

**ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL
OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Minutes of a meeting of the **OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Ilminster on Tuesday 21st January 2014 at 19:30hrs

Present:

Chairman: Cllr C Goodall

Councillors: Cllr S Austin, Cllr P Burton, Cllr V Higgins, Cllr V Keitch, Cllr A Lawson, Cllr D Miller, Cllr J Pallister, Cllr A Shearman, Cllr S Shepherd, Cllr S Storey, Cllr R Swann, Cllr L Vijeh and Cllr E Taylor.

In Attendance

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

Two members of the public attended this meeting.

Before the meeting started Mr R Brown and Mr Pettitt from Persimmons Homes gave a presentation on the amended layout for the open spaces area at the Canal Way Development.

74. Apologies for absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Sothern.

75. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made by Councillors or Officers in respect of any items on the agenda.

76. Minutes.

RESOLVED

- a) that the minutes of the meeting held on 17th December 2014 be confirmed as a correct record.
- b) to note the action list relating to the Open Spaces committee.

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

- Four members of youth council have stood down since started senior school. The Chair is unsure at the moment how this will affect the youth council's involvement with the work they have been carrying out to improve Winterhay Lane recreation ground.
- The Senior Open Spaces Warden and Deputy Clerk have met Phil Poulton from South Somerset District Council to look at trees on Herne Hill in relation to the Herne Hill management plan.
- The Angling Association will start work on the grill for the canal's outlet pipe once the weather improves
- The cemetery railings have been installed.
- Work to slope the ground at the bottom of the cemetery will be started once the weather improves.
- The neighbours of the cemetery have sent an invoice to the Town Council for various costs associated with the North West Cemetery Wall – this will be reported formally to the next Council meeting.

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77. Warden's Report

The Committee received the report from the Senior Open Spaces Warden about recent open spaces activities in Iminster and future planned work

Discussions included the following:

- The format of the Warden's report has changed so that it identifies work that has been completed and work that is planned for the future.
- Councillor Taylor thanked the Open Spaces Apprentice and the Open Spaces volunteer for their hard work on Christmas Eve unblocking the ditches near Adams Meadow.
- The area on the recreation ground which has recently had work carried out on it to improve the drainage is less wet than it has been in the past
- Councillor Higgins praised the Open Spaces team for keeping the paths at Herne Hill in a good condition even though the weather has been against them. Twenty eight school children recently walked around the hill and found it very safe underfoot.
- A tree has fallen at Herne Hill, which is now balancing on another tree. It is not a danger to the public and will be removed next week.
- The Deputy Clerk and the Senior Open Spaces Warden have been working on arranging servicing for the tools and machinery. Quotations are being sought to service the 'gangs' to compare them with our current servicing provider to establish whether the Council is getting the best value for money.

78. Financial comparison

The Committee received information about the Open Spaces expenditure and commitments to date when compared with the 2013/14 budget

Discussions on this item included the following:

- Cllr Lawson will advise staff how to format cells which automatically show in red or as a minus in the variance column of the spreadsheet.
- The budget this year for tools has not been spent. The Senior Open Spaces Warden will let staff know what items are needed.

RESOLVED to note the report

79. 2014/15 Open Spaces Budget

The Committee were asked to consider the Open Spaces budget for 2014/15

Issues discussed on this topic included the following:

- The budget amount for the purchase of a MUGA is needed to match fund the amount available from the District Council. Councillors will not make a decision on this amount until they have figures showing how this will affect the precept. A decision will need to be made at Full Council to secure the funds at the District Council.
- A 3% increase on the cemetery fees is still lower than neighbouring local council, so a bigger increase would be favourable.
- The income from the cemetery lodge rents is used to offset management fees and any maintenance costs in the year, The balance is put into reserves
- The Market House expenditure should be moved to the Resources budget as the income generated from the market will go there.
- The money currently held by the Council for the Iminster Sports Initiative will be used towards the recreation review projects
- The protective clothing budget needs to be kept at £450 for replacement of worn items and in the event of the Council replacing the vacant Open Spaces Warden position

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- Prices are being obtained for tools that will be need to be purchased from the 2014/15 budget, the Senior Warden will also advise staff which items are needed immediately from amount remaining in the budget for this financial year.
- The budgeted figure for the maintenance of the churchyard has been increased to reflect the costs of painting the churchyard railings, which was agreed by Full Council to be carried out in 2014/15.
- The spare mobile phone is currently being used by the office as it is on a 2 year contract.
- The toilet cleaning charges did not increase in December, so the budget amount has been based on the current charges.
- The water charges for the toilet block have increased due to the increased flow in the urinals. The Open Spaces review Group will look at how improvements can be made to the toilet provision at the recreation ground.
- Following receipt of the electrical installation condition report for the toilet block. It has been noted that work is necessary to the three existing consumer units to protect against overload. Councillors agreed that the units are very old and need work.
- Now that both Committees have individually looked at their budgets, the staff will consolidate the figures and bring a complete set with all the adjustments/recommendations to Full Council on 28th January 2014

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the draft Open Spaces budget for 2014/15 be amended as follows:

- a) The cemetery fees are increase by 10% and rounded to the nearest pound.
- b) The Market House expenditure should be moved and shown under the Resources budget.
- c) The Iminster Sport Initiative fund should be renamed to the Recreation Review fund.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that electrical work is carried out to the Toilet Block at a cost not exceeding £650 + vat, funded from the renewal and provisions line 94 – toilet maintenance

Meeting ends 21:10hrs

Chair's signature and date