

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE WOODSTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE HELD AT 7:30 PM
ON TUESDAY 24th SEPTEMBER 2013
IN THE MAYOR'S PARLOUR,
WOODSTOCK TOWN HALL**

PRESENT:

Cllr C Carritt (Chairman)
Cllrs Mrs E Stokes
Cllr Mrs P Richardson

Cllr J Cooper (the Mayor)
Cllr M Robertson (Deputy Mayor)

Also in Attendance: Cllr B Yoxall

EC/29/13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
None.

EC/30/13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
None

EC/31/13 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Environment Committee held on 30th July 2013 were approved as a true record subject to the name "Cllr Collins" at EC/15/13 being amended to read "Cllr Carritt".

They were then signed by the Chairman of the Environment Committee.

EC/32/13 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION WITH RESPECT TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA
There were no members of the public present at this meeting.

EC/33/13 ENVIRONMENTAL BUDGET 2014/15
The draft 2014/15 EC budget was received and discussed. The Chairman noted that although amendments had been by the Finance Assistant to reflect the revised budget agreed at the Budget Review meeting the bottom line remained the same. However, the following additional amendments were agreed:

- (a) The staff costs budget line should be increased to £1.3k
- (b) The budget line for the warden salary should be deleted
- (c) The water meadows maintenance budget should be increased to £5k
- (d) The OWL maintenance budget should be increased to £2k

ACTION: Cllr Carritt will discuss the 2014/15 budget amendments to the draft EC budget with the Finance Assistant. Any minor adjustments to be identified to CC by Env. Comm. Members asap

The budget for the tree survey at the water meadows was discussed and it was confirmed that this survey will be included under the Environment Committee resolution EC/22/13.

It was noted that there will be a cost for laying out the new cemetery extension but it was considered that there should be sufficient ear marked reserves to pay for this work.

The Town Clerk queried why the Bowls and Tennis Club projected income was included under the Environment rather than the Property budget. It was agreed that in future the Bowls and Tennis Club budget should form part of the Mayor's Committee (Property) budget

EC/34/13 GRASS CUTTING CONTRACT

The draft grass cutting contract prepared by the Town Clerk was received and considered.

RESOLVED

That the Town Clerk will action the amendments agreed by the Environment Committee and submit the revised paperwork to the November Town Council 2013 for approval.

ACTIONS:

- 1. The Town Clerk will amend the draft grass cutting tender paperwork and include the grass cutting contract on the agenda for the November 2013 Town Council meeting.*
- 2. The Town Clerk will enquire whether Oxford City Council would be interested in being included on the tender list.*
- 3. The Clerk was thanked for the extensive work involved in preparing these tenders.*

EC/35/13 TOWN LITTER BINS

Cllr Carritt reported that he will be working with the Deputy Caretaker to progress the survey of the town centre litter bins (EC/19/13) in the near future.

ACTION: *Cllr Carritt will liaise with the Deputy Caretaker to complete the town litter bin audit.*

EC/36/13 CONTRACT FOR TREE INSPECTIONS

The Town Clerk will progress the invitation to quote with the three named contractors.

ACTION: *The Town Clerk will contact the three specialist companies to progress EC/22/13.*

EC/37/13 WATER MEADOWS

i. Water Meadows Management Plan

Cllr Mrs Richardson noted that she had recently met with Nick Mottram, Project Manager at the Wychwood Project. They agreed that the best location for the experimental fritillary meadow is at the front of meadow 5 near to the kissing gate. A few bulbs will also be planted in the churchyard.

The 1,000 fritillaries being donated by Andrew Leaning owner of the Good Value Plant Nursery at Bunkers Hill, should be collected within a fortnight.

It was noted that the second conservation holiday that was held at the end of July 2013 was a great success with 14 volunteers taking part. There will not be a third conservation holiday in September.

Staff from the Thames Valley Records Centre have progressed their part of the watermeadows plan and this report will be sent to the Town Clerk.

Cllr Mrs Richardson noted that there were problems with Japanese balsam at the water meadows and that the poplars beside the main road will need to be pollarded. It was suggested that the tree work required on the water meadows be undertaken on a rolling programme and that the possibility of grant funding is investigated.

ACTION: Cllr Mrs Richardson will liaise with Mr Leaning about the fritillaries.

ii. Water Meadows Bank Repairs Required

Cllr Carritt reported that the bank retainers previously installed at a stretch of the bank opposite the Black Prince had collapsed and will require repair for H&S reasons before the winter. The Administrative Assistant is currently seeking quotes from three specialist companies for consideration by the council.

It was noted that the support post of one of the wooden hand rails on the water meadows is rotten. WODC has already been asked to progress the replacement of this post. They will be advised to contact Cllr Yoxall if they require any clarification about the location of the post in question.

iii. Approach by the Army Cadet Force to undertake manoeuvres on the Water Meadows

The EC referred this approach by the Army Cadets for the consideration of the full council at the October Town Council meeting. A representative from the Army cadets will address the council during the public participation session at this meeting

ACTION: The Town Clerk will include an item about this approach on the agenda for the October Town Council meeting.

EC/38/13

CEMETERIES

i. Cemetery Regulations Training Days

The Town Clerk reported that the ICCM have yet to confirm the cost and available dates on which they could undertake training for WTC.

ii. Green Lane Cemetery Extension

The Town Clerk confirmed that WTC had signed and sealed the contract for the purchase of the WTC cemetery extension to the Green Lane Cemetery. It is currently being processed by the Blenheim Estates solicitors.

EC/39/13 PLAY AREAS

i. Play Area refurbishments at New Road and Budds Close

The EC received and considered an oral report from the Deputy Mayor. Since the last EC meeting WTC has been awarded a WREN grant resulting in an increased budget. The tender was therefore re-issued. The deadline for the receipt of tenders is Thursday 8th October.

Further letters have been received from a small number of residents opposed to the refurbishment project. The Mayor has written to these residents and invited them to suggest a date on which it would be convenient for them to meet with him to discuss their concerns. He is currently awaiting a response.

ii. Play Area at Old Woodstock

The new roundabout has now been installed and is being used by residents.

EC/40/13 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

The contract to undertake the priority repairs to the electrical switch boards prior to the 2013 Christmas Light installation has been awarded to "SparkX". This company was significantly cheaper than the other organisation who had quoted for this work. The repairs will be undertaken before the end of September 2013.

SparkX installs and maintains the Christmas Lights for Oxford City Council and will be invited to quote for the Woodstock Christmas Lights installation when the contract is retendered in 2014.

ACTION: Cllr Carritt will prepare a report about the future financing of the Woodstock Christmas Lights installation for discussion at the Town Council meeting in November 2013.

EC/41/13 HIGHWAYS

i. Parking Survey

Cllr Carritt reported that the OCC parking survey has now been completed. The results will be presented in the Mayor's Parlour one hour before the Traffic Advisory Committee meeting in October. All Cllrs are welcome to attend this presentation. The TAC will then discuss the next steps.

ii. Bollard on the Market Square

A vehicle has collided with one of the new bollards on the Market Square and knocked it over. The Administrative Assistant is currently trying to confirm the name of the company involved as it is understood that they may be a contractor that was working for one of the towns businesses.

ACTIONS:

- 1. The Administrative Assistant will try to confirm the name and address of the company that was involved in the collision in order that the Town Clerk can the pass this information to WTC's insurers.*
- 2. Cllr Carritt will call the bollard supplier to confirm whether it can be repaired.*

EC/27/13 OWL EXTENSION

Cllr Robertson reported that the official opening of the extension to the OWL Nature Reserve had been postponed as the footpath needed to be cleared of rubbish. She reported that the initial clearance quotes had been significantly more than anticipated but that this might be due in part to confusion about the specification for the required work.

Cllr Robertson had then asked the probation service to send a Community Pay Back team to clear the path. The Administrative Assistant worked hard to put the necessary arrangements in place in a short timescale and two days of assistance was booked in. However following objections from some local residents the proposed work on the OWL extension was cancelled. The clearance of the footpath will be discussed at the OWL Forum when it next meets.

As the proposed work for the Community Pay Back team was cancelled they undertook maintenance work for Sustainable Woodstock at the Woodstock Community Woodland instead. Cllr Carritt noted that they had done a good job and achieved a lot in a day. They will continue to work on the woodland and also do some gardening at the Community Centre when they return on their second scheduled visit.

The meeting finished at 9.03pm

Signed.....

Date:.....

Post Meeting Note: Cllr Pauline Richardson expressed her appreciation to the Green Gym for their efforts in removing the Himalayan Balsam and millstream weed infestation at the watermeadows.