

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF  
THE WOODSTOCK TOWN COUNCIL  
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE HELD AT 7:30 PM  
ON TUESDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2015  
IN THE MAYOR'S PARLOUR,  
WOODSTOCK TOWN HALL**

**PRESENT:**

Cllr P Jay (Chair)	Cllr J Cooper (Mayor)
Cllr M Robertson (Deputy Mayor)	Cllr Mrs E Jay
Cllr C Carritt	Cllrs L Maybury
Cllr Mrs E Stokes	

**Also in Attendance:** Cllr E Poskitt.

**EC/39/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** None.

**EC/40/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** None

**EC/41/14 APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Environment Committee held on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2014 were approved as a true record and were then signed by the Chairman of the Environment Committee.

**EC/42/14 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** None

**EC/43/14 HOGGROVE STEPS – BLOOM:** This item was deferred until the next EC meeting to enable Cllr S Parnes to complete his research clarifying relevant title details via the Land Registry.

**ACTION:** *The Town Clerk will bring forward this item to the next EC meeting.*

**EC/44/14 WATERMEADOWS**

- (i) Legal Opinion on Liabilities: It was noted Mr Rowse had finished his work reviewing the old Blenheim Estate records about the Mill Stream. This and other research will now be sent to a barrister for consideration.
- (ii) Conservation activities in Woodstock Water Meadows: The report entitled 'Watermeadows report, for Environment Cttee mtg, Tue 24 Feb 2015' by Cllr Mrs E Jay was received and considered. Following advice received following a visit by professional advisors from the Environment Agency and the Berks, Bucks, Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) the EC

**RESOLVED** that the Green Gym should do no further clearing of the reeds and rushes in the river.

**ACTION:** *Cllr Mrs E Jay will advise the Green Gym.*

- (iii) Free report received from the Wild Trout Trust: The report entitled 'River Glyme – Woodstock Meadows: An advisory visit by the Wild Trout Trust December 2014' (available from the Town Hall) was received and noted. Cllr C Carritt proposed, Cllr Mrs E Jay seconded the motion and it was

**RESOLVED** (unanimous) that the Environment Committee

RECOMMENDS that the report of the Wild Trout Trust (WTT) be brought to the attention of the Council and that:-

- a) The Council thank the WTT for their work in preparing the report and for the valuable advice and recommendations contained therein.
- b) Council is mindful that the Millstream (to which a number of the WTT report recommendations refer) may be regarded as the responsibility of Blenheim and that legal opinion is presently being sought on the matter. In the light of this, the Council is recommended to refrain, for the time being, from engaging in works to the millstream other than matters of safety and other essential maintenance.
- c) That Council accepts the recommendation of the WTT to engage with the Cotswold River Trust and the WFD Catchment hosts to explore the possibility of partnership working.
- d) That Council sends a copy of the report of the WTT to Blenheim Estates for their information and draws to their attention not only the recommendations for works within the Park, but also their possible liability for works to the millstream within the watermeadows.

- (iv) Additional tree work and habitat piles: Cllr Carritt will meet a local contractor on site to discuss some additional tree work.

A quote for work on habitat piles was received and considered but this work has now been done by the Green Gym.

**ACTIONS:**

1. *The Town Clerk will advise the contractor that this work has now been done.*
2. *Cllr Mrs E Jay will ask the Green Gym to finish off such work as is necessary in the summer.*

- (v) 'Wild Oxfordshire' bid: WTC has been invited to submit a list of items for inclusion in a bid that Hilary Phillips of 'Wild Oxfordshire' is currently preparing to submit to TOE2. The EC

**RESOLVED** to submit the following items to 'Wild Oxfordshire' for inclusion in the bid:

- (i) Trees – reduce and clear the 12 poplars by the A44 - £8k

- (ii) Saxon Hedging - start reducing over-dense Saxon Hedging planted on middle of south boundary and in south west corner - £2k
- (iii) Repair bank, especially where footpath is affected by crayfish and 'access' in jeopardy using method advised by Wild Trout Trust - £20k
- (iv) Himalayan balsam treatment - £2k
- (v) Cutting and removal of grass in meadows 5 and 6 - £5k

Total value of bid £37k.

**ACTION:** *The electronic application form listing the Town Clerk as the contact point will be submitted to meet the deadline of 1<sup>st</sup> March 2015.*

- (vi) Any other matters relating to the Water Meadows  
The policy on the grass cutting of Meadows 5 and 6 was changed and it was

**RESOLVED** (unanimous) that

- (i) M5 and 6 will not be cut unless the grass can be cleared as well
- (ii) The Town Clerk will seek quotes from 2 other contractors for these meadows to be cut and cleared in order that like for like comparisons can be made.
- (iii) The Town Clerk will negotiate with the current contractor alterations in the contract to include strimming Himalayan Balsam three times before July 2015 throughout the Water meadows instead of the cuts to M5 & 6. The Balsam should be cut down to a height of 6 inches especially around the water courses.

**ACTIONS:** *The Town Clerk will:*

1. *Notify the current contractor that WTC does not want M5 & 6 cut and left and negotiate balsam strimming to an equivalent value instead.*
2. *Confirm the name of the previous contractor who used to cut and collect the grass.*
3. *Seek a quote from this contractor, the contractor who now maintains the War Memorial, and others if required for the cutting and clearing of the grass in M5&6 so that 3 quotes can be considered by the EC*

It was also noted that:

- (i) Any additional water meadows running costs will be confirmed before July in order that they can be considered during the budget review.
- (ii) The grazing of horses at the Water Meadows would be impractical.

## **EC/45/14 PLAY AREAS**

Cllrs received and considered the 'Play Areas Report to the Environment Committee 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2015' from the Town Clerk. The following decisions were made:

(i) New Road fencing repairs

a) Adjacent to the MUGA

**RESOLVED** that no further action would be taken at present.

b) Adjacent to the car park

The damaged low fence between the New Road play area and the Cadogan Park car park was considered.

**Recommendation that the Council authorises the Town Clerk to commit WTC to a one-off contribution of £2k as co-funding in any grant applications for the fencing work.**

c) Additional play bark

The WODC playgrounds checkers have recommended that more bark is purchased in order to top up the New Road play areas. One quote has been received but the suggested quantities are larger than expected and so further investigation will be undertaken by the Town Clerk.

**RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk will obtain three like for like quotes and make a recommendation to the EC in time for it to be considered as part of the budget review.

**ACTION:** *The Town Clerk will seek to obtain a total of three quotes.*

(iii) The refurbishment of the metal frames of equipment at Budds Close play area

**RESOLVED** that WTC employs Jim Grant to paint the shelter and other original metal work at the Budds Close play area at a cost of £640 plus materials.

(iv) Annual RoSPA Inspections

**RESOLVED** that WTC employ John Hicks & Associates to undertake the WTC Annual play ground inspections for the next three years.

The goal mouths at the Old Woodstock play area were considered. It was noted that Cllr C Carritt is investigating the possibility of using bounce bark.

**EC/46/14**

**CEMETERIES**

(i) Green Lane Cemetery Extension: It was noted that the installation of rabbit proof fencing and native hedging at the Green Lane cemetery extension is scheduled for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> March 2015.

(ii) Surface at the entrance to the Green Lane cemetery: An email has been received from a resident who has commented upon the condition of the paths and the entrance to the Green Lane cemetery.

**ACTION:** *the Town Clerk will notify the resident that the EC is currently looking into a more comprehensive review of the access to the cemetery. This may include the installation of a hand rail alongside the existing access path.*

(iii) Handrail for existing path and possible new additional steps at Green Lane cemetery: The suggestion from the Town Clerk for a handrail alongside the existing cemetery path was noted by the EC and will be investigated further. The EC did not support the idea of steps.

**ACTION:** *The Town Clerk will investigate the possible costs of installing a handrail.*

(iv) Hensington Road – Community Payback Team: The Town Clerk has scheduled a meeting with a representative from the probation service to discuss the possibility of a community payback team undertaking vegetation clearance at the Hensington Road Cemetery.

**ACTION:** *The Town Clerk will discuss with the probation service the possibility of a community payback team also clearing cut grass in meadows 5 & 6 at the watermeadows during August or September.*

(v) Failed memorials – next steps: It was noted that during the routine H&S check of the memorials in the cemeteries several had been identified that require re-fixing or other maintenance work but that it is proving hard to trace some families associated with these memorials.

**ACTIONS:**

1. *The Administrative Assistant will circulate details of the memorials in question to all EC members*
2. *Discreet notices will be installed on the relevant graves asking families to contact the office.*
3. *The Deputy Mayor will produce a small item for inclusion in the forthcoming WTC newsletter asking families to contact the office.*
4. *The situation will be reviewed at the next EC meeting.*

(vi) Approval of a headstone: a request from Kendall & Davises solicitors, dated 11<sup>th</sup> December 2014, for the installation of a headstone for Mr R Robinson in the Green Lane cemetery was received and considered.

**RESOLVED** that the application for a headstone received from Kendall & Davies solicitors is approved.

**EC/47/14**

**WAR MEMORIAL MAINTENANCE 2015-17 INCLUSIVE**

A quote for the maintenance of the Woodstock War Memorial Garden for the period 2015-2017 inclusive from the existing contractor was received and considered.

**RESOLVED** that the quote is approved as the value is within the delegated authority of the EC.

**ACTION:** *The Town Clerk will confirm the contract.*

**EC/48/14 OWL NATURE RESERVE**

Cllrs received and considered a petition from residents living in five houses that back onto the OWL nature reserve extension asking about the possibility of tree maintenance work to be undertaken, and an additional separate request from a resident whose house backs on to the original OWL nature reserve.

**ACTIONS:**

1. *An annual budget for a programme of tree maintenance work on the OWL will be proposed as part of the budget review*
2. *The EC will consider what work it can take annually within the agreed budget for the OWL tree maintenance.*
3. *The Town Clerk will inform residents of the EC's intentions.*
4. *Cllr Mrs E Jay will go and look at the tree on the original OWL reserve and ask the Green Gym if they can reduce its height.*

**EC/49/14 DEAD TREE BY WODC GARAGES AT JUNCTION AT BROOK HILL AND OXFORD STREET**

The ownership of a tree by the garages at the junction of Brook Hill and Oxford Street is currently being disputed by WODC. The EC has been advised by the Bloom committee that the tree is dead and requires attention for H& S reasons.

**RESOLVED** that

- (i) The Mayor will discuss the matter during full committee at WODC the next day
- (ii) If the ownership is still disputed the Town Clerk will advise WODC that the tree needs attention because of H&S concerns and that if they cannot prove that it is owned by WTC within 2 weeks the Council will arrange for it to be taken down and for the bill to be sent to WODC.

**EC/50/14 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT**

(i) Relocating the Former Bollards on the Market Square

The EC received and noted an oral report from Cllr C Carritt about relocating one of the former bollards on the Market Square. OCC are unlikely to be able to relocate the bollard due to budget constraints. This matter is now concluded.

(ii) HGV's at Brook Hill

The EC received and noted an oral update from Cllr Carritt about the matters that were considered at the meeting with Mark Owen from Owen Mumfords. This matter is now concluded.

The meeting finished at 9.10 pm

Signed.....

Date:.....