

WALLINGFORD TOWN COUNCIL

M I N U T E S

of the

Parks, Gardens, Allotments and Open Spaces Committee
Meeting held in the Town Hall, Wallingford
on Monday 13th July 2020

P R E S E N T

Councillors Davies, Holford, Keats-Rohan, Kidley, Lester,
The Mayor of Wallingford, Councillor Lee Upcraft
In Attendance – Tracey Collins (Officer and Minute Taker)
Paula Lopez – Town Clerk (Guest)
Cllr Dolton (Guest)

124. TO ADVISE THOSE IN ATTENDANCE OF THE PROTOCOL FOR THE MEETING

Councillor Kidley reminded attendees of the protocol for the meeting.

125. APOLOGIES

Councillors Holford, Rennie and Sinkinson

126. ADMISSION OF THE PUBLIC

There were no admissions to the Public

127. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

A Councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in our Council's Standing Orders code of Conduct (Item 13) in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under code of conduct and his right to participate and vote on the matter (guidelines are available at the meeting and all Councillors have received a copy prior to the meeting).

There were no declarations of interest.

128. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – NOTIFIED AND IMPROMPTU 15 MINUTES IN TOTAL

There were a number of topics to be discussed

(i) **No mow areas.** Ms Young is interested in nature conservation and wanted to see more bio diversity in Wallingford especially exploring the possibility of no mow areas around Wallingford. A map of Wallingford would help to identify specific areas. Road safety is important but some verges have a strip with a shorter area which helps at junctions. Are maps available that can highlight areas to keep wild? Castle Gardens already has a wild area and SODC have allowed an area in Thames Street.

(ii) **No mow areas.** Ms Sharp wanted to request no mow areas within the town, she had contacted OCC recently with regard to the footpath from Hithercroft to Charter Way which was recently cut harshly by a large mower. There had been so much wildlife, birds, butterflies and insects then it was cut, which destroyed their habitat. Obviously there is a need for verges to be cut for safety reasons but money could be saved by reducing the amount of mowing, a number of Councils, have signed up to Plant Life.

Councillor Lester explained that there are maps available within the Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan.

The Mayor explained the complexity of land ownership, but welcomed the fact that the Neighbourhood Plan had been helpful in terms of maps and green spaces. The Mayor suggested contacting both guests to discuss a way forward.

(iii) **Litter.** Mr Holder spoke with regard to the litter problem within the open spaces since lockdown, it has become a huge problem especially at the riverside.

There is CCTV on the Bullcroft Pavilion which could be used.

Bring back the campaign "Keep Britain Tidy"

A campaign with local schools

A volunteer community group who collect litter on a regular basis.

Pizza shops could write names and telephone numbers on pizza boxes

Display posters, basic, blunt to the point, successful in other county's.

(iv) **Allotments.** Ms Head spoke with regard to the allotments. The pressure at the water troughs is very hit and miss and the distance between troughs does cause a problem for a lot of people. We are now prone to very hot and dry summers carrying the water to plots is difficult, the lack of rainfall due to climate change is making it extremely difficult to grow things. We do not appear to have had the grass cut at the allotments and we don't have a skip anymore so this must save some money. We also still have problems with dogs and bonfires and I would like the agenda to be displayed in the notice board.

129. VARIANCE OF ORDER OF BUSINESS

It was Proposed by Councillor Keats Rohan, Seconded by Councillor Lester and **RESOLVED: THAT** agenda item 14 (vi) – No mow areas be discussed .

Councillor Keats-Rohan is in favour of this in terms of the Neighbourhood Plan and the Climate and Nature Emergency. With regard to the Bullcroft and Kinecroft the ramparts have been left to flourish, possibility to do something similar along the fenced area. We should all be aware that part of our commitment to the scheduled monument is to clear the vegetation specifically ramparts and ditches, it will look disturbing for a time until it is cleared and restored.

The Mayor said this was a good idea in principle but we need to work alongside the big events to ensure they were not restricted too greatly also we have to be careful we do not restrict the public from using the area as a recreations space. We could maybe expand on the Castle Gardens and make the area bigger but we must be very careful with the Kinecroft and Bullcroft.

This needs to be explored in more detail, a map of the areas is needed to identify the areas appropriately and the open spaces document to be reviewed so not to restrict residents.

130. PARKS, GARDENS, ALLOTMENTS AND OPEN SPACES MINUTES

To sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Parks, Gardens, Allotments and Open Spaces Meeting held on the 20th January 2020, as set out on pages 213-217.

It was Proposed by Councillor Lester and Seconded by Councillor Keats-Rohan and

RESOLVED:

THAT the Minutes of the Parks, Gardens, Allotments and Open Spaces Committee Meeting held on the 20th January 2020 as set out on pages 213 - 217 of the Minute Book, copies circulated to Councillors, be signed as a correct record.

131. ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES WERE NOTED BY COUNCILLORS

- (i) The Mayor and Mrs Collins to write to the Michaelmas Fair following item 11(iii)
- (ii) Charges were emailed to Councillors

132. ALLOTMENTS

- (i) The Allotment Officer stated that there were 18 people waiting for an allotment, unfortunately only 2 handed back this year. Possibility of a larger plot being split in two halves. Some tenants have two or three plots, some may be willing to give up plots at renewal time. Bee keeping is going really

well, the site has been cleared and hives in place, really interesting to watch. When informed that the charge may increase next year only one concerned tenant who understood once explained the process.

- (ii) There are a couple of things that need addressing at the allotments the pot holes need filing and a part of the hedge needs repairing to stop trespassing. No costs have been drawn up but should come under budget.

It was Proposed by Councillor Upcraft, Seconded by Councillor Keats-Rohan RESOLVED: THAT the works go ahead to repair the potholes and hedge within the budget available.

- (iii) The work has now been finalised by Thames Water and plot 1 is looking wonderful again. Thames Water worked tirelessly to ensure a smooth process of which the both the tenant and ourselves were kept up to date continuously. The tenant is really happy and thanked everyone involved.

133. PARKS STAFF

- (i) There was no report from the Parks Foreman available.

(ii) Councillor Keats-Rohan reported that the requirement to employ another staff member again comes back to the landscape architects report. Specialist work is required within the park areas especially the ramparts of the Bullcroft and the Kinecroft. This work is going to stretch the parks team so an extra person would support this work and other works the parks team may require. The Mayor would like to see the parks/open spaces being made more of an attraction/place to visit rather than just the bare minimum being done. So much more could be achieved to make the most of the assets, if this requires more staff then we can look into this. Councillor Kidley also suggested that they could be used for maintaining some of the machinery if they had the required skills. This has already been discussed at Personnel, it is a good time to talk to the Parks team to find out their skills and requirements so that a job description can be put together with the budget constraints. A report should be put together that is based on facts and not just opinions. It is recommended that the Parks and Personnel Committees work together, Councillor Keats-Rohan feels it is extremely important to work with the parks team.

134. KINECROFT

- i) **Flooding** - Councillor Keats-Rohan explained that the area near to the Coach and Horses next the barrier floods badly, the grass has stopped growing and it becomes a muddy patch. Historic England would need to be consulted as it is on the scheduled monument.

It was recommended that Councillor Keats-Rohan **RESOLVED: THAT** Councillor Keats-Rohan talk with Historic England to find the best way forward:

ii) **Coach and Horses extended seating area** - The Mayor and Councillor Dolton have been liaising on this following a recommendation at the planning committee 6/7/2020/120 for the landlord to extend the current seating area so that he could comply with social distancing, he would not be increasing the number of tables just increasing the space he is using. There will be a number of restrictions in place and the landlord will need to sign and agree to these conditions but they can also be taken away at any time if the conditions are abused.

It was Proposed by Councillor Upcraft, Seconded by Councillor Keats-Rohan RESOLVED: THAT the terms are formalised in an agreement to the landlord which will be signed by the Mayor and the Landlord.

iii) **Request from Michaelmas Fair** - Following government guidelines the Michaelmas fair will be putting a request to attend this year with all precautions in place. Once all the guidelines and risk assessments are available, these will be checked before a firm booking is made.

iv) **To note forthcoming events** – A provisional booking has been made for the 7th November, this is yet to be confirmed. Risk assessments and insurance are to be submitted and checked before booking goes ahead.

135. BULL CROFT

i). **Play Area Closed** - Councillor Kidley reported that the Bullcroft play areas had not re-opened following government guidelines on the 4th July. As required an inspection was done by the parks foreman and a number of H & S issues were reported so it was decided to wait for the ROSPA inspection during July/August before opening to ensure all equipment was safe to use.

No forthcoming events on the Bull Croft

136. CASTLE GARDENS

i). **No Band Concerts this year** - Due to the Covid crisis the bands and refreshments have had to be cancelled but we welcome them back in 2021.

ii), **Request for Memorial Bench** – The Officer reported a request had been made for a memorial bench. We no longer put them at the riverside as the area is full but we are now starting to replace the older benches in the Castle Gardens with newer ones so this would be the best spot.

It was Proposed by Councillor Lester, Seconded by Councillor Upcraft
RESOLVED: THAT a memorial bench can be located in the Castle Gardens
replacing the older benches that are in need of repair.

137. OPEN SPACES

i). **Problem litter** – Following the report from Mr Holder, Councillors discussed options that might help eliminate the problem of litter in the open spaces. The suggestion of the posters seems like a sensible one to try in the first instance, if this doesn't work then other options should be explored. Permission to put posters but this could be an easy solution.

It was Proposed by Councillor Upcraft, Seconded by Councillor Keats-Rohan
and RECOMMENDED: THAT we develop our own version of the signs and put up in
key areas where there is a problem of littering.

ii). **Public Arts Strategy** - Councillor Lester updated Councillors that a meeting had not yet been able to take place but hoped that this could be done very soon. I spoke recently with a lighting engineer with regard to the bridge, the town centre and the Town Hall. I've been working on signposting, a bus shelter and bench close to Lidle

iii). **Shillingford Road Woods** – Councillor Holford is unable to report on this.

It was Proposed by Councillor Kidley, Seconded by Councillor
Upcraft and RECOMMENDED: THAT this item is deferred.

iv). **Radnor Road** – Councillor Keats-Rohan updated Councillors, in that it had been difficult during the pandemic and was still waiting to be updated on who was going to be doing what so it's still ongoing.

v). **Water Fountain in Market Place** – A request has been made that the water fountain be reinstated. Councillor Kidley explained that the fountain was renovated not so long ago but the issue with the water connection might be more complicated and expensive, there are also issues with legionella testing, litter and leaves in the fountain and currently with a pandemic, would anyone want to drink out of it. The Mayor asked that this be explored in more detail to establish costs, risk and future maintenance before we dismiss this request.

It was Proposed by Councillor Lester, Seconded by Councillor Upcraft and
RECOMMENDED: THAT Mrs Collins liaise with the member of public who requested this and ask them to find out more about costs what would be involved and report back at the next meeting.

(vi) Discussed above.

vii). Offer by SODC to stencil signs on the pavements - Councillor Dolton has already started work on this with regard to posters and signs to go up around the town, it was felt that the offer from SODC might be a little too late, not in keeping with the town and would look very messy in time. Signs won't go up until OCC give permission and the insurance company are happy with wording.

138. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Shillingford Road woods, potential for bike track – Councillors McGregor/Holford update

Castle Gardens – Open a second gate.

Kinecroft – AV events, Open air cinema proposal.

Meeting closed at approximately 8.45pm

Parks, Gardens, Allotments and Open Spaces
2020.07.13. tc

Chairman