

Minutes of the **Open Spaces Committee** held in the Council Chamber, North Street, Ilminster on Tuesday 10 September 2019 at 7.30pm

**Present:**

Chairman: Councillor M Gunn

Committee: P Hamilton, V Higgins, S Shepherd, R Swann, F White and L Wilcock.

**In Attendance:**

Councillors: P Burton, A Shearman and M James

Officers: Mr A Barnett (Grounds Manager) Miss J Norris (Town Clerk), Mr J Taylor (Assistant Grounds Manager Designate)

4 members of the public attended the meeting

**SPEAKER 1**

Drumming on the Rec. The speaker can hear the noise at home (Ashcombe Court) even with the doors shut and double glazed windows closed. The drumming penetrates more than the noise from events at the cricket or football clubs. Th speaker knows that he is not the only person who objects and the byelaws state that the drumming is not allowed. The speaker finds the drumming causes him stress and it could be damaging to his health and he would like to know if anything can be done to stop the drumming.

The Committee Chair responded that efforts have been made to arrange for the drummer to use alternative space but there are a large number of people who do like it. The Chairman will talk to the Town Clerk and Mayor to see if any solutions can be found.

The Chair introduced Mr Jake Taylor who will be starting with the Town Council on 7th October as the Assistant Grounds Manager.

**OS242 Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence as all Committee members were present.

**OS243 Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made regarding any items on the Agenda.

**OS244 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on **9 July 2019** were considered.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2019 be confirmed as a correct record.

**OS245 Action Plan**

Consideration was given to the Office Action Plan relating to the Open Spaces Committee.

- Angling Club – the angling club has a member who works for the Environment Agency,
- The angling club also look after Dillington pond
- MUGA (Multi Use Games Area) Swanmead – It is believed that one of the funding conditions when the MUGA was

installed was that a certain amount of time must be made available each week free of charge for community use - it may be that this provision was for a set amount of years from installation.

- A netball court could be fitted onto the tennis court nearest the Cricket Pavilion at 90' to the tennis court.

#### **OS246 Police Report**

This agenda item provides an opportunity for the Police to report on any matters relevant to policing in Ilminster. There was no written police report nor were any items raised.

#### **OS247 Financial Monitoring**

Information was presented about the Open Spaces Committee income, expenditure and commitments, compared to the 2019/20 budget

The Town Clerk believes that the overall income and expenditure figures are correct but the amounts may not have been allocated to the correct headings.

**RESOLVED** to note the report

#### **OS248 Grounds Team Report**

Consideration was given a report on recent Grounds Team work and work planned for the autumn.

Issues raised during consideration of the report included:

- Chris change of agency staff
- Cemetery wall (far end adjoining field) requires repair work
- Compound gate - badgers are digging underneath the gate to get at the rubbish bags in the compound. The gate is very heavy due to the wood screening on it. Possible solutions to both problems are being researched.

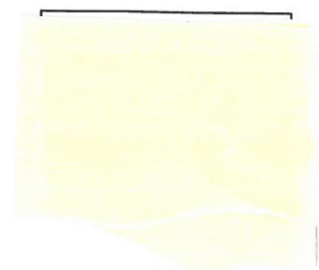
#### **OS249 Greening of Ilminster**

Consideration was given to a suggestion from the Greener Ilminster Group regarding wild flower planting on the periphery of Britten's Field.

A representative from Greener Ilminster provided information on the group which has been formed recently. One of their proposed projects is to try and improve the local habitat for pollinating insects. This is in response to declining insect numbers as a result of intensive farming, climate change and decimation of meadows and grasslands. There is mounting evidence that the declining insect population will impact significantly on the environment and food production. South Somerset District Council have declared a climate emergency and this project would be a small way of trying to act on this. The group has a small band of volunteers who are knowledgeable and motivated to try and make a difference.

The 2 proposed areas the group would like to work on are the slope behind Britten's Field and the pathway between Ile Youth club and Tesco. Advice has been sought from a person with many years of working at Ryewater Farm where a 10 acre meadow has been established that is now a SSSI.

The Group's plan is for the back of Britten's Field which is already a very interesting grassland area supporting a good variety of insects. Plug



plants would be used to gently introduce a carefully selected variety of wild flowers. It will entail a group of volunteers making small holes and pushing the plants into the ground. These are all indigenous species. This process will cause very little disturbance to the existing environment and is a relatively low labour process; there will be approx 500 plants. The seeds and growing/planting process will incur no cost to the town. The planting project will not change the management of the area for the team who manage it nor interfere with current recreational use of the area. (No problem to sledge!)

The second site referred to - the Frog Lane footpath - is not the responsibility of the Town Council. The plan for that area involves clearance of bramble, nettles and weeds before planting with a variety of perennial plants. There will be a small cost for this project.

Work would ideally be started in autumn 2019 on the footpath project clearing the brambles etc and possibly planting narcissus and primroses. The next stage would then be in early spring 2020 when both areas could be planted with plug plants.


The work would be carried out with risk assessments in place and the Greener Ilminster's own insurance.

Green Ilminster has some funds but would be grateful of a contribution from the Town Council.

Issues discussed during consideration of this agenda item included:

- The proposed area of Britten's Field is large, it may be better to start with a smaller area in order to get experience of the number of plants and amount of labour required
- A smaller site would be the bank side of The Incline - this is adjacent to the Greener Ilminster proposed site, still visible people using Britten's Field and would actually extend the "wild" area at the end of Britten's Field.
- The smaller site is planned to be cut in the autumn and some thinning of the trees, shrubs and brambles is planned
- Any site planted with wild flowers would benefit from a once a year cut in the autumn as it helps to scatter seeds
- there is a dichotomy between areas being tidy and bramble and weed free and encouraging the wildlife which thrives on plants many people find a nuisance and unsightly
- The ownership of Frog Lane is uncertain but the Town Council will share whatever information it has to help the Greener Ilminster Group

### **RESOLVED**

- (i) That the Town Council wholeheartedly supports the principle of the projects proposed by the Greener Ilminster Group i.e. to try and improve the local habitat for pollinating insects.
  - (ii) That the Town Council initially offers the Greener Ilminster Group the bank side of The Incline for planting wild flowers and, if that is successful, will consider extending the planting onto parts of the slope at the end of Britten's Field
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## **OS250 Dug outs**

Information was considered from Ilminster Sports Club Ltd regarding the erection of permanent dug-outs.

Issues discussed or raised during consideration of this agenda item included:

- There are regulations around football technical areas e.g. there has to be seating for a certain number of people and they have to be covered
- Wooden, wheeled structures already exist on Britten's Field –
- The existing dug-outs being made of wood are combustible and easily vandalised, they also get moved
- The proposed brick structures may increase community safety issues unless they can be closed and locked; it would be helpful to know if any community safety advice has been obtained from the police.
- most football clubs seem to have brick built structures for their technical areas
- there is a concern that sports clubs are intruding on the recreation space used by / available to other people

**RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** to Council not to give permission for a permanent brick structure to be erected and used as dug outs

## **OS251 Wharf Lane Recreation Ground Play Area Refurbishment**

- a) A recommendation to Council was considered for the amount of overall budget for the Wharf Lane Recreation Ground Play Area Refurbishment based on the existing sketch design
- b) The design of the barge which will form the focal point of the revamped play area was considered.

Issues discussed during consideration of this agenda item included:

- Phasing the work over several years will increase the costs as contractors will charge set up and welfare etc for each phase
- The current play equipment is old fashioned in many ways and some certainly requires replacement
- Is it worth putting so much money into a single item such as the barge?
- A scheme like this would serve the town for a long time
- children would love it and take a pride in it
- Other places, even smaller ones, have much better equipped and exciting play areas than Ilminster
- Re-vamping the Wharf Lane play area has been talked about it for a long time
- The Neighbourhood Plan consultation with young people and children comments were made about how much they would like a modern play area
- On-going maintenance costs
- Concerns about the use of sand; would cats use it as a toilet?
- The new Herne Vale play area is very well used
- Could there be any grant funding available?
- The possibility of including outdoor gym equipment for adults

**RESOLVED** that the overall design of the barge as a focal point of the play area is approved



**RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND To COUNCIL** that a budget of £343, 000 is agreed for the play area including the focal point barge design.

**OS252 Exclusion of Press and Public**

Consideration was given to taking Agenda item 11 Grounds Maintenance Equipment - Ride-On Mower without members of the public and press present, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted i.e. financial information and items subject to negotiation

**RESOLVED** that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Agenda item 11 Grounds Maintenance Equipment - Ride-On Mower due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted i.e. financial information and items subject to negotiation

**OS253 Grounds Maintenance Equipment - Ride-On Mower**

Consideration was given to making a recommendation to Council regarding whether or not a replacement ride-on mower is purchased. This agenda item had been deferred from the Committee meeting on 9 July to enable further information to be sought. The information had been obtained and incorporated into a revised report.

Issued raised or discussed during consideration of this agenda item included:

- Councillors were at the Ferris demonstration in 2018
- The Ferris is a rough cut machine not a precision cut and is best suited to work such as the footpaths on Herne Hill or area where the grass etc is allowed to grow longer.; it does not provide a precision cut such as that expected around the Minster
- A ride-on mower would offer a better , more precision cut
- A ride-on mower could be used in the play areas, the churchyard, Court Barton , Winterhay, and around the edges of the Wharf Lane Rec - this would reduce the amount of strimming required
- The Ferris would be used on Herne Hill and other areas where the grass is allowed to grow longer
- All of the machines listed in the report have been tested by the Grounds Team
- A fear was expressed that a ride-on mower would be used too much and the Ferris would be under used
- When the Ferris was bought in 2018 the Stiga was still working
- To mulch with the Ferris you need to cut twice

**RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND To COUNCIL** that a new ride-on mower is purchased

**OS254 Re-Admittance of the Press and Public**

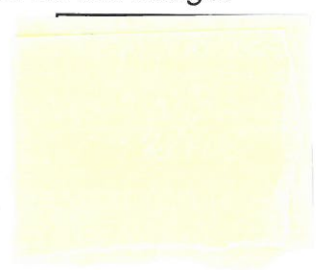
**RESOLVED** to readmit the press and public to the meeting

**OS 255 Budget 2019/20**

Consideration was given to income and expenditure ideas in preparation for the budget workshop.

Suggested items were:

- Earmarking a budget for paths around Wharf Lane Rec and Britten's Field
- Outdoor gym equipment



- Seats on Herne Hill
- Replacement Buggy
- Dredging the Canal

The meeting closed at 21: 30hrs

Chair's Signature & Date  
2 NOV '19