

29th July 2019

Minutes of the proceedings of the **AMENITIES COMMITTEE** meeting held on this day in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, WOKINGHAM** from 7:29pm to 9:40pm.

PRESENT

Cllrs: J Box, E Bishop, P Dennis (Vice-Chairman), L Forbes (The Mayor), D Hinton, P Hornsby, T Lack and M Malvern

IN ATTENDANCE

Amenities Officer (AO)
Buildings and Grounds Officer (B&GO)
Ethan Undrell, an Emmbrook school student

Cllr P Dennis welcomed councillors and said that given the absence of the chairman he will chair the meeting.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from:
N Campbell-White (Chairman)

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.

A point raised by Cllr D Hinton about smoking and cigarette butts in the children's playground at Elms Field and the subsequent discussion is reported under agenda item 7.

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 18th July 2019 is progressing.

Item 88: the B&GO said that the bench was installed on Glebelands Road and that he has received favourable comments from some residents.

The AO said he will formally contact Mrs S Fergusson to inform her about this. It was her request to have a bench at this location. The AO said that some time ago Mrs Fergusson indicated that she will have a plaque affixed to the bench.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



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

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The councillors expressed their appreciation for the tenacity of Cllr N Campbell-White in pursuing this matter with Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) and successfully concluding it in the face of many setbacks.

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

Item 113: the B&GO said that decisions about the leasing of office 3 in the Town Hall have not been taken. If this office does become vacant there will be an opportunity to consider relocating the kitchen into the space. In the meantime Wokingham Town Council's (WTC) Events Coordinator is considering what existing kitchen appliances could be replaced.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Item 125: the B&GO reported that WTC's recently leased van is proving to be very useful for the groundsman as he undertakes his duties. The AO was instructed to remove this item from the monitoring report.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Item 126: the AO said that the cleaning of Market Place around the town hall is to be discussed by WTC's Strategy Working Party on Wednesday this week. The Town Clerk has information about a variety of options and indicative costs.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Item 130: the AO confirmed that a public drinking fountain will be installed in the Peach Place development near the public conveniences.

The B&GO said that the drainage issue beneath the external tap on the town hall near the Courtyard Restaurant remains unresolved. The AO was instructed to re-word the entry on the monitoring report to reflect the position.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Item 131: Cllr L Forbes said that there is a demand from local secondary school students to have boards erected in the town for street artists to paint upon. It was felt that a licensing system for the use of the boards to be operated and monitored by WTC would be cumbersome. When asked, Ethan Undrell said he thought any such boards would be defaced by 'taggers'. He expressed his disappointment about the damage to the mural in the Woosehill roundabout underpass.

Councillors felt that the Arts and Culture Committee was a more appropriate vehicle to consider the location of such boards and to engage with street artists.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER/ ARTS AND CULTURE OFFICER

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

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



Item 132: this issue of a collection bin for used beverage cups will be discussed under agenda item 7.

Item 133: Cllr P Dennis said that his employer is not able to provide any funding for the refurbishment of the Joel Park playground. However, it is possible that some of his colleagues could undertake work on behalf of WTC. For example, work in support of Wokingham in Bloom.

ACTION: MARKET AND BLOOM OFFICER

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

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Item 134: the AO said that the introduction of Christmas lights in the two trees adjacent to Elms House, Broad Street may have to be delayed in order to afford the immediate work to install or replace the necessary electrical infrastructure for WTC's lights in many street lighting columns.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Item 135: the B&GO said that the feedback he has received from users of Joel Park is that the incidence of dog fouling is low and not increasing. The AO was instructed to remove item this from the monitoring report.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

ELMS FIELD (Agenda Item 5)

(a) The notes about the design features of the entrances to Elms Field from Ms S Morgan, WBC dated 23rd July 2019 were received and considered.

The B&GO said that Cllr D Lee has expressed his concern that the exits from Elms Field are poorly designed in that they do not have appropriate physical barriers to cause cyclists and inattentive children to reduce their speed before they reach public highways.

The design notes explain the rationale behind not having such obvious physical barriers. However, councillors are determined not to put any user of Elms Field at undue risk and propose to monitor the situation through personal observation and social media posts and comments.

ACTION: WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCILLORS/ BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

(b) Cllr T Lack said that Howard Palmer Garden, Market Place and Elms Field have all benefited greatly from the significant recent investments of public money. He is concerned that these improvements are not undermined by the failure to establish proper litter picking and cleaning regimes. The AO was instructed to include this matter on the monitoring report.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Councillors noted that WBC will provide a large Grundon branded waste container on the nearby Waterford Way for the litter collected from Elms Field by WTC's groundsman.

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



GRAFFITI WORKING PARTY (Agenda Item 6)

Notes from the 26th June 2019 Graffiti Working Party meeting were received and considered.

Cllr L Forbes said that in 2019 the Emmbrook School won WTC's school's graffiti and litter eradication competition. As part of the school's work to promote the anti-graffiti and litter message it has engaged with over 1,300 other students.

Emmbrook students are also designing litter bins for WBC Localities Environment with the possibility of one or two being installed in the town.

Cllr Forbes said that the participants in the 2019 schools graffiti and litter eradication competition are the Emmbrook School, Forest School and St. Crispin's.

She also said that the two students attached to WTC's Graffiti Working Party are promulgating the anti-graffiti and litter message via the Instagram social media platform. WTC's Marketing Officer is monitoring this.

ACTION: CLLR L FORBES/ MARKETING OFFICER

THE ENVIRONMENT (Agenda Item 9)

(a) The committee encouraged Cllr P Hornsby to approach town centre businesses to enlist their participation in recycling schemes promoted by TerraCycle. This company actively collects hard to recycle items, for example, pens, crayons, coffee capsules, crisp packets, toothbrushes et al.

ACTION: CLLR P HORNSBY

This is seen as entirely laudable provided it does not undermine WBC's kerbside recycling box use.

Cllrs Hornsby and Forbes will discuss how to maximise the effectiveness of TerraCycle collections from businesses and local schools alike.

ACTION: CLLR L FORBES/ CLLR P HORNSBY

Cllr D Hinton expressed his concern about the number of people smoking in the recently opened Elms Field playground as illustrated by the large number of discarded butts.

The B&GO said that he has previously investigated fitting cigarette butt receptacles to the litter bins on Market Place to no avail as it is not possible. The same litter bins have been installed at Elms Field.

Councillors said that notices with the message 'Please consider not smoking in this playground for the benefit of children's health' or similar should be displayed around the playground.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



(b)A paper entitled 'Managing urban areas for insect pollinators' provided by Cllr P Hornsby was received and considered.

The B&GO was asked to provide councillors with a list of the parks and open spaces WTC owns and manages.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUND OFFICER

The B&GO said that an area of Redlands Farm Park could be used for pollinator friendly plants and flowers as could the bank leading from Langborough Recreation Ground to Gipsy Lane. He said that matching seed mixes to soil types was important as was the correct soil preparation before any planting.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

The B&GO said that an indicative price for a contractor to sow 30 square metres with wildflowers is £650.00 excluding VAT.

Cllr D Hinton said he was in discussion with WBC to improve the wildflower planting along the Woosehill spine road.

(c)Cllr E Bishop explained the mechanics of Refill.Org's scheme to reduce the use of single use plastic water bottles.

**RESOLVED
29974**

It was proposed by Cllr P Dennis and seconded by Cllr E Bishop and it was to promote the introduction of a Refill.Org scheme in the town of Wokingham.

Councillors approved this by a majority of seven votes to one.

It was proposed by Cllr D Hinton and seconded by Cllr T Lack and it was

**RESOLVED
29975**

to support Cllr E Bishop as coordinator of the local Refill.org scheme in Wokingham.

This was approved unanimously.

Cllr Bishop said she will endeavour to launch this before she leaves for university at the end of September 2019.

ACTION: CLLR E BISHOP

WILDFLOWERS SOWN ALONG GRASS VERGES (Agenda Item 8)

The B&GO noted that WTC does not have any responsibility to manage grass verges in Wokingham.

Officers explained that the model used by other Wokingham local councils to sow grass verges with wildflowers is:

- underground services check
- preparation of ground/ verge
- sowing of an appropriate wildflower mix
- cutting back annually in autumn

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



- repeat process each year excluding the underground services check

The AO said that all of the attendant costs for this work are borne by the parish or town council and not WBC. However, it is possible that the underground services check, if arranged through WBC, may be gratis.

Ethan Undrell left the meeting at 9:00pm.

The AO said that staff at Earley Town Council have a good deal of experience with converting grass verges to wildflower corridors.

The B&GO said that if grass verges are sown with wildflowers due regard must be paid to sightlines for vehicle drivers and pedestrians alike.

It was suggested that ornamental grasses could be sown in tandem or as an alternative to wildflowers in some places.

Councillors decided not to proceed with this until WTC has sown more wildflowers in the parks and open spaces it owns.

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

The AO said that developer Crest Nicholson has been challenged repeatedly about the quality of the soil it is providing at the proposed allotment site at Mulberry Grove. However, he said that following a site visit this morning with extensive test digging he is satisfied that the soil now presents an acceptable growing medium for allotment gardeners.

It was proposed by Cllr L Forbes and seconded by Cllr J Box and it was

**RESOLVED
29976**

that WTC will accept the allotment site and begin the letting process once the legal transfer of the site from Crest Nicholson to WTC is completed.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

This was approved unanimously.

The AO said that the proposed allotment site at Montague Park was still under construction and is not expected to be ready until late spring 2020 at the earliest.

WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL'S RISK REGISTER (Agenda Item 10)

The AO said that WTC's insurers require it to review its risk register annually. The sections relevant to the Amenities Committee were received and considered. The Vice-Chairman asked councillors to comment on any aspect of the register. The B&GO said that as events unfold across the year the assessment of risks and their impact is adjusted accordingly.

It was proposed by Cllr D Hinton and seconded by Cllr T Lack and it was

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



to accept the sections of WTC's risk register as presented.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER/ RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER

**RESOLVED
29977**

This was approved unanimously.

**POTENTIAL PROJECTS AND FUNDING REQUESTS FOR FINANCIAL YEAR
2020-2021 (Agenda Item 11)**

The AO explained that the Amenities Committee has three meetings to decide what costed, prioritized work requests it wants the Finance and Personnel Committee to consider funding in financial year 2020-2021. These meetings are in July, September and November.

Councillors said that they want the following to be considered:

- improvement work at Woosehill Community Hall as detailed on the amenities five year plan
- introduction of a 'garden of reflection' at Elms Field
- repointing external brickwork on the town hall
- redecoration of the external clock tower on the town hall
- a Christmas market on Peach Place or Elms Field
- extending the Christmas lights coverage when the current three year contract ends in March 2020

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The B&GO said that his previous attempt to attract a Christmas market to Wokingham was not successful because the perception of providers was that footfall in the town centre is not high enough to make a Christmas market commercially viable.

Councillors suggested that grants may be available for the work to repoint and redecorate parts of the town hall.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Cllr D Hinton said there is an opportunity to encourage local artisans to sell their wares at a craft market in Market Place. The Market and Bloom Officer was asked to discuss this with him.

ACTION: MARKET AND BLOOM OFFICER

START TIME OF AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETINGS (Agenda Item 12)

Councillors discussed starting Amenities Committee meetings earlier than the established time of 7:30pm. The consensus was that the current start time is convenient for the majority of councillors so it was decided not to change it.

Councillors noted that Amenities Committee agendas tend to be longer than those of other WTC committees. The AO encouraged all councillors to challenge agenda items if they felt they did not support the committee's remit or merit discussion.

AMENITIES COMMITTEE INFORMATION (Agenda Item 13)

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



(a) Councillors acknowledged former town councillor Mr C George's generosity in donating a CCTV camera system to WTC. This has been installed on Pennicott's building on Luckley Path. The AO was instructed to write to Mr George to thank him on behalf of WTC.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

(b) Cllr L Forbes said she will provide photographs of different refuse bins for the next Amenities Committee meeting.

ACTION: CLLR L FORBES/AMENITIES OFFICER

The meeting closed at 9:40pm.

CHAIRMAN

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____

