

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 May 2015 at 19:30hrs

Present:

Chairman: Cllr S Shepherd

Councillors: F Albin, P Burton, R Drayton, J Fagan, J Fowler, C Goodall, V Keitch, D Kinder, R Neave, A Shearman, J Sothern, R Swann and T Walker

In Attendance

Officers: Mr A Jones (Senior Open Spaces Warden), Miss J Norris (Town Clerk)
Mrs D Speed (Administration Officer (Finance)) Mrs S Whitefield (Deputy Town Clerk)

4 members of the public attended the meeting, 3 of whom spoke during the public participation session.

Speaker 1

Congratulated everyone who had been elected and wished them well in their Councillor role. The speaker then asked 4 questions

- A) Why has Ilminster In Bloom been dropped?
- B) Why have 2 previously separate events been combined in recent years – the Awards Evening and the Annual Town Meeting?
- C) Why has the Herne Hill Management Committee been dropped?
- D) What has happened to the money raised via the “Buy A Brick” campaign for the Sports Initiative?

The Chair said he would look into the first 3 points; the Town Clerk explained that the Town Council had agreed the Sports Initiative money would be ringfenced for the Football and Community Facility.

Speaker 2

Raised two issues

- A) The speaker had seen rats along the canal bank, by the tennis court where the grass had not been cut
- B) Requested an update on the Lookout Point – the Town Clerk said this will be an item on the Agenda at the next Town Council meeting.

Speaker 3

This speaker expressed appreciation on behalf of the Cricket and Football Clubs of the work that the Senior Open Spaces Warden had done during his employment with the Town Council.

The Chair formally opened the meeting and explained that it was Tony Jones', the Senior Open Spaces Warden, last meeting before he leaves to take up new employment. The Chair thanked Mr Jones for the work he had done and the commitment he had shown during his employment with the Town Council

OS1 Apologies for absence.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Storey.

OS2 Declarations of Interest.

No declarations of interest were made in respect of any agenda items at this point in the meeting, however at the start of the discussion on Agenda Item 8 “Request To Use the Recreation Ground for Activities For Young People” Cllr Shearman declared a personal interest as he is employed by Somerset County Council.

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OS3 Minutes

RESOLVED

- (i) That the minutes of the meeting held on 24th March 2015 be confirmed as a correct record
- (ii) To note the action list relating to the Open Spaces Committee.

Issues raised during consideration of the action list included:

- Cllr Swann has some literature from the Canal and River Trust that may be suitable for adaptation to posters regarding feeding the ducks
- The person wishing to use a metal detector on Town Council owned land has been informed that permission has not been granted
- The contractor hopes to undertake the rotivation of the paths on Herne Hill, where the chippings were removed next week
- The Angling Club have now installed the grill over the canal outlet as agreed

OS4 Police Report

A police report was provided for Council on 19 May 2015 and there was no further report for this meeting.

OS5 Wardens Report.

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

Items discussed during consideration of this agenda item included:

- Badgers around the Canal - Natural England have advised that no action can be taken until after the beginning of June
- When trees on Herne Hill fall, provided that they do not cause any danger, the trunk is usually left in situ and the branches are removed and taken to Cleaves Close to be burnt

OS6 Business Case for Replacing the Vehicle used by the Open Spaces Team

The business case for replacing the vehicle used by the Open Spaces Team was considered.

Items discussed during consideration of this agenda item included:

- There is money allocated in reserves for replacing the current utility vehicle
- Ongoing maintenance costs of the current vehicle
- Utility vehicles can be obtained in EEC road homologated and non homologated versions (homologated for road use means that the vehicle can be legally used on the road and is fitted with the appropriate lights, horn etc)
- From the vehicle demonstrations, the Open Spaces Team preferred the Kioti vehicle as it seemed sturdy and well made
- The possibility of the new Senior Open Spaces Warden having alternative suggestions for the vehicle type and requirements / specification
- There are only a limited number of vehicles on the market which match the current requirements e.g. on and off road use, load capacity
- The possibility of the vehicle manufacturer being featured prominently on the vehicle and the Town Council receiving a discount for permitting such display
- Warranty durations and what is covered
- Tyre type – the all-terrain tyre leaves clear indentations in the grass so the medium tyre would be better suited to the Town Council's use; whilst not essential it would be useful to also have a set of winter tyres

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RESOLVED that quotations are sought for a replacement utility vehicle.

OS7 Natural / Wildlife Encouragement Areas

In 2014 it was agreed that the bank along the Canal and the hill on Britten's Field be left to grow, without cutting / strimming, throughout the late spring / summer to encourage wildlife; with the exception of a mown pathway that traversed the Britten's Field hill. As well as encouraging small animals and insects and natural plant life, the risk of health and safety issues connected to the gradient of the slope and ground conditions are reduced. The meeting considered whether or not the 2014 "let it grow" policy should be continued. Items discussed during consideration of this agenda item included:

- The long grass encourages insects and butterflies and small animals
- Wild flower areas do not just happen they need to be carefully planned, the ground prepared correctly and wild flower plugs planted
- Long grass may increase the likelihood of adders inhabiting the area

RESOLVED

- (i) To regularly cut or trim the grass parallel with the Canal so that it is kept tidy
- (ii) That the grass on the slope from Britten's Field towards the Ridge Path and Herne Hill should be left to grow during the summer
- (iii) That research is undertaken to find the most appropriate type of plants suitable for the area from Britten's Field towards the Ridge Path and Herne Hill to encourage butterflies
- (iv) That research is undertaken to find the most appropriate type of plants suitable for the area from Britten's Field towards the Ridge Path and Herne Hill which could be bought as plugs and planted to encourage further wildflower growth

OS8 Request to use the Recreation Ground for activities for Young People

The Committee considered a request to use the Recreation Ground, as in previous years, for activities for young people on afternoons in July and August.

RESOLVED that permission is given for the Recreation Ground to be used for activities for young people on afternoons in July and August

Note: Cllr Shearman declared a personal interest in this agenda item as he is an employee of Somerset County Council.

The meeting closed at 20:25 hrs

Chair's Signature & Date