

**TOWN CLERK'S REPORT
AMENITIES & OPEN SPACES – MONDAY, 18TH NOVEMBER 2019**

SUMMARY

This is a report of follow-up to decisions made at the A&OS Committee. It is a Standing Item on agendas to update Members. Once follow-up is completed, items are marked as closed. Ongoing items will be brought back to Committee when a new decision is required or when a fuller update is needed.

Min. 515/18	Signage – On 4 February, it was resolved to erect signage at Town Council-owned car parks and to delegate to the Town Clerk to put the signage in place. Ongoing
Min. 673/18	Dog Fouling – On 7 May, Members resolved to consider carrying out a public consultation and research around a local Warden/Ranger role. The Assistant Town Clerk has been liaising with Wiltshire Council's Dog Control & Animal Welfare Officer on dog fouling issues in the town. He was invited along to the A&OS meeting of 2 September but was, unfortunately, unable to attend. Ongoing
Min.117/19	Interpretation Boards - Further to the recommendation made on 1 July, the Assistant Town Clerk has approached 3 companies regarding the re-vamp of the interpretation board in the High Street. Quotations for a 3D illustrative re-design of the map of the High Street, similar to town maps created in other Wiltshire towns, have been requested. It is hoped that the design could then be used in other ways; a printed map for tourists, in digital format, and potentially on merchandise etc. Costs are currently being obtained. Ongoing
Min121/19	Offer of WW1 Memorial Benches – On 1 July, Members resolved to accept the generous offer from the Royal British Legion (RBL) of 2 WW1 benches for the 7 th Wilts War Memorial and at Bert's Corner. Cllrs. also agreed to buy a third bench for these areas. A decision on bench style is still awaited from RBL. Ongoing
Min.213/19	Priory Gardens – At the last meeting, it was resolved that work should continue towards the installation of <u>CCTV cameras</u> . A response about using the party wall to enable cabling to be passed from the lamppost to the cameras rests with Waitrose. It was also agreed that the <u>railings at the riverbank should be extended</u> . This work has been completed. <u>Path restoration</u> – it was agreed that further quotes be obtained for the work to paths and alternative specifications be considered to minimise costs. The Grounds Manager is currently looking into this. <u>Repairs to the wall (Figgins Lane side)</u> – this repair work has been completed. CCTV installation and path restoration – Ongoing Extension of railings and repairs to wall – Closed
Min.214/19	Coopers Meadow – At the last meeting it was resolved that Cllr Cairns, the Council's representative to the Wiltshire Council Operational Flood Working Group Meeting, seeks advice from the Environment Agency about the maintenance of the Leet. Ongoing
Min. 218.19	Memorial Bench – At the meeting on 2 September, it was resolved that the request for a Memorial Bench at the Recreation Ground was approved. The Assistant Town Clerk and the Grounds Manager have meet with those organising the commemorative bench and have agreed an alternative design. Ongoing

Marlborough Town Council

Grounds Managers Report November 2019

General

We have now come to the end of summer and autumn has arrived.

The grass has slowed down but not stopped and we have our winter work ahead of us hedge cutting bench cleaning and dividing some of the herbaceous plants around our open spaces

This is my least favourite season lots of leaf chasing which at times seems pointless but needs doing.

Workload

The two Mop fares have been and gone with the road closures and traffic management provided by the Town Council we have also provided the traffic management for the Remembrance Day parade

We have the Christmas lights event at the end of this week which we will be responsible for traffic management and road closures.

After this event we will then be able to get back in to our winter maintenance programme

Bedding displays

We have had another good display of summer bedding this year but unfortunately due to the succulent nature of the plants we used they are not hardy enough to with stand our cold damp and frosty winter months.

We have removed all of the summer bedding and have prepared the planters for the winter bedding. We have saved some of the plants to grow again for next year.

Because of our colder temperatures through the winter months the variety bedding plants available is very restrictive we are planting out our barrier planters with a mixture of Bellis/ Primrose /Polyanthus Wall flowers and Stocks.

Although these plants do not trail they will give a splash of colour to our open spaces

we are currently planting out our winter bedding

Play

The play areas are being well used around the town

With monthly health and safety inspections recorder

we have sanded the edges of some of the boards on some of the play equipment where they were starting to delaminate

We have set out and marked 5 football pitches that will require weekly line marking and cutting as and when necessary this is two fewer than last year

Machinery:

I am currently working on getting prices for the machinery that we could possibly need next year with the reduction on services from Wiltshire council this is somewhat of a challenge as we are not entirely sure which areas could be coming our way .

some of the machinery may not be necessary depending on the area of grass that could potentially come our way we will only know this once the area have been discussed with Wiltshire council

The machinery that I have been looking at also includes some new machinery for the possible new areas as well as updating some of our existing machines and some battery operated machines to try reducing our carbon foot print

Site Specific

Salisbury Road Recreation Ground.

This area is well used throughout the year with the skate park is almost in constant use unless it is wet

We are litter picking and emptying the bin three times a week in this area

The litter levels are still high in this area due to the pedestrian traffic on the way to and from the schools

We have marked out one 9 a side football pitch for the season for the youth football the surface it holding up well

St Mary's Church

The church yard is a popular meeting place for the young people of Marlborough which creates a litter problem from time to time but with regular checks we are keeping up with it the maintenance schedule has slowed due to the seasonal demands but does get checked a couple of times a week

The Green

Unfortunately the memorial bench for Jimmy Gardener was vandalised over one of the MOP fair weekends this has been removed and will be taken to Marlborough joiners for a quote on the price for its repair

The Lime trees have almost dropped all of their leafs we will remove the Epicormic growth get this area cleared and cut over the next couple of weeks

War Memorials

These were cut and weeded around in preparation for the remembrance and Armistice Day parade

The Cemetery

The grass has slowed down now I am hoping that we may have done our last cut for this year.
Our next challenge is to get the hedges cut a long with clearing the fallen leafs
And removing the Epicormic growth from the lime trees

Old Cemetery

The next scheduled work in this area is the hedge cutting we will also continue to remove some more of the dead wood from the Yew hedge at the rear of the cemetery to encourage the new shoots to develop

The Priory

The priory is still being well used
Regular maintenance visits to keep the weeds under control
Daily litter picks and bins checked
The grass will be cut one more time this year and the leafs will be collected and composted
The wall in the priory gardens has been repaired following on from the last structural survey
The barrier extension has now been installed
A replacement Cherry tree has been planted for former grounds man Mick Plank as the previous tree was damaged.
We have a had some graffiti sprayed onto the inside of the priory wall that backs on to Cromwell mews we are currently treating this with Nitromors which is slowly fading the graffiti

Coopers Meadow

The play equipment has been installed and the park has been open for the past year and is still highly popular with the young people of Marlborough
Some Ash Die back has been noticed in this area and reported to the woodland trust.

The Common

The common has been well used all year and with the youth football and park run as well as the usual dog walker and rugby fixtures
The bench close to the swing set on the common was vandalised last weekend and we have had to remove the bench in the interest of health and Safety

Manton - Jubilee field

The grass will be cut one more time this year
The play equipment is showing its age now with some of the wooden boards are starting to delaminate
This is another area that we will need to get the hedges cut.

Wye House Gardens

The garden at wye house has greatly improved this year but I feel that there is still room for improvement
The same as last year we will be dividing more of the herbaceous plants to fill in any remaining gaps
The large Meta Sequoia has nearly dropped it leafs so these will need to e cleared away
Regular checks for litter general condition of plants will continue throughout the winter months

Elcot Rec

This area is used by dog walkers and for sporting events
Weekly checks for litter and site checked weekly for any problems
We have marked a football pitch which is being played on as much a three games over most weekends

Stonebridge Meadow

The grass has been cut as and when needed this year.
The foot path along the side of the river has been cut with any encroaching brambles cut back
Bins and litter are checked regularly

The Common

Summary – This report asks Members to consider recommendations about the mowing regime for The Common, the upkeep of the recycling area and a request from Marlborough Rugby Football Club (MRFC) about the display of advertising boards.

1. Mowing of the Common

Since the Grounds Manager has been working for the Town Council, the Grounds Team has annually cut all of the remaining long grass on The Common in late autumn. Timing varies slightly depending on the use of The Common and in July 2019, a considerable area was mown for the English Civil War Society's Re-enactment of the Battle of Marlborough. This left a narrow uncut area along the side of the golf course driving range and a triangular shaped area in the top left-hand corner.

Mowing long grass on The Common in the autumn has less effect on the wildfire including small mammals and helps to give an even swathe of grass which reduces the sods or large clumps of grass. It also helps to spread the remaining seeds that have not already dispersed giving them the opportunity to germinate and regrow the following year, resulting in more wildflowers.

There has been some local interest in this practice and Members are asked to agree that this mowing regime continues. In fact, Councillors may feel it is worth giving some explanation about this on the Town Council's website.

2. The Green Waste Composting Area

The green waste composting area sits at the top end of Frees Avenue. This is where the skip for general waste is kept and also where green waste is deposited. The compost area backs on to the edge of The Common and has a four-foot-tall (seeded) bund along the front edge leaving the two ends open for vehicular access.

Throughout the summer it is not always easy to keep this area tidy. Some comments have been received in terms of its overall poor appearance and measures have been put in place to improve it, including replacing the obtrusive yellow skip with a green one (currently on order).

Useable compost, created in the last year or so will be spread as a mulch on the Town Council's open spaces and borders as part of the winter maintenance programme.

Members are asked to agree that this area continues (as it has done for many years) as a composting area.

3. Request from MRFC about the display of advertising boards

Members will recall that permission was granted (following advice given by the relevant department at the Planning Inspectorate) for barrier advertising. Relevant extracts from meeting minutes area as follows:

A&OS: 19 November 2018Barrier Advertising

MRFC was seeking to attract local sponsorship for the club via barrier advertisements to be hung from the new pitch barriers from Friday evening to Sunday afternoons during the rugby season. Members discussed:

- That the Town Council was the lawful authority to grant this permission in accordance with the Marlborough Common Byelaws
- It was not clear whether planning permission (advertising) would be required
- That the design should be appropriate for the location
- Whether to consult with North Wessex Downs AONB about design guidelines

RESOLVED: (ii) 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

A&OS: 4 February 2019Fixtures Boards and Barrier Advertising

It was noted that a response had been received from Wiltshire Council and it had been confirmed that advertising consent would be required. It would be the responsibility of MRFC to submit the relevant planning application.

Members asked that Town Crest be added to the proposed design of the fixtures boards.

RESOLVED: (i) to inform MRFC that advertising consent was required for the fixtures boards and barrier advertising

RESOLVED: (ii) that the locations, style and wording of the fixtures boards (with the addition of the Town Crest) were approved and that barrier advertising boards were permitted subject to previously agreed limits about timing and location. Also that the relevant planning permissions were in place.

Subsequent to this, planning permission was issued for just one fixtures board and conditions placed on the advertising barriers. This was disappointing and as a result, MRFC would like the A&OS Committee to revisit its original decision about the advertising barriers which would involve them being around the pitch for a longer period. Proposals are to seek permission from the Town Council to extend days on which the advertising can be used from 3 days to 7 days per week. Details are at **Appendix 1**.

Town Clerk's Recommendations

The Town Clerk recommends that Members:

- i) Agree that the mowing regime continues on The Common as in previous years with long grass mown in late autumn to maintain and encourage wildlife
- ii) That the composting area remains in situ and improvements are made to improve its overall appearance

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- iii) Consider the request from MRFC for advertising barriers to remain for longer than originally agreed (the 6 months rule has passed in terms of decisions being rescinded – Standing Orders para. 8a)

Town Clerk

13 November 2019

Coopers Meadow

<p>Summary – This report asks Members to note action taken to Ash Trees in Coopers Meadow</p>
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1. Background

On 24 September, the Grounds Manager received an enquiry from a resident living close to Coopers Meadow expressing concern about the health of two ash trees.

On inspection, it was clear that the trees were in distress and probably suffering from Ash die back (a disease with the potential to be as devastating to Ash Trees as Dutch Elm disease was to Elm trees in the UK). Expert opinion was sought from a local tree surgeon who confirmed that the trees were indeed suffering from Ash die back.

The tree surgeon explained that the disease would make the tree very brittle and recommended that the trees were reduced to ground level as they were in close proximity to the housing.

The trees in the meadow fall on the boundary for the Conservation Area so a request to Wiltshire Council to fell these trees was submitted and the Woodland Trust was informed as part of a national scheme to map the spread of this disease.

The trees are due to be felled on 17 January 2020.

The application is listed with other applications for tree works on the Planning Committee's agenda of 13 November.

Recommendation

The Grounds Manager recommends that Members note this report.

Grounds Manager

13 November 2019

Stonebridge Meadow

Summary – This report asks Members to note the minutes of the last Stonebridge Meadow Management Committee (SMC) held on 18 September and consider the following:

- i) An approach to St John's Trust about building a bridge between the north and south banks of the river
- ii) A request to consult with residents of Stonebridge Close about an accessway into the meadow
- iii) A longstanding request for planting of poplar trees
- iv) The erection of a plaque of dedication on a White Willow tree.

1. Background

The minutes of the last SMC are at **Appendix 1**. Within this, Members of the A&OS committee are asked to consider a number of requests, plus one that has been referred to this committee by Full Council:

i) A request to St John's Trust about building a bridge between the north and south banks of the river

It has been agreed that ARK and MTC will work in partnership towards the above project. However, ahead of this, permission is required from the St. John's Foundation Trust, which owns the north riverbank before any fundraising or construction takes place. (ARK has a lease with St John's Foundation Trust for this land). ARK has requested that the Town Council writes a letter to the Trust supporting this request.

ii) A request to consult with residents of Stonebridge Close about an accessway into the meadow

At the last A&OS meeting it was agreed that it would be sensible that residents of Stonebridge Close are consulted about any proposal to create an accessway into the meadow from Stonebridge Close. SMC has now suggested that a leaflet is produced by the Town Council as part of this consultation with local residents

iii) A longstanding request for planting of poplar trees

At the September SMC, Town Council representatives were reminded of a longstanding request that black poplars are planted in the buffer strip between the Football Club and the meadow. The SMC feels that the addition of trees would increase the ecological value of the buffer strip, particularly if native black poplars were used. They would also serve as a good wind break for the football pitch and poplars are traditionally associated with football pitch boundaries. The SMC is aware that the Football Club had, in the past, expressed an interest in expanding their pitches into the meadow. Town Councillors will recall that this proposal was discussed during the last council and proved controversial. It is not currently known whether the Football Club still has this aspiration.

iv) The erection of a plaque of dedication on a White Willow tree

The following is an extract from the minutes of the Full Council meeting of 4 November:

316/19 TREE AT STONEBRIDGE MEADOW

Councillors noted the Town Clerk's report and looked at the proposed locations for a commemorative White Willow tree to be planted in November in the amenity area at Stonebridge Meadow. There was some concern about loss of amenity space if a tree was planted in the mown area and that it would be more appropriately placed in the unmown area known as the 'finger.'

RESOLVED: to agree the request for the planting of a White Willow Tree outside of the mown amenity area at Stonebridge Meadow and that the proposal to erect a dedication plaque is submitted to the A&OS Committee on 18 November 2019.

Details about the plaque for dedication are at **Appendix 2**

It is hoped that Councillors will attend the dedication event before the end of November.

2. Financial Implications

Financial implications for the requests above are minimal, but it is not yet clear what the costs are for the bridge project, poplar planting or the creation of an access from Stonebridge Close. An allocation of £1,000 was made for 2019/20 with a balance remaining of £970.

Town Clerk's Recommendation

The Town Clerk recommends that members consider:

- i) Whether to write a letter of support for ARK for the building of a bridge from land it leases from St John's Trust
- ii) If the Town Council should produce a consultation leaflet for the residents of Stonebridge Close about the proposal to create an access for ARK and the Town Council into Stonebridge Meadow
- iii) Whether to agree to the planting of poplars in the buffer strip between the meadow and the Football Club
- iv) Whether to agree to a plaque of dedication for a White Willow tree to be planted at Stonebridge Meadow

12 November 2019

Town Clerk

Vehicle Branding

Summary – The report asks Members to note work to brand the Town Council's vehicles.

1. Background

Members are asked to note that, in line with other town councils, some of Marlborough Town Council's vehicles will be branded with the Town Crest and contact details. The Grounds Manager has been seeking quotes for this. Examples are at **Appendix 1**.

This relatively inexpensive branding exercise will help to raise the profile of the Town Council making it more visible, especially important as we take on devolved services and assets from Wiltshire Council.

What to consider. When deciding on the style, advice is

- Make it absolutely clear what organisation the vehicle represents
- Make the website and phone number stand out
- Onlookers may only have a few seconds to process the details, so make sure it's clear, uncluttered
- Use the back of vehicles, generally considered to be the best place for advertising, as those behind have longer to digest what it says

It is advised that magnetic signs are used. These are the easiest to put on and remove. This also makes it easy to include temporary signs promoting events such as the Christmas Lights, the Puppet Festival or Dark Skies event.

2. Points to Note

Members may have comments on style of font or colour. As we move into more branding of the Town Council, the message should be consistent throughout.

3. Financial Implications

The cost is estimated at £140 per vehicle.

Town Clerk's Recommendation

The Town Clerk recommends that Members note the signwriting/branding exercise and make any comments ahead of final sign-off of the design.

Town Clerk/Grounds Manager

13 November 2019

Update on Progress with Floodlighting at the Skatepark

Summary - To note progress towards the lighting of the Skatepark at the Salisbury Road Recreation Ground

Current Situation

At a meeting of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee on 1st July 2019, members noted a report of the Assistant Town Clerk in relation to a bat survey required as part of the planning process, to commence prior to submission of a formal planning application.



Three companies submitted quotations and one company was chosen to carry out the works. An initial walkover was carried out during the week of 12th August, part of which included gathering desk study information.

The report and supporting documents have now been received and are attached at **Appendix 1**.

The report recommends that no further survey or mitigation with regards to bats and the floodlighting proposal is required, however there are opportunities for biodiversity enhancements, which can be found within the report.

The Assistant Town Clerk will now be able to move forward with the project, which will involve some initial public consultation on the proposals prior to the submission of a planning application to Wiltshire Council.

Recommendation

Members are requested to note the bat report recommendations contained within and agree the next steps.

Author – Assistant Town Clerk

12th November 2019

Marlborough in Bloom 2019

Summary – To provide an update on the results of this year's competition, recent changes with the Marlborough In Bloom committee and the Town Council's involvement.



Current Situation

At an awards ceremony, held in Newquay back in October 2019, the Town was awarded GOLD once again in the main competition.

The town's community groups swept up awards, the town's pubs won accolades and our Town Mayor, was invited onto the stage to receive the coveted Gold Award from Bloom Patrons, Lord and Lady Fellowes.

The other awards and prizes come in a variety of

categories and levels as follows:

Best Website – Marlborough in Bloom
Best Urban Communities Award

The Town's Businesses:

The Lamb Inn – Gold

The Royal Oak – Silver Gilt

The Green Dragon – Silver Gilt

It's Your Neighbourhood:

St John's Close Residents Association – Establishing

Coopers Meadow – Thriving

St Peter's Churchyard – Thriving

Preshute Primary School – Thriving

Marlborough College Gardens – Thriving

Savernake View Care Home – Thriving

Marlborough & District Housing Association, The Green – Thriving

Jubilee Orchard – Thriving

Wye House Gardens – Outstanding

Stonebridge Wild River Reserve – Outstanding

Plume of Feathers Garden – Outstanding

The Waterfront Garden – Outstanding

On Wednesday 6th November, the Marlborough in Bloom (MIB) Committee held their annual AGM in the Town Hall at which they presented certificates to those who had taken part in the competition. Subsequent to the presentation, a number of the current Marlborough In Bloom committee announced that they were standing down; Steve Pascall - President, Ann Lovett - Chair, Diana Whitcutt - Secretary and Eric Gilbert – Photographer. Richard Beale and Richard Shaw, the current Treasurer, confirmed that they were both happy to remain on the Committee. Steve Pascall shared the name of a local resident, who had expressed an interest in becoming Chair of the Committee, however, as proper process was not followed there are plans for an Extraordinary meeting in the New Year to formalise this appointment.

An informal meeting has been arranged in the meantime between the Assistant Town Clerk and Grounds Manager, Richard Beale and the proposed Chair to start talking early about plans for 2020 and agree working practices to suit both the Town Council and MIB committee.

Recommendation

Members are requested to note the report and consider the Town Council's role in the South West in Bloom Competition going forward into 2020.

Author – Assistant Town Clerk

12th November 2019

A&OS Committee – Budget Setting – 2020/21

Summary - In line with Financial Regulation 3, the A&OS Committee (as with all budget holding committees) should submit budget proposals for the following financial year to the Finance & Policy Committee before final recommendation to Full Council.

1. Background

Members had an early opportunity to review A &OS budgets at their meeting of 2 September. Here is the relevant extract from the meeting minutes:

223/19 BUDGET AND PRECEPT SETTING

Members noted a report by the Town Clerk and considered requirements for 2020/21. Potential items discussed included:

- An assumption of increased requirements due to anticipated devolution of services from Wiltshire Council (e.g. a mechanical road sweeper)
- That it was possible to take on additional services without waiting for devolution from Wiltshire Council
- Whether there was any scope to approach other institutions with a view to sharing equipment

RESOLVED: that the Town Council should assume it would take responsibility for devolved services and make provision within the 2020/21 budget, and that the Grounds Manager should draw together a list of requirements and costs for the A&OS meeting on 18 November 2019

Officers have compiled a set of budget proposals for Members to consider (colour coded to identify where there are changes to existing budgets or new budget lines). This is at **Appendix 1**.

These are estimates only and it is for Councillors to decide what figures to take forward.

2. Points to Note

- All budgets will be affected by devolved services and asset transfers from Wiltshire Council over the coming 18 months. (*Marlborough is not due to start discussions with WC until May 2020*). An ear mark reserve is already set aside for this (£46,000) and the F&P Committee is likely to review this
- The salary figures have been agreed by the Staffing Committee (still to be agreed by F&P)
- It is also important to consider income estimates
- The budget line for the new workshop has been removed as this sits with the Property Committee
- Members may like to consider allocating funds for renovating the path in Priory Gardens
- That from 1.4.20 onwards, all vehicles will appear in the same cost centre

3. Grounds Team – List of Requirements

As requested by Councillors, the Grounds Manager has drawn up a list of requirements as part of forward planning for devolution of services. This is at **Appendix 2**.

4. Action Plan 2017 -2021

Projects still to be completed listed under the Action Plan are:

Project	Budget Estimate 2020/21	Ear Marked Reserve
Cemetery Extension	£0	£28,000
Climate Change (Planting of Trees at Frees Avenue))*	£1,000	£0
Dark Skies (2020 Event) **	£5,000	£0
Skate Park Lighting	£1,000	£5,000

**Councillors may decide to plant other trees too, so may like to review this figure*

***This is listed under projects for the A&OS Committee though most reporting has been direct to FTC.*

Members should consider allocations to the projects listed above (estimates provided in table above and on budget sheets)

5. Parish Precept setting in England

Members may find the information interesting at **Appendix 3** which lists the highest council tax Band Ds in the country. Many of those with the highest precepts are in unitary authority areas where land and assets have been transferred to towns and parishes. It's also worth noting that Marlborough and other towns in the north of Wiltshire have higher precepts because they have historically been responsible for cemeteries, parks and play areas whilst those in southern Wiltshire did not share the same responsibilities. Marlborough's overall precept requirement for 2019/20 was 669,875.00 and the Band D annual precept charge was £195.15.

The Finance & Policy Committee will review all committee budget figures before a final recommendation is made to Full Council on 20 January 2020.

Town Clerk's Recommendation

The Town Clerk recommends that Members discuss budget requirements for the A&OS Committee for 2020/21 to recommend to the Finance & Policy Committee. Focus should be to:

- i) Agree/amend the prepared budget sheets at **Appendix 1**
- ii) Consider the list of equipment provided by the Grounds Manager and allocating budget as appropriate
- iii) Consider whether to allocate additional funds to those projects listed in the Action Plan 2017-2021.
- iv) Consider whether to allocate funds towards the renovation of a path at Priory Gardens

Agreed amendments/changes will be added to the budget sheets for the F&P Committee.

Town Clerk

13th November 2019