

10th January 2023

Minutes of the proceedings of the **AMENITIES COMMITTEE** meeting held on this day in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, WOKINGHAM** from 7:31 pm to 9:05pm.

PRESENT

Cllrs: R Bishop-Firth, N Campbell-White, P Dennis (Vice-Chair), M Ferrai, L Forbes, D Hinton, T Lack (Chairman), P Lucey and M Malvern

IN ATTENDANCE

Amenities Officer (AO) – Fiona Sleaford
Town Clerk (TC) – Katy Hughes
Grounds & Bloom Officer (GBO) – Marianna Pentek
Cllr I Shepherd-DuBey
Four Wokingham town residents

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

None received

MEMBERS' INTERESTS (Agenda Item 2)

None

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

None

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS (Agenda Item 4)

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

**RESOLVED
30560**

that the minutes of the Amenities Committee meeting held on 01st November 2022 (pages 16629 to 16632) be received as a true and correct record and they be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

GREENWAY PROPOSAL (Agenda item 5)

Cllrs received Town Clerk's Report 06/2022-23, dated 4th January 2023.
Cllrs had a robust discussion about Wokingham Borough Council's proposal.

The Chairman requested the committee consider the proposal as individual sections, in relation to:

- Crossing Joel Park
- Passing through the woodland area of Joel Park
- The exit onto Reading Road, at Larch Avenue

For ease of reporting the Cllrs comments are summarised in the following areas:

Safety concerns:

- Routing the Greenway out onto a very busy section of the Reading Road where the road gradient changes, impacting visibility of cyclists looking to cross the road, and that this section of cycle way is not fit for purpose. On the understand that the greenway should avoid roads where possible, putting cyclists at risk on Reading Road is not a sensible option
- Encouraging use of a section of unlit path through a wooded area

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Impact on nature:

- Detrimental impact of the path, and the construction works to create the path, on trees, particularly those with exposed roots and a number of recently planted oak trees located near the proposed route
- Concern over the impact on birds and bats within the park and the wooded areas
- Concern that, if the path is well used, it will impact the tranquillity of the wooded area within the park

Visual amenity:

- Concern over the intrusive nature of a man-made path within what is a very natural section of the parkland
- Significant concern over the visual impact of the path across the sloped section of the path

Park impact:

- The creation of a path would leave a detached section of parkland which would be harder to manage, mow etc.
- Concern over the impact the construction of a new path may have on the use of the site for sledging

Maintenance:

- Concern over both the long-term and day-to-day maintenance of the path, in terms of the regularity of maintenance proposed by WBC (leaf-clearance etc.) and the robustness of the engineering to sustain the path within the slope, the steepness of which it is noted differs across the proposed route
- Questions raised over whether the route through the woodland, would create additional 'desire lines' through the park, leading to greater wear and tear to the park

Other:

- Concern over the public reaction to the investment of significant sums of money to deliver this project at the current time
- A concern that there is no quantifiable data available as to the number of potential users. As one resident present at the meeting commented, the suggestion to run a Greenway route through Joel Park is "a proposed solution to a problem that doesn't exist"

It was proposed by Cllr Forbes and seconded by Cllr Malvern, and it was

**RESOLVED
30561**

that Wokingham Borough Council's request to install Greenway Route B through Joel Park be refused.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

LANGBOROUGH RECREATION GROUND FACILITIES (Agenda Item 6)

Cllrs received and considered the Grounds & Bloom Officer's Report 01/2022-23, dated 23rd December 2022.

Cllrs commented positively and agreed:

- The LRG goalposts be moved and installed permanently at King George V Playing Field, subject to sourcing the required fittings

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



- Alternative uses for the LRG changing room facilities be investigated, with the following considered:
 - Demolition of the facilities, and expansion of the community garden
 - A new “men’s shed” site, or other local resource
 - The Great Langborough Residents Association be contacted
 - Any further suggestions from local residents

ACTION: GROUNDS & BLOOM OFFICER

IN-YEAR REQUEST TO F&P FOR FUNDING – KGV FOOTPATH (Agenda Item 7)

Cllrs received, considered, and discussed the Town Clerk’s Report 03/2022-23, dated 23rd December 2022. Discussion points included:

- Leaving the project for the in-coming Council to request additional funds
- That many residents and school children will benefit from the footpath
- That as a permanent structure it offers value of return on investment
- The excellent work installing, and public use of, the first stage of this footpath

It was proposed by Cllr Dennis and seconded by Cllr Forbes, and it was

**RESOLVED
30562**

that a request for in-year funding be made to the F&P Committee for their January meeting.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

WOKINGHAM IN BLOOM (Agenda Item 8)

Cllrs received:

- a. The Wokingham in Bloom 2023 planning notes, regarding entry into the Regional and National Competition 2023.
- b. The Wokingham in Bloom “Mind Map” for 2023.

The GBO requested assistance from Cllrs to help promote the new Bloom volunteer forms, once they are available on the website.

Cllrs wished to acknowledge the phenomenal achievement of the Bloom team and recognised the great leadership they had received.

GRAFFITI UPDATE (Agenda Item 9)

Cllrs:

- a. Received an update from Cllr Lack regarding graffiti removal.
- b. Received an updated list of Graffiti to be cleaned, as of 11th December 2022.
- c. Noted that SGN have cleaned their utility cabinet at Old Forrest Road.
- d. Were informed that the mural in The Plaza receive an additional, contractor applied, anti-graffiti coating on Friday 6th January 2023.
- e. Were informed that a contractor has been found to install the new artwork panels in Ertstadt court, as commissioned by A&C. Installation is expected to be completed in February.

Cllr Lack confirmed that he cannot repair the professionally wrapped cabinet, vandalised on London Road, as reported at the November meeting.

The GBO requested whether Cllr Lack, with some Bloom volunteers, could apply vinyl wrapping to the most unsightly, graffiti vandalised, utility cabinets on the Wokingham in Bloom judging route.

CHAIRMAN’S INITIALS _____



ALLOTMENTS (Agenda item 10)

Cllrs received:

- a. Allotment Officer's Report 01/2022-2023, dated 22nd December 2022.
 - Cllrs were delighted with the finding of the new apple tree species, and consent for Mr & Mrs Gook to name the trees with no WTC involvement.
- b. Allotment Officer's Briefing Notes January 2023, dated 24th December 2022.

The TC gave an update on the Tan House Lane railway crossing, which may impact on both Ormonde Road and Latimer Road allotments. Cllrs discussed that, although they do not want to lose any allotment plots, the best long-term solution is to have an accessible bridge for residents. WTC will work with WBC to try to achieve this aim.

ACTION: ALLOTMENTS OFFICER

MONITORING REPORT (Agenda Item 11)

Councillors received and discussed the report dated 23rd December 2022:

Item 151: HPG Garden of Reflection: This remains on WIN's list of active projects with another project ahead of it to be completed.

ACTION: CLLR FORBES

Item 158: Tree planting 2021-2022: The one remaining Hawthorn tree was planted at Leslie Sears in November 2022.

Item to be removed from the monitoring report.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Item 159: Defibrillator for Elms Field, FY 2021-2022: An appropriate defibrillator and cabinet are being sourced.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Item 160: Footpath in KGV: Work completed early November 2022.

Item to be removed from the monitoring report.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Item 161: Footpath in Leslie Sears: Work completed mid November 2022 and included additional resurfacing work to the car park.

Item to be removed from the monitoring report.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Item 162: Town Hall stairs, hall, and landing recarpeting: Work completed during the first week of January 2023.

Item to be removed from the monitoring report.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Item 164: Basic gym equipment in KGV: Item is proving difficult to progress.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Item 168: Improvement of paving around Woosehill Hall: These areas are private land and not maintained by WBC. The TC followed up with a letter to the management agent. No response has been received. There is no further action that WTC can take.

Item to be removed from the monitoring report.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____



AMENITIES COMMITTEE INFORMATION (Agenda Item 12)

Cllrs noted the following:

- a) Market Place cleaning was unable to be undertaken after Winter Carnival, in December 2022, for health and safety reasons. As there was no lighting on Market Place western side and the temperature was too low, and risked freezing. The lighting remains to be repaired.
- b) The Tan House Lane railway crossing bridge has been discussed at P&T but the long-term impact on the allotment site(s) is not yet known. The TC provided an additional update, under agenda item 10.
- c) A metal detecting policy will be brought to a future meeting.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER / GROUNDS & BLOOM OFFICER

MATTERS TO PUBLICISE VIA SOCIAL MEDIA FROM THIS EVENING'S MEETING (Agenda Item 13)

- The discovery of new apple species at Gipsy Lane allotments.

ACTION: ALLOTMENTS OFFICER / MARKETING OFFICER

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC (Agenda Item 14)

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

**RESOLVED
30563**

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

HANGING BASKETS AND PLANTERS CONTRACT (Agenda Item 15)

Cllrs received, considered, and discussed the Amenities Officer's report 05/2022-23, dated 21st December 2022.

Cllrs commented positively about the very excellent service, and positive working relationship, that WTC has received from the current contractor, Windowflowers Ltd, over previous years.

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

**RESOLVED
30564**

that the WTC five-year contract for hanging baskets and planters be awarded to tenderer A, Windowflowers Ltd.

ACTION: AMENITIES OFFICER

Meeting closed at 9:05pm.

CHAIRMAN

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS _____

