

5th November 2019

Minutes of the proceedings of the **AMENITIES COMMITTEE** meeting held on this day in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, WOKINGHAM** from 7:31pm to 10:13pm.

PRESENT

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

IN ATTENDANCE

Cllr P Lucey
Amenities Officer (AO)
Buildings and Grounds Officer (B&GO)
Market and Bloom Officer
Ethan Undrell, an Emmbrook school student
Three members of Wokingham Horticultural Association

The Chairman thanked Cllr P Dennis for his chairmanship of the three previous Amenities Committee meetings.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from:
Cllr D Hinton
Cllr P Hornsby

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.

MEMBER'S ATTENDANCE: WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL STANDING ORDER NO.17 (Agenda Item 4)

A copy of Wokingham Town Council's (WTC) standing order no.17 was received and considered.

Cllr N Campbell-White said that he has not been able to attend the three previous Amenities Committee meetings. He explained that he was unexpectedly called to France on a business matter at the time of the two July meetings. In September he was on holiday. He apologised for his absence.

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



**RESOLVED
30037**

It was proposed by Cllr J Box and seconded by Cllr P Dennis and it was to accept Cllr N Campbell-White's explanation and to support his continued membership of the Amenities Committee.

This was unanimously approved.

WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL'S STREET MARKETS (Agenda Item 5)

The Chairman introduced Marianna Pentek, WTC's Market and Bloom Officer (M&BO). She outlined her responsibilities in regard to markets and horticultural competitions.

She said that the number of traders selling at the Friday and Saturday markets was encouraging. The second all vegan market is set for this coming Sunday and WTC expects to earn £200 gross per vegan market.

She noted that the day celebrating the 800th anniversary of the granting of Wokingham's market charter was very successful. However, she expressed concern that the number of traders attending the monthly farmers' market was dwindling and it was difficult to attract new sellers. On an annual basis WTC earns around £3,000 gross from the monthly farmers' market tolls. Cllrs J Box and L Forbes urged the M&BO to consider bolt-ons to the farmers market – especially more and more varied food stalls.

ACTION: MARKET AND BLOOM OFFICER

She confirmed that she is moving away from paid for advertising and using social media sites like Facebook and Instagram at little cost.

Cllr N Campbell-White congratulated the M&BO on the vibrancy of the Friday and Saturday general markets. He observed that nearby Newbury has closed its general street market.

GARDENING COMPETITIONS (Agenda item 6)

The M&BO confirmed that Wokingham was awarded Silver Gilt in the 2019 Thames and Chilterns in Bloom horticultural competition. She noted that the marks awarded in each of the three categories were higher than in 2018.

She said that although she is relatively new in post she has many ideas for new projects in 2020. She wants to use the experience of successful, established projects to inform these new schemes. She noted that Cockpit Path community garden was recognised as 'outstanding' for the fifth time in the 'It's Your Neighbourhood' section. She said that an increase to the Wokingham in Bloom budget for 2020-21 is necessary.

Cllr N Campbell-White congratulated the M&BO on her work for the successful entry.

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



Councillors noted that discussions are ongoing with Network Rail about WTC/Bloom taking over the public space around Wokingham railway station. It was agreed that this major gateway into Wokingham should be better presented and cared for and this would have a positive impact on the Bloom entry. However, the funding WTC could receive from Network Rail to pay for improvement and maintenance works is still a matter of negotiation.

The M&BO briefly described WTC's in-house gardening competitions. She left the meeting at 7:58pm.

REQUEST FROM WOKINGHAM HORTICULTURAL ASSOCIATION FOR A THIRTY YEAR LEASE FOR ITS TRADING STORE AT ORMONDE ROAD ALLOTMENTS SITE (Agenda Item 7)

(a) A letter from Wokingham Horticultural Association (WHA) dated 29th August 2019 was received and considered.

The Chairman welcomed three members of WHA to the meeting and acknowledged their request for a thirty year extension for the lease of space at Ormonde Road allotment site on which WHA's trading store stands.

The Chairman said he was content to offer a fifteen or, at most, twenty year extension but was unable to offer more. Sheila McKeand, WHA, said that Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) has recently granted thirty years to local organizations in comparable circumstances.

The AO advised members that any amendment to the existing lease would need to be drawn up by WTC's solicitor at a significant cost. Mrs McKeand indicated that a draft lease could be prepared by WHA, at its own expense. However, councillors noted that WTC's solicitor would have to consider them.

The chairman felt that, once they are clearly established, the legal costs should be split equally between WTC and WHA.

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

**RESOLVED
30038**

to recommend to WTC's Finance and Personnel Committee that the WHA is offered a guaranteed extension of 20 years to its lease of space at Ormonde Road allotments for the specific purpose of refurbishing its trading store within the pre-existing boundaries.

ACTION: RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER/ AMENITIES OFFICER

This was unanimously approved.

(b) It was proposed by Cllr N Campbell-White and seconded by Cllr T Lack and it was

**RESOLVED
30039**

to maintain the annual rent WHA pays WTC for its trading store at Ormonde Road allotments site at £50.00 for 2020.

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



ACTION: RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER/ AMENITIES OFFICER

This was unanimously approved.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 8)

It was proposed by Cllr J Box and seconded by Cllr T Lack and it was

**RESOLVED
30040**

that the minutes of the Amenities Committee meeting held on 3rd September 2019 (pages 15895 to 15904) be received as a true and correct record and they be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

This was unanimously approved.

MONITORING REPORT (Agenda Item 9)

The AO and B&GO updated the committee on how the work to deal with the items on the monitoring report dated 29th October 2019 is progressing.

Item 113: the B&GO said that the Events Coordinator has still not provided details of the new equipment he would like for the public kitchen.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

The AO was instructed to remove the note about the future use of office 3 from the monitoring report.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Item 126: this is an agenda item later in the meeting.

Item 130: the AO was instructed to remove the note about Peach Place public drinking fountain from the monitoring report.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The AO said that the Town Clerk has a further meeting arranged with WBC personnel responsible for the remedial items from the Market Place improvements work. The drainage issue beneath the outside tap adjacent to the Town Hall building will be one of the matters discussed.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Item 132: Cllr P Dennis said that Cllr P Hornsby has visited Costa Coffee on Market Place and been assured that it recycles used plastic beverage cups – those it sells and cups from other outlets.

Cllr L Forbes reminded councillors that Emmbrook School students are in discussion with Peter Baveystock, Cleaner and Greener, WBC about putting an additional recycling bin on Market Place.

ACTION: CLLR L FORBES

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



The AO undertook to investigate the recycling of plastic beverage cups from Gunwharf Quays shopping centre.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The AO said that he has visited some Shell petrol stations in the locality which have a large replica plastic beverage cup on their forecourt. Each of these large cups have a solid top and is, in effect, an advertising feature. The AO said he has contacted Shell's head office and been told that Shell does not collect and recycle plastic beverage cups and has no plans in the immediate future to do so. The AO was instructed to remove this item from the monitoring report.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Item 134: the AO reminded councillors that there is insufficient funds in the Christmas lights budget to install lights in the two trees adjacent to Elms House on Broad Street. He was instructed to remove this item from the monitoring report.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Item 139: Specific objectives for the Amenities Committee will be formulated when WTC's strategic plan for 2019-2022 is agreed upon.

Item 140: there is no update on these Terracycle matters and this item is to remain on the monitoring report.

Item 141: the B&GO said he is waiting for one more quotation before placing an order for the required signs for Elms Field.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Item 142: this is an agenda item later in the meeting.

Item 143: the B&GO said that Cllr D Hinton and the M&BO remain in discussion about holding a craft market in Wokingham.

ACTION: MARKET AND BLOOM OFFICER

Item 144: the Chairman thanked Cllr E Bishop for her role in launching the Refill.Org scheme in Wokingham. Cllr Bishop said she is hopeful of enrolling more outlets.

ACTION: CLLR E BISHOP

Councillors said there is an opportunity to have stalls promoting the scheme at WTC's general street market and its annual Fun Day.

ACTION: MARKET AND BLOOM OFFICER/ ARTS AND CULTURE OFFICER

It was noted that Wokingham's Refill scheme was featured recently on BBC's South Today programme.

Item 146: this is an agenda item later in the meeting.

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



Item 147: the AO said that the heritage impact assessment report WTC had to commission as an integral part of its external CCTV installation planning application ran to 35 pages. The AO assured councillors that a temporary CCTV camera would be aimed at the main Christmas tree when it is installed next week.

When asked, the B&GO said that work to install the pipes, electrical infrastructure and boilers was progressing well. A delay in WBC granting the requisite approval to erect scaffolding has been problematic but has now been resolved. Therefore, the work to install the new flue system will begin very shortly.

The Chairman thanked the B&GO for his management of this complex project.

The B&GO was asked to ensure that WTC writes to the owners of the restaurants at the Town Hall to thank them for their ready cooperation and forbearance whilst the work has been ongoing.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

GRAFFITI WORKING PARTY (Agenda Item 10)

Copies of the notes from the Graffiti Working Party's meetings held on 12th September and 21st October 2019 were received and considered.

Cllr L Forbes said that the entrants in the schools and litter eradication project for 2019 will present to councillors on Tuesday 28th January 2020 at 6:15pm immediately prior to the scheduled Full Council meeting.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK/ GRAFFITI WORKING PARTY

Cllr Forbes said that the GWP would appreciate another councillor joining the judging panel. Cllrs M Malvern and E Bishop said they would be very pleased to take part.

ACTION: GRAFFITI WORKING PARTY/ CLLR E BISHOP/CLLE M MALVERN

Ethan Undrell was invited to join the judging panel as a student advisor.

ACTION: GRAFFITI WORKING PARTY/ ETHAN UNDRELL

Cllr L Forbes said that other councillors may be invited to join the GWP in 2020.

KING GEORGE V PLAYING FIELD CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND (Agenda Item 11)

Separate emails from two residents were received and considered.

The B&GO said that because of vandalism the pod swing basket has been removed from the playground. He said that it has taken a good deal of time to source the requisite parts because they are no longer standard stock lines. However, the basket will be returned to the playground shortly.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



The B&GO said that the wetpour safety surface at the playground has been deliberately damaged on a number of occasions. The cost of repair of the latest attack is around £6,000. This is subject to an insurance claim.

The B&GO was asked to write to the two email correspondents to ensure them that it is WTC's intention, subject to the availability of funds, to refurbish this playground in 2021-22.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Cllr P Lucey left the meeting at 8:47pm. He said he is a strong supporter of the plan to install feature lighting on the first floor of the Town Hall building.

UPDATE ON NEW ALLOTMENT SITES (Agenda Item 12)

A copy of drawing no.SK100/ALPB for Keephatch Gardens (Binfield Road) was received and considered.

The AO said that all of the twenty-eight plots at the new Mulberry Grove allotment site are let to tenants. He said that a good deal of remedial work has had to be undertaken by WTC, drawing on S106 funds attached to the Montague Park development.

The AO said that with regard to the proposed new sites at Montague Park and Keephatch Gardens the initial set-ups have been determined by WBC at an early stage of the planning approval process long before WTC was involved. Therefore, it is proving to be a challenge to get the developers to adjust the set-ups to incorporate WTC's particular requirements.

In regard to Keephatch Gardens allotment site, off Binfield Road, meetings are ongoing with WBC officers and Bellway Homes. With regard to Montague Park allotment site, near William Heelas Way, meetings with WBC officers are ongoing. The AO said to date he has been unable to access these sites to make an initial assessment of the soil quality.

It was proposed by Cllr N Campbell-White and seconded by Cllr L Forbes and it was

**RESOLVED
30041**

that WTC will only take on the ownership and management of these sites if they are set-up to WTC's satisfaction at a reasonable cost and are shovel ready.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

This was unanimously approved.

The AO said that he is in the process of organising a marketing leaflet for the allotments at Keephatch Gardens which will be distributed by Bellway Homes. At present there is one name on the waiting list for a plot.

The AO was thanked for his work with regard to WTC's actual and proposed new allotment sites.

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



Ethan Undrell left the meeting at 8:58pm.

BONFIRES AT ALLOTMENT SITES (Agenda item 13)

The AO said that he met with a disgruntled Ormonde Road householder recently who complained about the deleterious effect of smoke from Ormonde Road allotment bonfires. The resident complained of smoke wafting into his house.

The AO advised councillors that some years ago WTC altered its permission for bonfires from any day of the week to Wednesday and Saturdays only. In addition bonfires are not allowed at Gipsy Lane between June and August inclusive. Councillors took different positions on whether bonfires should be allowed or not at WTC's allotments sites. The AO said that some pernicious weeds like mare's tail and couch grass are very difficult to compost.

Councillors decide to maintain WTC's current restrictions on bonfires. The AO was instructed to write to all allotment tenants to advise them to compost as much green waste as possible on site, or to take it to RE3 Bracknell or Reading in the expectation of reducing the incidence of bonfires.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The AO was also instructed to draw up and publish best practice for the lighting and control of bonfires to supplement the existing guidelines set out in WTC's allotment agreement.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

JOEL PARK PLAYGROUND IMPROVEMENT WORKS (Agenda Item 14)

The AO said that the installation of the new play equipment and safety surface at Joel Park children's playground proceeded on schedule despite the persistent rainfall during October. He noted that the surfacing crew worked on Saturdays and Sundays to make up lost time.

He advised councillors that the paint on the circles for the Twister game has deteriorated quickly. Caloo Ltd has advised that this is disappointing but not surprising given the damp conditions at this time of year when the paint was applied. Caloo will repaint the Twister circles when the weather is more favourable.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

POTENTIAL PROJECTS AND FUNDING REQUESTS FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2020-2021 (Agenda Item 15)

P.15887 from the minutes of 29th July 2019 Amenities Committee meeting was received and considered as was p.15903 from the minutes of 3rd September 2019 Amenities Committee meeting.

Councillors discussed the merits and benefits of the projects suggested at the two previous meetings of the Amenities Committee.

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



The Chairman said that when WTC assumes full responsibility for Elms Field next year ongoing maintenance costs will need to be added to relevant existing budgets.

With regard to encouraging pollinators by planting wildflowers the B&GO said he is working in conjunction with Holt Copse Conservation Volunteers to establish a wildflower area at Joel Park. He said it is possible to introduce an area at Redlands Farm Park. He explained that planting to augment the existing wildflowers at Viking Field will be undertaken and funded from an existing budget. The B&GO said that to properly establish wildflowers work will, in all likelihood, have to be undertaken over several seasons at each location.

The B&GO said that it is necessary to have some of the external Town Hall brickwork repointed. At the same time a number of bricks will have to be replaced.

The B&GO said that the paint on the wooden clock tower on the Town Hall is peeling and needs to be addressed. He noted that the largest proportion of the cost of this will be the erection of scaffolding for access.

Cllr E Bishop left the meeting at 9:32pm.

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

**RESOLVED
30042**

to request the following funding from the Finance and Personnel Committee in this prioritized order for 2020-2021:

- 1) Increase Elms Field maintenance budgets by a total of £30,000
- 2) Establish a Market Place pavement cleaning budget of £25,000
- 3) Re-pointing of some Town Hall external brickwork - £10,000
- 4) Repainting Town Hall clock tower - £13 500
- 5) Introduce wildflower areas at some WTC open spaces - £3,000
- 6) A 'garden of reflection' at Howard Palmer Garden - £6,000

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER/ RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER

This was unanimously approved.

The AO was instructed to add refurbishing the children's playground at King George V Playing Field to the Committee's four year plan at an assumed cost of £80,000 for 2021-2022. Similarly the redecoration of the hall, landing and stairs at the Town Hall is to be added to the four year plan.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The AO said he has agreed an increase in the Christmas lights budget with the Responsible Finance Officer to take account of the next three year contract, 2020-2023.

The AO asked councillors to send him their thoughts about the existing and possible future displays of Christmas lights when 2019's motifs are up and lit.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



Councillors want to scrutinize the plans for the installation of external lighting for the first floor of the Town Hall at their next meeting.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

ELMS FIELD/HOWARD PALMER GARDEN WORKING PARTY (Agenda Item 16)

(a) The notes from the first meeting of the Elms Field/ Howard Palmer Garden Working Party dated 31st July 2019 were received and considered.

Cllr T Lack said that it was felt that Howard Palmer Garden would be a more suitable space for a 'garden of reflection' rather than the much livelier Elms Field. It was proposed by Cllr L Forbes and seconded by Cllr J Box and it was

**RESOLVED
30043**

to record the gratitude of the Amenities Committee for Cllr T Lack and Wokingham Litter Heroes litter picking the aforementioned spaces whilst WTC's groundsman was on leave recently.

This was unanimously approved.

(b) At WTC's Full Council meeting held on 22nd October 2019 Cllr D Lee raised his long held concerns about the safety of the exits from Elms Field onto Wellington and Elms Road. Several councillors described the involvement of a number of organizations and agencies with this matter and it was felt that the Town Clerk should coordinate WTC's response.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

The Chairman said he will discuss this directly with the Town Clerk.

ACTION: CLLR N CAMPBELL-WHITE

It was noted that WBC are planning to make the concrete bollards at the Wellington Road exit easier to navigate around for the visually impaired.

AMENITIES COMMITTEE INFORMATION (Agenda Item 17)

No information was raised by councillors.

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC (Agenda Item 18)

It was proposed by Cllr T Lack and seconded by Cllr J Box and it was

**RESOLVED
30044**

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.

This was passed unanimously.

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



PART II

MARKET PLACE CLEANING (Agenda Item 19)

Report 14:2019 from the Town Clerk dated 29th October 2019 was received and considered.

The AO said that the quotation from company 3 was not valid as this company did not consider that regular weekly cleaning of Market Place is necessary.

It was proposed by Cllr T Lack and seconded by Cllr J Box and it was

**RESOLVED
30045**

to engage company 1 to clean the new pavements on and around Market Place. This cleaning to be spread over six days a week. The cost of a one-off deep clean is £10,980 excluding VAT; the ongoing annual cleaning cost is £24,965 excluding VAT.

This was unanimously approved.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The AO said that company 1 is Premier Support Services Group. It was noted that WBC will pay 50% of the weekly cleaning costs.

ORMONDE ROAD CAR PARK IMPROVEMENT WORKS (Agenda Item 20)

To receive and consider report 05:2019/20 dated 9th October 2019 from the Amenities Officer.

Councillors felt that quotations A, C and E were overly expensive and agreed they should be disregarded.

The Chairman said quotation D contained the best work process and most detail and was in fact the least expensive. Councillors noted that three of the companies, including company D, are based in the local area.

It was proposed by Cllr N Campbell-White and seconded by Cllr T Lack and it was

**RESOLVED
30046**

to engage company D to improve and extend the Ormonde Road allotments site car park and to improve and extend the existing haulage way for £35,580 excluding VAT.

This was unanimously approved

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The AO said company D is ESC Surfacing. It was noted that the S106 funds attached to Montague Park allotments site will be used to pay for this work.

The meeting closed at 10:13pm.

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



CHAIRMAN

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____

Amenities Committee 5th November 2019

15960

