

12th January 2021

In accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, this meeting was held virtually.

Minutes of the proceedings of the **AMENITIES COMMITTEE** meeting held on this day, **VIRTUALLY** from 7:30pm to 10:00pm

PRESENT

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

IN ATTENDANCE

Amenities Officer (AO) – F Sleaford
Cllr I Shepherd-Dubey

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

No absences

MEMBERS' INTERESTS (Agenda Item 2)

No declarations

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OR PUBLIC (Agenda Item 3)

No questions

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 4)

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

**RESOLVED
30239**

that the minutes of the Amenities Committee meeting held on 03rd November 2020 (pages 16179 to 16183) be received as a true and correct record and they be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

TOWN HALL REDECORATION (Agenda item 5)

- a) Councillors received the three quotations, for the redecoration of the Town Hall stairwells, main hallway and first floor landing. Cllr Campbell-White explained the contractor selection, that costs were authorised from this year's budget, that lockdown was the ideal time for the work to be completed and hence the speed the work was started.
- b) Councillors were informed that redecoration work began on Monday 11th January 2020 and is expected to take three weeks.

DONATION OF ELM TREES FOR ELMS FIELD (Agenda item 6)

- a) Councillors were informed that two elm trees, both resistant to Dutch elm disease, are being provided by:
 - The Wokingham District Veteran Tree Association, as awarded by The Tree Council in celebration of their 30th anniversary.
 - The Wokingham Society.

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



- b) These trees are due to be delivered on Wednesday 13th or Thursday 14th January 2021 and are expected to be planted on Elms Field the same day, and protective railings installed.
- c) An official planting event will be arranged once Covid-19 restrictions allow.

ACTION: MARKET & BLOOM OFFICER / AMENITIES OFFICER

RESTING BENCHES (Agenda item 7)

- a) Councillors received a verbal update from Cllr Lack:
 - Sites have been agreed between Wokingham Town Council (WTC) and The Wokingham Society, away from residential properties.
 - Wokingham Society will install five benches and maintain them.
- b) WTC have already installed two resting benches on Viking Field, as agreed.

ACTION: BUILDING & GROUNDS OFFICER

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS (Agenda Item 8)

Councillors received a verbal report from the AO:

- New installations: on Station Approach, wrapped tree on the traffic island by The Ship Inn and two wrapped trees in Peach Place.
- Notable issues solved, outstanding from 2019:
 - Installation of lamp column infrastructure and so the icicle lights lit on Tudor House
 - Wrapped tree outside Cote lit, having been dark last year
 - WBC socket installed in Peach Place to power two wrapped trees
- Throughout the season various issues were solved.
- A written report, including possible improvements, will be provided for the next meeting.
- Ertstadt Court suggested as a location for additional lighting.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

GRAFFITI (Agenda Item 9)

- a) Councillors received an update from Cllr Lack, and photo montage of graffiti removed, concentrating on the issue over the Christmas period:
 - Many sites, including the Town Hall, were graffitied during this period
 - The AO had arranged professional cleaning for the 31st December 2020
 - Due to the huge volume of graffiti Cllr Lack worked directly with the company to remove as much graffiti as possible from around the town
 - Currently no graffiti removal by Cllr Lack, due to covid-19 restrictions
 - WTC's CCTV images to be submitted to the police
- b) Councillors discussed the Mayor's proposal for a mural in The Plaza:
 - A local artist has supplied a sketch and volunteered to complete the work
 - WTC will provide materials and graffiti protection for the finished mural
 - It was agreed that a budget of £1000 could be made available.
 - Further sketches will be provided for the committee to review and agree

Councillors expressed their incredible thanks to Cllr Lack for the amazing job and his dedication to removing graffiti, especially over the Christmas period.

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



**RESOLVED
30240**

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

that the Amenities Committee support the Mayor's idea for a mural on a wall in The Plaza and that £1000 should be allocated from the graffiti budget.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER / CLLR LACK

ALLOTMENTS UPDATE (Agenda Item 10)

Councillors received notes from the Allotment Officer, presented by the AO, regarding Binfield Road allotment site:

- Drainage on the site remains poor, even with no rain for at least 10 days.
- WBC have demanded that Bellway Homes install a French drain beneath the central, hardstanding walkway, after which WBC will sign off the site as completed, and the site should be available in spring.
- The ALO stated to WBC that WTC will only accept the site if the plots are usable after steady rainfall proves the French drain is effective.

Councillors unanimously voted to support the ALO in his assertion to WBC, that these allotments would not be accepted by WTC until adequate drainage is provided and proven to work, following a steady rainfall.

ACTION: ALLOTMENT OFFICER

ELMS FIELD & HOWARD PALMER GARDENS (Agenda Item 11)

- a) Councillors received notes of the virtual Working Party meeting, held Tuesday 1st December, from the Amenities Officer.
- b) Councillors received a verbal update from Cllr Lack from the latest Working Party meeting, held Tuesday 12th January 2021. Official notes will be provided at the next meeting.
- c) Emptying of park waste bins during the holiday period:
 - i. Elms Field and Howard Palmer Gardens.
 - ii. King George V and Langborough Road.

Not emptying Elms Field bins over the holiday period was an oversight, WTC officers were not expecting such volume and accept that the bins will need to be emptied over future holiday periods

The Committee accepted the problems with emptying the bins. However, they made it absolutely clear this must not happen again over any holiday period.

Regarding Elms Field play park:

- As a "destination play park" is also considered a "hot spot" area for covid-19
- Potential for Leslie Sears to be a "hot spot", WTC grounds man will monitor

The Working Party were unanimous in wanting:

- To keep the play parks open
- To avoid over control and leave parents taking responsibility
- To **not** provide hand sanitizer, this should be under parental responsibility
- To leave all play nooks and crannies under play equipment open
- The Working Party does **not** recommend introducing a one-way system, booking system or the closing of selected gates.

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



- WBC are providing signage, however, currently it is not known if it is acceptable or not. WTC will provide signage if WBC's is not considered acceptable.
- Risk Assessments must be kept up to date.
- WTC will follow WBC and Government guidelines on local parks as a default, to help avoid resident confusion.

Councillors discussed the following:

- Play parks do need to remain open to provide play and parental respite
- Potential of a click in click out service at busy times with Covid Marshals
- New signage may improve the situation
- Removing some swings to improve social distancing
- The Amenities Committee will follow the Working Party recommendations
- WTC will continue to monitor the situation after the signage is installed
- WTC may need to act unilaterally if the situation appears to deteriorate
- WTC need to consider this may move the problem to other parks
- Letter to be sent to WBC regarding the Covid Marshals ascertaining:
 - The position regarding the Covid Marshals' timetable
 - When they should be present at Elms Field
 - How are the Covid Marshals reporting back to WBC

ACTION: CLLR CAMPBELL-WHITE / AMENITIES OFFICER / BUILDING & GROUNDS OFFICER

MONITORING REPORT (Agenda Item 12)

Councillors received and discussed the report dated 4th January 2021.

Item 113: Town Hall Kitchen: No update.

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

Item 139: Strategic objectives: Further information to be made available for a future meeting.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Item 140: Terracycle: Items remain paused due to Covid-19 restrictions.

ACTION: CLLR P HORNSBY / CLLR L FORBES

Item 143: Market stalls: Items remain paused due to Covid-19 restrictions.

ACTION: CLLR D HINTON / CLLR L FORBES

Item 149: Elms Field chicane exits: Discussed under agenda item 11.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER / BUILDINGS & GROUNDS OFFICER

Item 151: HPG Garden of Reflection: Discussed under agenda item 11.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK / BUILDINGS & GROUNDS OFFICER

Item 153: Air Quality (AQ): Ongoing follow up, including requests for the latest ratified data.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



AMENITIES COMMITTEE INFORMATION (Agenda Item 13)

- a) Councillors received a notification of thanks from John Herridge's family.
- b) Councillors noted that the Courtyard roof repair work has been postponed until weather conditions improve.
- c) Councillors were informed that an e-bike event is being planned, supporting WTC's strategic action plan. Further information will be provided in future. Item is to be added to the monitoring report.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

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

- Concerns regarding the number of residents in Elms Field play park. Reminding parents to ensure there are not too many people present and they should maintain social distancing from other families. WTC will be monitoring the situation very closely and if the park is misused the council will have to consider more extreme measures, even to the extent of closing the play park.
- The donation and planting of the two elm trees on Elms Field.
- Redecoration of the Town Hall stairwells, main hallway and first floor landing brought forward to be completed during lockdown, enabling the Town Hall to be ready for weddings and events as soon as allowed.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER / MARKETING OFFICER

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC (Agenda Item 15)

It was proposed by Cllr Campbell-White and seconded by Cllr Malvern and it was

**RESOLVED
30241**

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.

PART II

MARKET PLACE CLEANING - UPDATE (Agenda Item 16)

Councillors received, considered and discussed in detail report 06/2020-21, dated 6th January 2021, from the Amenities Officer, detailing the four quotations received from the original tenderers and two hire companies.

Councillors discussed the following:

- The feasibility of hiring a machine and employing a member of staff.
- The hire option was discounted; however, it remains a future option.
- Contractor A was removed from the process due to distance.
- Tasks required:
 - Litter picking daily – not so vital, two days a week acceptable
 - Bench cleaning – regular, possibly daily cleaning
 - Cleaning outer areas – required
 - Scrub main market area regularly – monthly or every two months
 - Do we need a deep clean? – unknown, potential to have a one off at an extra cost
- Regarding the scrubbing WTC could increase to once a month from once every two months if it is considered necessary.

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



- Market traders to be encouraged to take more responsibility and care, for example with cooking, spillages, litter, use of drip trays etc.
- Weathering will be expected as a continuous natural process.
- Contractor E to be contacted to request a more effective machine.

**RESOLVED
30242**

It was proposed by Cllr Campbell-White and seconded by Cllr Dennis and it was

that:

1. WTC respond to contractors to explain that more information is required for comparison.
2. WTC to provide a revised specification, to facilitate this comparison, including all basic requirements.
3. Request contractors C, D and E amend their proposal for an effective cleaning regime and quote based on the revised specification.
4. Request contractors C, D and E (with different machine) provide a demonstration of their scrub and/or deep clean proposal on a small area of the Market Place.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Meeting closed at 10:00pm.

CHAIRMAN

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____

