

Minutes for the **Open Spaces Committee** held online on Skype on Tuesday 22nd September 2020

Present:

Chair: Cllr M Gunn

Committee: Cllr V Higgins, Cllr L Wilcock, Cllr B Hamilton and Cllr S Shepherd

In Attendance:

Officers: Adam Barnett (Grounds Manager), Mrs J Earp (Deputy Town Clerk and RFO) and Mrs H White (Town Clerk)
One member of the public.

OS307 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr R Swann and Cllr F White.

OS308 Declarations of Interest

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

OS309 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 5th August were considered.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 5th August to be confirmed as a correct record.

OS310 Action Plan

Consideration was given to the Action Plan. A number of items on the list need updating and possibly removing. Cllr Gunn to liaise with the Town Clerk to review, particularly item 4, 9 and 13.

OS311 Police Report

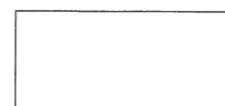
To consider any police report received.
No report received for this meeting.

OS312 Financial Monitoring

Consideration was given to the budget and expenditure figures produced. RFO confirmed that the system used produces figures for all council committees. No other comments.

OS313 Grounds Team Report

Consideration was given to the report prepared by the Grounds Manager. Discussion was held around the Burma Star Garden and why it was positioned where it was. Explanation was made regarding Ken Carbin who had looked after the garden and had lived in Winterhay Lane. The Grounds Manager talked about Herne Hill and the large amount of work that continues on the Nature Reserve. The bagging up of the logs was discussed and a suggestion was put forward about making charcoal. In the coming months the Grounds Manager is looking to develop a survey for the public to gauge their opinion on the open spaces we manage and possibly to ask Councillors to visit certain



areas to give their input. The new buggy has been on order for some time but due to the pandemic this remains outstanding.

OS314 Land on the South Side of Frog Lane

A discussion was had regarding the land on the South side of Frog Lane. The Town Clerk had located the owner and written to them to ask them to cut the overgrown land. The landowner had provided a dismissive reply. The Councillors discussed the various options.

1. Refer the matter to the Town Council solicitor and ask them to write a letter to the landlord.
2. Fines can be issued by councils for breaches of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs). This is one of a number of ways councils can tackle persistent anti-social behaviour problems raised by local communities, including dealing with “eyesore” gardens.
3. Write to the landlord and confirm that the land is not adopted and to advise that we’ll cut and care for the ground but for a price.

It was noted that a fence has appeared on the land with a “no entry” sign. It is unclear who has put up the sign. Cllr Hamilton said that he could speak to the enforcement team at SSDC.

RESOLVED to agree to leave with Cllr Hamilton and for him to speak to his enforcement team and not to make any decision at this stage.

OS315 Maintenance of our Open Spaces

Consideration was given to the report prepared by Colin Hyde. The Chair took the Committee out of session and Colin was invited to speak on this topic.

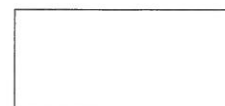
Colin Hyde is the Environment Champion for Ilminster.

Colin talked about the management of road side verges and although the verges are not owned by Ilminster Town Council he would like the Open Spaces Committee to reconsider the land that they do manage, the Recreation ground, playgrounds, Herne Hill and the Cemetery. To consider only mowing any marginal land not used for sport or footpaths less frequently to help halt the decline in insect biomass. This new policy could, for example, be put into practice where the Paupers’ graves are at the cemetery. The Committee were also asked to support the Environment Champions in their representations to both the County Council and District Council to re-evaluate their verge mowing regimes. They would like to say they are supported by the Town Council. This might be in the form of a written endorsement.

The Chair took the meeting back into session.

The committee discussed the verges generally around the town and how they looked when left in a more natural state. One of the councillors made reference to another town where there were signs that stated “Please excuse the weeds we’re feeding the bees.”

There was a proposal to support with the two actions put forward by Colin Hyde.



RESOLVED to support Green Ilminster with their two requests.

OS316 Rugby Posts

Consideration was given to a request by one of the residents for rugby posts to be erected somewhere on our open spaces.

Reference was made to Bye Laws and that no ball games were allowed on our open spaces unless on an area designated for that purpose. The council considered the room that we have on the open spaces. Consideration was also given to the fact that there are big rugby clubs in Chard and Crewkerne and this serves the area well.

RESOLVED to defer any further discussions until the Bye Laws are revisited.

OS317 Dog bins

Consideration was given to the addition of a dog bin near 1 High Street. There is already a bin situated on the path. Ilminster Town Council do not own the land so do not have the authority to put a bin on this land. Agreed that no further action would be taken.

OS318 Replacement and new benches

Consideration was given to replacing the bench by the tennis courts. The bench has been broken and removed.

Consideration was given to purchasing a new bench for the Burma Star Garden.

RESOLVED to purchase a new 3 seater Wessex bench in green to replace the broken seat and to speak to the Royal British Legion about possibly sharing the cost of a bench for the Burma Star Garden.

OS319 Party on the Park 2021

Consideration was given to a letter received requesting permission to hold the Party on the Park in 2021. If agreed our contract cleaners for the public toilets need to be asked to keep them open until 20:30.

RESOLVED to give permission for Party on the Park 2021.

OS320 Skatepark

Consideration was given to the current state of the skatepark. It has been noted that gaps have appeared and causing the skaters issues. There is possible land that has subsided and a "V" shape inch wide gap has occurred. Maintenance of the park needs to be looked at. There have been injuries to people. Higgs who installed the skatepark no longer provide maintenance. Play UK who are involved in the new playpark provide refurbishments of skateparks.

RESOLVED to research maintenance.



OS321

Playground refurbishment update

The committee were advised that the barge was going to be installed on or around the 26th October. Comfort facilities for the installers need to be provided. Consideration was given to the Tuck Shop and whether this could be utilised. A temporary fix could be an Ikea kitchen and pop in a sink and a few units to be paid from the contingency fund. The chair of Open of Spaces would research and update the committee.

8:46pm Cllr Shepherd left the meeting.

Committee no longer had a quorum. Agreed remaining Agenda items to be discussed at next meeting. As the Wharf Lane recreation ground entrance was a health and safety issue the committee asked the Town Clerk to speak to the Chair of the Planning Highways and Transport committee to see if can be discussed at their meeting.

Meeting closed 9:06pm

Chair's signature:

Date: