

14th January 2020

Minutes of the proceedings of the **AMENITIES COMMITTEE** meeting held on this day in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, WOKINGHAM** from 7:31pm to 9:29pm.

PRESENT

Cllrs: N Campbell-White (Chairman), 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

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from:
Cllr E Bishop
Cllr J Box

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.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 4)

It was proposed by Cllr P Dennis and seconded by Cllr L Forbes and it was

**RESOLVED
30079**

that the minutes of the Amenities Committee meeting held on 5th November 2019 (pages 15949 to 15960) be received as a true and correct record and they be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

This was unanimously approved.

When asked, the B&GO said that he has not yet written to the proprietors of the Piccolo Arco and Courtyard restaurants, on behalf of Wokingham Town Council (WTC) to express WTC's gratitude for their cooperation whilst the town hall boilers were replaced.

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He said that he intends to write this week.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

The Chairman thanked the B&GO for his diligent work in managing the complex gas boiler installation project and acknowledged the B&GO's important role in bringing it to a successful conclusion.

The B&GO said that his job was made easier through the expertise of and personnel deployed by the contractor. The B&GO was asked to post photographs of the new boilers on WTC's website and to write a short rationale describing the need to replace and upgrade the old boilers.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

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 7th January 2020 is progressing.

Item 113: the B&GO said that he has raised the public kitchen refurbishment with the Events Coordinator once again. The latter is to re-engage with kitchen appliance providers.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Item 126: the AO said that the high powered jet-washing of the Yorkstone, on and around Market Place, has been effective in cleaning off dirt and grime. However, it has been much less successful in removing oil, tar and rubber stains. He said that the six days per week cleaning and litter picking regime is now in place. Councillors acknowledged that litter picking across the space was significantly better but they reiterated their concern about the residue of oil, tar and rubber stains.

The AO said that with the Town Clerk he is meeting the business development manager of Premier Support Services Group to review the first month of this operation. How to effectively deal with the residual stains will be raised. In addition to this the AO is meeting with another company which claims to supply very effective cleaning liquids for all types of external paving.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Councillors noticed that the removal of chewing gum from the pavements is proving to be slow. The AO confirmed that this will be discussed with Premier at the forthcoming review meeting.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The AO reported that the jet-washing company said that an annual deep clean would, in its view, be required.

Cllr T Lack said that litter picking at Howard Palmer Garden and Elms Field was being discussed at length by the recently formed working party. He explained that the Town Clerk has undertaken to raise the concerns of the working party with Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) officers as a matter of priority.

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**ACTION: ELMS FIELD/HOWARD PALMER GARDEN WORKING PARTY/
TOWN CLERK**

Councillors registered their concern about the poor quality of the two sets of wooden gates at the play area on Elms Field. The B&GO said that these were installed as part of the coordinated design established for Elms Field and look visually pleasing but the hinges and closers may not be fit for purpose. He indicated that WBC Regeneration is aware of the issues with these gates and the Town Clerk is continuing to work for a long-lasting solution.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK/ BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Item 130: the B&GO reported that WBC has indicated that it is considering some remedial work to counter the lack of proper drainage beneath WTC's outside tap on the town hall building. However, it is understood that this will not involve any groundworks.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK/ BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Item 132: Cllr P Hornsby confirmed that Costa Coffee does recycle used plastic lined paper beverage cups – those it uses and those from all other retailers. The AO said he is collecting these and returning them to Costa, Market Place. The AO was instructed to remove this item from the monitoring report.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Item 139: this matter is to remain on the monitoring report until WTC's overarching strategic direction is clearly delineated.

Item 140: Cllr P Hornsby said that he has engaged with several local groups about introducing TerraCycle schemes. He plans to extend this engagement to larger town centre retailers in the near future.

ACTION: CLLR P HORNSBY

Cllr L Forbes said that she has asked Morrisons supermarket, Woosehill, to consider launching its own TerraCycle scheme. Morrisons is interested in so doing if WTC will assist with publicizing it.

ACTION: CLLR L FORBES

She said that she will redouble her efforts to engage with local secondary schools about recycling from February 2020 onwards.

ACTION: CLLR L FORBES

Item 141: the B&GO confirmed that the additional signage for Elms Field is on order. It includes braille script which complicates the production process.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Item 142: the B&GO said that £3,000 has been allocated for wildflower planting with effect from April 2020. He said that Holt Copse Conservation Volunteers has agreed to undertake planting at Joel Park. He said that a further 12m tranche of Viking Field will be sown with a mixture of wildflower seeds this year.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



The Chairman asked the B&GO to consider planting some shrubs as well as sowing wildflower seeds. His view is that these can be equally effective in attracting pollinators and can look attractive all year round if properly cared for.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Item 143: Cllr D Hinton said that he is in discussion with the Markets and Bloom Officer to explore the possibility of including craft stalls in the Sunday vegan market. He has also raised the possibility of introducing a mother and baby market similar to that at Guildford street market.

ACTION: CLLR D HINTON/ MARKETS AND BLOOM OFFICER

Item 148: the AO said that the work to improve and expand the car parking area and haulage way at Ormonde Road allotments site is underway.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Item 149: the independent safety report from Peninsula dated 9th January 2020, commissioned by WTC, about the exits from Elms Field, sent to councillors earlier in the day, was received and considered. Councillors expressed their disappointment that the report was not more definitive in declaring the exits either dangerous to use or not so.

The B&GO said that the three recommendations to mitigate the risk of unhindered access, particularly onto the busy Wellington Road, could all be introduced. He said that councillors will need to determine what level of risk they are prepared to accept.

Councillors want further reassurance that the design of the exits from Elms Field onto adjacent pavements and highway have been subjected to rigorous WBC safety audits.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

It was decided to ask Cllr T Lack as chairman of the Elms Field/Howard Palmer Garden Working Party to work with the B&GO to provide indicative costs for:

- 1) the installation of two additional concrete blocks at the Wellington Road exit
- 2) the offset extension of the metal railed gateway at this exit
- 3) the installation of a piece(s) of public art at this exit

All of points 1-3 are to establish a more clearly defined barrier for users, especially children, to negotiate when leaving Elms Field, whilst still allowing ready access for people with disabilities, motorized disability scooters and parents with large buggies. All of these considerations are to be applied to the Elms Field exits.

ACTION: CLLR T LACK/ BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

GRAFFITI WORKING PARTY (Agenda item 6)

The notes from the 7th January 2020 meeting of the Graffiti Working Party were received and considered.

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



Cllr L Forbes reminded councillors that three secondary schools will present to them about litter and graffiti eradication prior to the Full Council meeting on Tuesday 28th January 2020, with a prompt 5:30pm start. She invited the councillors to come to this to support the students. She outlined the process and asked Ethan Undrell to help with the practical organization of the evening.

Cllr L Forbes said that with the possible expansion of the project from three to five schools in 2020 she felt it was the right time for her to step back. She asked if any of her fellow councillors wanted to take her place as the WTC lead but acknowledged that it required a significant amount of time and effort.

ACTION: AMENITIES COMMITTEE COUNCILLORS

It was suggested that she raises this at the impending Full Council meeting to offer this opportunity to all town councillors.

ACTION: CLLR L FORBES

The AO was instructed to invite local journalists to attend and report on the presentations evening.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

TOWN COUNCIL'S CHRISTMAS LIGHTS 2019 AND CONTRACT 2020-23 (Agenda Item 7)

Report 06:2019-20 from the Amenities Officer dated 3rd January 2020 was received and considered.

The AO said that 97% of WTC's Christmas lights scheme was installed and illuminated for the duration of the season. He acknowledged that two significant problems in Broad Street detracted from the overall festive effect – lights on Tudor House and in the tree adjacent to Cote restaurant. He indicated that the cause of these problems was WBC's street lighting infrastructure.

He told councillors that he will include a report about designs and quotations for the next WTC Christmas lights contract on the 4th March 2020 Amenities Committee agenda.

Cllr D Hinton said he understands that WBC has received a proposal to have solar powered water-fed plants attached to many town centre lamp-columns. He felt that in principle this could reduce the number of columns WTC could attach Christmas motifs to. The AO was instructed, as a matter of urgency, to contact the relevant WBC officers to investigate this.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION CAMERAS ON WOKINGHAM TOWN HALL (Agenda Item 8)

Report 06:2019-20 from the Amenities Officer dated 3rd January 2020 was received and considered.

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The Chairman noted that planning permission and listed building consent for the installation of five external closed circuit television cameras has been granted by WBC for a temporary period of five years.

Councillors discussed the need for and effect of these cameras in light of the vandalism and theft visited on the town hall over the recent Christmas period. It was decided that, on balance, this installation should be carried out.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

UPDATE ON NEW ALLOTMENT SITES (Agenda Item 9)

The AO said that Bellway Homes is very keen to handover responsibility for the Keephatch Beech, Binfield Road allotments site. He reminded councillors that it has been set up as specified in the planning accords agreed with WBC – with little or no input from WTC. Therefore, on behalf of the Amenities Committee, he has asked for Bellway to undertake remedial work and is awaiting a response. This is in conjunction with a soil condition analysis report commissioned by WBC.

The Chairman said WTC should not be bounced into taking on a site it did not think was properly set up or which required a good deal of costly remedial work to bring it into a lettable condition.

The AO said that at the turn of the year there were two names on the waiting list for this site. To gauge latent demand he has asked those on WTC's existing sites waiting list to indicate if they would be interested in renting a plot at Keephatch Beech. To date 26 people have said they would be. The AO said that he intends to promote this site on a number of social media platforms.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The AO said he is continuing to interact with WBC green infrastructure delivery officers about the set-up of the proposed allotment site at Montague Park.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

POTENTIAL PROJECTS AND FUNDING REQUESTS FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2020-2021 (Agenda Item 10)

A copy of the relevant extract from the 5th November 2019 Amenities Committee minutes (p.15957) and pp.15970-71 from the Finance and Personnel Committee (F&PC) minutes dated 19th November 2020 were received and considered.

The Chairman said that the F&PC approved the funding requests made by the Amenities Committee with the exception of money for a 'garden of reflection' in Howard Palmer Garden. It was noted that three quotations are being sought for the latter. It may be that a separate in-year funding request will then be considered appropriate.

The Chairman said that £80,000 for the improvement of the children's play area at King George V playing field has been added to the amenities four year plan.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

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**WOKINGHAM TOWN HALL FEASIBILITY LIGHTING STUDY (EXTERNAL)
(Agenda Item 11)**

Report 000-01 from WSP/Parsons Brinckerhoff dated 03.05/2016 was received and considered.

The AO described the context in which this feasibility study was produced – as part of the recently concluded Market Place improvement works.

The existing roof line LED bulbs on the Town Hall are much valued by most councillors.

It was proposed by Cllr L Forbes and seconded by Cllr P Dennis and it was

**RESOLVED
30080**

that the external lighting scheme for the first floor of the Town Hall is considered to be too expensive to pursue at this time.

This was approved unanimously.

The AO was instructed to ensure this remains on the amenities four year plan.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Ethan Undrell left the meeting at 9pm.

ELMS FIELD/ HOWARD PALMER GARDEN WORKING PARTY (Agenda Item 12)

- (a) The notes from 28th November 2019 meeting of the working party were received and considered. Cllr T Lack said a meeting of the working party was held earlier in the day and that the matters listed on the notes of 28th November 2019 were discussed. He said that drainage issues on Elms Field need to be addressed as a matter of urgency. He noted that efforts to increase the number of general litter and recycling bins is ongoing for both spaces as is improvement to the litter picking regimes.
- (b) The safety audit was discussed under item 149 of the monitoring report.

AMENITIES COMMITTEE SPENDING (Agenda Item 13)

The relevant extract from the budget detail dated 31st December 2019 was received and considered.

The Chairman invited councillors to ask the officers about year to date spending and spend to budget.

The AO said the overspend on the Christmas lights budgets was in part due to the purchase of additional icicle lights for Peach Place. WBC has been invoiced for this expenditure of £4,250 and payment is awaited.

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WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL'S ANNUAL LITTER PICK 2020 (Agenda Item 14)

Ms V Harper's email dated 25th October 2019 was received and considered.

Councillors decided to support WBC's litter pick on Saturday 28th March 2020. Muster time at the town hall is 10am. The AO was instructed to promote this event on social media platforms and elsewhere.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

AMENITIES COMMITTEE INFORMATION (Agenda Item 15)

The Chairman thanked the AO for attending Ormonde Road allotments site on New Year's Day to assess and deal with the aftermath of a break-in at an adjacent Ashville Way commercial unit. The criminals used the allotment site as their route to and from the unit.

The Chairman encouraged councillors to attend the forthcoming meeting about reorganization of local health services into 'neighbourhoods'.

He re-emphasized Cllr Forbes' earlier request for Amenities Committee councillors to attend the schools' graffiti and litter eradication presentations on 28th January 2020.

The meeting closed at 9:29pm.

CHAIRMAN

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