



Wallingford Town Council

**MINUTES  
of a meeting of the  
PARKS, GARDENS, ALLOTMENTS &  
OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE  
held on Monday, 5 June 2023 at 7.00 pm  
in Wallingford Town Hall**

**Present**

**Members:** Cllr Sue Hendrie  
Cllr Steve Holder (Chairman from Minute 47/23 onwards)  
Cllr Katharine Keats-Rohan  
Cllr Ros Lester (Vice-Chairman from Minute 48/23 onwards)

**Officers:** Duncan Kent, Head of Parks & Estates  
Luke Whitcomb, Meetings Officer

**Others:** 1 member of the public  
0 members of the press

**46/23      ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

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

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Holder be elected Chairman for the 2023-2024 Municipal Year

**47/23      ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

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

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Lester be elected Vice-Chairman for the 2023-2024 Municipal Year.

**48/23      MEETING PROTOCOL**

The Chairman outlined the protocol that would be following in the conduct of the meeting.

49/23

**APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Margarido.

Councillor Acreman did not attend.

50/23

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No interests were declared.

51/23

**MINUTES**

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

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Parks, Gardens, Allotments and Open Spaces Committee held on 6 February 2023 be approved as a correct record and the Chairman is authorised to sign them

52/23

**ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

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

53/23

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

One member of the public attended and spoke to the item on Climate Change minuted as 60/23 below.

54/23

**GENERAL OVERVIEW**

The Head of Parks and Estates presented an overview of the outdoor spaces which the Town Council owned or was responsible for.

**Action:**

**The presentation slide deck to be circulated to all new Town Councillors**

55/23

**ALLOTMENTS**

The Chairman reported that the 38 new allotments which had been created as part of Highcroft (Site B) housing development would be handed over in July or August 2023. These were for personal and family use only.

There was a need for guidelines on the size and location of sheds. There was also a need to avoid the existing allotments becoming a place where new allotment holders parked as sufficient access had been provided elsewhere.

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

**RESOLVED** that, given the next meeting of the Committee would not be until September 2023, the Town Clerk and Chairman of the Parks, Gardens, Allotments and Open Spaces Committee be given delegated responsibility for all matters relating to the new allotments until then

**Action:**

**Ask the developers St Joseph's (Berkeley Homes) to provide a small shed for each of the new allotments, thus determining uniformity**

**56/23**

**ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

The Committee recognised that anti-social behaviour was not synonymous with young people. However, a number of youth initiatives were discussed.

The Chairman reported that the Mayor, Councillor Beauchamp, was meeting with the leaders of the Didcot youth project TRAIN, about the possibility of them providing something similar in Wallingford, including pop-ups.

The OX10 Community Group was holding a meeting with all stakeholders interested in youth provision.

David Johnston MP was also holding a Crime Summit on 15 June 2023, using Waitrose as the venue.

The Town Council was still waiting to hear back from Historic England about the Heritage Crime Pilots for which Wallingford had been put forward.

Biking on the ramparts in the Kinecroft and Bull Croft continued to be a problem, damaging the historic earthworks. It had been particularly bad during the Easter school holidays.

Graffiti continued to be a challenge and had yet to be removed from the Centre 70 building. There had been offers to help support the trustees of Centre 70. Training in the use of the cleaning chemicals was essential. (See also Minute 62/23(d) below)

**57/23**

**BULL CROFT – PLANNING UPDATE**

The Committee considered the Planning Officer's comments and recommendations on the Town Council's application and how the Council's

agents, Bluestone Planning, proposed to modify the original plans. This included the need to move the playground further away (an extra five meters) from the nearest neighbouring residential boundary) which had other implications.

The Chairman expressed thanks for the support of the Wallingford Historical & Archaeological Society (TWHAS) with archaeological evaluation.

There was continuing correspondence between the Planning Officer and some of the residents in Castle Street. A new application would be submitted once the response deadline of 11 July had been passed.

The new District Councillor James Barlow had been briefed on the Town Council's plans and proposals.

**58/23**

### **SEASONAL REPORT**

The Committee received a seasonal written report from the Parks and Estates Manager which made clear the amount of training that had been undertaken recently.

A lot of positive comment continued to be received about the work of the Parks and Estates Team and the Chairman - on behalf of the Committee - expressed his thanks to Mr Scott Wells, Parks and Estates Manager for his enthusiastic and imaginative leadership of the team since taking on the role six months ago.

**59/23**

### **TEAM UPDATE**

The Chairman reported that Mr Duncan Kent, Head of Parks and Estates, would be leaving the Town Council at the end of June or thereabouts.

The vacant and modified role of Parks Warden had been filled.

Ms Angie Dickinson, Mooring Collections Officer and Park Warden, had recently left after 9 years' employment with the Town Council. The vacant part-time Parks Warden role would be advertised the following week.

**60/23**

### **CLIMATE ACTION**

The Committee received updates on a number of climate change-related actions, including the Council's low mow areas, hedgerow planting and tree-planting. The Queen's Green Canopy had been successful but had now ended. However tree-planting initiatives continued. The latest new tree to be planted had been in New Road.

In future, the continuing commitments and action plans of both Oxfordshire County Council and South Oxfordshire District Council were likely to lead to further parish and community initiatives.

Although the Neighbourhood Plan, which was currently being revised, was primarily a planning document, it was also a key vehicle for continued emphasis on the ecological welfare of the town.

A member of the public, a representative of the OX10 Community Group, and asked the Committee for a summary of the progress made since the Town Council's climate change and ecological pledge in 2020 (Full Council, 18 May 2020, Minute 19).

Councillor Keats-Rohan, who had proposed the original pledge, was the principal respondent to these questions. She reminded Members and the public that the original pledge had been controversial and was only narrowly passed at Full Council. The initial working group no longer existed as it had not proved the most effective vehicle. However since then climate change considerations had become mainstream in much of the Council's thinking and in committee discussion, driven partly by legislative requirements, including energy efficiencies in all the buildings that the Council owned, including let properties, and the actions undertaken by the Parks and Estates Team including the low mow areas and tree and hedgerow planting.

**Action:**

**The Town Council's climate action progress and ecological achievements since 2020 to be grouped in one place on the Town Council website**

61/23

**KINECROFT**

**(a) Coach and Horses Pub, Horse chestnut tree**

The Chairman reported that a final decision had been deferred by the Full Council to October 2023 to see what improvements (if any) had appeared following the interventions that had already been made.

**(b) Drainage**

There continued to be some drainage issues, with a particularly wet patch near the Coach and Horses Pub. Temporary measures had been taken and some examples posted on the OCC Fix-My-Street website.

**(c) Historic earthworks**

These had been talked about earlier (Minute 56/23))

**62/23**

**BULL CROFT**

**(a) Football pitches**

The Head of Parks and Estates reported that there was the potential of funding from the Football Association (FA) for the resurfacing of the football pitches. This would involve a management agreement.

**(b) Tennis courts**

A practical challenge had arisen with the completion of the new operating model involving the Lawn Tennis Association and the National Tennis Association. The contractors believed they would struggle to get their large vehicles through the gates. Alternative access from St George's Road would involve a costly metal track.

**(c) Lighting strategy**

Work was progressing as part of a wider consideration of lighting in parks.

**(d) Graffiti strategy**

This had been discussed earlier (Minute 56/23). The Parks and Estates Team were now stocking the removal chemicals and also invested in brick sealant. It was important that the graffiti was photographed before it was reported to the Police.

**(e) Volunteer and landscape management plan**

This had been reported in the seasonal update from the Parks and Estates Manager (Minute 58/23). There was a need for a regular programme of volunteer engagement.

**63/23**

**CASTLE GARDENS**

**(a) Castle ruins**

The conservation work had now been completed and the ruins opened to the public. There was some concern about damage that was already been caused by children playing on delicate areas.

**Action:**

The Chairman to speak to Historic England about an official opening and to pick up with the Mayor

**(b) Queen's Diamond Jubilee tree**

This had been planted in February 2023

**(c) Water feature and flint folly**

This had now been repaired.

64/23

**ALLOTMENTS**

**(a) Combination lock gate**

A combination lock had been installed at the request of some allotment holders, but this had already been vandalised. Some allotment holders had not been in favour of the lock.

**(b) New posts, filling and hedging**

This had now been completed

**(c) Waiting list**

There were believed to be around 30 on the waiting list, but at the same time the Council was shortly to be given 38 new allotments (including raised beds) as part of the Highcroft (Site B) housing development

**(d) Footpath and track to/from Highcroft housing development**

This would be officially opened at the end of June 2023.

**(e) Annual meeting with allotment holders**

This had already been covered earlier in the meeting (Minute 52/23). The annual meeting would be held on 16 September 2023 and a drop-in surgery was also being organised for the Wallingford Allotments and Gardens Society Autumn Show on 9 September 2023.

65/23

**RIVERSIDE**

**(a) Wallingford Accessible Boat Club**

An agreement was being pursued with the Greene King brewery company

**(b) Tree management**

This remained a concern, including for the Environment Agency. There were ongoing discussions about the ownership of this stretch of the river, although the Town Council believed it belonged to the District Council

66/23

**BRITAIN IN BLOOM**

This had already been covered earlier in the meeting (Minute 52/23). The Full Council had approved the formation of an Ad Hoc Working. This submission – the first in a while - was being used to receive feedback as a ‘test case’ enabling the Town Council to submit further applications in the future. A tour of the town was being arranged on 4 July 2023 for judges, highlighting specific areas.

67/23

**EVENTS**

The Committee NOTED public events that would be taking place on Council-owned land over the forthcoming months.

68/23

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

The Committee identified the following items for future meetings:

- Castle Motte
- Electric vehicles to replace diesel ones
- Policy for new allotments
- Trees on the Harwell ‘hot dog’
- Six-month walkaround
- Health and safety audit
- Ash dieback and horse chestnut tree
- Allotment judging – date needed from Senior Office or Head of Parks and Estates

The meeting ended at 9.05 pm

Minutes of the meeting of the



Parks, Gardens, Allotments and Open Spaces Committee  
held on  
5 June 2023,  
signed as a correct record

Chairman

2023-06-05 PKS minutes PUBLIC