

**ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL
OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Minutes of a meeting of the **OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Ilminster, on Tuesday 3 June 2014 starting at 19:30.

Present

Chairman: C Goodall

Councillors: Cllr P Burton, Cllr C Goodall, Cllr V Keitch, Cllr V Higgins, Cllr A Lawson, Cllr D Miller, Cllr J Pallister, Cllr A Shearman, Cllr S Shepherd, Cllr S Storey, Cllr R Swann, Cllr E J Taylor

In Attendance

Officers: Mr A Jones (Senior Open Spaces Warden), Miss J Norris (Town Clerk)

Twelve members of the public attended the meeting.

Public Participation

Speaker 1 asked what was happening as a result of the petition regarding the Open Spaces Review that had been handed to the Town Council as no response had been received.

The Chair explained that when the petition had been handed in the person presenting the petition had said that names were still being collected so the Town Council were waiting to be told that the petition was complete. Further, the petition was about the Open Spaces Review and the Review Group was still collecting information and developing plan; the petition would be considered as relevant information when the Council was asked to make decisions about associated open spaces matters.

Speaker 2 complained that The Ilminster Cemetery was not being maintained to a satisfactory standard.

Speaker 3 gave his opinion on a number of matters:

- A) The lookout point on Herne Hill was going to be expensive to construct and the rubble deposited as the starting point should be removed
- B) The gap in the hedge [made to recover stranded equipment] should be replanted
- C) The grass alongside the Canal was overgrown and should be cut
- D) The fence around the children's play area on the Wharf Lane Recreation ground should be re-instated
- E) The short section of hedge between Orchard Vale and the children's play area should be cut much shorter as this would discourage anti-social behaviour
- F) The Cemetery was not being maintained in a respectful manner
- G) The grass was too long on the slope between Britten's Field and the Ridge Path to Herne Hill and should be cut more frequently
- H) The Open Spaces Team were not taking sufficient health and safety precautions when working in areas when the public were present
- I) Young people are drinking and urinating around the toilet block and the grandstand in the Wharf Lane Recreation Ground.

Chair's Initials

105 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Austin and Sothern.

106 Declarations of Interest

The declarations of Interest given in the table below were made.

Name	Minute No	Agenda Item	Type of Interest	Nature of Interest
Cllr J Pallister		Ground Conditions on the Wharf Lane Recreation Ground	Personal	Cllr Pallister is an unpaid groundsman for the Cricket Club and one of the areas to be discussed in the access way to the Cricket Club store (rented from the Town Council)
Cllr S Storey		Winterhay Lane Recreation Ground perimeter Fence	Personal	The back of Cllr Storey's home is adjacent to eth Winterhay Recreation ground

107 Appointment of Vice-Chair

RESOLVED that Councillor John Pallister be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Open Spaces Committee.

108 Minutes

RESOLVED

- (i) To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 22 April 2014 as a correct record
- (ii) To note the action list as presented to the Committee

Issues discussed relating to the action list included:

- The telephone number to report blocked gullies is 0845 3459155
- That the action from the meeting on 22 April 2014 (Minute OS92b) regarding surface water in Station Road be allocated to Cllr Shearman (as Cllr Vijeh has resigned from the Town Council)
- That the action has been taken to repair the locks on the Wardens' workshop
- That the item regarding a contribution towards the removal of the cemetery wall can be removed as it is complete
- That the graduation work to the bank by the North West cemetery wall has been completed.

109 Wardens Report

The Committee received the report from the Senior Open Spaces Warden about open spaces maintenance work undertaken since the April 2014 Committee meeting and work planned until the July 2014 meeting.

Chair's Initials

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- Pollarding of the Crack Willows
- Weed killing
- Planned meeting with the Forestry Commission representative regarding woodland management

110 Volunteer Policy

The draft Volunteer Policy which and previously been circulated to Councillors was considered.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The need to obtain references
- The need to check claims that volunteers hold qualifications and / or experience relevant to the volunteer role
- That supporting paperwork such as an application should be as simple as possible
- Induction and training requirements, including health and safety and training to use equipment and machinery
- Insurance cover for volunteers

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL that the draft Volunteer Policy be adopted and implemented subject to the inclusion of checking claims regarding relevant qualifications and experience being part of the recruitment process.

111. Update from the Open Spaces Review Group (OSRG)

The Chair introduced this agenda item explaining that although the OSRG reports direct to the Town Council, South Somerset District Council (SSDC) were seeking an early indication of the Council's position regarding a Multi-Use Games area (MUGA) and this was outside the scope of the OSRG.

SSDC was holding S106 money which had originally been earmarked for a MUGA in Ilminster and the extended time limit for spending the money was in 2015. If Ilminster did not wish to have a MUGA then SSDC would be able to reallocate the money to another area.

The Chair said that the Council needed to consider 3 questions:

- 1) Was a MUGA in Ilminster wanted?
- 2) If a MUGA was wanted where should it be located?
- 3) How could the match funding be raised?

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- Match funding can be grant funding, it does not have to be raised from the precept
- Disabled play and sport provision is very important
- MUGAs can be installed in various sizes depending on the space available
- The height of any perimeter fencing that may be required
- Whether it was essential to provide lighting
- Student representatives from Greenfyld, Swanmead and Wadham schools who had recently met with Councillors had been unanimous in their opinion that a MUGA was needed and would be used

Chair's Initials

RESOLVED that possible MUGA locations near the skatepark on the Wharf Lane Recreation ground be marked out for Councillors to look at.

112. Ground Conditions of the Wharf Lane Recreation Ground

The Committee considered whether or not specific areas of heavy use required additional maintenance or remedial work.

RESOLVED that a specification be prepared and 3 prices obtained for the installation of a “grasscrete” surface to a) widen the existing path between The Mead and the Warden’s Workshop, b) outside the entrance to the Warden’s Workshop (IEF side of the building) c) outside the storage shed rented to the Cricket Club

113 Request to Use the Recreation Ground for Activities For Young People

The Committee considered a request to hold SSDC Playday sessions on the Recreation Ground.

RESOLVED that permission is given for playday sessions to be held on the recreation ground on dates to be confirmed in July and August 2014.

114 Herne Hill Accessibility

The existing path network on Herne Hill was considered with a view to getting ideas for improving accessibility.

Issues discussed during consideration of this agenda item included:

- The need to find a balance between providing access to people and maintaining habitats for wildlife and plantlife
- The growing size of the town and therefore the increase in people who may wish to access the hill
- The width of the paths is an important element in whether or not people with pushchairs, wheelchairs or mobility scooters have access to the hill
- The Town Council’s responsibilities and duties under equality legislation
- Over 200 children from Greenfylde school have been able to go on the Hill this year – risk assessments need to include health and safety and emergency access.
- SSDC are currently planning equality access audits of play areas and may be able to visit Herne Hill to provide advice.

115 Seat / Bench Donations

The Committee was asked to decide what charges should be made in addition to purchase of a seat /bench and the commemorative plaque.

Issues discussed during consideration of this agenda item included:

- The cost of materials for providing a seat base
- The amount of staff time to prepare the base and install a seat
- The maintenance required on seats following installation
- The space / locations suitable for future donations

Chair’s Initials

RESOLVED

- (i) that the charge for seat / bench donations comprise:
 - a) the actual cost of the seat components
 - b) the actual cost of the materials for the base
 - c) the actual cost of the labour to prepare the base and install the seat / bench
 - d) the actual cost of the commemorative plaque
- (ii) that the Council guarantees to maintain the bench for a period of 10 years from the date of its original installation.
- (iii) That research is undertaken to source a suitable means of publicly displaying commemorative plaques from seats and benches that are beyond economic repair.

116 Time Capsule

The Committee considered possible locations for the burial of the Brownies centenary time capsule.

RESOLVED that the burial place should be close to the trig point and there should be a plaque or capping stone marking the place.

117 Winterhay Lane Recreation Ground Perimeter Fence

The Committee were asked to consider replacing the damaged fence, as previously agreed, taking into account the revised estimate that had been obtained (the estimate revision being due to the length of time that had elapsed since the original estimate had been submitted).

RESOLVED that a maximum of £800.00 (+VAT) is used from the renewals fund for the Winterhay Lane Recreation Ground to supply and erect replacement fencing at that location.

118 Financial Comparison

The Committee received information about the Open Spaces expenditure and commitments for the 2013/14 budget; no issues were raised.

The Chairman closed the meeting.

Chair's signature & Date