

22nd May 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 10:05pm.

PRESENT

Cllrs, J Box, E Bishop, N Campbell-White (Chairman), P Dennis (Vice-Chairman), D Hinton, P Hornsby, M Malvern

IN ATTENDANCE

Amenities Officer (AO)
Buildings and Grounds Officer (B&GO)
Mr P Must, The Wokingham Society
Ethan Undrell, an Emmbrook school student

The Chairman welcomed councillors and said that Amenities Committee meetings are conducted in a collegiate, non-partisan spirit for the good of the people of Wokingham. He would like the use of Christian names to be the norm. He noted that the committee has a wide remit and consequently agendas were longer than those of other WTC committees.

The Chairman drew the attention of councillors to Wokingham Town Council's (WTC) fire alarm procedures and confirmed that a fire drill is not scheduled this evening.

He introduced Ethan Undrell, a local student, who will attend meetings of the new committee in 2019-20 to learn about local government and to bring a young person's perspective to the committee's work.

Councillors and officers introduced themselves.

The Chairman emphasised the need for a prompt start to each meeting. He urged members to read the agenda and backing papers before each meeting to allow all councillors to contribute in a productive manner to all discussions. He reminded councillors that eating during meetings was not permitted.

Cllr E Bishop joined the meeting at 7:37pm.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from:
Cllr L Forbes (The Mayor)

MEMBERS' INTERESTS (Agenda Item 2)

Cllr E Bishop said that as a resident of Ormonde Road she has a vested interest in agenda item 12.

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



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

E-mails from a Wokingham town resident dated 25th and 28th February and 13th May 2019 about fencing off a section of Joel Park were received and considered.

The Chairman noted the resident's concerns about dogs and dog fouling at Joel Park. When asked, the B&GO said that he has not received any other complaints about problematic canine activity at Joel Park; he said the incidence of human anti-social behaviour in and around the park was not significant. When asked, Ethan said that he was not aware of problems with dogs at Joel Park.

The councillors instructed the AO to write to the resident to advise that a fenced area will not be introduced into Joel Park at this time but the B&GO will keep this under review as and when events unfold

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER/ BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

The B&GO was asked to liaise with local walking groups which use Joel Park to discuss their perception of dog fouling in the park.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

ELMS FIELD (Agenda Item 5)

(b) The Chairman invited Mr P Must to the table. Mr Must said Isobel Clifton-Ingram is a major benefactor of the Wokingham Society and that funds from her bequest have been used for the benefit of the town and townspeople over a long period of time. A recent example is support for the production and installation of the mosaic roundels around Market Place.

He said that the Wokingham Society has commissioned Thrussells to provide a design for a sculpture to commemorate Ms Clifton-Ingram. The resulting elm, bird and butterfly motif reflects her interest in ecology.

Unanimously the councillors were content, in principle, to agree to a sculpture to commemorate Ms Clifton-Ingram, to be displayed in Elms Field. However, they said that it must not be seen to be another piece of play equipment for children to climb on or swing from and must be devoid of sharp edges.

The Chairman told Mr Must that any such sculpture must remain in the ownership of the Wokingham Society which would be responsible for the cost of all maintenance and repair work.

The councillors want to see the finalised design for the sculpture.

**ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER/ AMENITIES COMMITTEE COUNCILLORS/
MR P MUST**

The B&GO said that planning permission may be required for any sculpture on Elms Field.

(a) The B&GO said that Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) expects to transfer the play area and the bulk of the green space at Elms Field to WTC towards the

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



end of July 2019 under a fifty year lease. He noted that much of the building construction adjacent to the park will remain behind hoardings subsequent to the transfer. He also noted that the trees and shrubs in the park will be maintained by WBC's contractor, East Midlands Landscapes Ltd, until that responsibility is transferred to WTC in summer 2020.

The question of the adequacy of mains water supply and pressure was raised given the increased demand generated by this and other housing and commercial developments in Wokingham.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 4)

It was proposed by Cllr N Campbell-White and seconded by Cllr P Dennis and it was

**RESOLVED
29942**

that the minutes of the Amenities Committee meeting held on 4th March 2019 (pages 15757 to 15764) be received as a true and correct record and they be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

MONITORING REPORT (Agenda Item 6)

The Chairman and AO updated the Committee on how the work to deal with the items on the monitoring report dated 15th May 2019 is progressing.

Item 88: the B&GO said that he has engaged Volker Highways to carry out an underground services check prior to having the bench installed.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Item 101: this matter will be considered under agenda item 9.

Item 113: the B&GO said that the replacement of large electrical appliances in the Town Hall public kitchen was on hold until WTC decided about the use of office 3. The Chairman thinks that office 3 is not an appropriate space, given its location, to convert into a kitchen.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Item 125: When asked the B&GO said that because the van is leased by WTC it may not be possible to use biodiesel as a fuel. He undertook to investigate.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

He noted that WTC's groundsman is using the van to collect and dispose of dog waste from its dedicated dog waste bins in conjunction with his established litter picking work.

Item 126: the AO explained that he was collecting information from providers about the cost of scrubbing clean the paving on Market Place around the Town Hall: both on a one-off and regular basis, along with the price of WTC purchasing a street cleaning machine. This information will be presented to the Strategy Working Party at its next meeting.

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The AO was instructed to contact Bracknell Borough Council to determine how it arranges the cleaning of its external paving.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Item 127: this matter will be considered under agenda item 12.

Item 128: the B&GO noted that the remedial work to bed the plastic grille into the Viking Field footpath has been successful. The AO was instructed to remove this item from the monitoring report.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Item 129: the B&GO said that the airbricks have been installed. The AO was instructed to remove this item from the monitoring report.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

At this point the Chairman asked the recently elected councillors if they wanted to be accompanied by officers on a visit to WTC's parks, open spaces and allotment sites. He explained that WTC could hire a minibus and that a tour would take at least two evenings to visit all sites. The consensus among the councillors was to visit the sites independently. Officers would, of course, be available to answer all questions prompted by these visits.

The AO was instructed to circulate the main gate padlock code for each allotment site to the recently elected councillors.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Item 130: the AO said that the issue of the lack of a proper drainage system beneath the external water tap by the Courtyard Restaurant was being discussed by the Town Clerk with WBC.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

With regard to a public drinking fountain councillors felt that an alternative approach was to encourage local coffee shops et al to sign up to Refill.Org.UK whereby water bottles are refilled free of charge by the local business. The AO undertook to visit the businesses to invite them to participate.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Cllr E Bishop said that a successful scheme operates in Oxford.

Councillors felt that public drinking fountains are prone to vandalism. They noted that as one is soon to be installed in Peach Place WTC should not pursue the installation of one by the Town Hall building.

Item 131: The AO was instructed to remove this item from the monitoring report.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The AO undertook to contact the Litter Innovation Fund on a regular basis to ascertain if and when a further tranche of funding will be available.

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

GRAFFITI WORKING PARTY (Agenda Item 7)

(a) The Chairman outlined the rationale behind WTC engaging with younger school students about the effect of graffiti on the public realm and the public purse. He said that this has to be seen as a long-term project. He said that Cllr Lack undertakes graffiti removal using his high-powered jet washer with chemicals provided by WTC, in his own time, free of charge. The AO said that contractors were also engaged depending on the location and extent of the graffiti. The cost of this, added to an approximate commercial cost of the work carried out by Cllr Lack, is around £20,000 in a calendar year. The AO broached the thorny issue of a dedicated graffiti wall on which street artists can paint images. Councillors were asked to consider a suitable location.

ACTION: AMENITIES COMMITTEE COUNCILLORS

(b) The Chairman invited councillors to join the Graffiti Working Party. For 2019-2020 this will comprise Cllrs N Campbell-White, L Forbes, T Lack and the AO. Two Emmbrook School students will also attend and participate.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The AO was instructed to include an agenda item at the next Amenities Committee meeting to consider the start time of its meetings.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Ethan Undrell left the meeting at 9pm.

UPDATE ON PROPOSED NEW ALLOTMENT SITES AT MULBERRY GROVE AND MONTAGUE PARK (Agenda Item 9)

The AO said that, in the view of the developer Crest Nicholson, the new allotment site on the Mulberry Grove development is complete and ready to be occupied. However, in the AO's view the quality of the soil is still not good enough to provide a reasonable growing medium. At the last meeting with Crest Nicholson it reluctantly undertook to introduce a large quantity of organic material into each plot to help break down the clay soil. The AO said that he understands this work is imminent.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

In regard to the proposed new site at Montague Park the AO continues to liaise with Ms D Lingam, WBC, to ascertain an accurate completion timescale. This is expected to be in the early months of 2020.

The AO advised councillors that WTC is set to be able to draw on a fund of approximately £130,000 from the Montague Park developer for infrastructure improvements to its four existing sites.

BINS FOR DOG WASTE, BEVERAGE CUPS AND GENERAL LITTER BINS (Agenda Item 8)

The photographs from Cllr L Forbes were received and considered. The B&GO said that to address a particular problem at Joel Park a new chute style dog

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



waste bin has been installed. The AO was instructed to include the beverage cups recycling bins on the monitoring report.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

**NEW PLAY EQUIPMENT AND SURFACE FOR JOEL PARK PLAYGROUND
(Agenda Item 10)**

The AO explained that residents in the vicinity of Joel Park have been asked what equipment they would like introduced into the play area for two to five year olds. Based on their responses contractors have been invited to submit plans and costs via central government's Contracts Finder portal. In conjunction with new play equipment WTC wants to significantly improve the uneven surface of the play area.

The AO has been told by the majority of the fifteen contractors he has met on site that the allocated budget of £47,000 is not sufficient to realise WTC's ambitions.

Cllr Dennis asked whether WTC has approached local businesses for sponsorship funding? The AO explained that the council hasn't on this occasion because of the major commitment of time such work entails. Cllr Dennis undertook to approach his employer for a donation towards the cost of the Joel Park scheme.

ACTION: CLLR P DENNIS

It was proposed by Cllr P Hornsby and seconded by Cllr J Box and it was

**RESOLVED
29943**

to request an additional £25,000 to £30,000 for the Joel Park play area refurbishment budget.

ACTION: RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER/AMENITIES OFFICER

Councillors unanimously supported this resolution.

The AO said that depending on the number of quotations received there may have to be a short-listing process. Subsequently the short-listed schemes may be presented to local residents for their views before councillors make a final decision.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS AND MOTIFS (Agenda Item 11)

The AO told councillors that 2019 is the final year of Lighting and Illumination Technology Experience Limited's (LITE) three year contract to provide, install and store WTC's Christmas motifs.

He confirmed that WTC's insurers have agreed to pay over £900 to replace the light strings on the main Christmas tree. These were damaged beyond repair by a criminal(s) in December 2018. He explained that at the previous Amenities Committee meeting there had been a move to have coloured lights on the main tree, but in view of the long established policy for white lights it was felt that a

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



consistent approach across the town should be maintained in the final year of LITE's contract.

It was proposed by Cllr N Campbell-White and seconded by Cllr J Box and it was

**RESOLVED
29944**

to purchase around thirty no.100 cool, white, static lights for the main tree on Market Place 2019.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Councillors unanimously supported this resolution.

The AO will:

- purchase and have installed additional light strings for the tree by Wokingham Pharmacy, Broad Street
- purchase and have installed cool, white, static light strings for up to eight trees on Peach Place
- purchase and have installed cool, white, static icicle lights on the concrete corniche on the west side of Peach Place
- purchase and have installed a large free-standing Christmas tree on Peach Place

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The AO confirmed that the obsolete Lewden plugs and plug tops around Market Place have been replaced. He told councillors that he has commissioned a report about the condition of WTC's infrastructure within the WBC lamp-columns used to display the Christmas motifs. He said that the outcome may be that significant remedial work is required.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The AO also said that consideration of WTC's contract for Christmas lights 2020-2022 will begin at the July Amenities Committee meeting.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The Chairman undertook to discuss drawing electricity from Elms House for light strings in the two adjacent trees on Broad Street with a resident of the building.

ACTION: CLLR N CAMPBELL-WHITE

REQUEST TO WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL TO USE A SMALL SECTION OF ORMONDE ROAD HIGHWAY TO EXTEND ADJACENT ALLOTMENT SITE CAR PARK (Agenda Item 12)

The AO said that WBC's belated response was emphatic and that, in his view, any further representation would be equally fruitless. He said that work to arrange an extension and resurfacing of the Ormonde Road allotments car park within its existing footprint would now begin.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

He advised councillors that the probable substantial financial outlay would be funded by the money available from the Montague Park housing developers.

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



AMENITIES COMMITTEE INFORMATION (Agenda Item 13)

- (a) The Chairman asked councillors to consider the Amenities Committee objectives 2018-2019 as received. The intention is to formulate and agree objectives for 2019-2020 at the July Amenities Committee meeting.

ACTION: AMENITIES COMMITTEE COUNCILLORS

- (b) The e-mail from Keep Britain Tidy dated 24th April 2019 was received for information.

- (c) Cllr P Hornsby requested that an item about recycling in general is included on the July Amenities Committee meeting.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

- (d) Cllr E Bishop requested that an item about allowing grass verges to be sown with wildflowers is included on the same agenda.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC (Agenda Item 14)

It was proposed by Cllr P Hornsby and seconded by Cllr E Bishop and it was

**RESOLVED
29945**

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.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

PART II

INSTALLATION OF CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION CAMERAS ON TOWN HALL BUILDING (Agenda Item 15)

Report 03:2019 dated 2nd May 2019 from the Town Clerk and Amenities Officer was received and considered. The AO distributed copies of the detailed quotations provided by the three companies.

In view of the lateness of the hour the Chairman agreed to defer this matter until the July Amenities Committee meeting.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Cllr D Hinton said he had some experience of closed circuit television camera systems and will liaise with the AO on behalf of the Committee.

ACTION: CLLR D HINTON

The meeting closed at 10:05pm.

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



CHAIRMAN

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____

Amenities Committee 22nd May 2019

15832

