

4th March 2019

Minutes of the proceedings of the **AMENITIES COMMITTEE** meeting held on this day in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, WOKINGHAM** from 7:30pm to 10:01pm.

PRESENT

Cllrs N J Campbell-White (Chairman), Mrs A N Drake, Ms L Forbes, M S Monk, C D Moore, S Oderdra, M L Richards

IN ATTENDANCE

Amenities Officer (AO)
Cllr Ms I L Shepherd-Dubey

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from:

Cllr J P McGhee-Sumner (the Mayor)
Cllr C R George (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr T J Lack

MEMBERS' INTERESTS (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest(s) from members.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OR PUBLIC (Agenda Item 3)

There were no questions from councillors or members of the public.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 4)

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

RESOLVED 29883

that the minutes of the Amenities Committee meeting held on 17th January 2019 (pages 15738 to 15747) 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 Chairman and AO updated the Committee on how the work to deal with the items on the monitoring report dated 26th February 2019 is progressing.

Item 88: the Chairman explained that once again he has complained to Highways, Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) about its refusal to permit Wokingham Town Council (WTC) to install a seating bench on the corner of Glebelands Road and Clare Avenue. From this an onsite meeting has been arranged with Mr P Baveystock, Cleaner and Greener, WBC, for Monday 11th March, 2019.

ACTION: CLLR N J CAMPBELL-WHITE/ AMENITIES OFFICER

Item 101: this matter will be considered under agenda item 11.

Item 113: the AO said that the Building and Grounds Officer (B&GO) and Events Co-ordinator are still considering what items of kitchen equipment to purchase.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Item 118: this matter will be considered under agenda item 10.

Cllr Ms I Shepherd-Dubey joined the meeting at 7:36pm and was invited to the table by the Chairman.

Item 125: the AO said he understood that the contract for the hire of a diesel powered van for use by WTC staff has been signed and that delivery of the van is imminent.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Item 126: Councillors expressed their disappointment that the standard of litter picking and street cleaning around Market Place has not noticeably improved. The AO said that the Town Clerk is still in discussion with WBC about this whole matter. Councillors noted that any recommendations about WTC taking over responsibility for some aspects of street cleaning on Market Place will be made by the Strategy Working Party and then taken to Full Council.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Cllr N J Campbell-White said that he spoke with the contractor when the area around the Town Hall was being scrubbed by machine recently. This contractor maintained that the paving has not been properly sealed. Therefore, it is easy to mark and stain and removing the marks and stains is consequently more difficult. Cllr Campbell-White noted that WBC Highways insist that the area has been properly sealed.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Item 127: the AO said that he has contacted Mr M Gould, Highways, WBC for his response to WTC's request to incorporate a small section of Ormonde Road highway into the adjacent allotment car park.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Item 128: the AO said that WTC's contractor has carried out remedial work to the installed plastic grilles at Viking Field and that the B&GO is monitoring how they settle into the footpath.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Item 129: the work on the Town Hall is scheduled for week commencing 25th March 2019.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Item 130: the AO said the issue with the lack of a proper drainage system beneath the external water tap near the Courtyard Restaurant was being discussed by the Town Clerk with WBC and the Market Place improvements works contractor.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

The AO said that until this is satisfactorily resolved it is not practicable to install a public drinking fountain in this area. The AO reported that the B&GO has obtained purchase only prices for some types of fountains. However, the B&GO is concerned about vandalism to a fountain if one is installed.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

NON-ATTENDANCE OF CLLR M S MONK AT THE THREE PREVIOUS AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETINGS (Agenda Item 6)

Cllr M S Monk was invited to explain why he has not attended the three previous Amenities Committee meetings as required by WTC's standing order no.17 (attendance).

Cllr Monk apologised to the Committee and said that his personal circumstances have changed and he is spending a good deal of time out of the country. For this, and other reasons, he has decided not to stand for re-election in May 2019. The Chairman thanked Cllr Monk for his explanation. The Committee took no further action.

GRAFFITI WORKING PARTY (Agenda Item 7)

The notes from the Graffiti Working Party's meeting held on 21st January 2019 were received and considered.

Cllr Ms L Forbes said that she is attending an assembly at the Emmbrook School tomorrow morning to present the first prize cheque in WTC's schools' graffiti and litter eradication competition to its project group.

She plans to send information and photographs to local newspapers after the presentation.

ACTION: MS L FORBES

She said that the Emmbrook group has presented its plans for tackling graffiti and litter in the public realm to over 600 school children and that it has received invitations to visit four other schools.

Cllr Forbes said that the 2019 WTC schools' competition to eradicate litter and graffiti will involve the Emmbrook, Forest (Winnersh) and St. Crispin's schools.

Councillors asked about the effect the competition has had in reducing the incidence of graffiti and litter around the town. The Chairman and Cllr Forbes said it was too early to make an accurate assessment about this. They stressed the long-term nature of the project in attempting to change attitudes and behaviours.

When asked, the AO said that, of course, Cllr T J Lack's personal effort in removing graffiti was crucial to the success of the operation. He reminded councillors that WTC's groundsman, private contractors and the AO also undertake graffiti removal and will continue to do so.

LITTER INNOVATION FUND (Agenda Item 8)

The Gov.UK document outlining the purpose of the fund and the application criteria was received and considered.

Councillors felt that the Litter Innovation Fund (LIF) presented a good opportunity for WTC to attempt to obtain additional funding for its efforts in tackling litter and graffiti across the town.

The AO said he was unsure if a local authority could make an application to the LIF but will investigate this. It may be that an application would have to be made under the auspices of a community group – for example, Wokingham Litter Heroes.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Cllr S Odedra pointed out that the LIF is set up as a matched funding vehicle. The AO was instructed to, if possible, make an application to it.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL'S COMMUNITY LITTER PICK 2019 (Agenda Item 9)

The email from Ms V Harper, WBC, was received and considered along with a copy of 'The Great British Spring Clean' guide.

Councillors said they wanted WTC to support WBC's community litter pick in 2019.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The actual date is to be decided upon in consultation with Cllr T J Lack. The AO said the use of WTC's social media account to publicise the event will be an important component of the advertising this year.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

NEW PLAY AREA AT ELMS FIELD (Agenda Item 10)

- (a) The AO said that the indications are that the new play area at Elms Field will be ready in summer 2019.
- (b) The email from Mr P Must, the Wokingham Society (WS), dated 21st February 2019, was received and considered. Therein WS requested WTC's permission to install a piece of public art on Elms Field. The WS wants to celebrate the life of Ms Isobel Elliston Clifton with a sculpture in the redeveloped Elms Field. The AO explained that Ms Clifton is a major benefactor of Wokingham Society (WS). The Councillors questioned whether WS's proposed fund of £5,000 was sufficient to realise this ambition and raised the issue of ongoing cleaning and maintenance - specifically who would be responsible for it and who would pay for it. Councillors also expressed their concern that a sculpture on Elms Field would be a potential target for vandals. Councillors felt they could not support this request from WS without a fuller understanding of the achievements of Ms Clifton and her role(s) within the town of Wokingham.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

UPDATE ON ALLOTMENT SITES AT MULBERRY GROVE AND MONTAGUE PARK (Agenda Item 11)

The AO said that he has been told by WBC officers that the developer Crest Nicholson has largely completed the remedial work at Mulberry Grove allotment site identified at the onsite meeting in November 2018. The major concerns are the quality of the soil, its workability and the drainage across the site.

The AO anticipates meeting with the Crest Nicholson landscaping manager and Ms D Lingam, WBC, at Mulberry Grove in the near future to assess the success of the remedial work undertaken.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The AO will be accompanied by an allotment gardener with over forty years' experience of working with and improving allotment soils.

In regard to the proposed allotment site at Montague Park the AO has heard anecdotally that it is nearing completion. He has contacted Ms Lingam about this and is awaiting a response. Previously WTC has been led to expect handover early in 2020.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

AMENITIES COMMITTEE SPENDING 2018-2019 YEAR TO DATE (Agenda Item 12)

The Budget Detail – By Centre dated 31st January 2019 was received and considered. Chairman noted that this covered the first ten months of WTC's financial year.

Councillors acknowledged the detrimental effect of the improvement works on Market Place in 2018 on the hiring of the Town Hall for weddings. However, despite this they were pleased that income from external wedding catering was ahead of budget.

When asked the AO said that the notional underspend against utility bills at Woosehill Community Hall was due to timing issues with the receipt some bills.

REPAIRS TO TOWN HALL CLOCK TOWER AND CLOCK FACE (Agenda Item 13)

The AO said that the B&GO expects the repairs to the Town Hall clock face and clock tower to be completed in the near future.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

NEW PLAY EQUIPMENT AND SURFACE FOR JOEL PARK PLAYGROUND (Agenda Item 14)

The AO said that he has met with two play equipment providers at Joel Park. Both will provide indicative layouts for an expanded play area to include equipment specifically designed for 2-5 year olds.

WTC's plan to introduce play equipment for this age group has been publicized via WTC's Facebook page. Cllr I S Shepherd-Dubey said that this has produced a good response from local residents. She said that a wide slide was requested by some people.

The AO said that information inviting contractors to provide fully costed play schemes via central government's Contracts Finder website will be based on responses from residents and the two aforementioned providers. Assuming a large response is received from Contracts Finder the submissions will have to be shortlisted. At this point it may be that councillors will choose a scheme to install or, alternatively, to hold a public meeting for residents to comment on the shortlisted submissions.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The AO said that from the responses he has seen from the Facebook post a multi-play unit and a ground set mini trampoline are particularly favoured.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The AO told councillors that his initial discussions with play equipment providers have indicated that the cost of resurfacing the existing play area may be higher than anticipated and that this could reduce the amount of money available for play equipment for two to five year olds.

Councillors said that in these circumstances a request would be made to the Finance and Personnel Committee for additional funding.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS AND MOTIFS 2018 (Agenda Item 15)

Report 03:2018-19 dated 18th December 2018 from the AO was received and considered.

Photographs of Christmas trees with lights in Covent Garden, central London, and Woodley, Berkshire were distributed by Cllr Ms L Forbes. The AO presented his report item by item.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Councillors said that they want the lights on both the main tree and the one in Old Row Court affixed horizontally and not vertically in future.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The AO said that WTC was awaiting the outcome of its insurance claim regarding the vandalised lights on the main Christmas tree. Councillors want replacement lights to be static multi-coloured, not static, cool white.

Councillors want the two motifs owned by WTC which cannot be displayed on lamp-columns on The Terrace, to be used on lamp-columns by Wokingham railway station.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Councillors want the two trees opposite Elms House, Broad Street, to have lights wrapped around them. The AO said that he will investigate the most straightforward, cost effective means of providing an electrical connection to the trees.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Councillors want the white picket fences which surround the main Christmas tree to be more securely fixed together by means of chains to make them less easy to vandalise.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The AO said that the Town Clerk was discussing with WBC the opportunity of installing security cameras around Market Place as part of the surveillance camera scheme(s) for Elms Field and Peach Place.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

The AO said that as instructed by the Town Clerk he is in discussion with Vodafone about installing the Cloudview security camera system on Market Place. Cllr S Odedra said that there are many alternative systems which might be more suitable for this. The AO said that it may be sensible to seek independent advice about other security camera systems.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Councillors want to consider installing Christmas lights on Elms Field and in Peach Place when these developments are sufficiently advanced.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Councillors do not want to have any more trees on Broad Street to have lights wrapped around their trunks to ground level.

Councillors do not want to have decorations on the main Christmas tree as suggested by the Arts and Culture Committee, apart from those made by local school children.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER/ ARTS AND CULTURE OFFICER

Councillors do not want the tree on the Ship Inn, London Road, traffic island to be wrapped with Christmas lights as they felt this could present a dangerous distraction to vehicle drivers and other road users.

Councillors want to consider WTC's Christmas lights provision on a whole town basis. The AO said that the current provision was confined to the three main town centre roads and Rectory Road. He said that extending coverage could involve a significant cost and would require additional funding. He was instructed to include this matter as an agenda item at the next Amenities Committee meeting.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

USE OF WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL'S PARKS AND OPEN SPACES BY PROFESSIONAL DOG WALKERS (Agenda Item 16)

The Chairman said given the lateness of the hour he was deferring discussion of this matter until the next meeting.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

AMENITIES COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES (Agenda Item 17)

A document detailing the work undertaken by the Amenities Committee over 2015-2019 was received and considered.

Councillors noted the volume and extent of the work undertaken by the Amenities Committee over this period.

Councillors decided to leave the formulation of objectives for 2019-20 for the Amenities Committee until the first meeting of the reconstituted Amenities Committee following the forthcoming local government elections.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

AMENITIES COMMITTEE INFORMATION (Agenda Item 18)

- (a) Cllr Ms L Forbes distributed photographs of dog waste/ general litter bins and a receptacle for used plastic-lined drinking cups. The AO was

instructed to include an agenda item for the next Amenities Committee meeting to facilitate a discussion about them.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

- (b) An email from Wokingham Horticultural Association was received for information.

The Chairman thanked his fellow councillors for their work as members of the Amenities Committee over the previous years.

The Chairman and councillors thanked the B&GO and AO for their support of and work for the Amenities Committee.

The meeting closed at 10:01pm.

CHAIRMAN