

ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Ilminster on Tuesday, 10th July, 2012 at 7:52 p.m.

Present

Chairman: Cllr C Goodall

Councillors: Cllr P Burton, Cllr A Lawson, Cllr S Maylor, Cllr D Miller, Cllr J Pallister, Cllr S Sainsbury, Cllr A Shearman, Cllr S Shepherd, Cllr J Sothern, Cllr R Swann, Cllr E J Taylor, Cllr L Vijeh, and Cllr Whaites.

Officers: Mr A Jones, Mrs J Thorne

1. Minutes of the previous Open Spaces Committee Meeting

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the Open Spaces Committee Meeting held on 12th June be approved and signed as a correct record with the amendment under item 13 (b) that it was suggested the Personnel Working Party held a meeting on Tuesday 19th June.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr S Maylor

3. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Pallister and Shepherd declared prejudicial interests in the items on Licences and Cricket Nets.

4. Matters arising from the Minutes

Item 5 – Oil Tank

The Clerk informed the Committee that the office was still awaiting a response from the Environment Agency but in the meantime the Deputy Clerk had been in touch with a local oil tank installer to arrange for him to come and advise the council.

Item 5 – Audit of Sports Facilities

The Clerk had spoken to SSDC and was informed that when the information had been received from Somerset Activity and Sport Partnership the Town Council would be informed of the findings.

Item 8 – Market House

The District Conservation Officer Greg Venn had looked at the Market House and had advised that he was happy for the ceiling to be painted and the trap door to be sealed. He suggested the Council source some appropriate paint and the Chair of Open Spaces had sourced some anti-vandal paint and had emailed the Conservation Officer with her suggestion. She was awaiting a reply.

ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

Item 12 (c) – Bus stop locations

The clerk had emailed John Perrett, SCC Operations Manager to enquire when the bus stop meetings were to take place and was awaiting a reply.

5. Wardens Report

The Open Spaces Warden Tony Jones reported that they had been catching up on cutting the grass when the weather permitted. The flail has been very useful when the grass had grown too long for the gangs including West Crescent, the hill part of Britain's field and the pathways on Herne hill. The town signs and planters had all been strimmed around.

Although it had been very wet, the wardens had been able to get up on the hill to clear some of the broken branches that had come down in the wind.

The toilet block had had several tiles damaged on the football pitch side although it was not clear if this has had been done deliberately or through balls hitting them. Approximately 12 tiles would need to be replaced along as well as the guttering that was in a poor condition.

The metal posts around the block had been painted with undercoat.

An old wooden/metal bench on the Recreation Ground opposite The Mead had been removed and the concrete pad had been replaced and the old metal benches that had been repaired and repainted had been put back there.

The old bench from the Recreation Ground had been repaired and painted and placed at New Road near the footpath gate with the metal one taken there to repair and repaint. This will then be placed on the Recreation Ground when refurbished.

The old green bin near the tennis courts had been replaced with a new one and the bin had been fixed at the top of Wharf Lane.

Yarlington Housing held its skip day at the top of Recreation Ground near Orchard Vale which seemed popular and once gone there was little mess to clear.

Rubbish left from the other nights lighting of the beacon had been tidied up.

There had been the usual broken bottles around the Recreation Ground which had been cleared up.

The bench near the Tesco garage had been broken and removed and the bin had been burnt badly and melted beyond repair.

Several plants had been stolen from the planters on Strawberry Bank.

There had also been quite a lot of vandalism in the tennis courts which included one top wire broken, a centre strap, two centre fixing hooks, one metal end rod and one new net cut. One net had been taken to the shed to store because of damage.

The annual play equipment inspection was due to take place last week but had been cancelled and was rescheduled for 6th July.

The canal volunteers had been busy on the canal while the young volunteers Luke and Corry had helped the wardens on a regular basis and had been very useful.

The wardens had changed the engine oil and filter on the mule, repaired the electrics on the stiga cutting deck, and replaced the hitch on the gangs.

There had been a meeting with Mr. Marshall from the fair. It had been decided that due to state of the water logged field that the summer fair should be cancelled this time but they hoped to be back for carnival time.

ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

The cracks on the Cemetery Lodge had been monitored for six months and there were no signs of movement of the walls.

Councillors were largely in favour that the bin and bench near Tesco's garage which had been broken should be both replaced.

Members also discussed their concerns of repeated damage to the toilet block including the tiles and guttering. It was agreed that different options to decrease the occurrence of damage such as metal guttering ought to be explored. The clerk agreed to bring this back to a future committee meeting.

Councillor Vijeh thought it would be useful if the office set up a list showing items which had been vandalised during the year and the cost of them in terms of labour and repairing and replacing them.

The Chairman suggested the installation of a mobile CCTV unit at the toilet block and asked the clerk to contact the police to see if this could be arranged.

Councillor Sainsbury also felt it would be worth putting up a notice asking youngsters to play football elsewhere and not next to the toilet block.

It was RESOLVED that both a new bin and bench should be purchased and installed where the old furniture on the Orchard Vale had been.

6. Skate Park

The Chairman gave a report on the skate park. A meeting had been held with the contractors and as a result some of the costs had been reduced which included a discount of £8,034.00 and the removal of delivery costs. After some discussion, it was agreed that the layout should be reversed so that the Big Bowl was at the Toilet end rather than the Fun Fair end. It was also agreed that the 'pad' should be extended to give skaters a slightly larger area in which to build up speed. Play UK, the groundwork company would begin work, weather permitting, on 23rd July. It would take approximately 2 weeks to complete the work and the skate park elements could be installed after the tarmac and concrete has been down for two days.

7. Open Spaces

(a) Management Plan

The Chairman spoke of her concern that costly issues kept occurring in Open Spaces and said that we have got to get to grips with this area of the Town Council's responsibilities. She felt that to improve the situation the following needed to be in place.

Firstly, an overall plan for the Recreation Grounds was required that embraced all the land for which the Council is responsible.

This should be a five or ten year plan that identified what was needed in all areas - for example considering possible growth within the town and the need for recreational land; or establishing whether the wardens' facilities were adequate or if they needed to be expanded or even relocated.

ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

She suggested a small committee should be formed, a combination of Councillors and individuals from other organisations, to do this work to ensure that in the future the Council's open spaces were fit for purpose.

She also pointed out that the warden's work was no longer just about mowing grass and managing Herne Hill, the Cemetery and the Churchyard. To help manage their increased work load she proposed that with the help of a District Officer an annual programme of work for the wardens be set up on the computer which would allow delays or unexpected items that needed addressing to be seen at a glance. The officer has set up a similar system in Chard and was prepared to do the work at no cost to the Town Council.

It was agreed to trial the management programme for 3 months.

Winterhay Lane Play Area needed improving and there were funds available from the District Council for this. The Chair suggested the Youth Council be given a real life challenge and be involved with this by carrying out consultation with the residents and their children to find out what they would like to see in the play area.

Councillor Vijeh left here at 8.35pm

(b) Risk assessments

The Chair updated the Committee and said work on this was ongoing but hoped by next Monday Mrs Shelley would have electronic copies for the Tractor, Flail, Chainsaw, the Strimmer/Brushcutter, Blowers, Pesticide Application and hopefully the Stiga.

(c) Licenses

The Chair explained that the documents were before Councillors for discussion and to make changes if required. When preparing the Cricket Licence she had been asked to create one document that covered all the elements – at present only licences for the Pavilion and the Garage/Store exist. The documents had not yet been seen by the District Solicitor. She felt the issues raised by Mrs Shelley and the Wardens would sit better in a Recreation User Agreement which would be an extra document.

It was agreed the licences should include review dates on and it was suggested this should be set at 10 years. The area for which the council was responsible for cutting the grass should be clearly set out in the licence and this should be reflected in the amount of rent charged.

8. Cemetery Wall

(a) Wall

A meeting had been arranged with SSDC Building Control Team Leader Rob Petrie the following day for his opinion on the best way forward.

(b) Management Training

Members had received a report by the Town Clerk after both the Clerk and Deputy Clerk had attended a training session on Cemetery Management on 19 June organised by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management. The report stated the topics covered by the training session and also highlighted a number of areas which needed further

ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

consideration. It was agreed this report should be taken to the Cemetery Working Party to discuss and to report back to committee.

9. Town Clerk's Report and Correspondence

(a) Request for bin from SSDC

The request had been withdrawn.

(b) Cricket Club nets

The information the Council requested from the Cricket Club regarding the equipment had been received and the clerk informed the Committee on the prices for each of the damaged parts. The total came to £270.67 which included VAT and delivery. The Clerk also informed members that the wind speed on the day when the tree broke was approximately 35 mph which was classed as a moderate gale.

Members agreed the Council would pay for the damage to the nets.

It was RESOLVED to pay a total of £270.67 for the repairs.

(c) Kellaway Training request

A request had been received from Kellaway Training asking if the Council would lower its rent for use of West Crescent for dog training classes as the attendance was quite low at present. It was agreed that the company should be charged £2 a dog up to £10 per session.

The meeting closed at 10.03 pm

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Signature

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Date