

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE WOODSTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE HELD AT 7:30 PM
ON MONDAY 14th DECEMBER 2015
IN THE MAYOR'S PARLOUR,
WOODSTOCK TOWN HALL**

PRESENT:

Cllr P Jay (Chairman)
Cllr Mrs E Jay
Cllr C Carritt (Deputy Mayor)

Cllr L Maybury
Cllr Mrs E Stokes

Also in Attendance: one resident.

EC/35/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Cllrs E Poskitt and Mrs S Rasch.

EC/36/15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: None.

EC/37/15 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Environment Committee held on 27th October 2015 were approved as a true record and were signed by the Chairman of the Environment Committee.

EC/38/15 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Mr John Hodges addressed the Environment Committee and updated them about the Brook Hill ditch. A repair has been undertaken but a mess has been left on site.

ACTION: *The Town Clerk will ask WODC to come and complete the job and remove the mess at its own expense.*

EC/39/15 PLAY AREAS

The Environment received and noted a report from the Town Clerk.

EC/40/15 WATERMEADOWS

1. Drainage ditch adjacent to 48 Glyme Close: The Environment Committee received and noted reports that the drainage ditch adjacent to 48 Glyme Close has now been cleared by WODC; but it had also heard that the work was not satisfactorily completed.

2. Report from the Town Clerk: The Environment Committee received and noted a report from the Town Clerk as follows:

(i) Bridge Repairs and Chicken Wire:

The Wychwood Project has offered to pay 50% towards the repair of the 'cow' bridge between meadows 5 and 6 that has recently been completed.

ACTION: *The Town Clerk will arrange for the Wychwood Project to be invoiced for 50% of the bill when it arrives from Thomas Fox.*

The Green Gym was thanked for stapling down the chicken wire that was presenting a trip hazard as a temporary repair. In spring the Wychwood Project will replace the chicken wire with strips that will be a longer term solution.

(ii) Concerns of a Resident about cows: An article about dangers relating to cows which was sent to the Town Council was received and discussed. It was noted that when the cows are on the water meadows WTC puts up signs asking for dogs to be kept on leads if people are crossing these fields.

ACTION: *The Town Clerk will write to the resident and explain:*

- 1. that WTC will work with the farmer who supplies the Dexter cattle to produce a risk assessment before the cows return in the spring and confirm that these are considered to be a gentle breed of cattle.*
- 2. that WTC will monitor the situation.*
- 3. why cows are good for the maintenance of the water meadows.*

(iii) Letter of Thanks: The Council received and noted a letter from a resident that thanked it for the tree work that is being undertaken at the Water Meadows. The resident queried whether three particular trees would be included in this work. Cllr Mrs E Jay advised the Committee that she had already been in contact with the resident to discuss his concerns and to confirm that these trees will be included in due course.

(iv) Community Payback Team

Cllrs noted the Community Payback workers will be back in Woodstock from 4th January 2016 assisting the Town Council.

3. Report from Cllr Mrs E Jay: The Environment Committee received and considered a report from Cllr Mrs E Jay. The following matters were discussed:

(i) Eco Plugs: the use of eco-plugs or similar products would be used to kill only the small poplars in the overgrown 'Saxon' hedge and not the large poplar trees.

(ii) Update on the possible contracting out of the management of the Water Meadows or offers of external help: Cllr Mrs E Jay updated Cllrs.

ACTION: Cllrs considered this to be an attractive idea and therefore Cllr Mrs E Jay was asked to prepare a report that sets out the proposal for outsourcing the management of the water meadows for consideration at the next Environment Committee meeting in February 2016 and then by Full Council in March 2016.

The report will include information about:

1. the background to this proposal
2. the specification – which will be based upon the water meadows management plan
3. the legal roles and responsibilities of the various parties
4. the cost information submitted from companies who are interested in undertaking this work.

It was noted that any such contract should be for an initial period of 5 years to ensure continuity. The aim is to pass this proposal to the new Woodstock Town Council in May 2016.

(iii) Meeting at the Water Meadows: It was noted that Cllr Mrs E Jay, the Mayor and the Town Clerk will meet with representatives from the Wild Trout Trust, the Wychwood project and the Evenlode project on Thursday 17th December for a meeting on site to discuss options for reducing the future costs at the water meadows.

(iv) New Gates at Meadow 5: The Council noted that the Wychwood project had offered to install two new self-closing gates at meadow 5 free of charge.

EC/41/15 FALLEN TREE AT THE OWL: It was noted that the Green Gym had offered to remove a tree that had recently fallen across the footpath on the OWL reserve extension and the Committee thanked them for their help. Council staff were reminded that forthcoming tree works in the OWL should be notified to neighbouring residents, using the email list compiled for the OWL Forum.

The meeting finished at 8.35 pm.

Signed.....

Date:.....