

# ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Ilminster on Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2012 at 7:30 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, and Cllr L Vijeh.

**Officers:** Mr A Jones, Miss N McIntosh, Mrs J Thorne

### **1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Whaites

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

None

### **3. Appointment of Vice Chair**

The Chair of Open Spaces Committee Carol Goodall invited nominations for Vice Chair.

Cllr Lawson proposed Cllr Sainsbury, seconded by Cllr Taylor

Cllr Vijeh proposed Cllr Pallister seconded by Cllr Swann

A paper ballot was held which resulted in Cllr Pallister receiving the majority of votes, it was therefore RESOLVED that Cllr Pallister be appointed Vice Chair of Open Spaces Committee for the year to May 2013.

### **4. Minutes of the previous Open Spaces Committee Meeting**

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the Open Spaces Committee Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> March be approved and signed as a correct record.

### **5. Matters arising from the Minutes**

Item 9 – Oil Tank

Councillor Goodall informed the Committee that the Deputy Clerk, Marilyn Shelley was awaiting response from the environment agency and OFTEC.

Item 8 – Canal

Councillor Sherman had raised the issue of badgers in the vicinity of the canal. Councillor Goodall reported that a Pest Control officer was looking into the situation and had expressed concern regarding the badgers that are starting to burrow under the garages.

The pest control officer also mentioned that in regards to rats the anglers need to exercise restraint when using bread to attract fish as it can attract rats. It was agreed to write to the Angling Club with the pest control officer's comments.

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### Item 11 – Cricket nets

We have received an email from the Chair of the Cricket regarding the damage to the mobile cricket nets asking if these would be covered by our insurance. The Clerk was looking into the matter.

### Item 13 – b) Audit of Sports Facilities

Councillor Pallister met with representatives from the Somerset Activity and Sport Partnership, who were carrying out an audit of sports facilities of playing pitches on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> April. The Clerk has emailed Somerset Activity and Sport Partnership to ask if the Council can have a report on the findings.

## 6. Wardens Report

The Open Spaces Warden, Tony Jones reported that they had continued to cut grass (weather permitting) but as there was two weeks of rainfall the wardens were a little behind.

The new flail was now being actively used and has helped to cut the long grass and seed heads; this has then enabled them to use the gangs again. The flail has been very useful and they have now cut most of the pathways around the hill. The Open Spaces Wardens have had problems with the mule not running properly so it had been looked at by Loxston's to rectify the problem, and it is now running well.

The Warden thanked Councillor Pallister for his help in cutting the Cricket outfield on several occasions during this busy time.

The Warden informed the Committee that the chain on the seat part of the zip wire had to be replaced due to wear in the links. The Zip wire safety surface had now been completed and they have re-seeded this along with other patches around the play area.

Due to health & safety reasons the BMX track fence has been taken down as recommended by the District Play Officer. The fair side will need to be repaired or removed as several posts are broken at ground level.

A few benches needed to be repaired and repainted/stained due to vandalism; unfortunately a bench on Britten's field was beyond repair and had to be removed.

The Wardens have replaced all the steps at the top of Cleves Close and also the steps at the scout plantation and trig point (using the old BMX post).

At the Cemetery the tree climber has looked at and removed the rotten tree. They have now cleared the surrounding graves of all branches and wood.

The Contractor had started work and dug up tree stumps and removed soil against the bottom wall of the cemetery. He has also finished digging out the trench along the wall revealing several roots from the neighbour's trees and a considerable amount of damage to the wall.

The Warden reported that during the walkabout of Herne hill and other Open Spaces area. He showed Councillors the bank of the Incline that the Lions Club would like to have permission to plant trees. They have contacted him and the office to seek approval for this scheme and the number of tree whips and types required, to enable them to seek funding. If they are unable to raise funds they would like to plant more the following year and thus create the 'Lion's Copse'.

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The Warden notified the Committee that they are awaiting the outcome from the new licences and agreements to decide on responsibility for maintenance and repair to grounds and equipment.

Due to bad weather the canal had flooded and they had to clear the outlet pipes three times.

The Warden suggested that the Council looks into another system to stop debris blocking the pipe.

At the canal the life buoys have been replaced and the broken post has been repaired.

The Wardens have taken down Football Goal Posts, and helped fit the new gates for the toilet block and removed the winter bedding from all planters, and replanted with spring/summer plants in time for the Olympic torch and Jubilee Celebrations.

The Assistant Warden had also been busy preparing for the lighting of the beacon.

### **7. Skate Park**

At the Working Party meeting a decision was taken to put the spine in place of the rail, but it was agreed that this would be paid for by the Town Council rather than the Youth Council to raise funds because it would take time to raise funds and it would incur extra delivery, machinery and installation costs.

The Youth Council would be asked to help raise money for the shelter.

There was to be a meeting held on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> June, to finalise prices, order, groundwork and installation.

Notes from this meeting would be sent to Councillors.

### **8. Market House**

Cracks had appeared in the mortar of the Market House and the ceiling had also needed painting.

During an inspection it had also been discovered that a person/persons had accessed the roof space and the padlock had been removed.

The Warden suggested that the trapdoor should be replaced with wood, and screws put into the surrounding area to keep unauthorised persons out. The Conservation officer was looking at the Market House tomorrow to give his views.

### **9. Herne Hill Walkabout**

The Warden reported this year's walkabout included some of the open spaces the Council was responsible for. He was able to show the Councillors the new safety surfaces and play equipment on the Rec, and the problem with the concrete posts around the Football pitch and the stray lumps of concrete that end up hidden in grass which could cause damage to gang mowers.

On the walkabout Councillors looked at the cricket pavilion, the new score box and the tennis courts and were shown the work which was carried out by Councillors and volunteers on the canal. The walkabout also proceeded up the Incline where they pointed out where the Lions Club would like to plant the "Lions Copse," and up to West Crescent and looked at the play equipment and the poor safety surface and the proposed site for tree planting at the far end.

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The walkabout went along the “Old Road” path up to Herne Hill via ridge path. Councillors were shown the remains of the five conifers that had been felled which had now opened up the view and let light onto the surrounding trees that had previously been overshadowed. The wood from the trees was being used for repairing the canal bank. During the walkabout the Wardens were able to point out various trees that would need to be thinned. All work will be included in the draft Herne Hill Management plan which the Wardens and Deputy Clerk would be producing.

Leaving the hill the Councillors passed Cleeves Close which it was suggested could be cut once or twice a year to encourage wild flowers to grow either naturally or by introducing seeds.

At Britten’s field the Councillors were shown the wear and tear caused in the football goal mouths and then the entrance to the surgery from the Hammerhead.

The councillors then walked through the housing estate and along the side of Shrudrick stream and onto Winterhay play area, again looking at the play facilities, safety surfaces and surrounding fencing and hedges.

### **10. Summer Competitions**

a) Scarecrow Competition – Winners have now been contacted and the office would be sending out letters in due course with details of the Presentation Evening.

b) Floral Competition – It was agreed the final judging for the Floral Competition should take place on the 13<sup>th</sup> July.

The Clerk would contact Garden Judge Sidney Painter to confirm arrangements if he was in agreement Councillors would start their judging for 7<sup>th</sup> July.

Councillors were asked to contact the office with information of what areas they would cover.

It was decided that a press release in the local paper would be appropriate to advertise competition.

### **11. Lions Trees**

A letter has been received from Mr Nigel Clymow of the Lions asking for the Council’s approval to be involved in planting trees on the waste land area on the Incline in November with a plaque to mark the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee. The Council agreed to the request on the grounds that the trees planted were native trees which would not grow too tall, and with the suggestion the Mayor plants the first tree. They also wished to see a stone plaque rather than a metal plaque.

### **12. Town Clerk’s Report and Correspondence**

a) The Clerk reported that she had received an email from County Councillor Turner informing the Town Council that A358 Highway Improvement works between Taunton and Ilminster were due to commence in September after the Olympic games.

b) The Clerk informed the Committee of a notice of AGM from National Playing Fields Association on June 22<sup>nd</sup>. The report and accounts would be available in the office to view.

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- c) The Clerk notified the Committee of a letter received from Ilminster Patients Group enquiring about the bus stops location. They have requested that the bus stop be moved nearer the entrance of the new doctors' surgery. Jon Perret from the County Council has informed the Council that the request could come from the doctor's surgeries, direct if they felt strongly about. He has also received correspondence regarding the bus stopping at Riec-Sur-Belon Way from local residents. Mr Perret has suggested that he organise a site meeting with the bus company and the Town Council to look at both areas and to find a suitable solution.
- d) The Clerk has received an email from Crewkerne and Ilminster First and Middle Schools Parent and Family Support Adviser, asking if the Council was happy for them to organise a family walk at Herne Hill to discover animal homes and hunt for bugs followed by a picnic on the field on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> July. The Council had no objections.
- e) Cemetery Training - The Clerk has received confirmation from ICCM that the Cemetery Management Course would take place on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> June. The Council would only be paying for room hire.
- f) The Clerk congratulated the Jubilee Committee and members on the great turnout to the events and all their hard work.

It was resolved:

That in view of confidential nature of the business transacted it was advisable in the public interest, that the press and public be excluded and they were instructed to withdraw as laid out in the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

### Confidential Items

#### 13. a) Cemetery wall

- 1. It was agreed: The council would need to look at the conveyance.
- 2. A letter would be prepared and then sent to legal officer at SSDC for his thoughts before being sent to neighbours.

- b) Personnel – The Administrative Manager has sadly handed in her notice and her last day of employment with the Town Council would be Friday 31<sup>st</sup> August 2012. She wished the staff and Councillors every success in the future. The Committee suggested the Personnel Working Party held a meeting on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> July at 4:00pm to decide on the recruitment process.

The meeting closed at 9.02 pm

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Signature

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Date