

13th September 2016

Minutes of the proceedings of the **AMENITIES COMMITTEE** meeting held on this day in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, WOKINGHAM** from 7:31pm to 8:59pm.

PRESENT

Cllrs M A Ashwell (Vice-Chairman), N J Campbell-White (Chairman), Ms L Forbes, T J Lack and P M Lucey

IN ATTENDANCE

Amenities Officer (AO)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from:

Cllr C R George
Cllr Mrs G S Hewetson (the Mayor)
Cllr C D Moore
Cllr S Odedra
Buildings and Grounds Officer (B&GO)

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 P M Lucey and seconded by Cllr Ms L Forbes and it was

RESOLVED 29430

that the minutes of the Amenities Committee meeting held on 5th July 2016 (pages 15193 to 15197) 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 updated the committee on how the work to deal with the items on the monitoring report dated 6th September 2016 is progressing.

Item 3: the AO said that phase three of the project to repair and refurbish the windows in the Town Hall will be completed on Wednesday 14th September 2016.

The councillors noted that the work to reveal more of the internal stone window surrounds has been an additional cost.



It was recognised that this project was beset with logistical complications because of the competing demands on the use of the main hall. The B&GO was thanked for his professional approach in overseeing the process and for bringing it to a successful conclusion.

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

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Item 88: the AO said that the position remains unchanged since the previous Amenities Committee meeting.

Item 89: the AO said that today he met with Mr. Simon Maclean, one of the joint owners of the former Tudor House. Mr. Maclean is amenable to the councillors wish to install light strings on the gable ends of his property facing Broad Street.

Mr. Maclean's provisos are that the lights are static white when illuminated and avoid any sense of garishness. Also he does not want to be financially disadvantaged nor subjected to any significant inconvenience. Councillors noted that the stance of his insurance company with regard to the building may prove to be a hurdle. Tudor House is a grade II* listed building.

The AO will arrange for WTC's electrical contractor to visit to assess the scope of the work required. Mr Maclean is happy for the lights to draw power from an existing outdoor socket in his rear courtyard and for the cable to run unseen over the roof to the front gable ends. Professional advice will be sought to confirm the practicalities and safety of this arrangement.

It was proposed by Cllr Ms L Forbes and seconded by Cllr P M Lucey and it was

**RESOLVED
29431**

to instruct the AO to obtain a designed scheme and quotation from Festive Lighting Ltd to install lights beneath the tile overhang on both front gable ends of Tudor House.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

It is understood that Mr Maclean will then send this proposal to his insurance company for its consideration. If all parties are content WTC will then make a formal listed building planning application.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Item 94: the chairman noted that a hard-standing footpath has been installed from Tanners Row to Viking Field and previously on the opposite side leading into Leslie Sears playing field, in response to requests from residents. He is concerned about the consequent spoil deposited around this path and requested that it is spread out over a wider area.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

The councillors were gratified that Mr K Rowlands from the Evendons Neighbourhood Action Group (ENAG) has written to Cllr M A Ashwell to offer the thanks of the ENAG to WTC for the installation.

The B&GO was asked to confirm or obtain a guide price for the installation of green coloured plastic grille matting to run from this footpath across the centre of Viking Field to where it joins Leslie Sears playing field.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER



Item 96: the AO confirmed that the electrical infrastructure for Christmas motifs has been installed in the three lamp-columns between the Waitrose store entrance and Old Row Court. Similarly strings of lights have been installed in the tree near Bosphorus Barbers. Discussions are ongoing with the owner of the barbers to connect these lights to the main internal fuse board.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Item 98: the AO confirmed that the repairs to the anti-pigeon netting and boarding along the arcade at the bottom of Peach Street have been completed by Lee Baron managing agents. Consequently the fouling on the pavement below has lessened. However, some pigeons are settling on the top of the arcade. The AO is urging Lee Baron to install spikes or fire gel onto this ledge.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Item 99: this matter is still to be progressed.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Items 101 and 102: the AO was instructed to remove these items from the monitoring report.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF ELMS FIELD (Agenda Item 6)

Wokingham Borough Council's (WBC) Elms Field Play Area Design Brief was received and considered.

The AO said that LDA Design presented revised plans for the proposed new play area at Elms Field to WBC and WTC officers on 7th September 2016. The revised layout and examples of possible play equipment fully draw on the principles and expectations of the brief.

He said that the large play area is laid out in three distinct but adjacent zones – for toddlers, for younger children and for older children. All of the play equipment is to be constructed with wood to complement the setting. The surfacing around and under the equipment will be tiger mulch in a variety of colours.

There will be barrier fencing around the play equipment: a combination of existing hedges, felled materials and conventional fencing to keep dogs out and children in. The AO said it is likely that where practicable the felled trees will be used for fencing, seating or as play objects either in the playground and the greater park.

WBC plans to hold a breakfast time meeting for WTC councillors and borough councillors with town wards in the near future to present the design and composition and to seek comments and suggestions. Following this presentation WBC will undertake a wider consultation using social media and strategically sited information boards etc.

Councillor N J Campbell-White said that discussions between WBC and WTC on the leasing arrangements for Elms Field are continuing and include the length of the lease and the size and scope of the area to be leased by WTC.

From these discussions it has been decided that neither council will seek to have village green status conferred on Elms Field.



AMENITIES COMMITTEE SPENDING 2016-17 YEAR TO DATE (Agenda Item 7)

The relevant extract from the budget detail dated 31st August 2016 was received and considered.

The councillors asked the following questions:

- budget line 104/4320 *Woosehill telephones* – what is this expenditure and why was it so far overspent in 15/16 and why is 16/17's expenditure so close to the annual budget after five months?
- budget line 104/4382 *Woosehill insurances* – why is the actual a negative figure year to date?
- budget line 104/1019 *Woosehill out of hours income* – what is this?
- budget line 106/4330 *Info centre/ hirer misc costs* – what is this and why is it so far over budget?

The AO was unable to answer these questions and said he will talk to the Responsible Finance Officer on her return from annual leave.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER/ BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER/ RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER

POTENTIAL PROJECTS AND FUNDING REQUESTS FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2017-18 (Agenda Item 8)

The Chairman reminded councillors that due to the substantial cost of the Market Place refurbishment, spending on other projects is constrained over the near term.

The councillors agreed to send the following suggestions to the Finance and Personnel Committee after the 8th November 2016 meeting of the Amenities Committee:

- £7,500 for graffiti removal around the town centre
- £30,000 for the redecoration of the main hall and annexe in the town hall
- £1,500 for 2018/19 to refurbish the Rotary Club bench currently sited on Market Place

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

With regard to the graffiti removal proposal the AO was instructed to ensure that an item is included on the 8th November 2016 meeting's agenda to allow councillors to consider how best to engage with school children to convince them not to spray and draw graffiti on buildings and other structures around the town.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The councillors also want to consider a previous suggestion from Cllr Ms L Forbes at greater length regarding improvements to the entrance and interior of Woosehill Community Hall (WCH).

To this end councillors want to hold their 8th November meeting in the hall with time allowed to inspect it thoroughly.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

If all of the suitable rooms at WCH are pre-booked Cllr N J Campbell-White undertook to arrange an inspection of the hall prior to 8th November.



ACTION: CLLR N J CAMPBELL-WHITE/ BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER/ AMENITIES OFFICER

ALLOTMENT PLOT RENTAL RATES FOR 1ST NOVEMBER 2017 TO 31ST OCTOBER 2018 (Agenda Item 9)

Report 01:2016/17 from the AO dated 30th August 2016 was received and considered.

Cllr T J Lack reminded the committee that he is an allotment tenant at the St. Paul's Gate site.

When asked, the AO confirmed that non-Wokingham town residents are not offered plots on any of WTC's four allotments sites.

The councillors discussed the conclusions in the AO's report and

it was proposed by Cllr P M Lucey and seconded by Cllr Ms L Forbes and it was

**RESOLVED
29432**

1. to apply a 3% increase to the 2016/17 rates from 1st November 2017
2. to discontinue the 25% concessionary rate for those in receipt of a state pension with immediate effect. This measure is not to be applied to any existing tenant currently in receipt of such a concession nor to those existing tenants who subsequently receive a state pension whilst he or she is a WTC plot holder.
3. to allow the AO some discretion on whether to divide five pole and larger plots when such become vacant

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER/ RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER

Cllr P M Lucey left the meeting at 8:35pm.

THAMES AND CHILTERN IN BLOOM (Agenda Item 10)

The notes from the Wokingham in Bloom steering group's meeting dated 31st August 2016 were received and considered.

The AO reminded councillors that the results of Thames and Chilterns in Bloom 2016 will be announced in Amersham on Thursday 15th September 2016.

He confirmed that because of the substantive building works around the town centre in 2017 the Wokingham in Bloom steering group has decided not to enter the town into the 2017 competition.

However, it is hoped that several local Bloom groups will continue to take part in the linked It's Your Neighbourhood assessment scheme in 2017.

The AO advised councillors that plans to plant 5,000 crocus corms along London Road are being worked on. The corms have been sourced from the Rotary Club as part of its worldwide Purple 4 Polio campaign.

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS CONTRACT FROM APRIL 2017 (Agenda Item 11)

The AO said that the current three year contract with Gala Lights Ltd., expires on 31st March 2017. He reminded councillors that this is the first contract under



which WTC has hired its lamp-column motifs as opposed to purchasing them outright.

The councillors confirmed that they wished to continue with the hiring model. The AO was instructed to begin the tendering process on this basis.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

He was instructed to include outline provision of Christmas lights on Peach Place and Elms Field.

It was also noted that the location of the main Christmas tree and the secondary trees will alter from the existing arrangement during the refurbishment of Market Place.

Cllr T J Lack left the meeting at 8:54pm.

PROPOSED ALLOTMENTS AT MONTAGUE PARK (Agenda Item 12)

The AO said that Ms E Circuit, Planning WBC, has advised that the transfer of Montague Park allotments to WTC may not take place until late in 2018.

He said that the allotments are to be transferred on the completion of the 550th dwelling and that the developer's contribution money is to be disbursed in tranches on the completion of 400, 500 and 600 dwellings respectively.

He also said that previously unseen documentation provided by Ms Circuit indicates that the developer's contribution money is for both WTC and Wokingham Without Parish Council.

WTC's detailed requirements to ensure that the allotments are transferred to it in a 'ready to let' condition have been reiterated to Ms Circuit. Cllr M A Ashwell requested a copy of the relevant recent email exchanges.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

ALLOTMENTS OPEN DAY 13TH AUGUST 2016 (Agenda Item 13)

The AO reported that the allotments open day at Ormonde Road was a thoroughly enjoyable occasion and that around £140.00 was raised for the Town Mayor's charity from voluntary donations for refreshments.

The meeting closed at 8:59pm.

CHAIRMAN

