reserved matters during the planning process.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Councillors reiterated their concerns that the allotment site at Mulberry Grove is, at present, a compound for Crest Nicholson. As such they expect the crushed materials surface to be heavily contaminated with rubble, building materials, oil and other detritus which could have a damaging effect on the subsoil.



The AO said that Ms Morris has indicated that a toilet will not be provided for the allotment. Cllr C R George believes that plumbed in toilet facilities are contained within the compound given that he cannot see any portals.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The AO was instructed to apprise the Amenities Committee councillors of the outcome of his meeting with Ms Morris.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

REQUEST FROM RESIDENT FOR A FOOTPATH LINKING THE TWO PEDESTRIAN ENTRANCES INTO KING GEORGE V PLAYING FIELD (Agenda Item 14)

The request from Mrs. Dampier, a Wokingham resident, was received and considered.

The B&GO advised councillors that if they were minded to agree to the installation of a footpath across King George V playing field (KGV) as requested by Mrs Dampier a formal application for funding would have to be made to the Finance and Personnel Committee. He also said that he has been informed by WBC that no residual S106 funding is available for this work.

When asked he suggested that a properly laid footpath linking the entrances into KGV could be expected to cost in the region of £15,000.

Councillors challenged the contention that the pavements and roads on neighbouring streets are not safe to use. Any illegal or inconsiderate parking should be referred to WBC to deal with under the new civil enforcement procedures.

Councillors did not support paving over some of KGV's green space and therefore, could not accede to Mrs Dampier's request. The Town Clerk was asked to communicate this decision to Mrs Dampier and Cllr O J Whittle, WBC.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

REQUEST TO PLACE A BENCH ON CORNER OF CLARE AVENUE AND GLEBELANDS ROAD (Agenda Item 15)

The email from Mr W Robertson, WBC Highways, dated 1st September 2017 was received and considered.

Councillors expressed their great disappointment with the stance taken by WBC. They disputed the contention that a bench installed on the corner of Clare Avenue and Glebelands Road would lead to an increase in anti-social behaviour in the immediate vicinity.

Similarly they said that the potential for disturbance to underground services could easily be avoided.

The AO was instructed to respond to Mr. Robertson's email regretting WBC's decision and asking for it to be reconsidered.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

ALLOTMENTS OPEN DAY AT ORMONDE ROAD ALLOTMENTS (Agenda Item 16)



The AO said that the allotments open day in August was well received by those who attended. He said that six potential allotment tenants came to look around Ormonde Road and have all joined the waiting list.

He noted the crucial support of Wokingham Horticultural Association and several of its individual members. Their help was essential in planning, setting up and support across the day. He said that around £140 was donated to the town mayor's charities via the tea urn and cake stall.

POTENTIAL PROJECTS AND FUNDING REQUESTS FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2018-19 (Agenda Item 17)

The amenities plan was received and considered.

The councillors discussed what funding requests to make to the Finance and Personnel Committee for municipal year 2018-2019 and beyond.

To this end the AO said that councillors could consider making the following requests:

- increase the Thames and Chilterns in Bloom budget from £5,000 to £10,000 to support a return to the regional competition in 2018
- retain the £7,500 budget for graffiti removal and WTC's schools project
- resurface the Joel Park play area, likely cost to be between £10,000 and £15,000

Likewise the B&GO said that councillors could consider making the following requests:

- install two new boilers in the town hall to replace the existing three which are approaching the end of their useful life. The existing boilers are thought to be around 15 years old and in the year to date over £3,000 has been spent on repairing them. The B&GO said that the cost of two new boilers will be around £9,000 but the cost of labour and the need to re-route flues will be expensive. A budget of £25,000 would be required.
- establish a much safer route to and across the roof of the building: at present this involves crawling along a difficult pathway whenever flags are flown for an estimated cost £5,000

The AO was instructed to list these suggestions and send them to Amenities Committee councillors for their consideration prior to the next meeting.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Councillors were encouraged to add items to the list and to come to the 7th November 2017 meeting with their requirements in priority order.

ACTION: AMENITIES COMMITTEE COUNCILLORS

At this meeting a definitive prioritized list of financial requests will be arrived at. This will then be sent to the Finance and Personnel Committee for its consideration.

MAIN HALL REDECORATION WORKING PARTY (Agenda Item 18)

The B&GO said the Main Hall Redecoration Working party (MHRWP) has decided upon an overarching colour scheme for the repainting of the interior of the main hall and council chamber. At the forthcoming meeting of the MHRWP



specific colours will be agreed upon. With this accomplished the B&GO will draw up a detailed specification and will seek quotations from decorators for the work. Once received the quotations will be embedded in a report for the Amenities Committee to consider.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

AMENITIES COMMITTEE INFORMATION (Agenda Item 19)

- (a) The councillors felt that Wokingham's Winter Carnival in 2017 would still contain a procession through the town centre but the size of vehicles involved would be restricted because of the town centre improvement works.

The AO was instructed to include the proposed Elms Field children's play area on the next Amenities Committee agenda.

- (b) The letter from Ms. R. Bird, Strategic Engagement Officer, WBC, dated 28th July was received for information.

The meeting closed at 9:24pm.

CHAIRMAN

