

**ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL
OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Minutes of a meeting of the **OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Ilminster on Tuesday 26th August 2014 at 19:30hrs

Present:

Chairman: Cllr C Goodall

Councillors: Cllr P Burton, Cllr V Higgins, Cllr A Lawson, Cllr D Miller, Cllr R Neave, Cllr A Shearman, Cllr S Shepherd, Cllr S Storey and Cllr E Taylor.

In Attendance

Officers: Mr A Jones (Senior Open Spaces Warden), Miss J Norris (Town Clerk)

8 members of the public attended this meeting

The Chairman welcomed the members of the public and explained the public participation scheme.

Items brought to the attention of the Committee included the following:

Speaker 1

During holidays the speaker and his wife like to go to the Rec and watch the skateboarders, they are however very concerned about the safety of young children who are using ramps to crawl on and as slides. They recently witnessed a young person politely asking for someone to remove their toddler but receiving a rude response. The speaker suggested that a fence should be put around the skatepark and notices erected.

Speaker 2

The speaker wanted to know if the Football Club facility moves to Britten's Field whether the grandstand, wardens workshop and the shed will remain. The Chair responded that if the new facility goes ahead it is likely the grandstand will come down, however the decision was always that the Sports Club would remain in situ. The Speaker said that they would like copies of the minutes of the meetings since April where the Open Spaces review had been discussed as they had been unable to find out when the decision about the buildings were made. The Speaker agreed with the Town Clerk that they would come into the office on Friday 29 August to collect the copies of the minutes.

Speaker 3

Wished to know when new byelaw signs would be erected – on Sunday the previous weekend cyclists had cycled across the cricket square when a game was in progress.

Speaker 4

In the speaker's opinion the rats on the Canal bank are due to the grass not being cut. The Chairman responded that this had been raised at the last Open Spaces Committee meeting and it had been explained to those present that some time ago the pest control person had been visited the Canal area and agreed that there are but it was highly inadvisable to put down poison because of the presence of water voles. The Speaker said that the rats are hiding in the grass and can be seen if one stands quietly nearby, the Chairman said that she will go and look specifically at the long grass areas.

Speaker 5

The Speaker raised several issues:

- could an update be given on the petition about buildings on Britten's Field;
- the loss of picnic tables on Herne Hill;
- rubbish on Herne Hill;
- provision of a MUGA

The Chairman responded the picnic benches have been vandalised but it is hoped to replace them; stone and rubble has been put at what will be

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the lookout point on the Ridge Path to be used as infill for the viewing area; there are however currently difficulties transporting the recycled stone from the cemetery; The Mayor responded regarding the MUGA that the District Council is still holding S106 money for a MUGA in Ilminster; providing the skatepark had however been more costly than estimated and therefore some money originally allocated for the MUGA had been used to complete the skatepark.

The Mayor then responded to the remarks about the petition saying that a considerable amount of time had been spent verifying the signatures on the petition and that a number of duplicates had been found. The signatures of those signing the petition had been counted and sub divided for those living within Ilminster and outside of the town as is common practice.

129. Suspension of Standing Orders

The Committee were asked to suspend standing order 1m, which relates to photographing, recording, broadcasting or transmitting the proceedings as a new legislation allows members of the public the right to record a meeting.

RESOLVED to suspend Standing Order 1m.

130. Apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Pallister and Sothern.

131. Declarations of Interest.

No declarations of interest were made at this stage of the meeting

132. Minutes.

RESOLVED

- (i) To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on **29 July 2014** as a correct record.
- (ii) To note the action list relating to the Open Spaces committee

Items brought to the attention of the committee included the following:

- Typo re long grass and arranging for a farmer to cut and collect the grass
- The responses to the questions raised at the previous meeting on the Financial Comparison information were that bulk of the expenditure coded to miscellaneous was for the new town signs and the notes regarding the cemetery lodge were for 2 separate items- emptying the septic tank and resetting the timer on the electric water / heating in the lodge
- There is no town sign at Sea
- Cemetery Regulations signs should be the A3 laminated signs
- It may be helpful to issue a media release regarding the safety issues caused by unauthorised memorials
- A future committee agenda item could be the consideration of designating a specific area in the cemetery where memorials can be placed.
- A constructive example of work to make gravestones safe is Sandwell where gravestones have been placed back to back to support each other.

133. Wardens Report.

The report from the Senior Open Spaces Warden about recent open spaces activities in Ilminster was considered.

Issues discussed during this agenda item included:

- no additional litter has been noticed in the kiosk area since the new facility opened

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- there had been a demonstration of the Trimex snake mower which was able to cut on undulating ground, the demonstration had started when the weather was good but rain had come in so it had been possible to see the equipment's capacity for cutting wet grass as well
- Burma Star Garden - unfortunately one of the volunteers has stepped down

134. Police Report

A Police report was provided for Council on 19 August 2014 and there was no further report for this meeting

135. Use of Open Spaces Machinery

At its meeting on 11 March 2014 the Committee was asked to consider whether or not Cricket and Football Clubs should be charged a fee for the use of equipment owned by the Town Council; a decision was deferred pending the introduction of a Volunteer Policy. The Town Council's Volunteer Policy has now been adopted and implemented so the matter of charges for use of the Open Spaces Machinery had been referred back to the Committee for consideration.

Issues discussed during consideration of this agenda item included:

- The amount of time it takes to raise an invoice and the associated administration is likely to exceed the benefit of letting the club use
- A nominal charge could be included in future rent
- The additional wear and tear on machines
- Insurance responsibility
- If an item of equipment or machinery breaks whilst being used by a club who pays?
- Volunteers will have to be competency assessed before using any Town Council equipment and will be doing their allocated tasks under Council staff supervision
- Town Council need to use the equipment to take precedence over any request from another organisation

RESOLVED

- (i) That no charge be made provided the equipment is used / operated by a person on the Town Council's volunteer register
- (ii) That the decision not to charge is reviewed in 1 year having kept a record of usage

136. Charges for Use of the Recreation Ground

At its meeting on 22 April 2014 the Committee agreed the Council would charge £2 a person or maximum of £20 a session for fitness sessions to be held on the Recreation Ground. The organiser of the fitness session has asked that this charge be reviewed as he charges £4.00 per person per session.

Issues discussed during consideration of this agenda item included:

- Not necessarily 50% of income
- Nice to see the Rec being used

RESOLVED that the charge be £1.00 for each of the first 10 people and £2.00 for each person thereafter, this charge to be reviewed in 3 months when factual data on attendance is available and the organiser can provide a business case for his future charges.

137. Skate Park (Wharf Lane Recreation Ground)

To consider a communication from Street Scene regarding the Skatepark.
Issues discussed during this agenda item included:

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- It would be nice if the young people attended the Committee to present their ideas and suggestions
- Suggest the installers and South Somerset District Council Play Officers are contacted to comment on the viability and impact of sanding the surfaces, installing drains and fences
- The size of puddles around some of the equipment the spec for the tarmac was for porous / self draining
- At Party On the Park there was an accident but first aiders said it was not an unusual type of accident for a skatepark
- Referring to the comments made about the skatepark during public participation it was nice to see same opinion coming from different generations
- Working on the skatepark provided a good opportunity to engage with young people

RESOLVED that advice is sought from the skatepark installers and the appropriate South Somerset District Council officers regarding fencing and safety issues

138. Funfair Use of Land and Facilities

The Committee considered the arrangements and charges e.g. deposit, utilities charges regarding the Funfair's use of land and facilities.

Issues discussed during this agenda item included:

- A certain amount of damage is inevitable due to the size and weight of the fair vehicles
- Need to encourage the fair
- Repair costs are minimised if the repair is undertaken soon after the damage is done
- The charges made by other local towns for fairs
- Use of an agreed, designated area

RESOLVED that this item be discussed at September Council with the intention of taking a proposal to the funfair organisers when they are here for the carnival fair in October 2014

The meeting closed at 21:28hrs

Chair's Initials & Date