

8th November 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 8:55pm.

Before the meeting was called to order the Chairman reiterated Wokingham Town Council's (WTC) evacuation procedures in the event of the raising of a fire alarm.

PRESENT

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

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 Mrs G S Hewetson (the Mayor)

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 T J Lack and it was

**RESOLVED
29456**

that the minutes of the Amenities Committee meeting held on 13th September 2016 (pages 15227 to 15232) 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 2nd November 2016 is progressing.

Item 88: the AO said that the Committee's decision to relocate a bench from around the Town Hall to the junction of Clare Avenue and Glebelands Road may take longer than anticipated to implement if the refurbishment of Market Place is delayed.



Item 89: the AO said that this aspect of WTC's Christmas lights for 2016 has a discrete agenda item.

Item 94: the B&GO reported that he has obtained a firm quotation of £5,665 for the purchase and installation of green plastic grille matting from Tanners Row to Leslie Sears Playing Field, across Viking Field.

Councillors appreciate that there isn't confirmed funding to pay for this. The B&GO said that it is unlikely that the parks repairs and maintenance budget 2016-17 can pay for the work. This will be added to the amenities plan.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER/ AMENITIES OFFICER

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

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Item 96: the potential Christmas lights on Tudor House, Broad Street has a discrete agreed item.

Item 98: the AO confirmed that the managing agents Lee Baron have installed anti-pigeon spikes on the concrete spar above the gym on Peach Street. The AO said he has contacted Lee Baron again to ask for the spiking to be extended to cover adjoining premises.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Item 99: this issue is still to be addressed.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Item 100: the Chairman said that he will contact councillors shortly to arrange a visit to Woosehill Community Hall. The visit is likely to be set for the middle of November 2016.

The AO was instructed to place a relevant item on the agenda of 5th January 2017 Amenities Committee meeting.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Item 101: the AO said that the prospect of new allotments at Montague Park for WTC has a discrete agenda item.

GRAFFITI AROUND THE TOWN CENTRE AND ELSEWHERE IN WOKINGHAM (Agenda Item 6)

The AO reported that the prevalence of graffiti daubed around the town centre has reduced since WTC paid for a significant removal programme earlier in the year. However, there have been some incidents. He confirmed that WBC organized the over-painting of the pillars by Clarks Shoes on Broad Street to cover up some offensive scrawls.

The Chairman noted that Cllr Ms L Forbes sent a paper to councillors this afternoon (8th November) entitled 'Graffiti and litter eradication – engaging youth'. He said that many councillors had not had an opportunity to digest or study it. The AO was instructed to include this on the agenda for the Committee's next meeting.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER



The councillors said that one prong of any campaign to deal with graffiti and litter should be carefully positioned video cameras calibrated to record specific anti-social acts.

The AO was instructed to contact the local police station to solicit the inspector's support for video cameras in the town centre and to gain a fuller understanding of the legality and practicality of their use.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF ELMS FIELD PLAY AREA (Agenda Item 7)

The 'Elms Field Play Area, Autumn 2016' brochure was received and considered.

The Chairman asked each councillor in turn for their view on the selected wooden play equipment and the proposed layout. In the main it was felt that both fulfilled the Amenities Committee's requirement for a substantial, destination play area which provides an exciting range of play opportunities for both younger and older children. WBC was thanked for this.

Cllr M A Ashwell informed the councillors about the likely procurement and tendering process and its timetable. When asked he confirmed that WBC's regeneration team have asked children for their views on the redevelopment of the play area throughout the process. He noted that large display boards with the design on are now in situ at Elms Field.

He also said that WBC is aiming to have the new area accredited as one which accommodates inclusive play for children with disabilities.

The councillors asked for reassurance that the quantity of seats and benches is adequate for the anticipated number of visitors to the play area.

They were also concerned that there will be sufficient litter bins to deal with the expected volume of waste.

A concern was also expressed about the overly technical descriptors applied to the play area's surfacing on the regeneration website. It was felt that the general public would be confused by this.

The councillors would like a 'duel carousel' installed. Several councillors regularly visit Leslie Sears Playing Field and all report that this particular piece of equipment is very popular with older children.

They also said that they would like the regeneration team to install a seating area which will be attractive to teenagers, adjacent to the play area.

The AO was instructed to incorporate the above points into an Amenities Committee reply to the regeneration team.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

AMENITIES COMMITTEE SPENDING 2016-17 YEAR TO DATE (Agenda Item 8)

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

The councillors noted the buoyant revenue generated by wedding bookings.



The Chairman said that budget line *106/1260 hospitality income* relates to additional income from the new catering packages for weddings.

WOOSEHILL COMMUNITY HALL (Agenda Item 9)

The councillors acknowledged that Woosehill Community Hall is used by local groups for meetings and classes. The hiring charges for the various rooms reflect that it is a functional space.

The B&GO reminded councillors that for most of the times the rooms are on hire there isn't any WTC staff presence. Therefore, the security of the building is the responsibility of the hirers. To this end the B&GO said that any proposal to alter the entrance doors needs to take the ease of securing the premises fully into account.

POTENTIAL PROJECTS AND FUNDING REQUESTS FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2017-18 (Agenda Item 10)

The amenities plan and p.15230 of the minutes of the 13th September 2016 Amenities Committee meeting were received and considered.

It was proposed by Cllr P M Lucey and seconded by Cllr T J Lack and it was

**RESOLVED
29457**

to ask the Finance and Personnel Committee to approve the following funding in 2017-18 as

- £7,500 for graffiti removal around the town centre
- £30,000 to redecorate the main hall and annexe at the Town Hall
- £5,000 for Wokingham in Bloom
- £1,500 for 2018-19 to refurbish the large Rotary Club bench which is currently on Market Place.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER/ RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER

FUNDING FOR HOLT COPSE PATHS (Agenda Item 11)

The B&GO reminded councillors that Holt Copse Conservation Volunteers (HCCV) successfully applied for a grant from Tesco's community based environmental projects fund. The £8,000 was spent on improvements to the footpaths in the Copse.

The B&GO said that HCCV also applied for a substantial grant from Sita to improve the drainage around the avenue of red oaks on Joel Park. He reminded councillors that the Sita application was in part contingent on the guarantee of additional funding from other sources. WTC has previously offered £1,000 to support the bid. The B&GO said that unfortunately HCCV's application to Sita was not successful. Subsequently he has been asked by HCCV if the £1,000 is available to continue work to improve the footpaths in Holt Copse.

Councillors acknowledged the excellent work of the HCCV volunteers in actively tending and managing the Copse. They also noted the overall level of financial support given to HCCV by WTC. It was felt that the £1,000 pledged was contingent on HCCV's Sita bid being successful. Given that the bid did not succeed the councillors declined to release this funding.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER



Cllr Ms L Forbes encouraged the B&GO to pass her contact details to HCCV as she has a number of suggestions which might help HCCV tap into other funding streams.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

REQUEST TO USE JOEL PARK AND HOLT COPSE FOR ONGOING EXERCISE SESSIONS (Agenda Item 12)

An email from Mr. D. Goswell dated 26th October was received and considered.

Cllr M A Ashwell declared that he knows Mr. Goswell, a Wokingham and Emmbrook Football Club footballer, in a sporting capacity. Therefore, Cllr Ashwell excused himself from the discussion of this matter.

The councillors approved Mr. Goswell's request to use Joel Park and Holt Copse for ongoing exercise classes.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

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

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS ON TUDOR HOUSE AND BOSPHORUS BARBERS (Agenda Item 13)

The AO said that he has been advised by WBC's Conservation Officer and WBC Planning to apply for a certificate of lawful development in regard to external Christmas lights on Tudor House, Broad Street. A decision on the application from the planning authority is expected by the end of November 2016.

The AO noted that as this matter has been brought to the attention of the householder, the householder's insurer will not approve the installation of the lights without the certificate.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The AO said that the connection work to draw power from Bosphorus Barbers for the new lights in the adjacent tree will be carried out when the Tudor House lights are put up.

THAMES AND CHILTERN IN BLOOM AWARDS 2016 (Agenda Item 14)

The Thames and Chilterns in Bloom score sheets for July 2016 and the four It's Your Neighbourhood assessments were received and considered.

The councillors congratulated the voluntary groups and their members on all of their excellent work under the umbrella of Wokingham in Bloom. The AO drew the attention of the councillors to the recognition given to the Transition Wokingham Cockpit Path community garden group. They have been awarded a Royal Horticultural Society national certificate of distinction because the garden has been assessed as outstanding three years in a row.

The AO confirmed that Wokingham in Bloom will not be entering Thames and Chilterns in Bloom in 2017 because of the expected disruption to the town centre from the regeneration programme. However, he said that it is hoped that several local groups will enter the separate It's Your Neighbourhood assessed section.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Cllr C D Moore left the meeting at 8:50pm.



REVIEW OF WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL'S GARDENING COMPETITIONS 2016 (Agenda Item 15)

The AO's report 02:2016-17 dated 14th October 2016 was received and considered.

The AO drew the councillors' attention to the recommendations in the report. They supported the renaming of WTC's gardening competitions as Wokingham in Bloom: allotments, Wokingham in Bloom: schools et cetera.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

He was instructed to further develop the notion of incorporating a section for whole or parts of streets to enter the campaign. This could link with and complement WBC's Adopt A Street scheme.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

It was felt by councillors that this could be in conjunction with offering gardening advice and support to residents.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

HIRE CHARGES FOR WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL'S FACILITIES AND AMENITIES 2017 (Agenda Item 16)

The AO said that the view of WTC's Responsible Finance Officer is that the hire charges for WTC's facilities and amenities should be held at current 2016 levels. Price inflation remains low and due to the expected regeneration of the town centre some inconvenience can be anticipated for residents and visitors. It was felt that raising hire charges against this backdrop would not make commercial sense.

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

**RESOLVED
29458**

to maintain the hire charges for WTC's facilities and amenities for 2017-18 at 2016-17 levels.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER/ RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER

PROPOSED ALLOTMENTS AT MONTAGUE PARK (Agenda Item 17)

The AO said that Ms E Circuit, Delivery Manager South Wokingham and Wokingham Town Centre, WBC has informed WTC that the likely time for the handover of the proposed allotments at Montague Park will now not be until late 2018 or possibly into 2019. He also said that Ms Circuit has advised that some of the costs of providing these allotments in the so called shovel ready condition may have to be paid for from the contingent S106 funding.

The meeting closed at 8:55pm.

CHAIRMAN

