

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

Minutes of a Meeting of the **Amenities & Open Spaces Committee** which was held on **Monday, 18 November 2019** in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Marlborough** at 7.30 pm

PRESENT:	Councillor D. Heath Councillor M. Hall Councillor B. Castle Councillor P. Cairns Councillor M. Cooper	Chairman Town Mayor
ALSO PRESENT:	Mrs C. Harris Mrs D. Whitehall Mr N. Weatherly Councillor S. Dobson Mr N. Goodwin Plus 2 members of the public	Assistant Town Clerk Administrator Grounds Manager Wiltshire Councillor – Marlborough East Marlborough.News

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Cllr. Dobson referred to an email he had recently circulated concerning an accident at Frees Avenue. He asked the Town Council to consider revising the speed limit as well as improving visibility by cutting back the hedge at a much-used pedestrian crossing point near the cemetery. The **Chairman** was meeting with the Grounds Manager later in the week and the matter of improving visibility at the crossing point could be addressed at that time. In terms of the speed limits, the **Assistant Town Clerk** had received a similar request from a nearby resident. The **Town Mayor** clarified that highways improvements and speed limit requests were a matter for the Planning Committee, and this request would be considered at a future meeting.

345/19

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Ross and Barrett-Morton.

346/19

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations.

347/19

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The **Chairman** read out a letter of thanks from the organisers of Marlborough parkrun, which had been taking place on Marlborough Common successfully for over a year. Over 2,000 people had taken part, with weekly attendance averaging 136. In particular thanks were extended to members of the Grounds Team for help and advice as well as looking after the course.

348/19

MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held 2 September 2019 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

349/19

TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

The content of the Town Clerk's Report was noted.

350/19

GROUND'S MANAGER'S REPORT

The Grounds Manager's report was noted.

THE COMMON

Members noted the Town Clerk's report and considered recommendations about the mowing regime, the recycling area and a request from Marlborough Rugby Football Club (MRFC).

Mowing of The Common

For several years areas of The Common have been left uncut to encourage wildlife and wildflowers, with an annual mow in the late autumn. The autumn mow was timed for the best period of the year to have less impact on wildlife while helping with seed dispersal and promoting an even swathe of grass with reduced large clumps of grass and sods of earth. Following questions from members of the public about this, Members considered whether to continue this practice.

RESOLVED: (i) that the mowing regime on The Common should continue as in previous years

Green Waste Composting Area

Some comments have been received in terms of the appearance of this area, and measures had been put in place to improve it, including replacing the yellow skip with a green one (on order). Usable compost created here will be spread as mulch on the Town Council's open spaces and borders as part of the winter maintenance programme.

RESOLVED: (ii) that the composting area remains in situ and improvements are made to its overall appearance

Request from MRFC about the display of advertising boards

Following the Town Council's agreement to advertising boards, MRFC had been disappointed to receive Wiltshire Council's response to their planning application which granted permission for one fixtures board in the car park near the clubhouse - the application had been for 3 boards, with 2 located on The Common and visible to passing traffic. Also a planning condition related to the pitch-side barrier advertising was that the banners should be facing inwards (towards the pitch) and only displayed between 1 September and 30 April in any 12 month period.

As a result, MRFC were asking the Committee to revisit the original decision about advertising barriers. The 6-month rule had passed in terms of decisions being rescinded as per Standing Orders para. 8a.

*Minute No. 382/18 – 19 November 2018 – **RESOLVED:** that the Town Council grants permission for advertising boards to be hung from temporary barriers at weekends during the rugby season and that these should be designed in a way that is sensitive to their location)*

During a suspension of Standing Orders, Mark Thomas from MRFC explained the reasons for request and discussed with Members:

- The change being requested was to compensate for the lost fixture board revenue, that the advertising barriers remain in situ 7 days a week during the playing season rather than put out just at weekends. This would also reduce the cost of the boards as the design would be simpler, and would save on fitting, removal and storage costs each week.
- It was estimated that there would be around 20 boards to begin with

- To begin with it was likely that boards would only be placed on the barriers at the Golf Club side of the pitch – to be facing the majority of spectators who tended to stand on the Frees Avenue side
- Whether a trial period could be agreed
- The yellow tape at the goal end of the pitches had not been put there by MRFC, but may be linked to parkrun courses

RESOLVED: (iii) to agree that advertising barriers remain for longer than originally agreed (i.e. for 7 days a week between 1 September – 30 April)

2 members of the public left the meeting

352/19

COOPERS MEADOW

Members noted the Grounds Manager's report, and that two Ash trees in Coopers Meadow would be felled in January due to Ash die-back disease making them unstable.

The **Grounds Manager** answered questions about ensuring a free flow of water in the leat, confirming that clearance of the leat forms part of his routine maintenance programme.

353/19

STONEBRIDGE MEADOW

Members noted the most recent minutes of the Stonebridge Management Committee (SMC) and considered a number of requests.

A new bridge to create a circular walk

The boardwalk accessed from Stonebridge Lane to the north west of the river (the allotments side) currently ends in a seating area. In order to open this up into a circular walk a bridge was proposed across the river linking the walk, which is on land leased from St John's Trust, to the meadow. This would require permission from the landowner.

RESOLVED: (i) to write a letter of support for ARK for the building of a bridge from land it leases from St John's Trust

Access from Stonebridge Close

RESOLVED: (ii) to produce written information (e.g. a leaflet) to support a consultation with residents of Stonebridge Close about the creation of a locked access gate which will be for the use of the Town Council and ARK only

Poplar Trees

The SMC minutes showed an understanding that Marlborough Town Football Club (MTFC) may no longer have aspirations to extend the pitch into the area bordering the scrub area, where ARK would like to plant black poplars. In order to revisit this request to plant trees, Members would require further detail, including a map/drawing showing the proposed planting locations.

RESOLVED: (iii) to consult with MTFC and ARK to gather more information before making a decision on the planting of trees

Dedication Plaque

Members had already agreed that a commemorative White Willow be planted in the Meadow. A dedication plaque had also been requested and several options were presented for approval.

RESOLVED: (iv) that a 20 x 7.5 cm dedication plaque for Marlborough and District Dyslexia Association was approved to be erected at the White Willow tree

354/19

CEMETERIES

Members noted that no Grants of Exclusive Rights of Burial or Memorials and Inscriptions had been approved since the last meeting, and considered proposed charges for the forthcoming financial year.

RESOLVED: that the cemetery charges for 2020/21 were approved.

355/19

VEHICLE BRANDING

Members noted the Ground Manager's report and supported the proposed branding designs for Town Council vehicles.

Cllr. Cooper added that the Grounds Team did a great job for the town and it was important that people could see who was doing the work.

356/19

SKATEPARK LIGHTING

Members noted the update report from the Assistant Town Clerk. A bat survey had been completed and Members were in receipt of the report and recommendations. It was good news that no further report or mitigation was required with relation to bats, and that the project could now move to the next stage, which included public consultations and the submission of a planning application.

RESOLVED: that the Skatepark Lighting project should move forward with public consultation and the submission of a planning application

357/19

MARLBOROUGH IN BLOOM (MiB)

The Assistant Town Clerk's update report was noted. Members congratulated MiB and the Neighbourhood community on their achievements, with the town being awarded Gold for a third time in the main competition. Following the AGM on 6 November, a number of Committee members had decided to step down and so a new Committee would be formed in due course. In the meantime an informal meeting had been planned between remaining Committee members and the Assistant Town Clerk to discuss arrangements for 2020.

The Grounds Team's contribution to MiB was recognised and Members discussed:

- The importance of being clear about roles and responsibilities, and that these would need to be agreed by May/June to understand the resource required from Town Council staff
- The difficulty of finalising roles and responsibilities until there was clarity about the level of volunteer MiB resource committed for 2020
- Whether there was a likelihood of competing in the National level competition in 2020
- That if there was a decision to take a rest year from the main competition there would still be opportunities for Its Your Neighbourhood entries to go forward
- The likely increase in workload for the Grounds Team from 2020 onwards in terms of devolution of services from Wiltshire Council

RESOLVED: that a decision on the Town Council's role in MiB 2020 be deferred until there was more certainty about MiB resources and which competitions would be entered for next year

358/19

ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

The most recent minutes of the Allotment Association were noted. The **Town Mayor** had recently visited St John's Close to present a small grant award to the Residents Association for the community garden and had been very impressed with the progress at this location.

Thanks were extended to the Grounds Team for their support to the allotment community.

359/19

HIRE OF OPEN SPACES

Members considered the fees for the hire of the Town Council's open spaces, and considered including rates for Priory Gardens, Wye House Gardens and the Recreation Ground.

RESOLVED: that the proposed charges from 1 April 2020 were agreed and, for the 3 named spaces, a proportionate rate similar to The Common should be applied. The Town Clerk was asked to carry out further research and recommend set rates for these three locations.

Mr Goodwin left the meeting

360/19

BUDGET AND PRECEPT SETTING

Members noted the Town Clerk's report and considered budget requirements for 2020/21. With the expected devolution of services from Wiltshire Council, it was likely that the A&OS Budget would take the biggest impact but it was not yet clear whether this would be in 2020/21 or 2021/22. This would be a matter for Full Town Council to discuss.

RESOLVED: (i) that the prepared budget sheets were agreed for submission to the Finance & Policy Committee

Machinery and Equipment for the Grounds Team

The Grounds Manager had prepared a list of replacement machinery alongside possible machinery that would be required due to the devolution of services from Wiltshire Council - although not all quotations had yet been received. Costs had been provided for purchase and/or lease over 3 and 5 year terms. An additional list of items that would be required for the new workshop was also provided.

RESOLVED: (ii) that the list of equipment was accepted in principle, dependent upon the precept impact of anticipated additional services to be devolved from Wiltshire Council, and that the items for the new workshop were approved for 2020

Project Budgets

Projects still to be completed in the Town Council's 2017-21 Action plan related to this Committee Budget were reviewed and Members discussed whether to make any amendments.

RESOLVED: (iii) that the project funds listed in the budget sheets were agreed with no changes

Footpaths at Priory Gardens

An earlier estimate to renew the paths was prohibitively expensive. The Grounds Manager was now seeking quotations for repairs/replacement to the tarmac as the underlying path structures were still sound. No projected costs were available to review at this point.

RESOLVED: (iv) in the absence of estimated costs, no funds were allocated for Priory Gardens footpaths

The meeting closed at 9.07 pm

Signed: Date:

Chairman