

7th November 2017

Minutes of the proceedings of the **AMENITIES COMMITTEE** meeting held on this day in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, WOKINGHAM** from 7:31pm to 9:46pm.

PRESENT

Cllrs N J Campbell-White (Chairman), Ms L Forbes, C D Moore, M L Richards and S Odedra

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 M A Ashwell (Chairman)
Cllr C R George
Cllr P M Lucey (the Mayor)
Cllr T J Lack

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 C D Moore and it was

**RESOLVED
29631**

that the minutes of the Amenities Committee meeting held on 4th July 2017 (pages 15395 to 15400) be received as a true and correct record and they be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

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

**RESOLVED
29632**

that the minutes of the Amenities Committee meeting held on 12th September 2017 (pages 15420 to 15429) 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 AO and B&GO updated the Committee on how the work to deal with the items on the monitoring report dated 31st October 2017 is progressing.

Item 88: this matter will be dealt with under agenda item 11.

Cllr M L Richards joined the meeting at 7:36pm.

Item 100: the Chairman said that this matter will be considered under agenda item 16. The B&GO said that scheduling the redecoration at Woosehill Community Hall is complicated by the number and timings of room bookings.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Item 101: the AO said he met with Ms S Morris, Senior Planner, Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) and Ms D Lingam, Green Infrastructure Delivery Officer (Landscape Architect), WBC to discuss the Committee's requirements for the set-up of the new allotments at Mulberry Grove. Subsequent to this meeting Ms S Morris advised Crest Nicholson about these detailed requirements again.

Yesterday the AO received a revised layout and specification plan from Crest Nicholson via Ms S Morris. With the exception of toilet facilities all of the requirements have been incorporated into this.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

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

Item 104: this matter will be dealt with under agenda item 9.

Item 105: the B&GO said that there has been no progress regarding the installation of a hard-standing footpath at the rear of Morrisons supermarket, Woosehill.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Item 107: this matter will be dealt with under agenda item 17.

Item 108: the B&GO said that this matter will be attended to in the coming week now that staff have returned from ill-health absence and holidays.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Item 111: the AO said that ISS, WBC's grounds maintenance contractor, free of charge, has excavated a 30 centimetres deep and 45 metres long trench on Barkham Recreation Ground adjacent to the Ormonde Road allotments railings to enable hedging whips to be planted. It is anticipated that offenders serving unpaid work orders will begin the planting on Wednesday 8th November. As it grows the hedge will provide an additional barrier against unlawful entry onto the allotments and a useful habitat for insects and small birds and mammals. The whips have been obtained free of charge from the Woodland Trust.

GRAFFITI WORKING PARTY (Agenda Item 6)

Cllr Ms L Forbes noted that Inspector Donachy has transferred from Wokingham Police. She said that the Town Clerk will introduce her to his replacement in due course.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK/ CLLR MS L FORBES



In regard to the schools project she reported that The Emmbrook School is forming a project committee and that Cllr S Odedra has been very helpful in facilitating a link with The Holt School. She said that at the forthcoming meeting of the Graffiti Working Party (GWP) more details of the project will be worked through.

The Chairman congratulated Cllr Forbes on what the GWP has achieved to date.

Cllr Forbes said she thinks it would be helpful to engage with local media organizations early in 2018.

ACTION: CLLR MS L FORBES

The AO said that he has recently received information from WBC about the likely ownership of street cabinets across the town. He will shortly photograph these cabinets and contact the parent organizations to request the over-painting of the graffiti on them.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

He reported that the planned removal of graffiti from and painting of the Network Rail bridge along Reading Road is scheduled for Wednesday 8th November 2017.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

He said that he continues to engage with Mr S Griffin of Pennicott Chartered Surveyors, Luckley Path, regarding the installation of closed circuit television cameras on the side wall of its building. The cameras may deter criminals from daubing graffiti along the walls abutting Luckley Path.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The Chairman noted the return of graffiti on the brick wall and garden fence abutting the footpath off Wellington Road which leads to Albert Road.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The AO indicated that a power washer would assist with the removal of the graffiti from the brick wall abutting this footpath.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

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 October 2017 was received and considered.

The Chairman reiterated that the budget detail contains a great deal of financial information. He reminded councillors to study it upon receipt and to raise questions with either the Responsible Finance Officer, AO or B&GO prior to the relevant Amenities Committee meeting to enable any questions to be properly responded to.

The B&GO answered the questions raised about several budget lines at the 12th September 2017 meeting.

The B&GO said that plans to provide separately metered water supplies to The Courtyard Restaurant and Piccolo Arco are well advanced. When these are in place this will remove the need for WTC's finance team to reallocate water



charges to both businesses. Ideas on how separate water supplies could most easily be installed were discussed.

The Chairman noted that the revenue from the hire of WTC's facilities was very good. He wanted Kevin Belstone, Events Coordinator, thanked for his significant contribution to this.

ACTION: RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER

When asked, the B&GO said that three prospective wedding bookings may not have gone ahead because of the disruption caused by the Market Place improvement works.

LARGE OAK TREE AT NO.67 GIPSY LANE (Agenda Item 8)

The AO said that he was contacted by Mr W Barron, 67 Gipsy Lane, Wokingham about the very large oak tree at the rear of his property.

Mr Barron wants WTC to arrange for the height of this tree to be reduced by around 30%. It casts significant shadow over his garden for most of the year. The tree is around 30-35 metres tall with an equally impressive girth and spread. Mr Barron contended that the tree is owned by WTC because it stands on WTC land. The AO explained to him that the boundary between his property and Gipsy Lane allotments is the ditch which runs at the bottom of the bank. The trunk of the tree is on Mr Barron's side of the ditch.

The AO has obtained a guide price from a tree contractor of £3,800 (excluding VAT) to reduce the size of the tree by 30%. During the discussion with Mr Barron the householder indicated that he could not afford to pay more than a few hundred pounds for the work.

Mr Barron has formally requested that WTC pays for the work. The councillors said that as the tree appears to be in good health, is a landmark veteran tree and is on Mr Barron's property they would not pay for its crown reduction.

The AO was instructed to convey this decision to Mr Barron.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

CHRISTMAS TREE AND LIGHTS 2017 (Agenda Item 9)

The AO said that the main town centre Christmas tree will be installed outside the Diamond Jubilee Room of the Town Hall on either 21st or 22nd November 2017. He explained that the support pit will not be in place. However, a substantial 'concrete boot' will be used to hold the tree upright. The Town Clerk is in discussion with Balfour Beatty for it to pay the £600 cost of the boot.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

He said that the free-standing white picket fences have been purchased and will be delivered on 22nd November. They will be put around the main Christmas tree by the AO.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

HIRE CHARGES FOR WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL'S FACILITIES AND AMENITIES 2018 (Agenda Item 10)



The AO said that both the Town Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer think that in view of the significant construction work and disruption across the town centre it would be sensible to hold WTC's hire charges at 2017 levels.

Councillors agreed that this was the correct, pragmatic decision. The AO said he felt a small rise in the cost of hiring the football pitch at Langborough Recreation Ground (LRG) from the beginning of the season in July 2018 was appropriate. The charge of £40 per match has been in place for several years.

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

**RESOLVED
29633**

that the charges for WTC's facilities and amenities should be maintained at their current levels in 2018 with the exception of the hire of the LRG football pitch which should increase to £45 per match from July 2018.

ACTION: RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER/AMENITIES OFFICER

REQUEST TO PLACE A BENCH ON CORNER OF CLARE AVENUE AND GLEBELANDS ROAD (Agenda Item 11)

The email from Mr W Robertson, WBC, was received and considered. The councillors were very disappointed that WBC has again refused WTC's request to install a bench on the corner of Glebelands Road and Clare Avenue.

The Chairman said that he will contact WBC councillors to ask for this decision to be reconsidered.

ACTION: CLLR N J CAMPBELL-WHITE

REVIEW OF WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL'S 'WOKINGHAM IN BLOOM' GARDENING COMPETITIONS 2017 (Agenda Item 12)

The AO's report 03:2017/18 dated 13th October 2017 was received and considered.

The AO said that 2017 was another successful year for WTC's gardening competitions which are now held under the 'Wokingham in Bloom' banner. The four elements – allotment gardeners, businesses, residents and schools are well-supported by their respective constituencies. The help from Wokingham Horticultural Association who advertise the event and provide the judges for the residents 'Greenfingers' competition is very much appreciated. The Town Mayor is an enthusiastic judge for the businesses and schools elements.

All prize winners were welcomed by the Mayor to a presentation ceremony in the main hall of the Town Hall on Monday 2nd October 2017. Over one hundred guests attended. The AO contended that WTC's gardening competitions are an important component of the Council's annual calendar of events and have been held for each of the past fifteen years. Councillors said that the gardening competitions must continue.

ALLOTMENT RENTAL RATES FOR 1ST NOVEMBER 2017 TO 31ST OCTOBER 2018 (Agenda Item 13)

Emails from Mr R Ellis and Mr G McGroarty dated 13th October and 16th October 2017 respectively were received and considered.



Both of these allotment tenants have written to the AO to complain about the 3% increase in allotment rents from 1st November 2017.

When asked, the AO said that no other tenants had complained to him about the rise. He confirmed that the monetary value of this increase for a holder of a small plot is around 65p over a year.

The councillors noted the complaints of Mr Ellis and Mr McGroarty but decided not to reverse or amend the 3% increase.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

THAMES AND CHILTERN IN BLOOM 'IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD' RESULTS 2017 (Agenda Item 14)

The assessment forms for Cockpit Path community garden, Wokingham library garden volunteers group and Wokingham garden share scheme were received and considered.

The AO reminded councillors that entrants into the 'It's Your Neighbourhood' (IYN) section of Thames and Chilterns in Bloom are assessed on their own merits rather than judged against others, unlike the main competition. There are five assessment levels ranging from 'establishing' to 'outstanding'.

Councillors were very pleased to note that Cockpit Path community garden was assessed as outstanding for the fourth year running and that both other entrants were assessed to be thriving – one level below outstanding.

Councillors are keen for the IYN entrants to continue to take part in this. Councillors are also keen for the town to enter the main Thames and Chilterns in Bloom competition in 2018. They recognized the resourcing issues the entry could face if the appointment of a WTC Markets and Bloom Officer is significantly delayed.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

PROPOSAL FOR A COMPOST TOILET AT ORMONDE ROAD ALLOTMENTS SITE (Agenda Item 15)

The AO told councillors that since early summer Wokingham Horticultural Association (WHA) has rented and placed a 'portaloo' at Ormonde Road allotments site. This has been in response to increased usage of its trading store as a meeting venue. The WHA committee are unable to support this significant cost any longer.

The AO has held discussions with WHA committee members about possible future arrangements for a permanent toilet. A mains fed purpose built facility would be prohibitively expensive. A composting toilet is a much less costly option and requires little upkeep or ongoing maintenance. One can be purchased, delivered and installed for around £1,500. The AO said that the intention would be to provide a toilet facility and not to use the composted material.

WHA have pledged £500 towards this. Two Ormonde Road allotment tenants have each pledged £100.

It was proposed by Cllr N J Campbell-White and seconded by Cllr M L Richards and it was



**RESOLVED
29634**

that WTC should contribute £500 towards the cost of purchasing and installing a composting toilet at Ormonde Road allotments site from the 2017-18 allotments maintenance budget.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

It is intended to ask all Ormonde Road allotment tenants for a voluntary donation towards the cost. The Chairman said that WTC should act as a guarantor for the full monetary amount required in the event that donations from tenants leave a shortfall.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Cllr L Forbes suggested that Crest Nicholson should be approached to sponsor a composting toilet at the Mulberry Grove allotment site.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

POTENTIAL PROJECTS AND FUNDING REQUESTS FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2018-19 (Agenda Item 16)

When asked, the AO said that he had not received any further suggestions for funding for projects.

Councillors were reminded by the Chairman that the significant cost of the Market Place improvement works will continue to limit the number of other financial commitments WTC can make.

The following requests for funding for financial year 2018-19 are to be put before the Finance and Personnel Committee. They are prioritized as listed:

- 1) establish a much safer means of access to the Town Hall roof space and a safer route across the roof – *estimated cost £5,000 – £7,000*
- 2) install two new boilers in the Town Hall to replace the existing three, all of which are approaching the end of their useful life. These boilers are thought to be around fifteen years old and in the year to date over £3,000 has been spent on repairing them. Any new installation will require flues to be re-routed which will be a significant cost – *overall estimated cost up to £40,000*
- 3) increase the Thames and Chilterns in Bloom budget from £5,000 to £10,000
- 4) maintain the £7,500 budget for graffiti removal and the schools graffiti project
- 5) resurface the existing Joel Park play area and extend the playground to introduce equipment for younger children – *estimated cost £47,000*

ACTION: RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER/ AMENITIES OFFICER

It was felt that the redecoration of the upstairs hall, committee room and hall, landing and stairs at Woosehill Community Hall could be paid for from the relevant 2017-18 maintenance budget.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Further discussion was held about the current arrangements for gaining access to the roof space in the Town Hall. Councillors agreed that swifter action was necessary to address the safe working aspect of this. To this end the Chairman undertook to contact the Town Clerk as a matter of urgency.

ACTION: CLLR N J CAMPBELL- WHITE



It was also felt that the installation of a reinforced grass mesh onto the footpath across Viking Field could be paid for from the 2017-18 parks repairs and maintenance budget. The mesh would make walking across Viking Field much easier after heavy rain and has been requested by parents who use the field as a route to Evendons Primary School.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

With regard to the request for funding for an extended and improved play area at Joel Park the Chairman undertook to contact WBC to investigate the availability of community infrastructure levy money which may be attached to the nearby Matthews Green development.

ACTION: CLLR N J CAMPBELL- WHITE

WTC's Events Coordinator has asked for the Town Hall kitchen to be revamped. Councillors said that this should be put on the Amenities Plan. Several ideas were discussed by councillors. The B&GO undertook to work-up a practicable scheme and report back to the Committee.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER/ BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

MAIN HALL REDECORATION WORKING PARTY (Agenda Item 17)

The B&GO said that the Main Hall Redecoration Working Party has decided on a predominantly red colour scheme for the redecoration. Matt paint will be used.

He told councillors that it will be necessary to convene an Extraordinary Amenities Committee meeting once he has received all of the quotations and compiled a report for councillors.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Councillors said that it would be convenient to hold this meeting earlier in the evening of the forthcoming Full Council meeting.

CLr C D Moore asked how the chosen colours have been assessed for their historical accuracy in relation to the provenance of the building. The B&GO said that he has worked with a contractor who has significant experience of working on Grade 1 listed buildings. This contractor has confirmed that the chosen shades are similar to those used around the time of the building's construction.

AMENITIES COMMITTEE INFORMATION (Agenda Item 18)

CLr Ms L Forbes said that WTC could borrow ideas from the successful recent launch of the Lexicon shopping centre in Bracknell for the relaunch of the improved Market Place.

She also said that WTC could learn from the very successful street market in Lymington.

Councillors felt that the Market Area Working Party would be the most appropriate forum for these two matters to be discussed.

ACTION: CLLR MS L FORBES/ BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Councillors discussed WBC's formal response to WTC's feedback on the proposed layout for the new Elms Field play area. WBC think that the metal Duel Carousel unit would look out of place amongst all of the wooden equipment.



WBC also contend that if it was included two other pieces would have to be removed from the proposed layout.

Cllr Ms L Forbes reported that several local authorities have recently removed wooden play equipment from their schemes because of splinter injuries.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

The meeting closed at 9:46pm.

CHAIRMAN



