

**MARLBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL
AMENITIES & OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the **Amenities & Open Spaces Committee** meeting which was held via videoconference on
Monday, 22 June 2020 at 7 pm

PRESENT:	Councillor D Heath Councillor B Castle Councillor A Ross Councillor N Barrett-Morton Councillor L Farrell Councillor M Hall Councillor P Cairns Councillor V Hillier	Chairman
ALSO PRESENT:	Mrs S Parker Mrs D Whitehall Mr N Weatherly Councillor A Wilson Councillor S Dobson Mr N Goodwin Plus 8 members of the public	Town Clerk Administrator Grounds Manager Observing Wiltshire Councillor – Marlborough East Marlborough.News

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions.

33/20

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from the Town Mayor.

34/20

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations.

35/20

CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman was pleased to confirm that the start date for the build of the new play area at Jubilee Field, Manton would be 13 July 2020. The work would take approximately 4 weeks and the field would remain accessible. It was hoped to be able to open it up in time for young people to use it over the rest of the summer.

36/20

MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of Amenities & Open Spaces Committee held 3 February 2020 were approved as a true record

37/20

GROUND'S MANAGER'S REPORT

Members noted the Ground Manager's Report.

38/20

STONEBRIDGE MEADOW

Members noted a report following a meeting of the Stonebridge Meadow Management Committee and received a number of updates from the Chairman. A decision deferred from the previous meeting was also considered:

[Access to Stonebridge Meadow from Stonebridge Close](#)

Documents had kindly been provided by Marlborough Town Football Club's (MTFC)

solicitor confirming that the owners of Stonebridge Meadow (The Town Council and Action for the River Kennet (ARK)) had a right of access via the Football Club. The Town Council would welcome a meeting with MTFC as soon as conditions allowed, but from the documents received was satisfied that it would no longer need to investigate the creation of a new access via Stonebridge Close.

RESOLVED: that Marlborough Town Council will not pursue proposals to create an access between Stonebridge Meadow and Stonebridge Close

Replacement of gate between MTFC land and the meadow

A broken gate had allowed free passage for a recent encampment of travellers. A new gate was to be installed which the Town Council and ARK would be able to use to gain vehicle access to the Meadow, with a fence and a stile provided for walkers. **Cllr. Castle** asked for a kissing gate to be considered in place of a stile to make the meadow more accessible.

New bridge project

One quotation had been received to date, with two more expected. Costs and types of material were discussed. Once all quotations had been received it would be possible to estimate the overall cost and decide on an approach to funding, for example whether donations or funding might be sought from third parties such as the North Wessex Downs AONB or the Town Council.

Cattle

The experiment with the Belted Galloways would end this year. However, the grazing experiment had proven successful in helping to manage the meadow and other grazing cattle would be placed in the meadow in future.

Additional bench in the amenity area

Currently the only seating available was log seats, which could be unsuitable in wet weather and for elderly members of the community. Unobtrusive designs would be investigated to provide more seating.

During a suspension of Standing Orders, residents asked questions about the management of trees on the border with Stonebridge Close, in particular the height that they would be reduced to. The Grounds Manager felt that 8-10 ft would be ideal but, agreed to meet at the site with interested residents and ARK to review the options.

Tree planting as part of a wider Town Council initiative

Quite a lot of trees had been lost to storms in recent years. A survey of the meadow would be undertaken to identify potential planting sites for new trees.

Black poplars

No decision had been made on planting Black Poplar trees in the scrub area. It was hoped that this could be included in the discussions with MTFC once lockdown restrictions permitted a meeting to take place.

MARLBOROUGH COMMON

Members noted a report and considered requests from Marlborough Rugby Football Club (MRFC) for permission for an additional storage container at the Clubhouse and for a meeting to discuss playing space.

Storage container

MRFC had requested permission to locate a second small ISO (shipping container) behind the clubhouse. This would create additional storage and allow them to tidy up the area between the Clubhouse and the Victorian Cemetery which they were keen to do. MRFC had offered to make efforts to camouflage both containers by painting them green and providing some sort of visual screening. There were no financial implications for the Town Council and MRFC were checking whether planning consent would be required.

During a suspension of Standing Orders representatives from MRFC answered questions about the proposal and were amenable to suggestions and ideas from Councillors.

Discussion points included:

- The new container was proposed to be placed back to back with the existing container behind the Clubhouse between that building and Merlin Court and not projecting beyond the edge of the Clubhouse
- A temporary gate and temporary fencing panels such as harris fencing could help screen the containers and restrict access
- MRFC were keen to tidy the whole area so the Common would look good for visitors
- The large tyres near the Clubhouse had been fly tipped and were not the property of MRFC
- A skip used by the Club had been used as a free dump by the general public as there was no restriction of access. This would be placed behind the screening preventing the public using it and making it less visible to Common users
- No footings were required so if the container was moved or removed there would be no lasting effects to the Common
- Whether a time limit should be agreed (5 to 10 years was suggested)
- The Common had special status and permanent structures should not be encouraged. This also prevented any extensions to the existing clubhouse to add more storage space
- A response was awaited from Wiltshire Council on whether the container could be installed under permitted development

RESOLVED: that Marlborough Town Council grants permission for a new storage container to be placed behind the clubhouse with no time limit

Cllr. Castle asked that it be recorded that he voted against this proposal

Further discussions should take place about camouflage and/or screening the container.

Meeting to discuss options for more playing space

It was agreed that the Town Clerk would arrange a meeting with MRFC to discuss options for more playing space. Councillors Heath, Farrell, Castle, Hall and Hillier would join this meeting and the Town Clerk would liaise and invite representatives from other formal user groups of The Common.

40/20

MARLBOROUGH CEMETERY

The small car park at the Cemetery was for mourners and those visiting or tending graves. Increasingly, members of the public had been using the car park to visit the Common for other uses including picnics, attending sporting events or dog walking. This made it difficult for people attending funerals or visiting graves to park and at a recent funeral the organisers had felt compelled to put out their own signage asking people to reserve the car park for the use of mourners.

Members considered improved signage at the car park and entrance to the Cemetery.

The discussion included:

- Whether signs should be erected on Frees Avenue at either side of the cemetery which would require approval by the Highways Authority
- Whether signs should be erected just inside the access road, angled so drivers approaching from either direction could see them
- Whether to state any hours on the signs
- Whether it could be enforced
- Whether planning permission would be required

RESOLVED: that after checking planning requirements, signage is erected at the access road entrance to state the car park is for cemetery users only and to delegate to the Town Clerk to follow through with wording being agreed at the next meeting

41/20

COOPERS MEADOW

RESOLVED: to accept the amended Coopers Meadow Management Plan with the inclusion of a paragraph about ARK's maintenance of the reed beds and to review the plan annually

42/20

PRIORY GARDENS

Members considered a recommendation from the informal *Returning to a New Normal* meeting held 18 June 2020 about the reopening of Priory Gardens. Points of note were:

- The gardens had been closed at the start of the pandemic to protect vulnerable people living close by
- As COVID restrictions were being lifted, it was felt it was time to reopen the gardens but only allow access from the Figgins Lane gate
- The door from the glass tunnel leading to the High Street should remain closed in the short term for the continued protection of vulnerable people
- That appropriate signage should be erected making it clear that users of the gardens would have no access to the High Street
- That any decision about access via the tunnel should be reviewed as changes to the COVID restrictions were made by the UK Government
- That the Figgins Lane gate would not be locked at the end of the day in line with a Staffing Committee decision

RESOLVED: that Priory Gardens is re-opened but that, in the short term and being mindful that vulnerable people live in the Priory itself, access is restricted via Figgins Lane only. Appropriate notices will need to be erected at the Figgins Lane gate making clear that there is no access to the High Street. This decision should be reviewed again following further lifting of restrictions by the government when consideration can be given to the opening of the glass tunnel linking the Aster owned buildings at the entrance to the gardens from the High Street.

43/20

CLIMATE CHANGE

Members noted a report by the Town Clerk and considered whether to recommend that Marlborough Town Council should declare a climate emergency.

- The Town Council had already supported some action on climate change (**Min 480/18** 21 January 2019: **RESOLVED:** (i) that Marlborough Town Council will write to Claire Perry, MP to request that the UK Government should carry out due diligence on the CCL Carbon Free Dividend Policy proposal to assess whether it should be incorporated into Government policy and **RESOLVED:** (ii) that Marlborough Town Council shall be conscious of ecological effects in its own policies and procedures).

- Climate change demonstrations had taken place in the town
- That declaring a climate emergency would need to be backed up with an action plan
- Whether to hold a public meeting with an external speaker to raise public awareness

RESOLVED: to recommend to Full Town Council to take on a commitment to climate breakdown via a Climate Emergency Declaration and supporting Action Plan

44/20

MEMORIAL BENCHES

Members noted a report by the Town Clerk about requests for memorial benches.

RESOLVED: (i) to grant permission for a memorial bench on the Village Green at Elcot Lane in memory of Owen Martin

RESOLVED: (ii) to offer a space on The Green near Silverless Street for a memorial bench in memory of Peter Offer, and to delegate to the Town Clerk to follow up on the installation

45/20

BEQUEST FROM THE FREE FAMILY

Members of the Free family played an important part in the recent history of the town, with Frees Avenue named in its honour and the avenue of Horse Chestnut trees donated by the family. A member of the family, Martin Crook, had generously left a bequest of £1,500 to the Town Council for a memorial bench close to Frees Avenue and towards replenishing trees there. Members discussed a possible location for a bench:

- Close to the Cemetery
- Near the Diamond Plantation orchard
- On the Common
- At existing plinth points along Frees Avenue where benches had been previously installed

RESOLVED: (i) that a letter is sent from The Mayor thanking the family for the bequest

RESOLVED: (ii) that a bench should be installed near the Cemetery and to liaise with the family about a suitable plaque and inviting family members for a small 'unveiling' event

46/20

MARLBOROUGH IN BLOOM (MiB)

Cllr Hillier gave a verbal updated following the most recent Working Party meeting and a discussion with Anne Crawley, MiB Chair

- The MiB Facebook page would be updated
- It was good news to see litter bins replaced, improving the streetscene
- Although the RHS competition was cancelled, the Its Your Neighbourhood gardens would be pursued this year via online resources
- The Macmillan Committee had generously offered to sponsor a planter
- When possible, the MiB committee would meet on the first Wednesday of the month

47/20

ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

Members noted the minutes of the most recent meeting of the Allotment Association.

The meeting closed at 8.25 pm

Signed: Date:
Chair