

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 4th November 2020 at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Cllr Andy Briers (Chairman)
Cllr Darren Loose (Vice Chairman)
Cllr Philip Day (*from 7.05pm*)
Cllr Gareth Deboos
Cllr Hilary Edge
Cllr Rae Frederick
Cllr Peter Kelleher
Cllr Gloria O’Reilly
Cllr Tony Ring
Cllr Glenys Turner

IN ATTENDANCE: Chris Wilkins, Town Clerk
Nicola Vodden, Meetings Administrator
Kelvin Wentworth, Grounds Foreman

ABSENT: Cllr John Haywood

**OS/6004
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no members of the public present.

**OS/6005
APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Town Clerk reported that apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Haywood.

**OS/6006
DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

**OS/6007
MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 7th October 2020 be approved and signed as a correct record.

**OS/6008
REVIEW OF GROUNDS TEAM’S WORK PROGRAMME**

The Grounds Foreman addressed the Committee in respect of the Grounds Team’s work



programme providing a summary of the previous year and looked forward to projects planned for the next few months.

He thanked Members for the additional van, which had been purchased to assist in getting the team to the various locations around town. This has been invaluable since restrictions were introduced and has enabled social distancing to be achieved more easily.

He reported that there had been an 8-week break in March/April and, as a result, workload had built up. Following a busy period initially, the team has managed to catch up on most of the routine work, although hedge cutting is a little late this year. Communication with the office team, who are mostly working from home, is going well. Extra bulbs have been planted in the Gateway Square and on the Bickerley, and the planters and roundabout beds have also been filled with Winter plants.

He highlighted the impact on the budget from machinery breakdowns this year. This was due to wear and tear.

Cllr Day joined the meeting at 7.05pm.

The Grounds Foreman extended his thanks to the whole grounds team, for their hard work and conscientiousness, but particularly his deputy, who worked alone every day through April, without question, nor problem. He described him as a remarkable and committed person who is extremely good at his job and goes above and beyond.

The team plan to continue working through the second lockdown, as measures enabling this are in place. Plans going forward include starting works to prevent encampments, extending the water supply at '10 acre field', re-decorating the toilets at the cemetery and replacing rubbish and dog bins (part of a 3-year programme).

The Chairman offered his thanks for the help the team have offered over the year. Their hard work is very much appreciated. Other Members added to this and thanked the team for their readiness to assist, which some of them had experienced personally.

RESOLVED: That the report on the Grounds Team's work programme be received.

ACTION K Wentworth

OS/6009

EVENTS MANAGEMENT

Members received an update in respect of Remembrance Service and Christmas arrangements following the meeting of Ringwood Events Team (RET) on 2nd November. As new restrictions would come into force on 5th November, the remote meeting was held (with other representatives invited) to consider the impact on the plans in place.

Remembrance Service- 8th November 2020

Notice will be posted via social media asking people not to attend Memorial Gardens, but also to indicate how people can view the service online. A short road closure would be in place. Church services are cancelled, but private prayer is permitted.

Christmas arrangements

Revised plans for the virtual grotto, Lights switch-on, toy collection, drive-in service and Winter Wanderland were outlined. Publicity would be posted on social media and appear in the Ringwood and Fordingbridge News, at the appropriate time.



No requests for Council support had been received from outside organisations. It was understood that displays may happen, but that no specific assistance was required. Organisations would publicise their own arrangements but were welcome to contact the Events Co-Ordinator for help with this, if required.

RESOLVED: That the update in respect of events be received;

ACTION C Bennett

**OS/6010
CEMETERY MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES**

The Town Clerk presented his report (*Annex A*) highlighting the difficulties officers encounter in learning cemetery management and with the processing of cemetery requests. The system currently in place is not user friendly, as both paper and computer records need to be checked to get a true picture. Neither are a complete record. He recommended a move towards a wholly digital system and explained the significant benefits and phased approach outlined in his report.

He advised that sufficient mapping of the cemetery was required by law and if Members did not approve the digital option, a great deal of time would need to be spent on producing better paper maps than those that currently exist. He also confirmed that the quotes obtained for Phase 1 represented 'good value' for the amount of work involved. Once Phase 1 is complete, options for Phase 2 would be presented to the Committee.

Cllr O'Reilly left the meeting briefly at 7.46pm due to technical reasons.

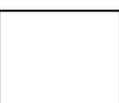
Members wished to support the recommendation and agreed this be added to the project list as a high priority, with a budget bid for 2021/22. Cllr Day felt that the possibility of a columbarium should be revisited and included for consideration (*see also OS/6011 and OS/6012*).

RESOLVED: 1) That the recommended course of working towards wholly digital record-keeping and processing, with regard to the Cemetery, be supported in principle; and
2) That the recommendation that the old registers and paper records be scanned and an interactive digital map of the Cemetery be commissioned and a bid for £5,000 be included in the 2021-22 budget to cover the anticipated cost be supported.

ACTION C Wilkins

**OS/6011
CURRENT PROJECTS UPDATE**

A1 – War Memorial Repairs – The Town Clerk advised that one of the War Memorials Trust's conditions, in relation to the offered grant, remained outstanding. This relates to treatment of each one of the very small metal letters with anti-theft liquid (SmartWater). Until this is completed a report cannot be filed to confirm the refurbishment is done and is delaying the confirmation of the grant. It was thought that some of the local organisations would be prepared to assist if invited to volunteer.



A7 – Waste bin replacement programme – The replacement of bins is due to commence around Christmas.

A8 – Aerator refurbishment – The extensive overhaul will be scheduled at a suitable time when it is not required by the grounds team and will extend the life of this specialist piece of equipment.

A9 – Ash Grove fence – The quote obtained has since been revised by 5% and a re-tendering exercise is likely to take place.

A10 – Bickerley Roads improvement – A resident had again expressed concerns and was expected to join the meeting to request this is treated as a high priority. In the short-term materials have been ordered and the area will be raked, but in time this will wash away and potholes will re-appear quite quickly. The Town Clerk indicated that a long-term solution would be preferable, but in the absence of in-house experience and given the constraints of the area, it being a Village Green and subject to environmental conditions the matter is not simple to resolve and requires technical advice. Officers are stretched in terms of capacity and options on long term solutions will be brought before the Committee, but realistically it may take a while.

Cllr O'Reilly re-joined the meeting at 8.03pm.

C1 – Bickerley drainage works – Another statutory notice had been received from Wessex Water (WW) for more works on the Bickerley, at the end of November, in the vicinity of the pumping station. Any damage caused WW will be liable to compensate the Council. The Deputy Town Clerk was pushing to resolve the outstanding claim for compensation.

In response to a request that a columbarium be added to the project list, the Town Clerk reminded Members of their agreement to formulate a plan for the future development of the cemetery. He expected a columbarium would be part of the specialist brief and included in the options for discussion, but he would ensure that these items are included in the project report.

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

ACTION C Wilkins

OS/6012

COMMITTEE BUDGET 2021/22

Members considered the RFO's report in relation to the Committee's budget for 2021/22 (*Annex C*). An Excel 'sandbox' would be made available to Members to assist with modelling of the budget. It will allow experimentation with different figures in order to see the resulting impact on the budget of any changes made.

After discussion officers were asked to include bids for £23,000 for a columbarium and for a car park at Carvers (amount not specified) and update the modelling for further discussion and decision at the December meeting.

No fee increases were proposed but the Clerk recommended that any future changes to allotment rents and charges take effect on the tenancies renewal date (1st October) rather than the usual 1st April.

ACTION R Fitzgerald / C Wilkins
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There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.20pm.

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

RECEIVED
25th November 2020

APPROVED
2nd December 2020

TOWN MAYOR

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN