

## MARLBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL

### AMENITIES AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the **Amenities and Open Spaces Committee** held on **Monday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2016** in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Marlborough**, at 7.00 pm

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| <b>PRESENT</b>      | Councillor G. Loosmore<br>Councillor M. Rose<br>Councillor B. Castle<br>Councillor A. Ross<br>Councillor A. Kirk Wilson<br>Councillor A. Light | Chairman<br>Town Mayor   |
| <b>ALSO PRESENT</b> | Councillor M. Hall<br>Mrs S. Parker<br>Mr R. Beale<br>Mrs D. Whitehall<br>Mrs S. Pryor<br>Plus 2 members of the public                         | Observing<br>Town Clerk<br>Grounds & Estates Manager<br>Administrator<br>The Adviser |

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#### **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no questions.

**623/15**

#### **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence was received from Cllrs. Hannaford-Dobson and Lam.

**624/15**

#### **DECLARATION(S) OF INTEREST**

Cllr. Ross – agenda item 11 – Rugby Club – non-pecuniary. Cllr. Light – agenda item 18 – Priory Gardens – non-pecuniary.

**625/15**

#### **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

As this was the last A&OS meeting of the Mayoral year, the Chairman thanked Members for what had been a very busy year. He thanked the Town Clerk and Grounds & Estates team for meeting the continuing challenges. There was a lot to do, with sometimes difficult decisions to be taken with far-reaching implications. Things were moving in the right direction and the Chairman was confident would continue to do so in the future.

**626/15**

#### **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2016 be approved and signed as a correct record.

**627/15**

#### **TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**

The contents of the Town Clerk's report were noted. Cllr. Ross asked for an update on dog fouling (Min 154/14, 630/14):

- This problem had been identified as a high priority for the Town Council but, progress had slipped due to more pressing projects
- New notices had been put up on The Common in addition to larger litter bins and these were being used

- New legislation had been passed to give local authorities more enforcement powers and a number of Councils (e.g. Calne and Devizes) had trained members of staff issuing on-the-spot penalties
- The Dogs Trust would be running a campaign in June and the Town Council was signed up to this
- Reports of dog fouling were being recorded via Wiltshire Council's reporting tool
- It was agreed to add an agenda item to the next A&OS meeting with a view to creating a plan for the coming year.

**628/15**

### **GROUNDS AND ESTATES MANAGER'S REPORT**

Members noted a report by the Grounds and Estates Manager. Points of discussion included:

- The window boxes on the Town Hall were problematic to maintain and Marlborough in Bloom had requested they be re-sited
- Fresh play grade bark chips had been spread in Cooper's Meadow play area. Cllr. Castle requested more be added to the entrance to the play area once the water table had subsided
- The tractor used for grave digging was incurring high repair costs and the GEM recommended leasing a new one which could double for grass cutting
- Several locations had been identified which were suitable for the placement of beehives and the first would be placed in the Victorian Cemetery and Cooper's Meadow (see Minute 629/15) by beekeeper, Mr Richard Peterson. The Town Clerk would check insurance requirements
- It was disappointing to note cases of vandalism in the seating area of St Mary's Churchyard overlooking High Walls where loose stone setts had been prised from the pavement and thrown down into the flower beds below. These had been repaired a number of times. The GEM recommended setting them in concrete and, if this did not resolve the issue, they would have to be removed to prevent a risk to the public and passing traffic
- Members noted some improvement to the area around the Boxing Club in Elcot Lane. Ongoing building work meant there was still debris (e.g. a tractor tyre) around the site which hindered mowing. It was agreed the Town Clerk would write to the Club asking for the area to be cleared.

**RESOLVED:** (i) the window boxes be removed from the Town Hall and relocated to a more advantageous position in the town ready for summer displays

**RESOLVED:** (ii) the GEM obtain quotations to replace the grave digging tractor

**RESOLVED:** (iii) the GEM to concrete in the stone setts in the seating area in St Mary's Churchyard overlooking High Walls

**629/15**

### **COOPER'S MEADOW**

Members noted the minutes of the Cooper's Meadow User Group together with a report by the Grounds and Estates Manager. The area for sheep grazing was considered along with the placing of beehives and a new format for User Group meetings. The main points of discussion were:

- Following consultation with the Youth Council, it was not felt appropriate to locate play equipment for older children in Cooper's Meadow. This was better located at the Recreation Ground in Salisbury Road.
- Play equipment for younger children would be upgraded within the existing designated area
- There were differing views on whether to reduce the size of the area for sheep grazing

- Additional chippings would be added to the play area.
- Given the larger project to redevelop the toilet block in George Lane Car Park, it might be better to delay any major changes within Cooper's Meadow and include landscaping in the wider project area - this would reduce costs and the workload for the Grounds Team
- The Town Clerk needed to issue a grazing licence in time for summer grazing

**RESOLVED:** (i) by 4 votes for with 2 against there will be no change to the area designated for sheep grazing this year and a grazing licence should be issued as soon as possible.

A recorded vote was requested.

Members voting for: Cllrs. Loosmore, Castle, Kirk Wilson and Ross.

Members voting against: Town Mayor and Cllr. Light

**RESOLVED:** (ii) that the area for bees is fenced off at Cooper's Meadow and the bee keeper allowed to place the hives within this area

**RESOLVED:** (iii) that the User's Group format be changed to a community drop-in session to encourage more of the public to be engaged in the future of the meadow and that views be recorded and submitted to the A&OS Committee

630/15

#### **STONEBRIDGE MEADOW**

Members noted the minutes of the Stonebridge Meadow Management Committee held 10<sup>th</sup> February 2016 together with a report by the Grounds and Estates Manager and a letter from a member of the public concerning Footpath 45.

At the A&OS meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> October 2015 (Min 326/15) it had been agreed that a bat survey and priority tree felling should go ahead as soon as possible at a shared cost between Marlborough Town Council and Action for the River Kennet (ARK). However, as set out in the SMC minutes, ARK was not able to raise grant funding for tree surgery but, could do so for capital projects. As the Town Council held joint liability for health and safety work in the meadow, it was felt that these costs should be borne by the Town Council and offset against other funding met by ARK. A need for flexibility in funding responsibility was recognised. It followed that if the tree work costs were borne by the Town Council, ARK would bear more cost for other works. For example, significant investment had been acquired by ARK from SITA enabling improvements to access to the meadow and external funding for the dipping pond.

The GEM confirmed that most of the 2015/16 £1,000 budget line for Stonebridge Meadow had been spent on these priority tree works (4 trees felled). It was agreed that the Bat Survey should be jointly funded.

**RESOLVED:** that it be acknowledged that the priority felling of trees in the meadow be met by the Town Council.

**RESOLVED:** that the Ground and Estate Manager's report and Management Committee minutes were noted, and that the letter concerning Footpath 45 be referred to the Stonebridge Meadow Management Committee.

631/15

#### **THE COMMON**

The minutes of the Common Users' Group (CUG) were noted. Main points were:

- In an effort to combat problems with dog fouling, the CUG had recommended new bins for the Common at the main entrances and near the entrance to Hyde

Lane. Recently erected notices and larger, open bins were having a positive effect and it was recommended that the more bins should be purchased

- The CUG had raised a number of matters concerning the Rugby Club. It was clarified that the blue roped-off area was a temporary measure to protect grass. The Manager of the Rugby Club had been very responsive to the concerns raised and appealed to people to raise matters directly with the Club to resolve any issues, e.g. removing obstacles from footpaths. There was a high cost connected to disposing of the tyres currently stored behind the clubhouse and as an alternative, the Club were in discussions with a local farmers and others to help recycle them
- Members noted the CUG suggestion of a new footpath but, felt other future works might remove the need for the cost of installing this
- The request to reduce grass cutting in order to encourage wildlife was supported
- The GEM had identified areas where protective mesh could be laid to provide temporary car parking without causing damage. He also highlighted an area of existing hard-standing (the foundations for an old school) now partially covered by moss, which could support car parking at little to no cost
- The requests to hold a Food & Drink Festival and a WWII Vehicle Event, were supported in principle, although it was recognised that further information was required to satisfy event management plans
- Members congratulated Mark Nash on his recent work to restore the commemorative stone for the 347<sup>th</sup> Station Hospital, and asked the Town Clerk to write a letter of thanks

**RESOLVED:** (i) to purchase four bins for The Common and reduce grass cutting to encourage wildlife

**RESOLVED:** (ii) the GEM to arrange an on-site meeting to highlight potential areas for car parking (existing hard-standing), and to investigate costs for the potential areas to be laid with mesh

**RESOLVED:** (iii) to delegate to the Town Clerk final decision on the requests for a Food & Drink Festival and WWII event

632/15

#### **ORCHARD ROAD PLAY AREA**

Members noted a report by the Town Clerk about project progress. Main points discussed included:

- A modified design to accommodate the existing right of way (FP.30) had resulted in a slight reduction in the project cost and it had been proposed that some of this could be used to purchase a litter bin
- A further SSE inspection would take place to properly map underground cabling ahead of installation
- That installation was likely to be completed in June in time for the school summer holidays.
- The works could be completed under permitted development rights, so no planning permission was required. This also meant that there no requirement to consult with local neighbours. However, there would be a letter drop about a month ahead of works starting. Cllr. Light offered to distribute letters in the local neighbourhood.

**RESOLVED:** to purchase an open timber litter bin at £268 with installation at £115

633/15

**RUGBY CLUB**

The Town Clerk's report was noted. Members considered arrangements around use of the newly levelled area.

**RESOLVED:** to issue an annual agreement for the use of the levelled area by junior rugby players at a charge of £250 per annum.

Cllr. Ross did not vote.

634/15

**CEMETERIES**

i) Recent grants of Exclusive Rights of Burial were noted.

ii) Approved Memorials and Inscriptions were noted.

635/15

**ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION**

Members considered the powers of town and parish councils governing the renting of allotments to those living outside of the parish boundary. There were differing views on whether this should be allowed and if other parishes offered this.

**RESOLVED:** that the GEM seek advice on how Swindon Borough Council officers manage similar requests

636/15

**MARLBOROUGH COMMUNITY ORCHARD**

Members noted the Town Clerk's report about the planting of fruit trees around the town.

**RESOLVED:** that the Town Clerk's report be noted and the Town Council welcomes increased liaison with Marlborough Community Orchard Group

637/15

**CHURCHILL COURT**

Members noted a report by the Town Clerk and considered any action necessary on the river bank currently in the ownership of the Town Council. The potential for re-visiting the possibility of a riverside footpath was discussed.

**RESOLVED:** (i) that discussions are re-started with Churchill Court owners, Fairhold Homes, No 6, about the handing over of the land with a deadline of 6 months for a response

**RESOLVED:** (ii) that a qualified engineer is commissioned to write a report with recommendations about the condition of the river bank

638/15

**TOWN MILL MACHINERY**

Members noted a report by the Town Clerk and considered an offer to take on and display the Town Mill machinery.

**RESOLVED:** that the request was agreed, in principle, subject to a stipulation that the machinery must remain in the town and delegation be given to the Town Clerk to follow up.

639/15

**EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS & PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED:** That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

*Mrs Pryor and two members of the public left the meeting*

640/15

**PRIORY GARDENS**

Members noted a report by the Town Clerk about the most recent position at Priory

Gardens and considered a way forward on the legalities around ownership of the land.

**RESOLVED:** that the Town Clerk discuss a Deed of Variation with the Town Council's solicitor and pursue the matter of Town Council access to Priory Gardens via the car park

Cllr. Light did not vote

**641/15**

**LAND LEASES**

Members noted a report by the Town Clerk and considered renewal of lease arrangements for land owned by the Town Council at Tin Pit.

**RESOLVED:** to go ahead with lease renewals for a term of 7 years.

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm

Signed ..... Date .....  
Chairman