

1st March 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 9:22pm.

PRESENT

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

IN ATTENDANCE

Amenities Officer (AO)
Buildings and Grounds Officer (B&GO)

In the absence of Cllr N J Campbell-White, Vice-Chairman Cllr M A Ashwell assumed the chairmanship of the meeting.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from:

Cllr N J Campbell-White (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 councillors or members of the public.

Cllr T J Lack said that he was disappointed with the length of this evening's agenda and the consequent number and detail of the backing papers. Cllr Lack drew the councillor's attention to the brevity and focus of the Civic Committee's agendas and resultant short, sharp meetings.

Cllr Ms L Forbes said that in excess of one hundred pages of backing papers was unwieldy and recommended that printed copies should not be distributed. She said that the agenda and backing papers could be projected onto a large standalone screen at each meeting.

The AO said that he would welcome feedback from councillors at the end of this evening's meeting on what agenda items they felt were superfluous.

Cllr T J Lack suggested that increasing the frequency of Amenities Committee meetings would be one way to reduce the length of the agendas and the time taken to conduct the committee's business at each meeting.



MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 4)

It was proposed by Cllr C R George and seconded by Cllr Ms L Forbes and it was

**RESOLVED
29505**

that the minutes of the Amenities Committee meeting held on 5th January 2017 (pages 15288 to 15293) 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 24th February 2017 is progressing.

Item 88: the AO said that since the previous Amenities Committee meeting he has not received any requests to place a commemorative bench in the town.

Item 98: the AO said that managing agents Lee Baron have installed anti-pigeon spikes on the top ledge of the arcade on Peach Street. However, Lee Baron have finally stated that it is not responsible for the units currently occupied by Eden Lounge and Boishashki. The AO is pursuing this matter.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The AO said that managing agents, Alliance, have agreed to repair the damaged anti-pigeon netting on Red Lion Path.

Item 99: the B&GO said that remedial drainage work at the entrance to Redlands Farm Park will be paid for from the 2017-18 parks repairs and maintenance budget. He said that in excess of £3,000 has been spent in previous years to address the problem.

Item 100: the Chairman said that there is a separate agenda item for this matter.

Item 101: the AO said that he has no fresh information about the proposed new allotment sites but expects to provide a full report at the next Amenities Committee meeting.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Items 102-103: the Chairman said that these matters have separate agenda items.

Item 104: Cllr C R George said that at this stage it has not been possible to alter the design specification of the space for the main Christmas tree near the entrance to the Information Centre. Therefore, it may be that a picket fence surround for the tree would be the simplest solution to replace the unsightly banner clad traffic barriers.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

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

Cllr Ms L Forbes said that she has sent her document entitled 'Graffiti and Litter Eradication: Engaging Youth' to Inspector Donachy, Wokingham police. He



previously indicated that he will deploy an officer to work on the graffiti issue with the town council. Cllr Forbes is waiting to hear from Inspector Donachy regarding the next steps.

ACTION: CLLR MS L FORBES

The AO said that as instructed he has amassed around 250 photographs of graffiti in separate locations around the wider town. He acknowledged the vital contribution of Cllrs Forbes, George and Lack with this task.

The AO said that he has attempted to send these photographs to Inspector Donachy via the 'We Transfer' file sharing application. However, Wokingham police's computer system rejected the transfer. The AO is waiting for Inspector Donachy to provide a suitably formatted secure storage disc or similar.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK/ AMENITIES OFFICER

The councillors said that they wanted WTC to issue a press release highlighting the excellent response from Scottish and Southern Electricity and Marks and Spencer in painting over the graffiti on its respective premises.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The AO was instructed to respond to the letter from Rachel Parker, Executive Contact Officer, office of the Chair and Chief Executive, Network Rail under Cllr N J Campbell-White's signature.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The AO was also instructed to continue asking premises owners across the town to deal with graffiti on their property.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Cllr C D Moore said that the AO should chart the geographic incidence of graffiti across the town via a computer based mapping system. This could be repeated on an annual basis to enable councillors to review the effectiveness of their actions in tackling the scourge of graffiti.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

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

Cllr M A Ashwell acknowledged that Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) has not given WTC a formal response to the points the town council raised during the public consultation about the new play area at Elms Field. He said that WBC was grateful to the town council for its considered views and that he is confident that WBC will reply before the next Amenities Committee meeting.

The B&GO said that the design consultants engaged by WBC are experiencing some short-term staffing difficulties. These are expected to be resolved in the near future.

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

The relevant extract from the budget detail dated 31st January 2017 was received and considered.



Cllr T J Lack noted the absence of a budget for work on trees at WTC's allotment sites. The AO said that budget lines 101/4100 and 101/4102 did allow work on trees to take place.

Cllr Lack asked for the trees abutting plot SPG01 at the St. Paul's Gate site to be reduced in height. The AO said that some of the trees in question are growing in adjacent rear residential gardens. Cllr C R George undertook to investigate whether 'high hedges' legislation applies to a boundary between a domestic property and an allotment site.

ACTION: CLLR C R GEORGE

Cllr P M Lucey noted that actual total income of £133,175 was significantly ahead of the budget of £124,830. The B&GO said that in part this is due to recently introduced beverage charges to hirers, managed by WTC's Events Co-ordinator.

WOOSEHILL COMMUNITY HALL (Agenda Item 9)

The report dated 14th November 2016 from Cllr N J Campbell-White was received and considered along with some explanatory notes from the B&GO.

The B&GO thanked the councillors who inspected Woosehill community hall in November.

In regard to the consequent report he observed that some of the ideas were aspirational, that some matters were already in hand, and that others could be dealt with relatively easily.

It was decided to place the request for a new air conditioning and heating system on the amenities five year plan along with the proposal to redesign the entrance and porch.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The B&GO said that he will review the terms of WTC's lease with WBC to see if the town council can carry out these substantial alterations to the fabric and structure of the building.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

It was decided that WTC will carry out the following action:

- change the bulbs in the main hall uplighters to LED lights
- repaint inside the storage cupboards
- clean, reaffix and repaint areas of skirting board throughout the building
- replace the curtains in the upstairs hall early in financial year 2017-18
- obtain quotations to upgrade the lighting in the main hall (providing WTC's lease allows for this change)
- replace the fridge
- contact Emmview Veterinary Surgery to ask it to cut back the surrounding hedge

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

It was decided not to paint the external galvanised hand-rail nor to replace the existing fully functioning external security camera. The B&GO advised councillors that a microwave oven is situated in the kitchen.



The B&GO said that the floor surface in the main hall is to be sanded down and resealed in financial year 2017-18. He also said that it is planned for the vinyl floor covering in the upstairs hall to be repaired and polished in the near future. If this is successful the B&GO will arrange for the same to the vinyl floor in the committee room.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

The B&GO was asked to contact WBC to request that it installs a hard-standing footpath to the footbridge to the rear of the nearby Morrisons supermarket.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

COMMUNITY LITTER PICK (Agenda Item 10)

A copy of WBC's advertising poster for the community litter pick was received and considered.

Cllr T J Lack confirmed that the Big Tidy Up was set for Saturday 1st April 2017.

The AO was instructed to ensure that the REME room in the Town Hall is available for the volunteers to use as a meeting point and base on the day.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

REDECORATION OF MAIN HALL AT WOKINGHAM TOWN HALL (Agenda Item 11)

The B&GO said that the Finance and Personnel Committee has agreed a budget of £30,000 for the redecoration of the main hall and council chamber at the town hall in municipal year 2017-18.

He said that nine contractors have been contacted about this work and that to date three have visited the building and are preparing quotations.

He asked councillors to consider colour schemes for the rooms. He noted that the main hall would benefit from a lighter paint colour on its walls. He also said that he has been advised that the red paint used in the public rooms of the town hall may not be the precise shade of red commonly employed by the Victorian civic authorities.

It was decided that a working party should be formed to advise the Amenities Committee about choices of colour and other related matters.

Cllrs Ms L Forbes, C R George and T J Lack will be joined by the B&GO on this working party.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

The B&GO agreed that the likely duration of the redecoration of around two months will have a significant impact on hiring out the rooms in question.

He also said that the £30,000 budget will in all likelihood be insufficient to pay for both the redecoration and the cost of removal, storage and redisplay of the large paintings and other artefacts. He is awaiting a separate quotation for this latter aspect of the project from a specialist company.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER



POTENTIAL REPLACEMENT DOOR ENTRY SYSTEM FOR WOKINGHAM TOWN HALL (Agenda Item 12)

An email dated 31st January 2017 from the B&GO was received and considered.

The B&GO confirmed that the guide cost of installing the Paxton Networked Access Control System at both ground floor entrance doors at the town hall is £3,000. This amount excludes other potential costs, for example, linking the system into WTC's fire alarms.

It was noted that similar door entry systems are available from other companies. The B&GO said that notwithstanding the installation of a more secure door entry system, public access to the town hall was uncontrolled between 10am and 2pm each day apart from on Sundays.

Councillors felt that it would not be appropriate to commit this amount of money at this time.

The B&GO was asked to investigate whether the existing entry key pads could be set up to accept multiple codes. If so this could significantly improve the security of the building outside of office hours.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL'S DRAFT ALLOTMENTS POLICY (Agenda Item 13)

WTC's draft allotments policy was received and considered.

Councillors wanted the following italicized amendments made to the draft policy:

- To ensure that all allotment plots *which are rented* are in continual productive use whilst acknowledging the variable gardening abilities of the tenants (p.4).
- The set-up will *normally* be undertaken by housing developers with the support of Wokingham Borough Council (p.4)
- By exception there *are* a small number of larger plots (p.5).
- *Tenants are allowed ample time to improve their plots. However, if tenants do not address issues the final sanction is for WTC to take back the plot via a 'notice to quit' letter* (p.5).
- In December 2016 this *had* nineteen fruit trees in it (p.6).
- Kentwood Farm East *Phase 1* (p.7).
- Kentwood Farm West *Phase 2* (p.7).

It was also agreed to remove entirely the following statement:
contributes to the reduction of waste going to a landfill site through composting (p.4).

It was proposed by Cllr Ms L Forbes and seconded by Cllr C R George and it was

that WTC adopts the allotments policy if the aforementioned amendments are made to it.

**RESOLVED
29506**

Amenities Committee 01/03/2017



ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL'S WAITING LISTS FOR ALLOTMENT PLOTS AT IT'S FOUR EXISTING SITES (Agenda Item 14)

Report 03/2016-17 dated 20th January 2017 from the Amenities Officer was received and considered.

The AO confirmed that WTC's allotments waiting list was at its shortest for many years and that anecdotally this was the experience of many allotment providers across the country.

The AO said that in view of the declining length of the waiting list WTC's policy of not allowing non-Wokingham town residents to apply for WTC plots could be reconsidered. Councillors said that whatever the outcome the premium rental rate for non-town residents must be maintained. Councillors also said that if non-town residents are invited to apply for WTC plots the uptake should be carefully monitored to ensure that town residents are not overly disadvantaged.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

It was proposed by Cllr P M Lucey and seconded by Cllr S Odedra and it was

**RESOLVED
29507**

to ask the Town Clerk to approach the parish clerks of Barkham Parish Council and Arborfield Parish Council to seek the permission of these councils for WTC to invite their residents to apply to rent WTC allotment plots.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

SUBSTANTIAL CRIMINAL DAMAGE AT ORMONDE ROAD ALLOTMENTS SITE AND POSSIBLE REMEDIAL MEASURES (Agenda Item 15)

The AO described the appalling criminal damage, including arson, wreaked upon WTC's Ormonde Road allotments site over the weekends of 21st /22nd and 28th and 29th January 2017. He outlined one specific aspect of Wokingham police's response and listed the additional security measures taken by WTC.

The AO was instructed to expedite the investigation of options for the installation of a working closed circuit television system (CCTV) at Ormonde Road allotments site.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

It was agreed by councillors that the guide price of £5,000 to £6,000 obtained for cameras near the railway line with power drawn from WTC's storage container via a buried cable was not affordable.

Cllr C R George said that a working system near the main entrance gate with the power cable suspended well above head height would be a much more cost effective solution.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Cllr S Odedra said that he could visit Ormonde Road to advise on the location and installation of a working CCTV system.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER/ CLLR S ODEDRA



The AO was instructed to write to the three tenants at Ormonde Road allotments who have been so helpful and supportive with the introduction of additional security measures. The letter is to be under the signature of the Amenities Committee chairman.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

INFORMATION ITEM (Agenda Item 16)

The full Britain in Bloom results for 2016 were received.

The AO drew the attention of councillors to the Royal Horticultural Society's award of a national certificate of distinction for Transition Wokingham's community garden at Cockpit Path. The garden was a standalone entry in Britain in Bloom's 'It's Your Neighbourhood' assessed campaign.

The councillors expressed their admiration of and gratitude to the continuing work of these local volunteers.

The AO confirmed that the national certificate of distinction is awarded after a local horticultural project is assessed as excellent over three consecutive years.

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC (Agenda Item 17)

It was proposed by Cllr P M Lucey and seconded by Cllr C R George and it was

**RESOLVED
29508**

that in view of the confidential commercial nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable, in the public interest, that the press and public be temporarily excluded and that they are asked to withdraw.

RENEWAL OF WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL'S CHRISTMAS LIGHTS CONTRACT FOR 2017-2020 (Agenda Item 18)

Report 04/2016-17 dated 15th February 2017 from the Amenities Officer was received and considered.

The AO described in general terms the range of businesses which provided tenders for WTC's Christmas lights and motifs contract 2017 – 2020.

Councillors noted the relatively narrow range of the quotations.

When asked, the AO said that he favoured contractor 4's tender because of the quality of the motifs WTC has previously purchased from it and the very positive references he has received about the contractor. This latter point refers to its products, service quality and responsiveness.

The councillors compared the options for motifs offered by contractor 4. The designs labelled 'A' were the preferred choice. However, from 'A' they did not want the motif called 'Old Row' used at all; they also wanted the Christmas tree motif from design 'B' used for Waitrose car park. Therefore, the star with comet tail from design 'A' is not to be used at all.

It was proposed by Cllr P M Lucey and seconded by Cllr C R George and it was



**RESOLVED
29509**

to award WTC's Christmas lights and motifs contract for 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2020 to contractor 4, option A, for £53,100 nett for the three years entire.

ACTION: RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER/ AMENITIES OFFICER

This is with the proviso that the contractor substitutes designs as specified in the minutes above.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The AO advised councillors that contractor 4 is Lighting and Illumination Technology Experience Limited (LITE).

The meeting closed at 9:22pm.

CHAIRMAN

