

ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Ilminster on Tuesday, 23 October, 2012 at 7:35 p.m.

Present

Chairman: Cllr C Goodall

Councillors: Cllr S Austin, Cllr P Burton, Cllr D Miller, Cllr J Pallister, Cllr A Shearman, Cllr S Shepherd, Cllr J Sothern, Cllr E J Taylor, Cllr L Vijeh, and Cllr P Whaites.

In Attendance

Officers: Mrs M Clayton (Senior Administrator), Mr A Jones (Senior Warden), Miss J Norris (Town Clerk), Mrs M Shelley (Deputy Town Clerk)

Members of the Public

Two members of the public attended the meeting.

1. Minutes of the previous Open Spaces Committee Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Open Spaces Committee Meeting held on 18th September be approved and signed as a correct record.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lawson, Sainsbury, and Swann.

3. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made in respect of any item on the agenda.

4. Matters arising from the Minutes

Item a - Architectural Surveyors

Councillor Goodall reported that contact with the Architectural Surveyor is ongoing and will report on progress at the next meeting.

Item b – Signage in Play Area

Councillor Goodall reported that this matter is ongoing and will report on the progress in the next meeting.

Item c – MUGA/Machinery Review

Councillor Goodall reported that we are in the process of arranging a date for the Recreation Review Meeting, where these matters will be addressed.

5. Wardens Report

The Open Spaces Warden reported that since the last meeting on 18th September 2012, the Wardens have flailed the pathways on Herne Hill and started to flail Cleeves Close. They have gang mowed and cut grass on the recreation grounds and the cemetery (when weather permitted).

All the town tubs have been emptied and re-planted with winter bedding.

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The tree at the bottom of the cemetery has been taken down, as mentioned at the last Open Spaces meeting.

The Warden informed the committee that they have flailed and strimmed the bottom of the Cemetery, and removed all the decomposing grass from West Crescent and Winterhay with a leaf collector hired from Loxstons.

It was suggested that the Senior Warden and office staff look into hiring a similar sweeper to collect the fallen leaves.

Repairs have been made to the Council's downpipes on the pavilion.

The Ash trunk on Herne Hill has been cut up and the walkway on a steep slope has been improved, which had become very slippery.

The tops of the wooden stakes on the Canal have been cut.

Mr Jones reported that a plumber has fitted a new pipe to the gent's urinal in the toilet block to increase amount of water flow, in the hope that this will prevent any further blockages.

In addition, to the Wardens report, the Deputy Town Clerk reported that she attended a site meeting on Tuesday morning, at various open spaces locations around the town, with the Town Clerk, the Senior Warden, and Phil Poulton, the Tree Officer from South Somerset District Council.

As a result, Mr Poulton has suggested the following action should be taken:

- The Council will need to purchase 11 to 15 Acer trees to be planted 10 to 15 metres apart, along The Mead. If the Committee would prefer cherry trees, the Deputy Town Clerk has been advised of species which would look best, due to their nice colouring during the autumn.
Councillors were concerned with the costs of the purchases and whether it was necessary to keep planting trees. Councillor Vijeh suggested that maybe local businesses could sponsor a tree, and the Town Clerk explained that the once the trees were planted, it would reduce the costs of maintaining the grounds and enhance wildlife to the area.
- The Birch tree, on the drive up to the Warden's shed should be removed.
- The Willow tree, which has caused damage to the cricket net, needs to be cut back by about a third, and then revisited every 5 years.
- At the cemetery it was recommended that any new trees could be English yew
- The local Forestry Commission may be available to come and look at all our woodland areas, and help produce a plan on how to manage them.
- Shrubs, for example hazel, hawthorns, whips and field maple were suggested for the corner of Brittens Field, and The Incline.

Councillors were concerned with the costs of purchasing these items and how many would be needed.

RESOLVED that costs of all the trees and shrubs will need to be obtained, before a decision can be made.

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Budgets

Councillor Goodall advised that the committee's focus and discussion needed to be about the Open Spaces budget.

Discussions included the following items:

- National pay award increase maybe set at 1%
- Budget 2013/14 figures have been increased by 4% on 2012/13 figures. This is based on the average annual rate of inflation being 3.58%
- Budgets this year will be made for specific items and not taken out of reserves. This allows the reserves to be kept for unexpected events.
- Salary increases are due to 3 factors – 1% national pay award, salary increment point increase, and new Apprentice salary (included in Town Clerk's report).
- Electrical testing training for Senior Warden could reduce costs for us and may allow us to do electrical testing for other businesses.
- Budgets which are showing low elements or no costs are being reviewed further.
- The Town Clerk would like to introduce budget monitoring, and hold quarterly meeting with the Chairperson of each committee to discuss estimated figures, with actual amounts spent to date.
- Rents for the clubs have been increased by 4%, but have not yet been agreed with the clubs.
- Commitment accounting procedures need to be set up to show how much has been spent out of each budget so far, and how much is left to spend. This will help with the monitoring of the finances.
- Electricity, Gas and Water will probably increase more than the 4% allowed.
- Councillors need to take the figures home for further analysis.
- Any queries Councillors may have about the proposed budget should be directed to the Deputy Town Clerk via **email**
- There will be further discussion on the proposed budget figures at the Finance and Policy meeting on 13th November 2012

RESOLVED that if necessary a special Open Spaces meeting will be called to discuss the budget proposals further.

6. Skate Park

The Town Clerk reported that a site meeting had been held with the contractors, to discuss snagging issues. The following points were highlighted:

- Managing Director of Hags Play has accepted all the snagging issues, and if future problems arise with areas/items where potential problems have been pointed out they will honour the agreement to rectify the fault free of charge.
- The ground immediately adjacent to the Corner Bowl equipment is not level, and Hags Play is seeking advice from Germany as the best way to modify the equipment.
- It was suggested that rubber matting is needed to the side of the Corner Bowl, to stop the mud from slipping down onto the tarmac.

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- The new tarmac that has been laid should have been porous, but it is puddling, so we will need to contact the tarmac firm to check that the correct material has been used.

7. Recreation Ground

Councillor Goodall reported that the damage by the fair, to the recreation ground was unavoidable, due to the recent weather, and therefore asked the committee to consider where or not the deposit paid by Mr Herbert, the fair organiser, be refunded.

Councillors discussed the matter and agreed the Fair should not be penalised for the damage to the field

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that Mr Herbert be refunded in full the deposit of £400.

8. Football Stands

The Chair reported that the wooden part of the stand had been removed and they are in talks with contractors regarding the removal of the southern end.

9. Shed Security

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that our insurers have recommended that we could improve our security measures at the shed by installing dusk to dawn lighting. The costs for this work will be £520 + VAT. Councillors discussed the matter and agreed that in addition to the lighting, further security at the shed could involve, marking tools and installing metal lockable posts in front of the shed door.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that

- (i) the purchase of dusk till dawn lighting at a cost of £520 + VAT
- (ii) delegated authority is given to the Town Clerk to take appropriate measures for securing the wardens equipment store and expenditure incurred to be within the financial limits given in the standing orders

10. Safety Surfaces

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that the costs for the seesaw and matting have not been received and therefore will be reported at the next meeting.

11. Toilets

The Town Clerk reported that we have received quotes for purchasing galvanised guttering for the toilet block. The present guttering keeps getting damaged and is in need of constant repair. The quotes do not exceed £600 +VAT.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that delegated authority is given to the Town Clerk to purchase galvanised guttering for the toilet block at a cost not exceeding £600 +VAT

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12. Winterhay Fence

Councillor Goodall reported that the cost to replace the perimeter fence at Winterhay Lane will be £650 + VAT. However, Councillor Goodall is still waiting for confirmation in writing on the ownership of the fence.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that subject to the ownership of the fence being confirmed in writing, as to belonging to Ilminster Town Council, the Town Clerk is given delegated authority to order the supply and erection of the fencing for a cost not exceeding £650.00 + VAT.

13. Town Clerk's Report & Correspondence

- 1) **Bulb Planting** – The Town Clerk asked for suggestions of community groups that may like to assist with the bulb planting. The Scouts, Sunny Isle and Swanmead School gardening club were given.
Councillor Vjeh raised the point that children may not be allowed to handle daffodil bulbs now, as they are poisonous. The Town Clerk will look into this matter.
- 2) **West Street Sign** - The repositioning of the directional sign in the car park at West Street will be carried out on 24 October 2012 at 8.15am and it would be advantageous if a Council representative was present. Councillor Goodall volunteered.
- 3) **Doctor's Surgery Access** - Correspondence received by email on 22 October 2012 regarding the Doctor's surgery access. Councillors were asked in view of this, were any changes required to the instruction to the Town Clerk on 16 October 2012.
Councillors agreed that letters should be sent as soon as possible to enable a speedy resolution.
- 4) **Market House Insurance** - The Council's insurers have suggested that whenever a person who wishes to use the Market House does not have their own public liability insurance it may be possible for them to be covered by the Council's insurance. Each case would need to be subject of consideration.
- 5) **Ilminster Football Club** - Ilminster Football Club has substantially completed their business plan for building a new pavilion with changing facilities – this includes drawings for the proposed building. The Town Clerk has copies of the documents if anyone would like to look at them.
- 6) **Footpath Maintenance & Village Pump** - Correspondence has been received regarding footpath maintenance and preserving the village pump on the north side of East Street.
- 7) **Cemetery Wall**
 - a) It has not yet been possible to obtain the legal advice as agreed at Council on 16 October 2012
 - b) The Open Spaces Warden's have cleared the debris from the wall which had fallen onto land not owned by the Council. The owners are very pleased.
 - c) As a result of the work undertaken in B above it is now clear that the existing railings and wall are unsafe.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that subject to legal advice suggesting an alternative course of action

- i) The existing railings are removed (and stored for possible future use)
- ii) That the existing wall is removed where appropriate and made safe

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- iii) That during the course of i) & ii) above a pictorial record is kept and expert opinion is sought as to the causes of the wall disintegration – with the land owner or representative of the land owner present if they so desire
- iv) That the boundary of Ilminster Town Council land is marked by posts and a temporary fence
- v) That a record is kept by the Town Council of all the costs incurred for undertaking i), ii) and iii) above so that any appropriate recharges can be made.

8) Apprenticeship in Horticulture

- a) For the past year the Open Spaces Wardens have had the benefit of a young volunteer assisting with various grounds maintenance tasks. It has been suggested that a more formal arrangement would be of benefit to both the Town Council and the young person and accordingly enquiries have been made regarding the possibility of the Town Council offering an apprenticeship in horticulture to the current volunteer.
- b) Cannington College are able to offer an appropriate training and assessment package for a level 2 diploma in Horticulture.
- c) The Town Council would have to employ the apprentice for a minimum of 30 hours per week (which includes a day per week at college) for a maximum of 18 months. For the first 12 months the hourly rate of pay is £2.65 and for the final 6 months the national minimum wage of £4.98 per hour
- d) The costs to the Town Council for employing an apprentice for 30 hours per week would be approx £8,200 and £10,400 for 37 hours, for an 18 month period (if an apprentice was started in January 2013 the costs would be over 3 financial years)

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that an apprenticeship is offered to the current volunteer for 37 hours per week for 18 months starting in January 2013.

14. Confidential Item

Councillor Whaites who is the Town Council representative and governor at Greenfyld School reported on matters that were discussed at the recent governor's meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.24 pm

Chair's signature & Date