

3rd September 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 10:07pm.

PRESENT

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

IN ATTENDANCE

Amenities Officer (AO)
Buildings and Grounds Officer (B&GO)
Cllr P Lucey
Cllr I Shepherd-Dubey
Mr A Fletcher, Wokingham Borough Council (WBC)
Mr A Matthews, WBC
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. He also welcomed the two WBC officers.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

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

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.

PROPOSED 'GREENWAY' ACROSS JOEL PARK (Agenda Item 4)

The AO's report 04:2019-20 dated 20th August 2019 was received and considered.

The Vice-Chairman informed councillors that a decision on whether to allow WBC to install a greenway across Joel Park was required this evening. The Vice-Chairman suggested that councillors direct questions about WBC's response to WTC's previously expressed concerns to the Borough Council officers present.

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



Councillors remain concerned about the safety of the greenway road crossings. Mr. Matthews said that there is a planned upgrade to the existing tactile paving and described at some length the legal requirement placed on WBC to undertake an extensive safety audit.

The WBC officers confirmed that the planned route for the greenway across Reading Road is the existing pedestrian subway to Rotherfield Avenue, then along the riverside walk. They said that work to improve four bridges in this area will be undertaken. They acknowledged that if users eschew the subway an alternative crossing point over Reading Road would have to be considered.

Councillors suggested alternative routes for the greenway avoiding Joel Park. Mr Matthews said that the principle underpinning the concept of greenways is that the route must be off-road, hence the need to use Joel Park.

Cllr P Dennis challenged this assertion and said that an alternative off-road route is available via the new housing development.

The WBC officers said that in their view the line of least resistance, the so called 'desire line' for moving from Cantley Park to Reading Road, is across Joel Park. They felt that this would be the route users took regardless of alternative provision.

Councillors felt that the construction of a three metre wide stone and rubber path through Holt Copse would spoil this natural woodland and be visually intrusive.

Concern was also raised about the effect on flora and fauna in Holt Copse. Mr Matthews cited the positive effect of the California Country Park greenway where usage of the wooded areas by cyclists, pedestrians and wheelchair users has significantly increased.

Councillors again questioned the effectiveness of the public consultation on the Joel Park greenway. The chairpersons of both the Emmbrook and the Joel Park Residents Associations have said they were not aware of this consultation.

The WBC officers said that the standard width for a greenway to accommodate two-way movement is three metres. However, it can narrow to 2.5m if topographical surveys determine this is best for adjacent trees and their roots. The officers confirmed that no trees will be taken out or have their root systems disturbed because the greenway will be laid on top of the ground and graded back to ground level.

Mr A Matthews said that constructing the greenway closer to Holt Lane was not a viable option. Too much material would have to be imported to achieve a level surface and he believed the slope towards the play area would encourage cyclists to generate excessive speeds.

When asked about who is responsible for immediate and longer term maintenance Mr A Fletcher said that this would be carried out and paid for by WBC providing it was wear and tear work and not deliberate damage.

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



It was proposed by Cllr T Lack and seconded by Cllr J Box to allow WBC to install a greenway across Joel Park and it was

RESOLVED 29993 not to allow this to happen by four votes to three.

In the circumstances the WBC officers indicated that the greenway would probably begin on Woosehill and not include the Cantley Park to Joel Park link.

The WBC officers left the meeting at 8:20pm. Cllr I Shepherd-Dubey left the meeting at 8:23pm.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 5)

It was proposed by Cllr T Lack and seconded by Cllr M Malvern and it was

RESOLVED 29994 (a) that the minutes of the Amenities Committee meeting held on 25th July 2019 (pages 15876 to 15880) be received as a true and correct record and they be confirmed and signed by the Vice-Chairman.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

It was proposed by Cllr T Lack and seconded by Cllr P Hornsby and it was

RESOLVED 29995 (b) that the minutes of the Amenities Committee meeting held on 29th July 2019 (pages 15881 to 15888) be received as a true and correct record and they be confirmed and signed by the Vice-Chairman.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Both of these resolutions were unanimously carried.

Cllr P Lucey left the meeting at 8:31pm.

MONITORING REPORT (Agenda Item 6)

The AO and B&GO updated the committee on how the work to deal with the items on the monitoring report dated 28th August 2019 is progressing.

Item 101: the AO said this matter has a separate agenda item.

Item 113: the B&GO reiterated that the relocation and/or refurbishment of the town hall public kitchen is dependent on the future use of office 3. He said he is still waiting for confirmation from the Events Coordinator on what new kitchen appliances and equipment he favours.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Item 126: the AO confirmed that the cleaning contractor for the Peach Place external flooring will hold a practical demonstration on Market Place on Monday 16th September 2019.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The B&GO said that McLaughlin & Harvey personnel are litter picking Elms Field on a daily basis and that WTC staff are emptying the litter bins. Ethan Undrell

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



said he very much enjoys using Elms Field but dislikes the amount of litter being dropped in it.

The B&GO was thanked for displaying a 'no dogs allowed' sign on the children's playground fence at Elms Field.

Item 130: the AO confirmed that a public drinking fountain is still set to be installed on Peach Place.

The B&GO said that the Town Clerk is continuing to work with WBC officials to restore proper drainage beneath WTC's external tap by the Courtyard restaurant.
ACTION: TOWN CLERK

The B&GO said the Town Clerk would welcome Cllr P Dennis' offer to discuss this matter with WBC councillors.

ACTION: CLLR P DENNIS

Item 132: the AO said that he has contacted Simply Cups and Veolia about recycling single use plastic beverage cups on several occasions but has not received any response. It was pointed out the Shell garage on Reading Road has a purpose built bin for these used cups. The AO was instructed to contact the garage to determine if and how the deposited cups are recycled.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Cllr P Hornsby undertook to approach Costa Coffee on Market Place to determine if it has a process for recycling single use plastic cups.

ACTION: CLLR P HORNSBY

Cllr L Forbes said that the schools awarded prizes in WTC's 2018 graffiti and litter eradication competition were keen to use some of their prize money to purchase and install litter bins in the town centre. A plastic cup recycling bin could be included.

ACTION: CLLR L FORBES

Item 134: the AO reminded councillors that the installation of Christmas lights on the two trees adjacent to Elms House, Broad Street, may have to be held in abeyance as the budget is committed to repairing lamp columns and installing Christmas lights on Peach Place.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Item 139: the AO reported that the situation with formulating objectives for the Amenities Committee is unchanged from the last meeting.

Item 140: Cllr P Hornsby said that he plans to discuss the TerraCycle recycling scheme with Mrs G Hewetson from the nascent Wokingham business group.

ACTION: CLLR P HORNSBY

He said that he has also discussed the operation of the established TerraCycle scheme with Ms A Cheney. Cllr L Forbes said that she intends to discuss the

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



scheme with local secondary schools when she makes her next visit to them this September.

ACTION: CLLR L FORBES

Item 141: the B&GO said that he is continuing to work on obtaining coordinated signage for Elms Field. Councillors said that the injunction not to smoke cigarettes in the children's playground should be extended to include vaping.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Item 142: the B&GO said that he has identified areas on Langborough Recreation Ground, Redlands Farm Park, Leslie Sears Playing Field and Howard Palmer Garden that can be used to sow wildflowers. He said that the costings obtained range from £15 - £23 per square metre. However, he said that there is insufficient funding in the parks maintenance budget to pay for this new activity. Councillors said that the fledgling Wokingham Green Group could be approached for funding and practical assistance.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

It was also felt that Wokingham in Bloom volunteers could be approached to offer support and some funding.

ACTION: MARKET AND BLOOM OFFICER

The B&GO said that it was good practice to match wildflower seed mixes with appropriate soil types.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Item 143: Cllr E Bishop said that from the recent recruitment drive ten local catering businesses have joined Refill.Org's scheme which offers water, free of charge, to everyone who asks for it. Councillors want this scheme to be publicized on WTC's website and its Facebook and Twitter pages.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER/ MARKETING OFFICER

Item 145: the B&GO said that Cllr D Hinton and the Market and Bloom Officer are in discussion about the opportunity of holding a craft market in the town centre.

ACTION: MARKET AND BLOOM OFFICER/ CLLR D HINTON

Item 146: the AO confirmed that Caloo Ltd intends to start the work to improve Joel Park playground during week commencing 30th September 2019. If the weather is benign it is expected that the play area will re-open by the start of the October half-term school holiday.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Item 147: the AO said that several complications have arisen regarding the planning application for CCTV on the Town Hall building.

It has been confirmed that two applications are needed - 1) planning 2) listed building consent. These applications will have to be referred to Historic England for its consideration.

It is possible that the quality of WTC's existing architectural drawings is not acceptable which would require new drawings to be made at a considerable cost.

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



The AO said he is in discussion with the original architects who made the drawings in 1998.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The AO was instructed to continue with this work and, if need be, arrange to install a temporary CCTV camera(s) to afford some protection for the main Christmas tree on Market Place.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Etnan Undrell left the meeting at 9:01pm.

ELMS FIELD (Agenda Item 7)

(a) The Town Clerk's report 08:2019-20 dated 26th August 2019 was received and considered. Councillors said they were impressed by the design of the sculpture commissioned by The Wokingham Society to commemorate one of its benefactors - Miss Isobel Clifton.

Cllr L Forbes questioned whether approval should be given to install this in Elms Field before the use of all of Elms Field has been fully considered by WTC.

Councillors felt that this piece of public art would be a positive addition to Elms Field and noted that it was, in principle, included in the overarching planning consent for Elms Field.

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

**RESOLVED
29996**

to approve the installation of the Thrussell's 'thrush and butterfly on elm' sculpture in Elms Field.

This was approved by six votes to one.

(b) A working party was formed to consider the wider use of, cleaning and maintenance of, and ambience of both Elms Field and Howard Palmer Garden. The working party will consider the installation of a 'garden of reflection and/or remembrance' as part of its deliberations.

The councillor members of the working party are: L Forbes, T Lack and M Malvern. The Town Clerk is to decide which WTC officer(s) should join the working party.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

The AO said that any proposals from the working party which would require significant funding should be brought to the 5th November 2019 Amenities Committee meeting for possible inclusion on the prioritized funding request list for 2020-2021.

**ACTION: ELMS FIELD AND HOWARD PALMER GARDEN WORKING PARTY
GRAFFITI WORKING PARTY (Agenda Item 8)**

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



The 'Vinyl Wrap for Street Cabinets' document produced by Cllr L Forbes was received and considered.

Cllr L Forbes explained the rationale behind the proposal to invite local charities to pay for wrapping utility company street cabinets with vinyl photographs. Councillors supported the proposal.

It was proposed by Cllr T Lack and seconded by Cllr M Malvern and it was

**RESOLVED
29997**

to launch the vinyl wrapping for street cabinets programme as outlined within the presented document.

ACTION: CLLR L FORBES

This was passed unanimously.

Cllr T Lack said that once the protocol was established it could be that the Arts and Culture Committee assumes responsibility for it.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK/ ARTS AND CULTURE OFFICER

The B&GO suggested that the two large Grundon branded wheeled refuse bins by the Courtyard Restaurant could be wrapped to improve and soften their obtrusive appearance.

The AO was instructed to obtain a guide cost for this.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

NATIONAL ALLOTMENTS WEEK (Agenda Item 9)

The AO thanked the councillors who attended WTC's open afternoon at Ormonde Road allotments site. He explained that despite the very windy and wet weather the event went ahead in Wokingham Horticultural Association's trading store at the site. He said that he is anticipating coverage of the event in the next issue of the National Society for Allotment and Leisure Gardeners quarterly magazine.

UPDATE ON PROPOSED NEW ALLOTMENT SITES AT MULBERRY GROVE AND MONTAGUE PARK (Agenda item 10)

The AO said that the legal transfer of the new Mulberry Grove allotment site from Crest Nicholson to WTC was completed a week ago. He said that twenty of the twenty eight plots have been let with around ten being actively used by tenants at this early stage.

The AO explained that he is continuing to press Crest Nicholson's site manager to complete the residual clear up tasks he promised the developer would undertake. The AO said that he will arrange for anti-climb paint to be applied to the top of the boundary railings. There have been several reports of anti-social behaviour on the allotment site by youths who have climbed over the fence.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

With regard to Montague Park the AO said that he will resume discussions with WBC officer Ms D Lingam when she returns from her holiday.

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

NEW ALLOTMENTS SITE ON BELLWAY HOMES DEVELOPMENT, NORTH WOKINGHAM (Agenda Item 11)

A copy of Aspect Landscape Planning's drawing no. 5244/ASPD001PP/005 was received and considered.

The AO said that ten days ago he was made aware that a new allotment site was nearing completion adjacent to the Bellway Homes development off Binfield Road. A resident living on the housing estate contacted him to reserve a plot. Subsequently he visited the nearly completed allotment site and contacted Bellway Homes. Bellway's response was non-committal and opaque.

Councillors acknowledged that the site may not be offered up for local authority ownership or management.

The AO said that he will contact Ms D Lingam, WBC, as a matter of urgency when she returns to work later this week.

When asked, the AO said that the operating costs of running an allotment site can to an extent be offset by the rental revenue. However, this revenue does not cover the employment costs of a WTC officer administering the site.

It was proposed by Cllr P Dennis and seconded by Cllr T Lack and it was

**RESOLVED
29998**

- (a) for WTC, in principle, to assume responsibility for this allotment site if asked to take it on, providing it is in a 'spade ready' condition with particular regard to the soil quality.
- (b) this with the proviso that staffing and workload issues are fully taken into account and managed by the Town Clerk.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

This was approved unanimously.

POTENTIAL PROJECTS AND FUNDING REQUESTS FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2020-2021 (Agenda Item 12)

P.15887 from the minutes of 29th July 2019 Amenities Committee meeting was received and considered.

At the conclusion of the discussion of agenda item 4 Cllr P Lucey asked that councillors include the completion of the external lighting works for the town hall building. This is lighting for the first floor of the building and the removal of the individual light bulbs from the roof line.

The AO said that the Town Clerk has a costed scheme for this work of £45,000.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Cllr T Lack wants WTC to install 3-4 benches between Woosehill and Wokingham town centre on the route from Linnet Walk. He understands that as

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



well as requiring funding approval, permission would be required from WBC, the landowner.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Councillors said they are content with the scope of the plan to introduce Christmas lights to Peach Place. This is lights in nine trees, icicle lights from one corniche and the freestanding Christmas tree provided by the Rose Street Methodist Church. They do not feel that any more lights should be considered at this stage. Therefore, the budget for the next WTC Christmas lights contract 2020-2022 should be left to WTC officers to determine.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The AO said that a prioritized, fully costed list of funding requests must be decided upon at the 5th November 2019 Amenities Committee meeting.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER/ BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

BUDGET DETAIL (Agenda Item 13)

The relevant extract of the budget detail dated 31st July 2019 was received and considered.

The Vice-Chairman asked for comments and questions from the councillors.

- Market and Bloom advertising/marketing year to date spend £749 against £5,000 annual budget: the B&GO said the Market and Bloom Officer was moving away from advertising the markets via paid for media and using social media which is much less expensive.
- The parks maintenance and trees budgets year to date spends are very low. The B&GO said actual spend at year end would be around the budgeted amounts. The apparent underspend will self-correct as planned work is carried out over the year.
- Elms Field maintenance – why is there a £2,000 budget when by contract the developer is responsible for the work until July 2020? The B&GO said there is some ancillary work WTC is responsible for which at this stage he is employing cost free work-arounds to deal with.

When asked, the B&GO assured councillors that the lack of revenue from some room lettings at Woosehill Community Hall is not due to the external appearance of the building's entrance.

AMENITIES COMMITTEE INFORMATION (Agenda Item 14)

- (a) Minutes of WBC/ RE3 recycling meeting held on 26th July 2019 were received for information.
- (b) A cutting from the Daily Mail newspaper dated 12th August 2019 about the TerraCycle recycling scheme was received for information.

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



(c) No information was raised by councillors.

The meeting closed at 10:07pm.

CHAIRMAN

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____

