



Wallingford Town Council

MINUTES
of a meeting of the
PARKS, GARDENS, ALLOTMENTS &
OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE
held on Monday 6 February 2023 at 7.00 pm
in Wallingford Town Hall

Present

Members: Cllr Sue Hendrie
Cllr Steve Holder (Chairman)
Cllr Katharine Keats-Rohan (from Minute 572/22 onwards)
Cllr Mike Kidley
Cllr Katharine Keats-Rohan
Cllr Rosslyn Lester (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr Deborah Whelan

Officers: Duncan Kent, Head of Parks & Estates
Scott Wells, Parks & Estates Manager
Luke Whitcomb, Meetings Officer

Others: 7 members of the public
0 members of the press

568/22 MEETING PROTOCOL

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

569/22 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Holford.

Councillor Sinkinson did not attend.

570/22 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No interests were declared.

571/22

MINUTES

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

RESOLVED that, subject to the change in the number of members of the public to 1, the minutes of the meeting of the Parks, Gardens, and Allotments & Open Spaces Committee held on 21 November 2022 and the Chairman is authorised to sign them

572/22

ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee reviewed progress on 'open' actions agreed at previous meetings.

573/22

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Two members of the public spoke about the work of Wild about Wallingford over the past year, including the planting of two community orchards and work with the Town Council on 'low mow' areas. Surveying would be a priority in the coming year.

Three members of the public, all event organisers, were invited by the Chairman to speak under the next item.

574/22

EVENTS ON OPEN SPACES

The Committee NOTED confirmed events that would be taking place on open spaces over the next few months, including the annual Wallingford 1155 litter pick, the car rally, activities to mark the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III, band concerts on Castle Gardens, the Carnival, the Michaelmas Fair, the Fireworks and Bunkfest.

The organisers of Bunkfest, the Fireworks and the Car Rally spoke about the way they continued to be responsive to concerns expressed by members of the public, including noise, footfall, parking and sustainability. Noise and footfall levels were all within licence requirements and WHO recommendations. The organisers were thanked for the significant contribution that these annual events made to the life of the Town.

Councillor Whelan reported that the Mikron Theatre Company had confirmed a performance at the Riverside on 29 July 2023. This was being overseen by the Tourism and Economic Development Committee.

575/22

HEAD OF PARKS & ESTATES

The Committee welcomed Mr Duncan Kent to the role of Head of Parks and Estates. He had joined six weeks ago.

576/22

GENERAL MATTERS

The Committee a general report by the Parks and Estates Manager, including a report on the six-monthly walk around which had placed additional focus on the allotments.

The Parks and Estates Team were thanked in particular for the winter baskets and garlands in St Martin's Street which had been a new feature.

577/22

CLIMATE ACTION

The Chairman reported that the Town Council's commitments to climate change and ecology were being treated as part of the same pledge. The South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) had recently signed up to two separate pledges.

The topic of 'low mow' areas had already been covered in the oral report by Wild About Wallingford (Minute 573/22).

Work continued by the OX10 Group on the Queen's Green Canopy. Over 1k trees had been planted as part of this initiative. The statement tree to mark Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee would be arriving over the next few days and would be planted in the Castle Gardens as a further symbol of the Town's historic royalist sympathies.

Plant species studies had already been covered in the oral report by Wild about Wallingford (Minute 573/22).

A 'rake, seed and stamp' event was to be held for the wildflower area on the site of the rec rooms.

578/22

POLICIES

The Committee considered some small changes to two policies.

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

RECOMMENDED that the amendments to the tree/hedges and herbicide policies be approved

579/22

KINECROFT

The Chairman reported that the tree surgeon was coming to take an aerial survey of the horse chestnut tree by the Coach and Horses Public House and to

remove the branches that were causing risks to health and safety. After this, the Heras fencing would be removed.

The Full Council were considering the latest estimates for maintaining the tree.

The Head of Parks and Estates reported that discussions had started with Historic England about the planting of a further horse chestnut tree.

580/22

BULL CROFT

(a) Lighting

The Committee NOTED that the Bull Croft Working Party were considering how best to take forward the issue of lighting which had been raised at a recent meeting of the Full Council and which had been discussed in previous years. This was considered a challenging issue to solve.

(b) Planning update

The Chairman reported that a meeting was shortly to be held with some residents of Castle Street regarding the Bull Croft Trust's planning application.

(c) Volunteer and landscape management plan update

The current priority was the north-east and north-west area of the park. The intention was to undertake the work using volunteers before the bird nesting season. The Town Council was required to give SODC notice of this, but the District Council had already indicated that they would not object.

581/22

CASTLE GARDENS

(a) Castle ruins

The conservation work was nearly completed but the lime mortar had to be given time to settle. If possible the site should be opened in time for the Easter holidays, provided that did not put in jeopardy the work that had been undertaken. Full Council would receive an update in due course.

(b) Queen's Platinum Jubilee tree

The best date for the ceremonial planting seemed to be 25 February 2023 at 3.00 pm.

(c) Open and closing times

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

RECOMMENDED that the access times for Castle Gardens be extended to include the end of the October school holidays, with open times being 8.30 am to 5.00 pm for the period 1 to 31 October, after which the closing time would be 3.00pm until 1 April

(d) Tree map and overview

The Chairman reported that the trees in Castle Gardens had now been mapped listing them individually including features such as diameter, height, vitality, maturity and life expectancy.

(e) Memorial bench

The Committee were shown the new designs for the Atkins memorial bench which was bigger than originally envisaged.

582/22

ALLOTMENTS

(a) Dog policy and combination lock gate

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

RECOMMENDED that the dog policy be brought into line with the recommendation of the National Allotment Society, allowing dogs on the Council's allotments provided they were tethered and responsibly supervised by their owners

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

RECOMMENDED that a combination lock be installed by 1 March 2023 for a trial

(b) New posts, filling and hedging

The Head of Parks and Estates reported on repair work to reinforce fencing, including to decaying stanchions.

(c) Waiting list

There were currently 26 people on the waiting list.

(d) New allotments, footpath and track

This had now been re-opened but not officially handed back to the Town Council.

(e) Update from National Allotment Society

The Committee received a paper from the National Allotment Society, 21st Century Allotments in New Developments, which would inform the Town Council's approaches and policies.

583/22

RIVERSIDE

The Committee received a report from the Riverside Working Party for which it was the sponsoring body.

The Chairman corrected two statements made in the report: the original version of the application to DEFRA had been withdrawn because it was unauthorised and that BACS in addition to QR codes and the website was proving a highly effective method of payment.

The Head of Parks and Estates reported that the previous works to address the sink hole now needed to be updated.

584/22

REST GARDEN

The Committee considered some initial, indicative designs for an art installation to mark the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III. Because public arts monies were being used, it would be necessary to secure three quotations from different blacksmiths. The existing flower bed was mentioned in the Conservation Area Assessment and therefore needed to be considered in the overall design for the area and applications for planning consent.

The Parks and Estates Team would be developing a clear brief.

585/22

OTHER OPEN SPACES

(a) Telephone boxes

The Chairman reported that the two additional phone boxes were no longer available for adoption because there was sufficient call volumes or due to the need for 999 calls. The Council already owned two boxes in St George's Road and St John's Road. A fifth box at the Railway house a defibrillator.

(b) Tree survey review

This had been covered in Minute 581/22

(c) Tree works update

This was scheduled to be before nesting season.

586/22 NEW ROAD SENSORY GARDEN

The Chairman reported that a survey was being planned to inform the development of this garden.

587/22 BRITAIN IN BLOOM

The Full Council had already lent their support to an application by Wallingford. However help was needed with the documentation for which the deadline was July. Councillor Kidley offered to help with this.

588/22 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The following items have already been identified:

- Working Party review
- Castle Motte
- Electric vehicles to replace diesel ones
- Policy for allotments
- Allotment holders to be invited for July meeting
- Sink hole
- Rest Garden – hanging basket tree

The meeting ended at 9.00 pm

Minutes of the meeting of the
Parks, Gardens, Allotments and Open Spaces Committee
held on

6 February 2023,

signed as a correct record

Chairman

2023-02-06 PKS minutes CONFIDENTIAL