



Wallingford Town Council

MINUTES
of a meeting of the
PARKS, GARDENS, ALLOTMENTS &
OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE
held on Monday 25 July 2022 at 7.00 pm
in Wallingford Town Hall

Present

Members: Cllr Sue Hendrie
Cllr Steve Holder (Chairman)
Cllr Katharine Keats-Rohan
Cllr Rosslyn Lester
Cllr Marcus Harris (The Mayor) (Chairman) (up to Minute 183/22)
Cllr Deborah Whelan

Officers: Scott Wells, Acting Parks Foreman
Luke Whitcomb, Meetings Officer

Others: 6 members of the public
0 members of the press

168/22 **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR 2022-23**

It was proposed by Councillor Keats-Rohan, and seconded by Councillor Kidley, and

RESOLVED that Councillor Holder be elected Chairman for the 2022-23 Municipal Year

169/22 **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR 2022-23**

It was proposed by Councillor Kidley, and seconded by Councillor Harris, and

RESOLVED that Councillor Lester be elected Vice-Chairman for the 2022-23 Municipal Year

170/22 **MEETING PROTOCOL**

The Chairman explained the protocol that would be followed in conducting the meeting

171/22

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from the Town Clerk and the Senior Local Government Officer.

Councillor Sinkinson did not attend.

172/22

MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor Lester, and seconded by Councillor Hendrie, and

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Parks, Gardens, Allotments and Open Spaces Committee held on 24 January 2022 be approved as a correct record and the Chairman is authorised to sign them.

173/22

ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee reviewed actions agreed at the last meeting. Most had been completed and others were in progress. Uncompleted items would remain on the Action Log and carried forward

174/22

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

6 members of the public attended and spoke to items minuted as 177/22 (b), 179/22, 182/22 and 184/22 (f) below.

175/22

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Chairman explained that the Committee's terms of reference included the potential to co-opt two non-Councillors who would not have voting rights. The meeting discussed this and other alternatives.

It was proposed by Councillor Keats-Rohan, and seconded by Councillor Whelan, and

RESOLVED that the Committee will seek the input of subject matter experts as and when they are needed

176/22

POLICIES

(a) Tree and hedges

It was proposed by Councillor Keats-Rohan, and seconded by Councillor Hendrie, and

RESOLVED that the tree and hedges policy be approved

(b) Memorial benches

Some members were concerned at an expansion of the memorial bench programme and the Committee discussed alternative ways of memorialising people, including the planting of trees.

It was proposed by Councillor Lester, and seconded by Councillor Whelan, and

RESOLVED that the memorial benches policy be approved and that additional ways of memorialising people could be offered.

(c) Herbicide

It was proposed by Councillor Hendrie, and Councillor Whelan, and

RESOLVED that the herbicide policy be approved

177/22

CLIMATE ACTION

(a) 'Low mow' areas

The Council now had three 'low mow' areas: Castle Gardens with mown path, Bull Croft under trees and Kinecroft edges. These were likely to be joined in 2023 by the left hand side of the Bull Croft. The areas would be a mixture of flowers and grasses.

Councillor Holder thanked Wild about Wallingford, who were attending the meeting, for their encouragement and assistance.

(b) Queen's Green Canopy & Treescape

Councillor Keats-Rohan updated the Committee. The next opportunity for planting trees would be in the autumn and sites were currently be considered, including the strip of land by the Harwell Estate and Castle Gardens. Berkeley Homes would be planting trees on the Winterbrook Meadows development. Community activity was also taking place elsewhere. The next OX10 Group meeting would be on 24 September 2022 in the Town Hall.

Treescape reports identified opportunities in parishes across the county.

A member of the public spoke to this item.

It was proposed by Councillor Holder, and seconded by Councillor Hendrie, and

RESOLVED that the Lord-Lieutenant of Oxfordshire, or one of her deputies, as the Queen's representative, be invited to plant a tree in the Castle Gardens on non-scheduled monument land in October/November 2022, to mark this initiative, the species to be determined, but possibly an American Elm or an Ulmus 'Frontier' which are disease resistant.

178/22

BIANNUAL WALKAROUND

Councillor Holder presented a report on the biannual walkaround which demonstrated the significant progress that the Parks Team was making.

179/22

KINECROFT

(a) Coach & Horses Pub, Horse Chestnut Tree

A member of the public spoke to this item. His email had been read out at the recent meeting of the Full Council.

Councillor Holder reported that the Full Council had agreed that the next step should be a structural survey to determine what, if any, damage, was being caused to the building. This followed a detailed tree inspection that had been carried out.

(b) Ownership of strip of land on west side

Councillor Hendrie confirmed that a thin strip of land on the west side of the Kinecroft had been determined as being owned by the Town Council. It related to the culverting of the Mill Brook in the 1970s. This was tabled for awareness only; no action was needed.

(c) Triangle of land

The ownership of this had still to be determined, although it was believed this was owned by the Oxfordshire County Council and contact had been made with County Councillor Pete Sudbury asking him to confirm this.

Action: this matter to come to Full Council once ownership has been confirmed

(d) Giant Hogweed and Japanese Knotweed

The Acting Parks Foreman reported that evidence of Giant Hogweed and Japanese Knotweed had been discovered on the Kinecroft. This needed to be eradicated and a suitable company had been asked to carry out this work.

Action: Office (Parks Team) to ensure company also addresses issues on the allotments

180/22

BULL CROFT

(a) General update

Councillor Holder highlighted three areas that are presently being addressed: the Play Area, the Pavilion and the steps and bridges on the ramparts. At the appropriate point planning permission would be sought and a consultant was assisting the Council to bring the three areas into one. Grant fundraising could not proceed until planning permission had been granted, although some Section 106 monies had been earmarked.

(b) Rec Rooms

Councillor Holder reported that landscaping needed to be done and it was hoped that progress would have been made by the end of 2022

(c) Earthworks/Ramparts

This had been covered in the general update above

181/22

CASTLE GARDENS

(a) Castle Ruins

Councillor Keats-Rohan reported that Historic England had approved a proposal for the restoration phase and a construction company, Chichester Construction, had been appointed. They would be on site from 8 August 2022.

Action: Office to alert residents in adjoining streets, including Castle Lane, Bear Land and parts of the High Street

(b) Reinstatement of wall

Councillor Holder reported that repair work on the wall between Hallows churchyard and the Castle Gardens, which had been damaged by vandalism, had been completed. The Parks Team had opened up more of this area to make it less likely to be used for anti-social behaviour.

(c) Memorial benches

Councillor Holder reported that a location had been agreed for the Atkins white stone bench and that a new and more fitting location for the bench memorialising Jim Spence had been agreed with his family.

Action: Councillor Holder to update the Atkins family and agree a date for the benches to be repositioned

(d) Band stand

The Committee discussed the potential of a band stand on a non-scheduled monument area where the band concerts were normally held. Some Members questioned how often this would be used.

It was proposed by Councillor Lester, and seconded by Councillor Hendrie, and

RESOLVED that the Arts Working Party be asked to consider options and bring a proposal back to this Committee

Action: Reference to be made to Arts Working Party and this item be scheduled for a future meeting

(e) Water feature

It was proposed by Councillor Holder, and seconded by Councillor Keats-Rohan, and

RESOLVED that the water feature be restored in a style in keeping with a Victorian garden

Councillor Hendrie agreed to take forward this project.

Action: This matter to be brought back to this Committee or taken to Full Council

(f) Steps and lion castle wall

The Acting Parks Foreman reported that two damaged steps had been repaired using mortar resin. There was possible movement in the turret and a structural engineer had been asked to look at it.

Action: Structural engineer report to be sought to make further decision

182/22

ALLOTMENTS

(a) General update

Three members of the public spoke to this item and complained about the following:

- The lack of justification for above-inflation charges
- The lack of water pressure and the problems this was creating with the filling of the water troughs
- Failure to advertise meetings on the noticeboard allotments
- Issues with rats
- The track
- Concerns that the Council might be running down the allotments with a view to selling them

Councillor Holder explained that he had recently visited the allotments to look at the water pressure issues.

The Mayor, Councillor Harris, gave a categorical assurance that there was no intention of selling the allotments.

Councillor Holder reported that 4 allotments had been relinquished and reallocated within the last month and the number on the waiting list was currently 24.

(b) Highcroft (Site B) allotments

Councillor Holder reported that the 38 allotments would come into the Town Council's care in February or March 2023 when the 150th resident took up occupancy of their new home.

(c) Winterbrook Meadows (Site E) allotments

Councillor Holder reported that these allotments would be 'handed over' as part of Phase Four which would be around 2030.

(d) Hogweed

Councillor Holder reported that hogweed had been identified and this was being tackled as part of the similar activity being carried out on the Kinecroft.

(e) Filming

Councillor Holder reported that filming had taken place recently on Allotment 69 for the BBC Garden of the Year programme.

(f) Trophy

Councillor Holder reported that the judging would take place on 27 July 2022 and be presented at the WAGS show on 11 September 2022.

(g) Annual meeting

Councillor Holder undertook to reinstate the annual meeting of allotment holders at which matters could be addressed in a more focussed way and at which Councillors could receive feedback and answer questions directly.

Action: Councillor Holder to ask to have an area at the WAGS show and to spend a Saturday morning at the allotments to meet allotment holders. Date to be confirmed

(a) General

Councillor Whelan presented an update of the Working Group's activities. A key focus was securing clean water status at the beach area.

It was proposed by Councillor Holder, and seconded by Councillor Hendrie, and

RESOLVED that additional ways for the moorers to pay online be explored

It was proposed by Councillor Holder, and seconded by Councillor Whelan, and

RESOLVED that the government's nature guidance for the Thames be further explored and taken on board

It was proposed by Councillor Holder, and seconded by Councillor Whelan, and

RESOLVED that the Communications Working Group progress the leaflet for moorers

Actions: **Office to explore additional online payment methods for moorers;**
 Communications Working Group to take forward leaflet for moorers

(b) Winter moorings

This item would be carried forward to the meeting as it was unclear what action was required.

Action: **Office to schedule this item for the next meeting of the Committee and in the meantime investigate the nature of the issue**

(c) Anti-social behaviour

Councillor Holder reported on the recent increase in anti-social behaviour and the actions that the Town Council and others had undertaken, including a meeting with the Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and contact with local schools. There was a need to encourage residents and moorers to use the 101 or 999 (emergencies only) to make the Police aware.

(d) Refurbishment of benches

The Acting Parks Foreman reported that one bench had recently been refurbished and that there were plans for four others.

Councillor Harris left the meeting

OTHER OPEN SPACES**(a) Britain in Bloom**

Some Members reflected that the Town had won Britain in Bloom awards during the 1980s. However, when the criteria had been broadened, the Council had stopped making submissions.

It was proposed by Councillor Holder, and seconded by Councillor Lester, and

RESOLVED that the Parks Team explore making a submission for 2023, developing a proposal that could be considered at the November meeting of the Committee.

Action: **Acting Parks Foreman to develop a proposal;
Office to schedule item for the November 2022 meeting**

(b) Weed control around the Town Hall

This had already been addressed as part of the Herbicide Policy (see Minute 176/22 (c) above)

(c) Wallingford in Business: reference from the Tourism & Economic Development Committee

The Committee considered a reference from the Tourism & Economic Development Committee relating to a concern expressed by Wallingford in Business about the apparent scruffiness of the town, including poor weed control outside some shops

Councillor Holder reminded Members of the annual 'deep clean' undertaken by the South Oxfordshire District Council and the opportunity for the Town Council to suggest areas to target and to report issues on the 'Fix My Street' website.

(d) St Leonard's roundabout

Councillor Holder reported that he and the Acting Parks Foreman had met with representatives of the Oxfordshire County Council and that four solar-lit bollards would be installed in the autumn.

(e) Noticeboard and bench by LIDL

Councillor Lester showed images of the development of the bench and noticeboard for the area near LIDL. The work was being undertaken by local artists. The bench may be placed within the station.

(f) Market sockets

A member of the public spoke to this item.

Councillor Holder reported that the sockets had been inspected and made safe. One was standing proud of the pavement and was not able to go lower.

(g) Rest Garden opposite Waitrose

The Committee thanked the Acting Parks Foreman for the work that he and his team had undertaken, including the impressive display of flowers to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The Acting Parks Foreman reported that there was further work to do, including new paving and the possible installation of a metallic tree on which could be hung flower baskets, an idea he had seen at the recent Ball and Colegrave event.

It was proposed by Councillor Lester, and proposed by Councillor Whelan, and

RESOLVED that the Acting Parks Foreman develop his ideas further for consideration by the Arts Working Party before they are brought back to this Committee.

Action: Office (Parks Team) to develop specific ideas

(h) New Road green space

The Committee considered the potential of a sensory garden which might be able to be grant-funded.

It was proposed by Councillor Holder, and seconded by Councillor Whelan, and

RESOLVED that the Acting Parks Foreman develop his ideas before they are brought back to this Committee.

Action: Office (Parks Team) to develop specific ideas; Councillor Holder to apply for £1k grant funding

(i) Ball and Colegrave summer 2023

Councillor Holder and the Acting Parks Foreman reported on their recent visit to this event at which summer bedding plants and schemes were being showcased for summer 2023.

(j) Biannual tree survey

Councillor Holder reported that this would be carried out by thinktrees in September.

(k) Christmas tree and lights

Councillor Holder explained that it was the intention to use the size of last year's tree as a guide for this coming Christmas.

Action: Councillor Holder to speak to the Office about this

185/22

EVENTS

The Committee NOTED public events that would be held on the Bull Croft and Kinecroft, and in the Castle Gardens and Market Place, over forthcoming months, as listed on the agenda.

186/22

PARKS TEAM

(a) General

The Acting Parks Foreman gave a general update, including their work for Mayor's Sunday and the Platinum Jubilee Weekend. The Committee congratulated and thanked the Parks Team for what they had achieved.

It was proposed by Councillor Lester, and seconded by Councillor Keats-Rohan, and

RESOLVED that the Acting Parks Foreman's proposal for a winter basket trial and other winter planting be fully endorsed and supported

(b) Staff structure and job titles

Councillor Holder reported that the Town Clerk, he and the Acting Parks Foreman were reviewing the staffing structure required for the remainder of the calendar year and for the medium term, including job titles and the potential of grounds and maintenance teams. Any proposed changes would go to the Personnel Committee.

Action: Proposal to go to the Personnel Committee when ready

(c) Vehicles and equipment

Councillor Holder reported the Full Council's recent decision to hire a mini flail mower collector in the first instance, for the 'low mow' areas, before deciding whether to purchase

(d) Upcoming seasonal work schedules

Councillor Holder and the Acting Parks Foreman updated the Committee on upcoming work schedules which had been circulated.

(e) Bulb planting in autumn 2022

The Acting Parks Foreman updated the Committee on bulb planting for the coming autumn.

(f) Poles and lantern

The Acting Parks Foreman updated the Committee on repairs to the poles and lanterns in the Market Place.

187/22

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The following items were identified for future meetings:

- Allotment policy
- Committee meetings – frequency and timing
- Water feature, Castle Gardens (Councillor Hendrie)
- Band Stand, Castle Gardens (once considered by the Arts WP)
- Additional online payments, moorings
- Britain in Bloom, proposal by Acting Parks Foreman (November 2022)
- Rest Garden, opposite Waitrose, further developments, proposal by Acting Parks Foreman
- New Road green space, proposal by Acting Parks Foreman
- Update from the annual meeting of allotment holders
- Tree health survey

The meeting ended at 9.44 pm

Minutes of the meeting of the
Parks, Gardens, Allotments and Open Spaces Committee
held on
25 July 2022,
signed as a correct record

Chairman

2022-07-25 PKS minutes