

# 5<sup>th</sup> July 2016

Minutes of the proceedings of the **AMENITIES COMMITTEE** meeting held on this day in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, WOKINGHAM** from 7:30pm to 8:34pm.

## **PRESENT**

Cllrs N J Campbell-White (Chairman), Ms L Forbes, C R George, T J Lack, P M Lucey and S Odedra

## **IN ATTENDANCE**

Amenities Officer (AO)  
Buildings and Grounds Officer (B&GO)  
Cllr I L Shepherd-DuBey

## **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)**

Cllr M A Ashwell (Vice-Chairman)  
Cllr Mrs G S Hewetson (the Mayor)  
Cllr M L Richards

## **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 members of the council or 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  
29405**

that the minutes of the Amenities Committee meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2016 (pages 15146 to 15152) 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 29<sup>th</sup> June 2016 is progressing.

Item 3: the B&GO said that phase three of the project to repair and refurbish the windows in the Town Hall is underway. As with the previous phases the stone surrounds will be exposed. He said that an issue, outside of his control, with the erection of the external scaffolding, will, unfortunately, delay the outdoor repair and painting work. He said that additional external work to the small dormer style windows has been identified. For around £3,000 this work will be undertaken when the external scaffolding is in place and will be paid for from the Town Hall repairs and maintenance budget.

**ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER**



Item 88: the AO said that the position as recorded on the monitoring report is unchanged.

Item 89: the AO said that the purchase of Tudor House, buy a private buyer, is now complete. He confirmed that he will contact the new owner in August to ask about the provision of external roof lights.

**ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER**

Item 94: the B&GO said that the extension of the hard-standing path linking Viking Field and Leslie Sears Playing Field will be carried out in early August 2016.

**ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER**

He then said that he has received a request from the Evendons Neighbourhood Action Group to investigate installing a similar path from Tanners Row onto Viking Field because this area also becomes very wet.

**ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER**

Item 96: the AO confirmed that the tree by Cote restaurant on Broad Street, has had lights affixed to its branches.

He said that the three lamp-columns between the entrance to Waitrose's store and Old Row Court are owned by the grocer. Subject to the contractor and Wokingham Town Council (WTC) providing the documentation required by Waitrose the electrical infrastructure for Christmas motifs will be installed in these columns. At the same time the tree by Bosphorus Barbers will be dressed with lights.

**ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER**

Item 97: the AO confirmed that despite receiving permission from Wokingham Borough Council's (WBC) Street Works manager to allow offenders serving community payback orders to weed town centre pavements and gutters, WTC has been ordered to stop the work by WBC, Highways. The reasons cited are the potential damage to pavements and the likelihood of offenders obstructing pedestrians. WTC has been told that offenders can carry out the work providing they operate singly and pull the weeds out by hand. Neither of these conditions is acceptable to Thames Valley Probation Service (TVPS).

Councillors expressed their disappointment with this decision.

The AO said that under the contract entered into with TVPS the offenders will continue to be redeployed to other WTC locations and work.

**ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER**

Item 98: the AO said that the fouling of Red Lion Path by pigeons has significantly reduced since more netting and spikes were installed by the managing agents.

The work to repair and improve the anti-pigeon defences at the bottom of Peach Street will be carried out by Lee Baron's contractor on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2016.

Cllr I L Shepherd-DuBey joined the meeting at 7:46pm and was invited to join the councillors at the table by the chairman.

Item 99: the B&GO said that this matter will be addressed in due course.

**ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER**



Item 100: the B&GO said that the damaged hand-rail adjacent to the steps onto Langborough Recreation Ground has been repaired. The AO was instructed to remove this item from the monitoring report.

**ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER**

Item 101: the AO said that graffiti removal will be considered under agenda item 7.

### **PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF ELMS FIELD (Agenda Item 6)**

The B&GO said that he and the Town Clerk along with WBC staff visited two play areas recently to look at play equipment. LDA Design will produce a layout for the Elms Field play area. A short period for public consultation will then ensue.

The B&GO also said that the extent of WTC's responsibility for the areas bordering Elms Field will also be decided upon in the near future.

Cllr Ms L Forbes reminded councillors that during earlier discussions the Amenities Committee said that the suggested budget of £125,000 was not sufficient to install a flagship play scheme for children ranging in age from toddler to young teenage.

Councillors also want play equipment for children with physical and sensory disabilities to be incorporated into the playground.

**ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER AND TOWN CLERK**

Cllr Forbes says that she has received legal advice that when WTC leases Elms Field from WBC it could be accorded voluntary village green status. In her view this would prevent further development on Elms Field and would help to restore public trust given the disquiet with the development.

**ACTION: TOWN CLERK**

### **GRAFFITI REMOVAL AROUND TOWN CENTRE (Agenda Item 7)**

The AO said his discussions with Bracknell Forest and Reading Borough Councils led him to conclude that an independent graffiti removal contractor provided best value for money. To date around £2,500 has been spent from the Wokingham in Bloom budget to remove graffiti along Cockpit Path, Red Lion Path, South Place, Goatley Way and Erfstadt Court etc. He said that this has significantly improved the appearance of walls, doors and utility wiring boxes in these locations.

It was noted that the Bloom budget cannot pay for any further substantial graffiti removal.

The AO suggested that councillors could consider applying to the Finance and Personnel Committee for a budget to remove graffiti around the town centre at their September 2016 meeting.

**ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER**

Councillors noted the seemingly continual over-painting of the boards on Wellington Road and the litter this is generating.



## **AMENITIES COMMITTEE SPENDING 2015-16 YEAR TO DATE (Agenda Item 8)**

The relevant extract from the budget detail dated 31<sup>st</sup> May 2016 was received and considered.

The Chairman noted that this budget detail was for the first seven weeks of 2016-17.

Councillors questioned why £436 has been spent against line 101/4135 (allotments, water). The AO said that a long-term underground pipe leak at the Ormonde Road site has been uncovered and repaired by the joint efforts of community payback offenders, allotment tenants and the AO within the last ten days. This, along with normal usage will account for the spending.

Similarly, the expenditure of £3,409 against line 106/4135 (town hall, water) was queried. The B&GO said he will investigate this.

**ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER**

The expenditure of £15,120 against line 103/4107 (parks, trees) is due to the timing of paid invoices.

## **AMENITIES COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES 2016-17 YEAR TO DATE (Agenda Item 9)**

The Committee felt that the 2015 objectives were both rigorous and relevant and should be carried forward into 2016.

**ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER**

## **WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL'S RISK REGISTER (Agenda Item 10)**

WTC's risk register pertaining to the responsibilities of the Amenities Committee was received and considered.

The councillors said that the risk register was comprehensive and detailed and were happy to accept it providing officers review it as events unfold.

**ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER/ AMENITIES OFFICER**

## **REQUEST FROM WOKINGHAM DAY NURSERY TO USE LANGBOROUGH RECREATION GROUND (Agenda Item 11)**

The email from Ms N Humphris, dated 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2016 was received and considered.

The B&GO said he supported Ms Humphris' request to use Langborough Recreation Ground (LRG). He said that Wokingham Day Nursery will have a small ride-on train on the day, provided and operated by Wokingham Lions Club. The B&GO said he has received a copy of the Day Nursery's public liability insurance certificate. Councillors are happy to approve this activity.

**ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER**

On a wider issue the B&GO said that he is receiving several requests from groups of local women to use LRG to use the park for family and other social gatherings. Often the opening of the toilet block is included in these requests. Councillors are happy to accede to these requests if the groups provide details of planned activities and have public liability insurance. If the toilets are made



available the group must make a refundable £100 security deposit and undertake to clean the facilities after the event.

### **THAMES AND CHILTERN IN BLOOM (Agenda Item 12)**

The notes from Wokingham in Bloom's steering group meetings dated 9<sup>th</sup> May 2016 and 6<sup>th</sup> June 2016 were received and considered.

The AO said that judging the town's entry into Thames and Chilterns in Bloom is set for Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2016. The AO said that the judges will be taken to a number of enhanced, established gardening projects and a number of projects new for 2016.

He said that overall there are over 150 hanging baskets and planters around the town centre. This is a sizeable increase on 2015's number.

### **KEEPHATCH BEECH, NORTH WOKINGHAM ALLOTMENTS PLAN LAYOUT PROVISION (Agenda Item 13)**

Drawing 5244/SK109/ALP from Aspect Landscape Planning was received and considered.

The councillors noted that the proposed design of the Keephatch Beech allotments site incorporates most of the Amenities Committee's requirements as specified at its 5<sup>th</sup> January 2016 meeting.

The councillors instructed the AO to begin publicizing the availability of these and other new plots immediately when handover dates are established. The councillors are determined that residents on the respective housing developments are to be approached in the first instance.

**ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER**

The Chairman noted that demand for allotment plots fluctuates.

Cllr P M Lucey left the meeting at 8:25pm.

### **INFORMATION ITEMS (Agenda Item 14)**

The AO invited councillors to WTC's allotments open afternoon on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> August 2016.

The meeting closed at 8:34pm.

### **CHAIRMAN**

