

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE WOODSTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE HELD AT 7:30 PM
ON TUESDAY 23rd JUNE 2015
IN THE MAYOR'S PARLOUR,
WOODSTOCK TOWN HALL**

PRESENT:

Cllr P Jay
Cllr Mrs E Jay

Cllr E Poskitt (Mayor)
Cllr Mrs S Rasch

Also in Attendance: Cllr J Cooper and twelve residents.

EC/1/15 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN: The Mayor proposed that Cllr P Jay be elected as Chairman of the Environment Committee and Cllr S Rasch seconded the nomination. Cllr P Jay accepted the nomination but noted that he would be happy for another Cllr to take on the roll. No other Cllr wished to be considered and so Cllr P Jay was duly elected.

EC/2/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Cllrs C Carritt, L Maybury and Mrs E Stokes.

EC/3/15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: No pecuniary interests were declared. Cllrs E Poskitt and J Cooper both declared a general interest in the Agenda item 8 Planning, as they are West Oxfordshire District (WODC) Cllrs and Cllr Poskitt is involved in planning.

EC/4/15 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Environment Committee held on 28th April 2015 were approved as a true record subject to the following amendments:

EC/57/14: the resolution was amended to read "Resolved (unanimous) that no further action is taken on this matter.

EC/58/14 (ii): The spelling of the contractors name was corrected.

EC/60/14 (v): The word 'brakes' was deleted in the seventh line and replaced with the word 'breaks'.

The minutes were then signed by the Chairman of the Environment Committee.

EC/5/15 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

(I) Dr R McGurrian addressed the Council about residents' concerns about activities in the New Road Play Area primarily related to noise and the playing of football on the multi user play area.

(II) Mr K Larkin addressed the Council about his concerns about planning application Ref: 15/01940/LBC & 15/01949/HHD – 120 Manor Road. These were primarily concerned about the proposed location for parked cars.

EC/6/15 **PLANNING:** Cllrs E Poskitt and J Cooper both declared a general interest. The following applications were received and considered:

a) Ref: 15/01940/LBC and 15/01949/HHD – 120 Manor Road, Woodstock: 3no. replacement windows, porch and creation of parking with curtilage.

RESOLVED that WTC **objects** to this planning application under policy BE2 and because of the following concerns:

- (i) Concerns about access to and from the proposed parking area on to the main road
- (ii) Suggestions that some trees may have already been removed without planning permission
- (iii) The detrimental effect that the current proposals would have on the neighbour living at number 22

ACTIONS:

1. *Mr Larkin will send additional information to the Town Clerk before noon tomorrow for forwarding to WODC along with the WTC objection.*
2. *The Town Clerk will draw the attention of WODC to the information supplied by Mr Larkin and ask them to note the comments therein.*

b) Ref: 15/02119/HHD – 32 Westland Way, Woodstock: Erection of single storey rear extension.

RESOLVED that WTC wishes to make no comment about this planning application.

c) Ref: 15/02168/HHD – 6 Crecy Walk, Woodstock: Two storey extension with single storey element and storm porch.

RESOLVED that WTC wishes to make no comment about this planning application.

d) Ref: 15/02183/HHD – 9 Vanbrugh Close, Woodstock: Erection of front and rear dormer windows.

RESOLVED that WTC wishes to make no comment about this planning application.

ACTION: *The planning responses will be sent to WODC.*

EC/7/15 **COMMUNITY PAYBACK WORKERS:**

The Committee received and considered a report and recommendations from the Town Clerk. The Community Payback team is organised by the probation service and undertakes tasks in Woodstock including clearing overgrown footpaths and general clearance work in the Hensington Road cemetery. In the middle of May they came and did some clearance work in the Hensington Road cemetery. The timing of this work concerned several

residents who were worried about the effect on birds. The Environment Committee

RRSOLVED: That

1. WTC will engage the Probation service to undertake future Hensington Road cemetery maintenance work during September and October from now on.
2. We will put notices up in the cemetery the week beforehand to inform residents that the Community Payback Team will be working there.

The Community Payback team is now working at the Woodstock Water Meadows and we have received no complaints about their work at this site.

EC/8/15

WATERMEADOWS

(i) Cows at the Woodstock Water Meadows: Cllr Mrs E Jay was thanked for the extensive work that she had undertaken in order to arrange for cows to graze the Water Meadows. Four cows belonging to Mrs Collier from Tackley have now been re-introduced and WTC thanked Mrs Collier for supplying the cattle. WTC also thanked the team of volunteers who are now checking the cows on a daily basis.

(ii) Repair to a Footbridge in the Water Meadows: A report from the Town Clerk was received and considered. WTC contracts WODC staff to do weekly inspections of all of the play areas and the Water Meadows and to undertake minor repairs in these areas. The WODC team recently reported that a footbridge was collapsing and in need of urgent repair. It was therefore taped off and closed to the public. Photographs of the damage were circulated to members of the Committee. The bridge runs parallel to Oxford Street and enables people to cross the stream that runs through the water meadows and exit through the Lower Brook Hill exit. Thomas Fox Landscaping already had a team on site when the collapsed bridge was reported and so were able to assess the damage, to measure up the materials required for the repair and to provide a quote for the work.

RESOLVED: That this work is authorised on a one quote basis at a cost of £888.40 plus VAT so that it can be undertaken as quickly as possible. Because this footbridge is frequently used by residents and visitors to the water meadows, it is currently a health and safety issue, and some of the materials will take 7 working days to arrive from the supplier.

(iii) Possible Contracting Out of the Water Meadows Maintenance: Mrs E Jay asked whether the Environment Committee would give approval for her to investigate contracting out the management and maintenance to a professional external organisation. She had already discussed this possibility with Nicholson's Nursery in Middle Aston; and the Wychwood Project has indicated that it may also be interested

RESOLVED that Cllr E Jay should explore this idea further and then report back to the Environment Committee.

(iv) Other Matters Relating to the Water Meadows

The budget for the Water Meadows was discussed Cllr Mrs E Jay suggested that £15.6k should be the annual maintenance budget from now on and explained how this money would be spent.

RESOLVED that a revised total annual budget for the Water Meadows is submitted as £15.6k during the budget review.

ACTION: *Cllr Mrs E Jay will submit details of the budget requirements for increased spend on the Water Meadows for inclusion in the budget review.*

EC/9/15

PLAY AREAS

(i) Annual RoSPA Report

Cllrs received and considered the Annual RoSPA Report that Wicksteed Leisure had undertaken in Woodstock this year, free of charge, as part of their contract for the refurbishment of the play areas.

Recommendations to Council: That Woodstock Town Council approves the following maintenance work and employs Wicksteed to undertake the repairs recommended as follows:

- **Wet pour repairs at Old Woodstock Play Area at a cost of £1658.00 plus VAT**

The EC **RESOLVED** that:

- a) It approves the maintenance work on equipment at Budds Close costing £120.75 plus VAT
- b) WODC be asked to confirm whether the changes required at the New Road playground are covered under warranty. If not, WTC will employ Wicksteed to undertake the necessary work at a total cost of £160.00 plus VAT
- c) Woodstock Town Council asks Thomas Fox Landscaping to top up the play bark around the equipment at New Road and Budds Close as follows:
 - Budds Close £432.16 plus VAT
 - New Road £704.32 plus VAT

(ii) New Road Fencing Repairs

Further to the damage reported by Mr and Mrs Parkinson at the Town Council meeting on 9th June 2015 the Town Clerk had arranged for:

- a) One new fence 6' panel to be installed between the play area and their property to replace the one that had been damaged.
- b) The removal of a stretch of broken wire fence along the WTC boundary.

c) The repair of the wooden fence between the New Road Play Area and the car park. This is an old fence that has been there many years. So the repair is considered a temporary measure whilst the Clerk explores grant opportunities that may enable a replacement metal fence to be installed.

A quote of £1208.00 plus VAT had been obtained for 12 mature fast growing hedging plants that could be planted on the WTC side in front of the new fence panels.

Whilst on site the Town Clerk and Thomas Fox were able to look at the fence in a neighbouring garden that had been installed to stop footballs from the Football Club. The Town Council had previously been supplied with a link to the web site of the supplier of this fence.

RESOLVED:

1. The Town Clerk will try to confirm the price of purchasing and installing the fence recommended by the resident along the stretch of their boundary that is affected by footballs. It is hoped that this information can be brought to Council in July.
2. The full council is asked to consider the installation of hedging plants before any decision is taken.

A letter had arrived that day from a firm of solicitors working on behalf of a resident living adjacent to the New Road Play Area.

(iii) Repairs to the pitch at Old Woodstock

Quotes for this repair are currently being sought by the Administrative Assistant.

(iv) Vandalism at Budds Close

During week beginning 8th June WODC reported vandalism and graffiti at the Budds Close play area. The report was notified to PCSO Workman and registered with the police as criminal damage. The WODC employees repaired the damage and removed the graffiti. Over the following weekend more graffiti were sprayed around the play area. These were cleaned up by PCSO Workman who advised that he would talk to the children who attend the school.

On Monday 15th June WODC staff reported further more extensive graffiti at the play area – some of which were abusive. The Town Clerk lodged a further incidence of criminal damage with the police and WODC again cleaned this up. PCSO Workman placed a police notice at the site.

On Wednesday 17th June the police informed the Town Clerk that they were following up a lead in relation to this criminal damage. They explained the process that they would follow to try to resolve the situation and recover the cost of the damage from the families of those involved.

RESOLVED That the police, in particular PCSO Phil Workman, are thanked for their rapid response to this incident.

EC/10/15 CEMETERIES: The EC received and considered a report from the Town Clerk. The following was noted:

(i) Preparing the new cemetery extension: The latest situation is as follows:

a) A quote for a maximum cost of £250 has been received for altering the central flower bed in the existing cemetery. The work will comprise removing and disposing of the existing shrubs around the cherry tree, laying a weed suppressing membrane and covering this with pea shingle to facilitate access to the cemetery extension by pall bearers. The price may be less depending on the cost of materials.

RESOLVED: That a maximum budget of £250 is approved for this work.

b) The Clerk has already contacted two companies that advertise in the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management magazine – Cemetery Development Services Limited and Greenacre Solutions - and is currently arranging a site visit with each. Harrison Design Development Limited will also be contacted.

The companies will be invited to quote to design a cemetery that will include:

- An area specifically for cremated remains
- An area specifically for children
- An area of graves (perhaps beside pathways as advised by the ICCM) that would be large enough to accommodate the American style caskets that are becoming increasingly popular.

They will also be asked to

- Suggest the positioning of footpaths, water taps, memorial benches and other features in the light of the current facilities and layout
- Mark out all rows and grave spaces on site and digitally
- Quote to project-manage the subcontracting of specialists to install the paths
- Confirm whether the installation of a hand rail should be delayed owing to the movement of equipment until the landscaping is complete
- Advise on the cost of improving the existing path by the lych gate whilst on site
- Provide the names of two councils from whom we can obtain references.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cllr Carritt should work with the Town Clerk to progress the design of the cemetery extension.

2. That the Town Clerk should contact the ICCM to confirm whether the designers or sub-contractors should be working to any particular industry standards.

3. That all references should be followed up before letting a contract.

(ii) Hand Rail for existing path at Green Lane Cemetery

13.5 metres of railing will be required, including the corner at the top of the slope. There are two options for the style, both of which can be supplied by 'BROXAP':

a) The BROXAP BENLLECH PU2: This would cost approximately £2,400 for materials and £2,000 for Broxap to install. Total cost circa £4,400 or

b) Kee Clamp Railings: These are cheaper but very industrial looking. The approximate costs would be £500 for materials and £2,000 to install. Total cost circa £2,500.

Recommendations:

1. **That this should be a one-off purchase that will, it is hoped, be in place for many years. It is better to have the more attractive option and the BROXAP BENLLECH PU2 is recommended to Council at a cost of £2,400 for materials plus installation (circa £2,000) giving a total cost of approximately £4,400**

2. **This capital expenditure is submitted to the budget review**

3. **The Town Clerk should confirm with the cemetery extension designers whether:**

- **the installation should wait until after the installation of the paths in the cemetery extension**
- **their subcontractors could install the new handrail and, if so, at what cost.**

EC/11/15 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT: An update from the Town Clerk was received and noted.

(i) The Crown Scaffolding Licence: A resident brought it to the attention of the Town Clerk that the scaffolding licence at The Crown had expired. The Town Clerk contacted OCC to make them aware and OCC confirmed that a new scaffolding licence is currently being processed. This work may continue until the early autumn.

RESOLVED: That WTC continues to monitor this area to ensure that the licence is renewed when required and that it remains tidy, and reports any problems to OCC as soon as they occur.

(ii) Finger Post Signage to the Community Centre – A report from Cllr Carritt was received and reported. Cllr P Jay proposed, The Mayor seconded the motion and the EC

Recommended (2 votes for and 2 votes against, so the Chair used his casting vote to vote for the recommendation) that the Council includes £5k in the 2016/17 budget review for wooden finger posts to be installed at the end of New Road and off Oxford Road to direct people to the Community Centre and a further £1k is allocated for a similar sign directing people to the OWL Nature Reserve extension.

(iii) Owen Mumford's Traffic Issues Working Group First meeting
The administration assistant is currently organising this meeting.

EC/12/15 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED that in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted the public and press be temporarily excluded from the meeting (Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s.1).

EC/13/15 The legal letter received from a company representing Mr & Mrs Parkinson was received and considered along with some information from the Town Council's solicitors.

Cllr S Rasch left the meeting at this point.

RESOLVED (Unanimous): That

1. Cllr P Jay draft a response from WTC for immediate despatch, subject to any email comments by the EC members present, the Town Clerk and any further comments by the Council's solicitors.
2. In order to demonstrate its willingness to engage, WTC will invite Mr and Mrs Parkinson or two or three people acting on their behalf to meet a similar number from WTC plus the Town Clerk to discuss relevant matters.
3. WODC will be asked for comment on matters arising from their design and installation of the play area.
4. WTC will invite the resident as to discussion with the Old Woodstock Town Football Club and will also consult an independent professional play ground inspector, Wicksteed Leisure, the police and others to determine what further might be done to address the residents concerns.

The council then went back into public session.

The Town Clerk noted that a complaint about the Town Council had that day been received from a group of residents. They were concerned about the Council's lack of response to the concerns that they had raised about the New Road Play Area.

Cllr J Cooper agreed to take special interest in the Budds Close and the Old Woodstock play areas from now on. Cllr Mrs S Rasch agreed to interest herself in the New Road play area, but Cllr P Jay will take the lead in preparing the Council's response to the concerns expressed by some residents living near to this play area.

It was noted that:

1. A resident had reported that the hand rail near the Verenia Court end of the OWL reserve had become loose – the Town Clerk had asked a contractor to look at this.
2. A resident had asked whether the bench near the Hensington Road notice board would benefit from a coat of stain – the Town Clerk was in the process of obtaining a quote for all benches requiring a coat of stain to be treated. The Notice Boards would also be assessed.
3. Two small “2” stickers would be purchased to be stuck over the “5”s on the SAVE Woodstock banners at a cost of £40 plus VAT.

The meeting finished at 10.00 pm

Signed.....

Date:.....