

# 5<sup>th</sup> January 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 9:16pm.

## **PRESENT**

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

## **IN ATTENDANCE**

Amenities Officer (AO)

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

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from:

Cllr M A Ashwell (Vice-Chairman)  
Cllr Mrs G S Hewetson (the Mayor)  
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 public.

Cllr C R George referred to a recent incident whereby the access code to the door at the front of the Town Hall was circulated to a large number of people. This, in combination with a problem suffered by the Town Hall's tenant Timpson, prompted the door code to be changed.

Cllr George suggested that Wokingham Town Council (WTC) investigates the cost and practicality of installing a Radio Frequency IDentification system to replace the code operated locks on both entrances to the Town Hall.

The Buildings and Grounds Officer was asked to provide costs for such a system and to circulate this information to councillors prior to the Amenities Committee meeting scheduled for 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017.

**ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER**

## **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  
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that the minutes of the Amenities Committee meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2016 (pages 15254 to 15259) be received as a true and correct record and they be confirmed and signed by the chairman.

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**ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER**

Inspector Donachy of Wokingham Police joined the meeting at 7:37pm and was invited to the table.

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

In view of the inspector's attendance the chairman decided to bring forward the discussion of agenda item 6.

The chairman explained that WTC was considering installing closed circuit television cameras (CCTV) in parts of the town centre as one measure to combat the daubing of graffiti on buildings, street furniture and elsewhere. He said that councillors would welcome advice from the inspector on both the legality and practicality of this.

Inspector Donachy said that the trend, on a national and local basis, is for the removal of CCTV rather than its installation. However, he said that WTC was perfectly entitled to install the cameras providing the operation and management of them and the use of retrieved images fully complies with all relevant legislation and guidance.

He said that the move to remove the cameras from localities is due to (a) the cost of operating and maintaining them, (b) the variable quality of the retrieved images and (c) the understanding that the presence of surveillance cameras in public open space can displace anti-social and criminal activity rather than prevent it taking place. However, he recognised that CCTV cameras can still have an effect on moderating such behaviour.

He went on to say that his police officers and police community support officers do monitor the prevalence of graffiti in the public realm and that they actively maintain a database of 'tags'. His officers, including Wokingham's dedicated schools liaison officer regularly coordinate anti-graffiti action with the schools in the borough.

The chairman drew the inspector's attention to Cllr Ms L Forbes' document 'Graffiti and Litter Eradication: Engaging Youth'. Cllr Forbes proposes that WTC and the police work in tandem to support the ongoing work to combat the daubing of graffiti.

Inspector Donachy expressed his gratitude to Cllr Forbes for her initiative. He said that this was how the police want to act – proactively working with the community to prevent localized issues becoming larger problems.

He said that he will contact Cllr Forbes separately to arrange a meeting to discuss her proposals more fully. If schedules permit Cllrs N J Campbell-White and T J Lack will attend this meeting.

**ACTION: CLLR MS L FORBES**

Cllr Forbes was invited to send her document to Inspector Donachy by email.

**ACTION: CLLR MS L FORBES**

Cllr C D Moore asked whether live streaming webcams in the town centre with full public access to them via the internet would comply with the regulations previously alluded to?



Inspector Donachy recommended that WTC ascertain how other local councils manage their CCTV installations.

**ACTION: TOWN CLERK**

Cllr Moore left the meeting at 8:11pm.

The Chairman thanked Inspector Donachy for attending and for his advice and support. Inspector Donachy left the meeting.

To comply with the inspector's request the AO was instructed to compile a visual inventory of graffiti across the town. Cllrs C R George and Ms L Forbes undertook to provide relevant photographs from the Norreys and Woosehill areas respectively.

**ACTION: CLLRS C R GEORGE AND MS L FORBES**

When the inventory is compiled the AO was instructed to send it to Inspector Donachy.

**ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER**

The chairman thanked Cllr Forbes for her work in producing 'Graffiti and Litter Eradication: Engaging Youth' which he felt would prove to be a significant contribution in WTC's fight against graffiti.

#### **MONITORING REPORT (Agenda Item 5)**

The AO updated the Committee on how the work to deal with the items on the monitoring report dated 19<sup>th</sup> December 2016 is progressing.

Item 88: preliminary excavation works on Market Place are set to begin week commencing 9<sup>th</sup> January 2017. Once the results have been fully considered it is expected that a revised timetable for the refurbishment of the area will be established. This in turn should lead to a more certain timescale for the relocation of a bench from around the Town Hall to the junction of Clare Avenue and Glebelands Road.

Items 89 and 96: the AO was instructed to remove these items from the monitoring report.

**ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER**

Item 98: the AO said that managing agent Lee Baron has agreed to extend anti-pigeon spikes along the entire length of the exposed roof line of the arcade at the far end of Peach Street. It is anticipated that this work will be completed by the middle of January 2017.

Item 99: the AO said that the B&GO anticipates that remedial drainage work at Redlands Farm Park will be undertaken early in financial year 2017-18.

Item 100: this matter has a separate agenda item.

Item 101: the AO said that he has not received any further information about the potential new allotment sites in the town. He told councillors that he is in the midst of producing a draft WTC allotments policy for their consideration. This will include details about how to successfully promote and advertise the new plots.



Item 102: the AO was instructed to remove this item from the monitoring report.

**ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER**

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

The email from the AO dated 10<sup>th</sup> November 2016 and Ms M Allen's reply dated 16<sup>th</sup> December 2016 were received and considered.

The AO said he has not received any further information from Ms Allen but he does expect a more comprehensive response in the near future.

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

The relevant extract from the budget detail dated 30<sup>th</sup> November 2016 was received and considered.

The AO made the following observations:

101/4100 allotment repairs and maintenance – spending will in all likelihood overshoot the budget because of the imminent removal of a shed at the Latimer Road site, the ownership of which cannot be determined. This shed has a large amount of corrugated board which most probably contains some asbestos.

101/4122 Thames and Chilterns in Bloom – the apparent overspend needs to be offset against code 101/1154 sponsorship.

101/1101 Langborough Recreation Ground football pitch hire will generate £400 revenue when a recently raised invoice is paid by Bearwood Wanderers.

### **WOOSEHILL COMMUNITY HALL (Agenda Item 9)**

Given the length of time taken to consider agenda item 6 the Chairman recommended that discussion of the recent visit by councillors to Woosehill Community Hall is deferred to the next Amenities Committee meeting.

The councillors acknowledged that the report from Cllr N J Campbell-White does not contain any matters which require urgent attention.

The AO was instructed to ensure that the report and the B&GO's written response are included on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017 agenda.

**ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER**

### **COMMUNITY LITTER PICK (Agenda Item 10)**

The email from Ms B Warman, Performance Officer Cleaner and Greener Services, Wokingham Borough Council dated 28<sup>th</sup> November 2016 was received and considered.

The councillors agreed to support WBC's litter picking initiative around the town centre on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 from 10 am to 12 noon.

Cllr T J Lack volunteered to lead this work on behalf of WTC.



The AO was instructed to send Cllr Lack the contact details of all local organizations which may wish to participate in the litter pick, along with details of WTC's social media engagement.

**ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER**

### **TOWN COUNCIL'S CHRISTMAS LIGHTS AROUND TOWN CENTRE 2016 (Agenda Item 11)**

The annotated Christmas lights inventory dated 16<sup>th</sup> December 2016 was received and considered along with the email from Mr S MacLean dated 29<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

The councillors were pleased with the lights recently placed on Tudor House, Broad Street.

The AO said that for the third consecutive year all column mounted motifs were fully illuminated in stark contrast to the experience in previous years.

However, the AO expressed his disappointment with some aspects of the 2016 installation. In particular with the intermittent failures of some lights on Broad Street and the absence of some motifs on Rose Street.

The councillors felt that the traffic barriers around the main Christmas tree on Market Place, although covered by banners, detracted from the effect of the surrounding lights and decorations. The AO said that he has entered into discussion with a company who can provide bespoke free-standing picket fences. This could be a more aesthetically pleasing solution to the need to persuade miscreants not to climb the large Christmas tree.

Cllr C R George said that he will suggest another solution at the next meeting of the Markets Development Working Party. When the location of the main Christmas tree moves to the front of the Town Hall as part of the Market Place improvement works it may be possible to install a permanent but removable post and chain surround as the barrier.

The AO said that a persistent issue with the Christmas lights in trees and on lamp-columns is the malfunctioning of the timers. To this end he recommended that WTC phase out the use of timers for its Christmas lights. Councillors noted the overall financial benefit of this but recognised that more electricity would be consumed if lights were left on twenty-four hours a day over a six or seven week period.

**ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER**

When asked, the AO recommended deferring any decision on installing lights on the soon to be constructed Peach Place until the town square is nearer to completion. He also said that a more considered use of WTC's resources would be to upgrade the electrical infrastructure of the existing Christmas lights rather than seeking additional locations for lights and motifs.

**ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER**

The AO confirmed that the tender document for WTC's Christmas lights contract 2017- 2020 was sent to interested parties in early December. Consideration of the tenders will be undertaken by councillors at the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017 Amenities Committee meeting.

**ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER**



## **INFORMATION ITEM (Agenda Item 12)**

The allotments newsletter dated November 2016 was received for information.

When asked, the AO said that the entry regarding public liability insurance was a regular item on the newsletter. This year it was in part prompted by an accident to a tenant at the Ormonde Road site.

The meeting closed at 9:16pm

**CHAIRMAN**

