

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RECREATION, LEISURE & OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

The meeting took place in a virtual environment using “Zoom” video conferencing technology and members of the public and press were given the opportunity to observe or participate in the meeting.

Held on Wednesday 3rd February 2021 at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Cllr Andy Briers (Chairman)
Cllr Darren Loose (Vice Chairman)
Cllr Philip Day
Cllr Gareth Deboos
Cllr Hilary Edge
Cllr Rae Frederick
Cllr John Haywood
Cllr Peter Kelleher
Cllr Gloria O’Reilly
Cllr Tony Ring
Cllr Glenys Turner

IN ATTENDANCE: Chris Wilkins, Town Clerk
Nicola Vodden, Meetings Administrator
Cllr Jeremy Heron

ABSENT: None

**OS/6030
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was one member of the public present for an agenda item.

**OS/6031
APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

All Members were present.

**OS/6032
DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

**OS/6033
MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 6th January 2021 be approved and signed as a correct record.

**OS/6034
EVENTS MANAGEMENT**

Provisional dates were put forward for this year's Fireworks and Christmas Lights Switch-On Event / Market and agreed in principle, subject to restrictions in place at the time and that it's safe and legal for them to go ahead.

- RESOLVED:** 1) That the Fireworks Event be provisionally scheduled for Sunday 7th November 2021; and
2) That the Christmas Lights Switch-On Event / Market be provisionally scheduled for Sunday 28th November 2021.

ACTION C Wilkins

**OS/6035
ALLOTMENTS MANAGEMENT**

Members considered the Town Clerk's detailed report (*Annex A*) and the issues for consideration contained therein. Solicitors were still in discussions regarding the legal transfer and paperwork was awaited from the developer's solicitor. The legal title needed to be checked, along with rights and restrictions, etc. The Town Clerk had a meeting arranged with the Council's solicitor and he was hopeful that the occupation date of 1st April (for new tenants) was achievable. Most of the required work had been done and the grounds team were in the process of adding the finishing touches.

He flagged up potential issues with the access to the site, which isn't directly off Crow Arch Lane, but via an unmade single farm track, which also serves two properties and which the developer does not seem to own. The land transfer must include a right of way over the track. He indicated that once in regular use, most of the vehicle movements would be allotment holders and as landowners of the site, it would only be fair for the Council to maintain the access. He highlighted his may be problematic and costly.

A resident of the nearby houses expressed her concerns regarding the state of the track, which is not in good repair. It is not wide enough for two vehicles to pass and she said it would be unacceptable for people to use her driveway as a passing point. With the potentially large number of vehicles using the track, she commented that people would need to be considerate to the residents. The hedges had been cut back to make the track wider, but the grassed edges of the track were not stable.

The Town Clerk outlined the proposal to offer allotment holders at Hightown Road the opportunity to move to the new site at Crow, as this site (HR) was only ever a temporary arrangement until the space was required as an extension to the cemetery. If they choose not to move, there will be no guarantee that an alternative allotment will available when they receive the 'Notice to Quit' (in a few years' time) and they will have to join the waiting list. Members agreed the length of handover period for plots should be sufficient to allow for those who have already started planting at Hightown. Once it is known how many would like to move, then arrangements can be made to offer the remaining plots to those on the waiting list.

Management of the plots would not vary from the other sites and the Allotment Rules would apply, save that the size of sheds at Crow Arch Lane should be no larger than 6ft x 4ft. This was considered of adequate size and the site would not suit structures larger than this. In addition, Members agreed that the bonfires should not be permitted between 1st May and 30th September, in line with the rules for Hightown Road and Southampton Road and due to the proximity of residential properties. Further information on the number and size of plots was provided, along with rental income and a breakdown of the set-up costs.

- RESOLVED:** 1) That the Town Clerk's report be noted;



- 2) That the proposal to accept the new site transfer be agreed, in principle;
- 3) That the proposed treatment of the tenants of plots at Hightown Road be agreed, but with fair provision for an extended handover period;
- 4) That officer's recommendations regarding rules and procedures be agreed; and
- 5) That the same restrictions on bonfires be applied to Crow Arch Lane site as for Hightown Road and Southampton Road sites (not permitted between 1st May and 30th September).

ACTION C Wilkins

OS/6036

PROJECTS (current and proposed).

RLOS1 War Memorial – The Town Clerk reported that a grant of £3,820 had been received from the War Memorials Trust towards the refurbishment costs of the War Memorial. This was £400 less than anticipated due to a procedural matter. The contractor's work was excellent and of a high standard.

The grant requires the Council to conduct inspections and to have a maintenance regime in place and The Town Clerk was working on this.

Preliminary discussions had commenced with Rev Roberts regarding the rededication ceremony and whilst it was thought that perhaps Armed Forces Day may be too soon to arrange a suitable service, that perhaps Remembrance Sunday may be considered as an alternative date. It was noted that 2021 was the War Memorial's centenary year and it would be fitting for the rededication to be conducted this year.

The total cost of the refurbishment was £8,596 and Members discussed how the shortfall should be met. It was agreed that the work to the memorial was required and only right that the Council commissioned it. The grant has assisted towards the total cost and the General Reserve should meet the shortfall.

RESOLVED: That the update in respect of projects (*Annex B*) be noted.

RECOMMENDED TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE: That the remaining balance of the War Memorial refurbishment costs (£4,776) be met from the General Reserve.

ACTION C Wilkins

OS/6037

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

That, in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public were excluded because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature (*Confidential Annex C*)

OS/6038

BICKERLEY

Members received a verbal report from the Town Clerk and noted the confidential briefing from the Council's agent (*Confidential Annex D*). They and gave directions on the issues raised.



RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk proceed as directed.

ACTION C Wilkins

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.15pm.

Note: The text in the Action Boxes above does not form part of these minutes.

RECEIVED
24th February 2021

APPROVED
3rd March 2021

TOWN MAYOR

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

3rd February 2021

Allotments Management

1. Introduction and reason for report

- 1.1 The proposed new allotments site off Crow Arch Lane has reached practical completion. It is therefore timely for officers to present a report to members on the transfer process and seek direction on future management arrangements.

2. Background information and options

- 2.1 By a section 106 agreement, the developer of the new housing estate off Crow Lane committed to laying out a new allotments site and transferring it into public ownership. This Council is the appropriate authority in this area to receive that transfer.
- 2.2 A meeting took place on the site (off Crow Arch Lane) on 16th December at which officers agreed with representatives of the developer and the District Council that the site is practically complete and ready for transfer. Solicitors have therefore been instructed to act for the Council to undertake normal due diligence and subject thereto complete the transfer and registration of title to the land.
- 2.3 If the conveyancing process reveals any unexpected risks or liabilities (immediate or potential) these will be reported separately. However, it can already be said that accepting the transfer will entail assumption of some ongoing liabilities even though the initial transfer is free of charge. First, the boundary hedges and fences will need to be maintained, adding to the workload of the grounds team. Secondly, access to the site is via a short un-made farm track in less than perfect condition. It is entirely foreseeable that the Council will be expected to bear a share (and probably the lion's share) of the burden of its future upkeep. Experience at the Bickerley and Poulner Lakes suggests this will not be a light or inexpensive matter. Finally, although the developer has laid out the site as required, some further preparatory work is needed before lettings can begin and the costs involved will fall in the current financial year. The allotments administrator and grounds foreman have agreed the details and the cost is likely to be about £825 plus VAT.
- 2.4 The site works previously agreed have been completed by the developer. These include lockable entrance gates, boundary hedging and fencing, a gravel-surface parking area, soil preparation, rough division into plots and installation of mains water. Officers are currently working on the fine details of the division of the site into a suitable mix of plot types.
- 2.5 It should be possible to complete the legal formalities and other preparations to enable the plots at the new site to be let for immediate cultivation at the start of the next growing season. Officers are keen to implement the required letting agreements for commencement on 1st April 2021.
- 2.6 It is foreseeable that the land at the cemetery off Hightown Road temporarily given over to allotment use will be needed back within the next few years to extend the cemetery use. It therefore seems reasonable to seize the present opportunity to offer the current tenants of the plots at that site 'first refusal' on equivalent plots at the new permanent site if they are willing to transfer immediately. A letter inviting their agreement to do so has therefore been prepared for issue immediately after this meeting. This makes clear that if they decline this opportunity no guarantee can be given that an alternative plot will be available when notice to quit is given in due course (if they want a new plot then,

A

they will have to join the waiting list). Subject to that, applicants already on the waiting list will be offered the remaining plots at Crow Arch Lane.

- 2.7 If every tenant at Hightown Road opts to transfer immediately, that area will be cleared and re-incorporated into the cemetery without delay. If not, vacant plots will be offered to applicants on the waiting list but with a very clear warning that it is likely to be only a few years at most before they will be required to vacate and re-join the list.
- 2.8 This moment is the best opportunity to set out the basis for the operation of the new site. As now applied for new lettings at the other sites, officers propose to require deposits for keys and for complying with the covenant to maintain in good heart. The scale of rents will conform as closely as practicable to those applying at the other sites (having regard mainly to plot sizes) but tenants of Hightown Road plots who transfer having already paid their rent in advance will not be asked for any additional rent. Officers propose to encourage the initial tenants of the plots at the new site to form a tenants' association.
- 2.9 The rules currently applying to the other sites are equally suitable in the main for the new site with one exception; officers recommend that sheds be allowed (as elsewhere) but limited in size to 6'x4' rather than 6'x8'. Officers also recommend that members consider carefully what restriction on bonfires is suitable at this location (the tighter rules currently applying at Hightown Road and Southampton Road on account of the housing nearby or the more relaxed regime applying at Upper Kingston or something else?). No changes in respect of other matters will be assumed. Examples of the kinds of thing that might be regulated differently are the keeping of livestock (other than chickens and rabbits) and bee-keeping. If members wish to suggest or discuss possible variations at this site, they are invited to do so at this meeting

3. Issues for decision and any recommendations

Members are invited to note this report and to indicate:

- 3.1 If the proposal to accept the new site transfer is agreed in principle;**
- 3.2 If the proposed treatment of the tenants of plots at Hightown Road is agreed;**
- 3.3 If officers' recommendations regarding rules and procedures are agreed;**
- 3.4 What restriction on bonfires to impose; and**
- 3.5 Whether there are any other matters relating to the future management of the site on which they wish to give further direction to officers.**

For further information, contact:

Christopher Wilkins, Town Clerk
Direct Dial: 01425 484720
Email: chris.wilkins@ringwood.gov.uk

Nicola Vodden, Allotments Administrator
Direct Dial: 01425 484722
Email: nicola.vodden@ringwood.gov.uk

Current Projects Update

No.	Name	Status	Recent developments	Description and notes	Lead Officer/Member	Financing
Full Council						
FC1	Long Lane Football Facilities Development	In progress	Report given to FC meeting on 16 December	A joint venture with Ringwood Town Football Club and AFC Bournemouth Community Sports Trust to improve the football facilities for shared use by them and the community.	Town Clerk	No financial commitment yet
FC2	Strategic Plan	On hold - awaiting officer availability		Exploring ideas for medium term planning	Town Clerk	N/A
Planning Town & Environment Committee						
PTE1	Neighbourhood Plan	In progress	Steering Group recommendation to proceed to be considered by PT&E Cttee and Council in January 2021	To appoint consultants and undertake initial stages of preparation of a NP with a view to facilitating a decision by the Council on whether to proceed further with the project.	Deputy Clerk	£3,450 grant from Locality fully funded consultants for this phase; £3,000 held in General Reserve from unspent budget approved in 2018/19
PTE2	Human Sundial	In progress	HCC has appointed contractors and confirmed works will be carried out in August 2021, following completion of the works in West Street.	Replacement of damaged sundial and surrounding paviers; installation of removable benches to protect it for the future - working with HCC (Principal Designer and Contractor)	Deputy Clerk	£5,295.15 spent from budget of £10,657 to be funded from CIL and contribution of £5,249.15 from Carnival
PTE3	Crow Stream Maintenance	Annual recurrent	Annual flail and clearance by volunteers complete	Annual maintenance of Crow Ditch and Stream in order to keep it flowing and alleviate flooding	Deputy Clerk	£1,120 spent to be funded by transfer from earmarked reserve
Projects being delivered by others which are monitored by the Deputy Clerk and reported to this committee:						
	A31 widening scheme	In progress	HE online Public Information Event to take place in March. Closure of West Street junction with A31, widening of pavements in West Street and reversal of traffic flow in Meeting House Lane to commence 1 March 2021 (TBA). Works to divert water main to commence May 2021.	Widening of A31 westbound carriageway between Ringwood and Verwood off slip to improve traffic flow; associated town centre improvements utilising HE Designated Funds	Highways England (HE)	HE funded
	Pedestrian crossings Christchurch Road	Completed		Informal pedestrian crossings to the north and south of roundabout at junction of Christchurch Road with Wellworthy Way (Lidl)	Hampshire CC	Developers contributions
	Moortown drainage improvements	In progress		HCC considering a controlled opening of the system in Moortown Lane to alleviate highway flooding	Hampshire CC	Developers contributions
	Pedestrian crossing Castleman Way	On hold	Site does not meet HCC criteria for toucan crossing. Agreed to revisit following promotion of cycle path through Forest Gate Business Park.	Toucan crossing in Castleman Way to improve pedestrian and cycle route between town centre and Moortown	Hampshire CC	Developers contributions
	Cycleway signage and improvements	Completed		New signage and minor improvements to cycleway between Forest Gate Business Park and Hightown Road	Hampshire CC	HE Designated Funds
	Carvers footpath/cycle-way improvement	Completed		Creation of shared use path across Carvers between Southampton Road and Mansfield Road	Hampshire CC	Developers contributions
	Crow Lane Footpath	In progress		New footpath to link Beaumont Park with Hightown Road, alongside west of Crow Lane	Hampshire CC	Developers contributions
Policy & Finance Committee						
PF1	Website renewal	In progress	New photographs arranged. New text in preparation	Arranging a new website that is more responsive, directly editable by Council staff and compliant with accessibility regulations.	Town Clerk	
PF2	Greenways planning permission renewal	On hold - awaiting officer availability		Preparing a planning application to renew the lapsed permission for a detached bungalow	Town Clerk	
PF3	Youth Outreach work	On hold during pandemic restrictions		Recruiting to youth workers for detached outreach work	Carvers Manager	
PF4	Review of governance documents	On hold - awaiting officer availability		Periodic review of standing orders, financial regulations, committee terms of reference, delegated powers, etc. to maintain suitability and fitness	Town Clerk	
PF5	Poulner Lakes Lease	On hold - awaiting track maintenance solution	Grounds Foreman is seeking advice on options and indicative costs	Negotiating a lease from Ringwood & District Anglers' Association of the part of the site not owned by the Council	Town Clerk	
Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee						

B

RLOS1	War Memorial repair	In progress	Completion report emailed to War Memorials Trust. Grant award has been confirmed but reduced from £4,240 to £8,820 to reflect breach of offer conditions.	Repair by conservation specialists with Listed Building Consent. Re-dedication ceremony to be arranged.	Town Clerk	£8,596 spent. Grant award leaves £4,776 to be funded by public appeal or otherwise.
RLOS2	Bickerley tracks	In progress	Grounds Foreman is seeking advice on options and cost estimates from contractors.	Enhanced repair of tracks to address erosion and potholes (resurfacing is ruled out by town green status) and measures to control parking.	Town Clerk	Nothing yet committed or agreed
RLOS3	Public open spaces security	In progress	Having reported to the Open Spaces Working Party, officers are arranging as much of the highest priority work as the budget allows.	Review of public open spaces managed by the Council and measures to protect them from unauthorised encampments and incursions by vehicles	Town Clerk	Budget of £5,000 for emergency measures agreed. £1,382 committed to date.
RLOS4	Grounds department sheds replacement	In progress	Cllr Briers meeting grounds staff to define needs and the project scope and outline specification	Replacing the grounds maintenance team's temporary, dispersed & sub-standard workshop, garaging and storage facilities	Town Clerk	Capital budget of £2,500 (reduced from £3,000) agreed for feasibility study 2020-21.
RLOS5	Cemetery development	On hold - awaiting officer availability		Planning best use of remaining space, columbarium, etc.	Town Clerk	
RLOS6	Community Allotment	In progress	Initial proposals emailed 24/12/2020	Special agreement needed for community growing area at Southampton Road	Town Clerk	
RLOS7	Bowling Club lease	On hold during pandemic restrictions		Request by Ringwood Bowling Club for lease to be extended in space and term for a replacement club-house.	Town Clerk	
RLOS8	Ringwood Youth Club	On hold awaiting officer availability		Winding up the redundant CIO to terminate filing requirements	Town Clerk	
RLOS9	Aerator repair	In progress	Attachment is with contractor for repair.	Major overhaul to extend life of this much-used attachment	Grounds Foreman	
RLOS10	Waste bin replacement programme	On hold awaiting officer availability		Three-year programme to replace worn-out litter and dog-waste bins	Grounds Foreman	
RLOS11	Ash Grove Fence repair	In progress	Purchase order placed with contractor. Work scheduled to commence 26/01/2021.	Replacing the worn-out fence around the play area	Grounds Foreman	
RLOS12	Van replacement	On hold awaiting officer availability		Replacing the grounds foreman's diesel van with an electric vehicle	Grounds Foreman	
RLOS13	Bickerley compensation claim	In progress	Agent asked to report status in January	Statutory compensation claim for access and damage caused by drainage works	Deputy Clerk	
RLOS14	Poulner Lakes waste licence	On hold awaiting officer availability		Arranging to surrender our redundant waste licence to avoid annual renewal fees	Town Clerk	
RLOS15	Acorn bench at Friday's Cross	On hold - until suitable season	Preliminary discussion with Men's Shed	Arranging the re-painting of this bespoke art-work	Town Clerk	
RLOS16	Town Safe	In progress	Preliminary contacts with PCC and Conservation Officer	Possible re-paint of this important survival, part of a listed structure	Town Clerk	
RLOS17	New allotments site	In progress	Practical Completion of site agreed following inspection. A full report will be presented to committee in February.	The transfer to this Council (pursuant to a s.106 agreement) of a site for new allotments off Crow Arch Lane	Town Clerk	

Staffing Committee

S1	HR support contract renewal	On hold	Will commence in March 2021		Town Clerk
S2	Finance Staffing review	In progress	Agreed changes (both temporary and permanent) are being implemented.	Reassessing staffing requirements and capacity for finance functions and re-negotiating staff terms	Town Clerk

B

Proposed/Emerging Projects Update

B

No.	Name	Description	Lead	Recent developments	Progress / Status Stage reached	Estimated cost	Funding sources
Full Council							
None							
Planning Town & Environment Committee							
	Neighbourhood Plan	From the feasibility assessment to completion	Cllr Day	Full Council to consider recommendations of Steering Group on 27/01/2021	Bid for inclusion in 2021-22 programme submitted	£21,500	£14,550 grant, £3,000 earmarked reserve
	Climate emergency	Minor funding to support local initiatives	Cllr DeBoos	REAL WP debating vision and plans for 2021	Bid for inclusion in 2021-22 programme submitted	£1,000	
	Roundabout under A31	Planting and other environmental enhancements			Floated as possible future project		
	Lynes Lane re-paving Rear of Southampton Road	Ringwood Society proposal Proposal by Ringwood Society to improve appearance from The Furlong Car Park and approaches			Floated as possible future project Floated as possible future project		
Policy & Finance Committee							
	Paperless office	Increasing efficiency of office space use	Cllr. Heron	Discussions with Town Clerk and Finance Manager			
Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee							
	Cemetery map and registers digitisation	Professional scanning of the older registers and creation of a digital map to integrate with our management software	Town Clerk	Report considered at committee in November	Budget bid to undertake in 2021-22 approved	£5,000	Earmarked reserve
	Columbarium	Construction of columbarium facility at the Cemetery	Town Clerk		Budget bid to undertake in 2021-22 approved	£25,000	Earmarked reserves
	Play equipment at Toad Corner and Carvers	Installation of additional recreation facilities	Cllr Edge	Report on feasibility and outline costs presented on 2nd December	Budget bid to undertake in 2021-22 approved	£36,000	Unascertained
	Feasibility study for new grounds dept. facility and car park at Carvers	Combining the existing study with a closer look at creating a new public car park at Carvers too	Cllr Briers	Discussed at Carvers WP	Budget bid to undertake in 2021-22 approved	£10,000	Earmarked reserve
	Poulner Lakes	Developing and improving access road facilities	Cllr Heron	Grounds foreman is seeking suggestions for possible road treatments	Floated as possible future project		
	Brockey Sands	Environmental enhancements to this area between the Bickerley and the Millstream	Cllr Day		Floated as possible future project		
	Land at Folly Farm Facilities for school-age teenagers	Developing and improving this woodland site Researching demand and possible options	Cllrs Heron & Ring Cllrs Frederick & Turner		Floated as possible future project Floated as possible future project		
Staffing Committee							
None							