

4th March 2020

Minutes of the proceedings of the **AMENITIES COMMITTEE** meeting held on this day in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, WOKINGHAM** from 7:25pm to 9:34pm.

PRESENT

Cllrs: J Box, È Bishop, N Campbell-White (Chairman), 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)
Mrs F Sleaford, Amenities Officer (with effect from 20th April 2020)

The Chairman introduced Mrs Sleaford, welcomed her to the meeting and thanked her for attending. He offered her the Committee's best wishes when she begins her work as the Amenities Officer.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from:
Cllr D Hinton
Ethan Undrell, Emmbrook school student

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 P Hornsby and it was

RESOLVED
30098

that the minutes of the Amenities Committee meeting held on 14th January 2020 (pages 15996 to 16003) be received as a true and correct record and they be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



This was unanimously approved.

When asked, the B&GO confirmed that he has written to the owner of the Piccolo Arco restaurant on behalf of the Amenities Committee to thank him for his cooperation and support when the new town hall boilers were installed.

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 25th February 2020 is progressing.

Item 113: the B&GO said that the Events Coordinator (EC) has met with a kitchen equipment supplier. A decision on what, if any, equipment is required has not been made. The Responsible Finance Officer has been urged to expedite this.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER/ RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER/ EVENTS COORDINATOR

Item 126: this matter is to be considered under agenda item 12.

Item 130: the officers said that improving the drainage beneath the external town hall tap would require significant ground works on Market Place - which Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) will not countenance. Other methods of improving it were discussed but were considered to be impractical.

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 he is to continue to interact with the managers of Wokingham Boots and Waitrose stores about introducing TerraCycle schemes in their premises.

ACTION: CLLR P HORNSBY

Cllr L Forbes said she is continuing to do the same with the manager of the Morrisons supermarket at Woosehill.

ACTION: CLLR L FORBES

Item 141: the B&GO confirmed that the required signage has been installed at the Elms Field children's playground. The AO was instructed to remove this matter from the monitoring report.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Item 142: the B&GO said that Holt Copse Conservation Volunteers will sow wildflower seeds at Joel Park near the avenue of red oak trees. He said that Wokingham Town Council's (WTC) grounds maintenance contractor will shortly

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



sow wildflower seeds on either side of the central path at Viking Field. He said it is likely that wildflower sowing will be undertaken at Redlands Farm Park.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Councillors want the sowing of wildflower seeds to be broadcast on social media platforms when it takes place.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Cllr N Campbell-White acknowledged that the planting and sowing at Elms Field needs to be allowed to become established over the next seasons before WTC considers planting more shrubs in the borders.

Cllr L Forbes said she had been given two 'Little Garden' seedling kits whilst shopping at a Marks and Spencer store recently.

The AO was instructed to ask Marks and Spencer Plc for a large quantity of these kits to use across WTC's parks and open spaces.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Item 143: The B&GO said that a private operator has recently made a repeat booking to use the main hall in the town hall for an arts and gifts market.

Cllr L Forbes said she will find out more about the mother and baby market held in Guildford. She thinks less expensive clothes and products are the basis of the retail offer there.

ACTION: CLLR L FORBES

Item 147: this matter is to be considered under agenda item 7. The AO was instructed to remove this matter from the monitoring report.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Item 148: the AO said that the car park expansion and refurbishment at Ormonde Road allotments site has been completed. He was instructed to remove this matter from the monitoring report.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Item 149: this matter is to be considered under agenda item 10. The Chairman said that he recently reported sewage spilling onto Elms Field to Thames Water. Councillors said that this problem needs to be fully resolved before WTC assumes responsibility for the park in July 2020. The Town Clerk was asked to write to WBC to this effect.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Item 150: The B&GO confirmed that the main gates to the Elms Field children's playground have been repaired and are now back in place. He said that the wooden gates are fit for purpose but the metal brackets and self-closing

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



mechanisms are not. Councillors want WBC to carry out all necessary remedial work on these gates before WTC assumes full responsibility for the play area in July 2020.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER/ TOWN CLERK

GRAFFITI WORKING PARTY (Agenda item 6a/b)

The notes from the 2nd March 2020 meeting of the Graffiti Working Party were received and considered.

Cllr L Forbes said that the Graffiti Working Party has disbanded as its members consider it has accomplished its purposes. However, the intention is to continue the schools' graffiti and litter eradication competition in 2020 and four secondary schools will be invited to take part. She invited any councillor who wants to be involved with this very worthwhile enterprise to join with her. She said that Cllr D Hinton has indicated he will work with her over the coming weeks.

ACTION: AMENITIES COMMITTEE

COUNCILLORS

The Chairman thanked Cllr Forbes profusely for all of her work in establishing this competition which has become a mainstay of WTC's activities. He emphasised that it wouldn't have happened without her enthusiasm and drive.

The AO said that the new Amenities Officer will not be expected to undertake the removal of graffiti herself. However, he urged all councillors to report any and all graffiti they see around the town to her. Part of her role will continue to be to organise its removal via contractors, WTC staff and Cllr Lack.

ACTION: AMENITIES COMMITTEE COUNCILLORS/ AMENITIES OFFICER

The AO reminded councillors that the removal of graffiti supports the town's Thames and Chilterns in Bloom entry.

Information about beverage cup recycling provided by Cllr L Forbes was received and considered.

Cllr Forbes said Oxford City Council has obtained funding from The Cup Fund to install on-street beverage cup recycling bins in the city centre and elsewhere. Councillors asked Cllr Forbes to make more enquiries about its funding and operation and to report back at the next Amenities Committee meeting.

ACTION: CLLR L FORBES

Cllr P Hornsby said that whilst he applauded recycling the better route was, if possible, to avoid the need for it. With beverage cups this can best be accomplished by consumers using their personal refillable cups, eschewing disposable ones. He felt that WTC's efforts should be to encourage this.

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



The AO said that councillors must recognise that if a recycling/collection scheme for beverage cups is introduced the ongoing costs of it will be borne by WTC after grant funding is exhausted. Cllr Forbes said that this could be offset by sponsorship.

CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION CAMERAS ON WOKINGHAM TOWN HALL (Agenda Item 7)

The AO said that Protec engineers began the closed circuit television cameras installation on Friday 28th February 2020 and expect to complete it by Friday 6th March.

He told councillors that conditions attached to the planning consent by WBC had to be discharged before the work could proceed.

WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL'S RISK REGISTER (Agenda Item 8)

A copy of the relevant portion of the risk register was received and considered.

The Chairman asked councillors if they felt the register accurately reflected the risks borne by WTC's work and activities. Councillors said they were content with the detail and accuracy of the risk register. However, the Chairman asked the B&GO to re-evaluate the probability of acts of vandalism.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

When asked, the B&GO confirmed that there is a separate and very detailed asbestos location register for the town hall building and that this is consulted before any construction or maintenance work is undertaken by contactors. He confirmed that this process was scrupulously followed prior to the installation of the new town hall boilers.

UPDATE ON NEW ALLOTMENT SITES (Agenda Item 9)

The AO advised councillors that there are now three potential new allotment sites within the town that WTC could take on. He outlined the current position by site:

Montague Park

The developer, David Wilson Homes, has provided an actual cost of £85,000 to remove the existing soil from the site and then replace it with better soil which meets the relevant British standard.

It has been suggested by WBC green infrastructure delivery officers that this can be paid for from the S106 funds attached to the Montague Park development. The AO contends that good quality soil should be provided by the developer as part of the site set-up. He reminded councillors that over a third of this S106

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



money has already been spent. Councillors agreed that the AO must not commit to using the S106 money for soil improvement at Montague Park.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Keephatch Beech

The AO said that similar issues have arisen at Keephatch Beech, Binfield Road. Once again he was told to ensure that the developer provides a site replete with a good growing medium.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Kentwood Farm West

The AO said that this proposed site is part of the second phase of Crest Nicholson's development near Warren House Road. Early indications suggest the site will be available towards the end of 2021.

ELMS FIELD/ HOWARD PALMER GARDEN WORKING PARTY (Agenda Item 10)

A copy of Ms S Morgan's letter dated 21st February 2020 was received and considered.

Cllr T Lack said the working party is tackling several issues around the maintenance and enhancement of Elms Field. He noted that McLaughlin and Harvey have stopped litter picking the park. His group of volunteers is litter picking the space until WTC employs a new groundsman.

He said the working party is aware that the areas of newly laid turf are saturated after recent prolonged heavy rainfall. He said that this will be monitored regularly to ensure it either dries out satisfactorily or requires an additional drainage system.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

He noted that recycling bins will be installed at Elms Field. The collected material will be taken to a Grundon bin on Waterford Way by WTC's groundsman. From there it will be fed into WBC's recyclables collection system.

He said that it is hoped the planting in the brick planters on nearby Erfstadt Court will be improved and looked after by Wokingham in Bloom volunteers.

ACTION: CLLR T LACK/ MARKETS AND BLOOM

OFFICER

The B&GO said he has received a quotation of £4,000 nett for the supply and installation of a chicane system at the Wellington Road exit of Elms Field.

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



Councillors were advised that the design of this has to be reviewed by local groups representing citizens with a variety of physical and sensory impairments and to be approved by WBC's 'development board'.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Councillors said they want another exit from Elms Field included in this safety improvement work.

**RESOLVED
30099**

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

to supply and install a removable physical barrier at the exit from Elms Field which leads to the junction of Earle Crescent and Wellington Road.

This was unanimously approved.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Councillors reiterated that this barrier must be removable to facilitate maintenance vehicle access. It was also noted that the design of this must be submitted to disability groups and the development board for prior approval as per the main exit.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

It was decided that the other exits from Elms Field should have their safe egress reviewed when the adjacent highway is fully open to vehicle traffic.

ACTION: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OFFICER

Cllr Lack said that a landscape designer has submitted an interesting scheme for a garden of reflection at Howard Palmer Garden. She will be asked to produce a more detailed design with costings.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

WOKINGHAM IN BLOOM: ENTRY INTO THAMES AND CHILTERN IN BLOOM 2020 (Agenda Item 11)

A copy of the notes from the Bloom steering group meeting on 6th February 2020 along with a sponsorship opportunities document were received and considered.

Cllr P Dennis noted that Wokingham in Bloom has improved several discrete areas of the town centre over a number of years. He suggested a 'treasure hunt' to search for these spaces could be an effective way to engage more local residents with the Bloom initiative.

Cllr T Lack said he will discuss this with the Markets and Bloom Officer.

ACTION: CLLR T LACK/ MARKETS AND BLOOM OFFICER

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



Cllr L Forbes said she will forward the notes she made at the recent Thames and Chilterns awards event to Cllr Lack. These include potential horticultural and broader themes for Thames and Chilterns in Bloom 2020.

ACTION: CLLR L FORBES/ CLLR T

LACK

MARKET PLACE CLEANING (Agenda Item 12)

The AO suggested that the daily cold water scrub cleaning method carried out by Premier Support Services (PSS) was removing surface grime but was not tackling the more ingrained dirt. Nor was it cleaning off oil, rubber and tar stains. He said he was investigating the use of a chemical agent to help remove the ingrained dirt and stubborn stains. Some recent test cleans indicate that a cleaner surface can be achieved with the judicious use of chemicals. He assured councillors that any chemicals employed will comply fully with the relevant European Chemicals Agency directives.

Councillors instructed the AO to proceed providing the use of chemicals does not significantly increase the cost of the contract with PSS.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

AMENITIES COMMITTEE INFORMATION (Agenda Item 13)

- (a) A poster advertising Wokingham Town Council's 'Clean Up Day' on 28th March 2019 was received for information. The Chairman asked that this is widely advertised via social media platforms.
- (b) A poster advertising Wokingham Town Council's allotments open day was received for information.
- (c) A printed update from Refill.org was received for information.
- (d) The AO advised councillors that Onsite Rail, on behalf of Network Rail and Thames Water, is repairing the sewer which runs beside Wokingham Superbowl, under the railway line and across Ormonde Road allotments site. He assured councillors he is closely monitoring this operation to ensure there is no damage to WTC's car park and main haulage way, nor tenants' plots.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

- (e) Cllr P Dennis said he would like an agenda item about monitoring air quality in Wokingham town to be included on the next Amenities Committee agenda. Councillors readily agreed to this.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

MATTERS TO PUBLICIZE VIA SOCIAL MEDIA FROM THIS EVENING'S MEETING (Agenda Item 14)

Councillors instructed the AO to publicize the installation of CCTV cameras at the

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



town hall, Wokingham in Bloom, with particular emphasis on the drive for more volunteer helpers, and the Refill.org scheme.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER/ MARKETING OFFICER

Cllr T Lack left the meeting at 9:15pm.

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC (Agenda Item 15)

**RESOLVED
30100**

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

to resolve 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 unanimously approved.

PART II

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS CONTRACT 2020-2023

A copy of the AO's report 08:2019-2020 dated 18th February 2020 was received and considered.

The AO explained that the current contractor has offered a price for its existing motifs scheme to be re-used for the next three Christmases. Therefore, it was considered unnecessary to anonymise the supporting information provided by the five tenderers.

**RESOLVED
30101**

Councillors considered the costs of each tender and it was

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

to engage contractor C, option A, for £50,085 nett to supply, install, take down and store Christmas lights from 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2023.

This was unanimously approved.

The AO said that contractor C is Lighting and Illumination Technology Experience Limited.

Councillors decided that this was the best value for money from all of the proposals.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

The Chairman said that councillors will now have realised that this is Paul's final meeting as our Amenities Officer. Although most of you have only known him from the start of your Council year, you have all come to appreciate how many

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



facets there are to his job, how hard he works, and how thorough he is in all he does. His reports are concise and reasoned. He is unfailingly polite to us and to the members of the public he often deals with. We will all miss his can-do attitude and I particularly will miss his wise counsel.

There was spontaneous applause.

The meeting closed at 9:34pm.

CHAIRMAN

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____

