

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE WOODSTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE HELD AT 7:30 PM
ON TUESDAY 22nd JANUARY 2013
IN THE MAYOR'S PARLOUR,
WOODSTOCK TOWN HALL**

PRESENT:

Cllr C Carritt (Chairman)
Cllr G Fleetwood
Cllr T Wray

Cllr Mrs P Richardson
Cllr M Robertson

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Cllr E Poskitt.

The Chairman welcomed Cllr T Wray to the Environment Committee as she has agreed to join this group.

EC/25/12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs Mr B Yoxall and Mrs E Stokes.

EC/26/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

EC/27/12 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Environment Committee held on 23rd October 2012 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman of the Committee.

EC/28/12 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public present at this meeting.

EC/29/12 GRASS CUTTING AND LITTER PICKING

(i) Litter Picking

The Town Clerk reported that West Oxfordshire District Council would start their contract litter picking and safety assessing the Play Areas and Water Meadows on 4th February 2013. WODC will be responsible for checking the emergency phone is working at the Water Meadows, putting up warning signs when the river is in flood and closing the footpath when they consider it to be dangerous. This contract will be reviewed on a 6 monthly basis. The Town Clerk will write to the Deputy Caretaker to confirm that he will still be required to do 2-3 hours a week looking after the cemeteries, updating the Notice Boards, delivering Cllrs papers and undertaking twice yearly audits of the street furniture.

ACTION: *The Town Clerk will notify the Deputy Caretaker of the modified requirements of the EC.*

(ii) Grass Cutting

The Town Clerk distributed the draft extension to the current grass cutting contract and highlighted the changes previously agreed with EC members and the contractor. This contract extension will run from 1st April 2013 until 31st March 2014. It was noted that the current contract works well and that there have been no problems. Discussion followed.

Cllr P Richardson asked for an amendment to the contract extension so that the grass cutting of the War Memorial is removed. In addition to cutting the grass there is now a requirement for the flowerbeds to be tended and edged and grass treatments to be regularly applied. This is work that had previously been undertaken by volunteers at very little cost to the Council. This amendment was agreed. Cllr Mrs Richardson also asked that the contractors do not work in the vicinity of the church at 10am on a Wednesday morning as there a regular service takes place at that time and this was noted. Cllr Carritt proposed that the amended contract extension be approved by the EC and Cllr Mrs Richardson seconded this motion.

RESOLVED (Unanimous)

The current contract with Thomas Fox Landscaping and Maintenance will be extended until 31st March 2014 subject to the revisions agreed by the EC at this meeting.

A local contractor has already submitted an estimate for the new work required at the War Memorial between 1st March and 30th November 2013. Cllr Richardson proposed that this be approved by the EC. Cllr Fleetwood seconded this motion. Discussion followed and it was noted that the new requirements at the War Memorial will need to be included in the tender specification for the next grass cutting and maintenance contract that will go out to tender at the end of 2013.

RESOLVED

The estimate received from a local contractor for maintaining the grass and gardens at the War Memorial was approved for the year 2013/14.

ACTIONS:

- 1. The Town Clerk will modify the extension to the existing grass cutting contract to reflect the decisions of the EC and issue this to the contractor.*
- 2. The Town Clerk will notify the local contractor that their estimate for the revised work at the War Memorial during 2013/14 is accepted.*
- 3. By the autumn of 2013 the EC will have reviewed the requirements for the new three year grass cutting and maintenance contract in order that this can be put out to tender at the end of 2013 and start on 1st April 2014.*

EC/30/12

WATER MEADOWS

(i) Water Meadows Management Plan

An oral report was received from Cllr Mrs Richardson. Discussion followed.

RESOLVED

That the contractor will be asked to submit a draft of the Water Meadows Development Plan for consideration by the EC at its next meeting at the end of March and discussion by full council in April.

ACTION: *The Town Clerk will contact the project manager at the Wychwood Project and advise him of the deadline required by the EC.*

(ii) TCV Working Holidays

An oral report was received from Cllr Mrs Richardson. Discussion followed. It was noted that TCV has been offered a contribution of £450 towards the three working holidays that they will organise at the Water Meadows in Woodstock in 2013/14. The first of these holidays will take place at the beginning of May 2013 (the May Bank Holiday).

EC/31/12

THE GREEN GYM

The Town Clerk circulated copies of a report that Cllr Fleetwood had previously distributed by email. Cllr Fleetwood updated Cllrs about his recent communications with the Green Gym. Mr P Redpath is the primary contact for the Green Gym in Woodstock. A meeting at the Hensington Road Cemetery had been agreed between Cllr Fleetwood and Mr Redpath to discuss the work that the Green Gym might undertake at the cemetery in March or early April. This has had to be postponed due to the snow and will be rescheduled. Cllrs discussed how the waste arising from the work of the Green Gym will be disposed of. The council does not want bonfires in the cemetery or piles of waste to accumulate so the options for removing the green waste will be investigated.

ACTION: *The Town Clerk will speak to WODC and explore the possibility of additional waste collections to clear the green waste that will result from the work of the green gym.*

EC/32/12

HIGHWAYS MATTERS

(i) Review of the Town Centre Parking and Removal of the Taxi Rank

Cllr Carritt provided an oral update about the town centre parking review. The council wrote to WODC in October and were advised that OCC would need to undertake the legal work required to alter the traffic orders in Woodstock. It was noted that OCC staff are currently busy undertaking a major project in Oxford City Centre and so it was unlikely that anything would be done in the short term. The Council had written to OCC in November to ask whether it was possible for them to contract out the legal work but no response had been received.

RESOLVED

The Town Clerk will follow this matter up with OCC and copy the email to Cllr Ian Hudspeth.

ACTION: *The Town Clerk will contact OCC.*

(ii) Yellow Lines Outside the Town Hall

The replacement of the yellow lines outside the Town Hall was discussed. This matter was referred to OCC by the police after the Traffic Advisory Committee Meeting in October 2012. It was noted that nothing could have been done recently due to the wet weather.

RESOLVED

The Town Clerk will contact the OCC Area Steward and ask for the yellow lines to be replaced when the weather improves.

ACTION: *The Town Clerk will contact OCC.*

(iii) Uneven Paving between the Bear Hotel and the Church

OCC has been made aware of the current problem through informal discussions with Cllrs.

RESOLVED

The Town Clerk will officially notify the OCC Area Steward of the EC's concerns relating to the poor paving slabs between The Bear Hotel, the Church and the Town Gate. This email will be copied to Cllr Hudspeth.

ACTION: *The Town Clerk will contact OCC.*

(iv) Agenda Items for the Traffic Advisory Committee

The EC agreed that the following items should be included on the agenda of the next meeting of the Traffic Advisory Committee:

- a) The Town Fair
- b) A Review of the Hensington Road Scheme
- c) 20mph speed limits
- d) Safety audit for planters in Old Woodstock and possible extension of the 30mph speed limit.
- e) School bus routes to and from the Primary and Marlborough Schools.

ACTION: *These items will be included on the agenda for the Traffic Advisory Committee meeting that will take place in April.*

EC/33/12

CEMETERIES

(i) Cemetery Procedures

Cllrs received and considered the draft revised cemetery procedures. The draft circulated contained comments and clarification from WTC's professional cemeteries advisors, the ICCM.

RESOLVED

1. That the feedback received from the ICCM be incorporated in the next draft which will then be sent to ICCM for further comment before it is finalised.
2. The final draft of the revised cemetery procedures will be brought to Council in February for formal adoption.

3. Cllrs Carritt and Fleetwood will work with the Town Clerk and undertake a risk assessment for the cemeteries.
4. When the procedures have been formally adopted by WTC and the cemeteries risk assessment produced an approved list of funeral directors and grave diggers will be created. Any funeral director or grave digger wishing to work in the WTC cemeteries can apply to enter into a formal agreement with the Council and to be added to the approved list.

ACTIONS:

1. *The Town Clerk will continue to work with ICCM to finalise the draft cemetery procedures for consideration by Council at the February meeting.*
2. *Cllrs Carritt and Fleetwood will work with the Town Clerk to produce a risk assessment which will become part of the WTC cemeteries agreements.*

(ii) Hensington Road Cemetery

a) Update on the recent work at the cemetery

Cllr Fleetwood provided an oral update about the work at the Hensington Road Cemetery. Most of the clearance work is now complete and the two outstanding matters are expected to be completed in the next week.

b) Quotations from WODC

The Town Clerk has sought a quote for top soil and turf for use in this cemetery. This has not yet been received so this item will be brought forward to the next Environment Committee meeting.

The possibility of spreading ashes in the Hensington Road will be an agenda item for the next EC meeting

ACTION: *The Town Clerk will include the following items on the next EC agenda :*

1. *Quotation for top soil and turf*
2. *Spreading ashes in the Hensington Road Cemetery.*

(iii) Green Lane Cemetery

a) Purchase of the cemetery extension

The Town Clerk has instructed the Councils solicitors to progress the purchase of the Green Lane cemetery from the Blenheim Estates. The Town Clerk will submit a change of use to the WODC planning department and serve the required notice on Blenheim Estates.

ACTION: *The Town Clerk will submit the change of use application to WODC and serve notice on Blenheim Estates.*

b) Planning the lay out of the cemetery extension

As the purchase of the cemetery extension is not yet completed it was agreed that this matter would be carried forward to the next meeting.

ACTION: *The Town Clerk will include an item about planning the lay out of the cemetery extension on the next EC agenda.*

c) Problems with access to the Green Lane cemetery and allotment site

Access to the Green Lane cemetery and allotments site is regularly being blocked by large lorries in the road outside the Owen Mumford site.

ACTION: *The Town Clerk will write to Mark Owen at Owen Mumford to make him aware of this significant problem and ask him to confirm how the company will remedy this situation.*

d) Consideration of Quotes for hedge work

A quote is being obtained for removing the hedge root along the inside of the newly moved right hand fence at the Green Lane Cemetery and also for reducing the back hedge of the cemetery to a height of 4'6". This has not yet been received so this item will be brought forward to the next Environment Committee meeting.

ACTION: *The Town Clerk will include an item about hedge work at the Green Lane cemetery on the next EC agenda.*

e) Double Depth Graves

The Town Clerk and Cllr Carritt reported upon the suggestion that double depth graves might be considered in the cemetery extension. The Environment Agency has said that a Tier 2 survey would be required if double depth graves were to be used throughout the new cemetery extension. The cost of doing this would be £30-£35k. The Environment Agency would be happy for a limited number of double depth graves to be used in specific parts of the extension.

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That WTC maintain the current policy of only offering single depth graves at present but note that this policy should be reviewed in the future.**
- 2. That the Town Clerk asks the contractor employed to lay out the cemetery extension to consider the inclusion of a limited number of double depth graves within their plans in accordance with the requirements of the Environment Agency. This matter will then be brought back to the Environment Committee for further consideration.**

Several residents have recently asked WTC to buy back pre-purchased graves or cremation plots.

RECOMMENDED

The EC recommends that if the purchase price is known the resident is refunded 50% of the original purchase fee. If the

purchase fee cannot be confirmed the resident should be refunded 50% of the current rate.

Discussion followed about the charging structure that should be applied by WTC when a family wishes to inter one casket containing the cremated remains of more than one person.

RECOMMENDED

The EC recommends that the charge applied should be for the one casket irrespective of the number of sets of ashes contained therein.

These two policy matters will be to Council for formal adoption in February.

ACTION: *The two policy matters will be put on the agenda for the February Council meeting.*

EC/34/12 PLAY AREAS

S106 Play Areas Project Update

The EC received and considered an oral report by Cllr Mrs Richardson, a report from the Town Clerk and budget options and schematics developed by WODC. Steady progress is being made. The next step is to confirm the amount of funding that will be available to spend on this project as it determines the facilities that might be installed. WODC has produced a scheme for Budds Close and some suggestions for New Road that are based on different budget scenarios. When the potential project funding has been confirmed the proposed schemes will be presented to residents.

(i) Additional Project Funding

The Cllrs also considered a report from the Town Clerk that listed the actions arising from a recent meeting between Cllrs Mrs Richardson and Robertson and the Town Clerk. ORCC information about possible grant funding has been reviewed and opportunities identified. Funding is being sought for an additional piece of equipment at Old Woodstock Play Area. This will be subject to formal approval being received from the landowner.

RESOLVED

1. That Cllrs Mrs Richardson, Robertson and the Town Clerk action the items included in the report.
2. That the Town Clerk shall submit grant applications for £5k to the Chill out Fund and £1.5k to County Cllr I Hudspeth's Community Budget for funding towards a roundabout for Rosamund Drive

RECOMMENDED

That WTC funds any shortfall in the funding required for the purchase and installation of a roundabout for Old Woodstock Play Area – estimated to be between £1.5k and £3.5k

3. The Town Clerk will submit an application to the Cottsway 'Wellcommunity Fund' for a grant of £1k towards a piece of new equipment at Budds Close.

4. Applications will be made to the 'Green Square Community Chest Fund' and the 'Reaching Communities Initiative' for contributions towards the New Road and Budds Close play areas renovation and refurbishment.

(ii) Update about the Budd's Close Licence

The new play ground lease for Budds Close has been received and will be brought to the February Council meeting for sealing.

ACTION: *The Town Clerk will bring the new Budds Close lease to the Council meeting in February for sealing.*

EC/35/12 WOODSTOCK IN BLOOM 2013

Cllr Mrs Richardson noted that the Bloom Committee was due to meet soon. It was therefore agreed that this item be deferred to the next EC meeting.

ACTION: *The Town Clerk will bring 'Bloom' forward as an agenda item for the next EC meeting.*

EC/36/12 OWL WORKING PARTY REPORT

Cllr M Robertson reported that there will be a meeting of the OWL forum in the Community Centre at lunchtime on Saturday 26th January 2013 in order that residents living adjacent to the OWL could discuss access and look at the environment and tree report. Bill Butcher has done an assessment and produced a report about the sensitivities and potential anti-social behaviour. This report was very positive. Cllr Fleetwood has volunteered to be a warden at the OWL extension and the EC thanked him for this.

EC/37/12 BENCHES ON THE MARKET SQUARE

Two benches on the Market Square need to be replaced. They will be of the same style as the two that remain. WTC will have to pay for these unless the cost can be claimed on the Council's insurance.

RESOLVED

That

1. The Town Clerk will ask WODC if they can procure and install these and charge WTC.
2. The Town Clerk will submit a claim to the WTC insurance for the cost of the benches.

ACTION: *The Town Clerk will contact WODC and Zurich.*

EC/38/12 ALLOTMENTS

The minutes reporting the annual meeting of the allotment association were received and noted. These reported progress and activities at the allotment site. Cllr Mrs Richardson had attended this meeting.

RESOLVED

The minutes and report from the Allotment Association AGM will be circulated to all Cllrs for the February Council meeting.

The meeting finished at 9.40pm

Signed.....

Date:.....