

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE WOODSTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE HELD AT 7:55 PM
ON TUESDAY 23rd AUGUST 2016
IN THE MAYOR'S PARLOUR,
WOODSTOCK TOWN HALL**

PRESENT:

Cllr S Parnes (Chairman)

Cllr F Collingwood (Deputy Mayor)

Cllr Mrs A Grant

Cllr Mrs S Rasch

Cllr B Yoxall (substituting for Cllr P Redpath)

Also in Attendance: Cllr P Jay and one resident.

EC/17/16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs E Poskitt (Mayor), P Redpath, and Mrs E Stokes.

The Chairman asked that in future any substitutions be notified to him as well as the Town Clerk beforehand.

EC/18/16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: None.

EC/19/16 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Environment Committee held on 28th June 2016 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman of the Environment Committee.

EC/20/16 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Mr John Hodges addressed the Committee about the ownership of part of the watermeadows that borders Brook Hill. He queried why the WTC land registration did not include this land. Cllrs reiterated their understanding of the situation and re-confirmed that WTC does not own this land. An extract was read out from a report that detailed the transfer of the ownership of the land in question when this area of Woodstock was developed. This will be copied to Mr Hodges and a copy retained in the Town Hall. The Town Clerk will also give Mr Hodges copies of other relevant information held on WTC's files. Mr Hodges was advised to contact the District Council, as it took over Borough land that was not passed to WTC, and also the Oxfordshire County archive.

EC/21/16 MOTIONS. None.

EC/22/16 WATERMEADOWS UPDATE.

(i) Annual Inspection:

It was noted that the RoSPA Inspector and Wychwood project have been made aware of the fourth access onto the Water Meadows at Brook Hill. The Wychwood project has also been notified about sink holes appearing along the path that is adjacent to the mill stream.

The Wychwood Project would like to attach the life belts to their stands using quick release ties provided by Owen Mumford's and also install discreet signage asking that the belts should not be removed. The Town Clerk has asked that the Director of the Wychwood Project test the proposed ties before installation to confirm that they are easy to snap and could be released by a child if required.

ACTIONS:

1. *The Town Clerk will notify the Wychwood Project about a trip hazard at the big bridge that was reported by a Cllr at the EC meeting.*
2. *The Town Clerk asked Cllrs to report any future issues identified at the water meadows directly to the office so that they can be notified to the Wychwood Project in a timely way.*

(ii) Request from a Resident to Buy Land at the Water Meadows

An email from a resident was received and considered that contained two matters:

- (a) A request for permission to trim back some overhanging foliage from trees on the watermeadows that overhang a shared drive.

RESOLVED that the EC is happy for the resident to trim this foliage.

- (b) An enquiry as to whether the Town Council might sell a small area of its land by the Lower Brook Hill garages for additional parking purposes. Discussion followed during which it was noted that this land was gifted and so probably included a condition against its being sold and that even if the Council was inclined to sell it the regulations about the sale of a capital asset would apply. The Environment Committee

RECOMMENDATION to the Council is that it does not agree to sell this land.

ACTION: *The Clerk will:*

1. *Give permission for the foliage to be cut*
2. *Advise the resident that the enquiry about the sale of land will be considered by the full Council.*

EC/23/16 TREES AT THE OWL: It was noted that WODC has confirmed that no Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) apply to trees on the OWL nature reserve.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk therefore comply with the action previously agreed at minute EC/9/16 *"that if the tree in question is not the subject of a TPO that the resident be invited to cut the branch off at his own cost."*

ACTION: *The Town Clerk will notify the resident.*

EC/24/16 OWL STATUS REVIEW INCLUDING AND UPDATE ON SIGNAGE AND ASBESTOS

- (i) Asbestos panels have been left on the OWL reserve. Although the Council will take action against anyone who 'fly-tips' on it's it has not

been possible to identify who is responsible for this action. As asbestos is a health hazard it must be removed and so a quote has already been obtained and this was presented to the Committee. There is no budget for this work but it is a matter that needs urgent attention and will be within the Town Clerks delegated authority.

The Deputy Mayor proposed, Cllr B Yoxall seconded the motion and the Environment Committee

RESOLVED (unanimous) that the Town Clerk use her delegated authority to commission the removal of the asbestos from the OWL reserve.

ACTION: *The Town Clerk will arrange for the asbestos to be removed.*

(ii) Signage: A sign situated inside the grounds of the Marlborough School was blocked by vegetation. It has been removed. The Environment Committee decided that as the sign did not belong to WTC it should be reinstated.

ACTION: *The Town Clerk will arrange for the sign to be re-instated.*

EC/25/16 **OWL EXTENSION:** Committee members noted that more maintenance is required at the OWL reserve and that there is money included in the Green Gym budget allocation that could pay for this.

Cllr Mrs A Grant proposed, the Chairman of the Environment Committee seconded the motion and the Committee

RESOLVED (unanimous) that the Green Gym be asked to undertake maintenance work at the OWL reserve.

EC/26/16 **CEMETERIES:** Cllr Mrs A Grant offered to work with the staff on matters relating to the cemeteries.

The Town Clerk reported that old floral tributes and flower wrappings are sometimes blown around by the wind and make the Green Lane cemetery look untidy. WODC have provided details of their hourly charge rate for litter collection as and when required. Before any work would be undertaken WODC would assess the work and send a quote to the Town Clerk for approval. Discussion followed. Cllrs were unclear whether there was any money available for this in the cemeteries budget and so no action be taken at this stage.

ACTION: *Cllr Mrs A Grant will meet with the Town Clerk and Finance Assistant to confirm the fixed and variable elements of the Green Lane and other cemetery budgets for this year.*

It was noted that contractors' equipment is scattering loose gravel at the top of the slope outside the lych-gate at the Green Lane cemetery.

ACTIONS:

1. *The Town Clerk will ask the grass cutting contractor to ensure that any loose gravel displaced by their equipment is swept back up the slope and back inside the cemetery after they have finished work in the cemetery.*
2. *The funeral directors will be asked to require the grave diggers employed by them to ensure that any loose gravel displaced by their equipment is swept back up the slope back inside the cemetery after they have prepared a grave.*

EC/27/16 COMMITTEE MEMBERS' VOLUNTARY ROLES: Cllr Mrs A Grant agreed to be the Cllr looking after cemeteries. The Chairman of the EC will approach other EC members to discuss whether they can lead on other work that comes under the remit of the EC. He will report back to the next EC meeting.

ACTION: *This item will be brought forward to the next meeting.*

EC/28/16 STATE OF TOWN CENTRE: Cllrs received and considered correspondence from a resident about the state of the town centre and shop closures. Cllrs suggested that several new shops would soon be opening and that therefore the issue may not be quite as bad as suggested. It was noted that a Cllr is proposing to bring a new initiative for consideration at the September Council meeting that might also help to address this issue.

Cllr S Rasch proposed, the Deputy Mayor seconded the motion and the EC

RESOLVED (unanimous) that the Town Clerk thank the resident for their email and advise them that the matter is in hand.

EC/29/16 AIR QUALITY IN THE TOWN: This item was deferred until the next EC meeting.

EC/30/16 REPORT ON THE PLAY AREAS: It was noted that the Town Clerk will be sending a letter to Mrs Parkinson as agreed by Council.

EC/31/16 BUDGET REVIEW CONSIDERATIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS: Cllr P Jay explained the budget review process. Discussion followed. Some items suggested by the Town Clerk will be considered when the 2017/18 EC budget bid is prepared for submission. It was noted that part of the fence that contains the cows is broken and needs replacing. The Wychwood Project is currently getting quotes for the work.

ACTIONS:

1. *The Wychwood Project will be asked for a progress report about the clearance of Himalayan Balsam at the Water Meadows.*
2. *The Town Clerk will arrange for a copy of the Wychwood Project contract documents to be sent to all members of the EC.*

EC/32/16 COUNTRY FILE DEBRIEF:

ACTION: *The Clerk will confirm that the WTC response had been sent to WODC licensing and copy it to all Cllrs.*

EC/33/16 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS: The Committee received and considered an offer from a resident to provide funding towards lighting an additional tree on the Oxford Road as part of the Christmas Lights display. There were concerns about the additional cost of doing this and that it might set a precedent for future years when such a kind donation may not be available. A second resident has kindly offered a donation towards the Christmas Lights in response to the item in the recent WTC newsletter.

ACTIONS:

1. *The residents will be thanked for their offers*
2. *The Town Clerk will investigate the costs of lighting an additional tree and report back.*

Cllr Mrs A Grant has suggested a fundraising initiative to help fund the Christmas Lights which will need to be discussed by the Full Council.

ACTION: *This item will be included on the agenda for the September TC meeting.*

The meeting finished at 9.35 pm.

Signed.....

Date:.....