

**TOWN CLERK'S REPORT
FULL TOWN COUNCIL – MONDAY, 2 MARCH 2020**

Summary This is a report of follow-up to resolutions made at Full Town Council. This is a Standing Item on the agenda to update Members. Once follow-up is completed or taken on by a Committee, items will be marked as closed. Ongoing items will be brought back to Council when a new decision is required or when a fuller update is needed.

Min.309/19	Open Space at Barton Park – It was agreed that the terms of a licence giving maintenance responsibilities to the Town Council be further investigated. An email has been sent to the Estates Team at WC and a response is awaited. Ongoing
Min.315/19	Representatives to the Marlborough Patients Participation Group (PPG) – Nominated Councillors (Cllrs Cooper and Farrell) have been invited to attend the second PPG group meeting on 4 March. Closed
Min.425/19	Play Area at Jubilee Field, Manton – At the meeting on 20 January, the final design from Dragon Play was agreed. An order has been placed for the equipment and its installation at a cost of £66,422. Construction will begin after Easter with an opening event planned to take place in May 2020. This will be followed through by the A&OS Committee. Closed
Min.429/19	Rescinding of Previous Decision (Priory Gardens) – On 20 January, Councillors voted to rescind a previous decision to install CCTV in Priory Gardens. The Town Clerk is informing all interested parties. Closed
Min.431/19	Tourism – At the last meeting, a draft Tourism Strategy was agreed for online consultation. This is now live and runs to 22 March 2020. Actions recommended in the Signage and Wayfaring Review will also be followed through. Ongoing
Mini.432/19	CCTV – <u>Information Sharing Charter</u> – This was approved by FTC on 20 January and has now also been signed off by Wiltshire Police. Remote access is now in place. Further documentation including a review of the Council's CCTV Policy will be submitted to FTC in the coming weeks. Ongoing

Rabley Wood View

Summary – This report asks Members to consider a proposal that the Town Council takes on the ownership and management of the play area and public open space at the new GreenSquare development at Rabley Wood View.

1. Background

Members are aware of the planning history of the development by GreenSquare at Rabley Wood View. It is registered under 19/05549/REM. This was last discussed by the Planning Committee on 7 October. An extract from the meeting minutes is as follows:

19/05549/REM – Erection of 39 dwellings with associated details of access, appearance, layout, landscaping and scale (reserved matters pursuant to outline planning permission reference 15/01052/OUT) at Land off Rabley Wood View, Marlborough for GreenSquare Homes

RESOLVED: that Marlborough Town Council has no objection to this application provided all planning conditions are met

Amendments to plans are currently being considered and the Town Council has asked to be consulted about any changes.

2. The Proposal

The Town Council has now been asked by developers, GreenSquare Homes, to consider a proposal that it takes on the ownership and management of the play area (including the multi-use games area (MUGA) and public open space (POS) at Rabley Wood View. Also included is a landscaped area with trees on the other side of the development. A plan is at **Appendix 1** showing:

Area A – (including play equipment, MUGA and associated fences, gates, street furniture, pond and soft landscaping) shown outlined in blue on the plan and would be completed and transferred to the Town Council prior to the first occupation of any dwelling on the developed land

Area B - (including associated trees and landscaping) shown outlined in green on the plan and would be completed and transferred within 6 months of completion of the final property on the developed land

3. Meeting with GreenSquare

The Town Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Chair of Planning, a member of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee and the Town Clerk met with the Managing Director of GreenSquare on 27 January 2020 to discuss this proposal. The notes of this meeting are at **Appendix 2**.

The main points discussed at the meeting with GreenSquare were:

- That the land ownership would be transferred to the Town Council and overage agreements would need to be discussed should the land be associated with any alternative future use which enhances the land value
- Any transfer may need to be staged
- Long term maintenance costs would have to be estimated
- That a commuted sum from the developers should be part of any handover for maintenance and capital replacement costs
- Insurance cover would need to be clarified

- All warranties for equipment would need to be transferred
- The land did not include the riverbank. It was noted that adjacent land, known as Bay Meadows (in excess of 30 acres) was for sale and included the riverbank area directly behind the POS
- Concerns remained about the land as compensatory space for recreational use and a number of issues around its suitability had been raised by local residents.
- If the land was not taken on by the Council, then an alternative might be that a Management Company would be set up funded by residents in the new development
- It was hoped that local residents would welcome Town Council ownership.

4. Financial Implications

The Town Council's Grounds Manager has visited the site and offers his preliminary views on ongoing maintenance costs which are set out at **Appendix 3**. These are labour costs (largely around mowing of the POS). No costings have been sought for maintenance of the play area and MUGA or the landscaped area (it is expected that costs relating to the maintenance of new play equipment under warranty would be minimal, but regular inspections would need to take place, emptying of bins, etc.) No estimates on additional machinery have been made though it is likely that it could be undertaken with existing equipment. It is thought that the land transfer will cost £1.

It is not yet clear what CIL/S106 payments are applicable to this site. No formal calculations for a commuted sum have yet been made.

(A commuted sum is an amount of money, paid by a developer where that developer proposes that an area of open space is to be transferred into the council's ownership)

5. Heads of Terms

A draft *Heads of Terms* is at **Appendix 4** (this is a non-binding document outlining the main issues relevant to a possible transfer).

6. Points to Note

- It will be important that land ownership is transferred to the Town Council. Councillors will remember that the previous play area at that site was maintained by the Town Council under licence only and had to be removed when instructed to do so by the then owners (at a cost to the Town Council of £5,000)
- Legal advice will need to be sought especially around the detail of the Heads of Terms
- Access to the site for maintenance purposes must be addressed (see **Appendix 3**)
- Fuller costings will be needed before a commuted sum can be agreed
- Members may need to re-visit the concerns about contamination that were raised by members of the public during the application process to be certain that they have been resolved as well as flooding issues

Town Clerk's Recommendation

The Town Clerk recommends that

- i) Members decide whether to agree, in principle, to the transfer from GreenSquare Homes to the Town Council of the play area, MUGA, public open space and landscaped area with trees at Rabley Wood View.

and, if so,

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- ii) That negotiations and discussions continue about a commuted sum for the transfer, legal implications and any other associated issues ahead of a final decision being made by the Town Council.

Town Clerk

25 February 2020

Update on Progress with Marlborough Dark Skies Fest 2020

Summary - To note progress to date with the Marlborough Dark Skies Fest 2020



Background

The Dark Skies Working Party (DSWP) have met regularly over the last year and have made huge progress with the co-ordination of this event, which will take place across the weekend of 2-4th October 2020.

Current Situation

Members of the DSWP have undertaken a considerable amount of research over the last couple of months, liaising with Dark Skies groups across the country, local and national astronomical clubs and individuals/groups with an interest.

Since the last report to Full Council back in 2019, the DSWP have forged strong links with the North Wessex Downs AONB. Jacky Alam, a Project Officer for the NWD AONB has now joined forces with the Town Council on this project and has been working very closely with the Assistant Town Clerk and members of the DSWP to shape and develop the programme, attract considerable grant funding and support the Town Council in it's delivery. The programme has grown considerably since the concept of the Festival was discussed and interest in the event has been staggering.

The festival will be the first one held in Marlborough, in the heart of the North Wessex Downs AONB, and it is hoped will be one of many. Its primary focus is to raise awareness of the Dark Skies Initiative and inspire and educate local people about the wonders of the night sky.

The festival will be an important addition to a programme of events for the people of Marlborough and surrounding towns and villages. Experience shows us that events such as these increase community cohesion, pride for the area, a feeling of wellbeing for local people and visitors alike. They encourage people into the town centre keeping it vibrant and supporting the local economy. The Dark Skies festival will also encourage people to explore nearby wild or open spaces in a different way or possibly for the first time.

The festival will run from Friday 2nd to Sunday 4th October 2020, with educational events and activities taking place in the schools in the lead up. In order to inspire and educate a broad range of people, there will be a strong focus on education, arts, fun and families. It will also be an important opportunity to bring together local astronomers and enthusiasts to foster future collaborations.

Marlborough is very fortunate to be home to the world's oldest functioning electronic telescope, which is located at the Marlborough College Blakett Observatory. Director of the Observatory, Charles Barclay is the former Vice President of the Royal Astronomical Society, has been hugely supportive in the early planning days and is all set to host activities at the observatory and within the college.

Bob Mizon of the British Astronomical Association and Commission for Dark Skies has generously given his time to advise the working group for the festival and will be a key part of the weekend, providing talks and presentations, bringing along with him his mobile planetarium to deliver sessions to the local primary schools, families and children.

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Jo Richardson is advising and providing school & family education. Jo is one of the 10 ESERO-UK (European Space Education Office) Space Ambassadors and delivers high profile space education projects for the European and UK Space Agencies. Jo will be working with the primary schools and will be delivering workshops across the weekend too.

Airbus Space & Defense have signed up to be involved also, not just across the festival weekend but in the delivery of STEM workshops at St John's Academy & Marlborough College.



A successful funding application to The Arts Council has enabled us to book a superb art installation called 'The Museum of the Moon' by Luke Jerram. Measuring seven metres in diameter, the moon features 120dpi detailed NASA imagery of the lunar surface. At an approximate scale of 1:500,000, each centimetre of the internally lit spherical sculpture represents 5km of the moon's surface.

It has been a struggle to find a venue big enough to accommodate the moon (10m head height is required) however it is hoped that the Chapel at Marlborough College will host this. This is however subject to a feasibility site visit to look at the logistics. The DSWP are really hopeful that the installation is possible and have 'everything crossed', working closely with Charles Barclay at the College, who has been incredibly helpful.

Please see below for a list of just some of the participants who will be involved in a variety of activities across the weekend to include the delivery of talks, presentations, workshops, moon and solar astronomy sessions:

- Professor Chris Lintott – BBC Sky at Night (keynote speaker)
- The Commission for Dark Skies
- The Blakett Observatory, Marlborough College
- Airbus Space & Defense
- Swindon Stargazers
- Bath Astronomical Society
- Wells & Mendip Astronomers
- Pete Richardson Astrophotography
- Commission for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE)
- Nick Howes – Astronomer
- Southdowns Dark Skies
- Action for the River Kennet (ARK)
- Sally Russell - Moon Sketching
- Gavin James – Local Author/Astrophotographer
- Jo Richardson - Space Detectives
- Simon Banton - Archeoastronomer
- Mary Macintyre - Astronomer
- Sirius Astronomy
- Roger Day Storyteller
- Stephen Tonkins – Star Tales
- Science & Technology Facilities Council
- Marlborough Park Run
- No Added Sugar

An initial press release went out at the end of February, a copy of which is attached at **Appendix 1**. A website and Facebook page have been created and these can be found as follows:

www.marlborough-tc.gov.uk/darkskiesfest
@marboroughdarkskiesfest

Financial Implications

Whilst it is anticipated that most of the events will be free to attend, there may be a requirement for some activities to include a minimal (affordable) charge to cover costs. There will also be opportunities to recover some costs through the offering of sponsorship and advertising within the event programme. The group has been successful in being awarded circa £15,000 in grant funding from the Arts Council, with further applications for funding pending. The North Wessex Downs AONB are funding to the tune of £2,000 and Marlborough Town Council have approved a festival budget of £3,000.

Recommendation

Members are requested to notes the plans for the festival and await a full detailed programme.

Assistant Town Clerk

20 February 2020

Annual Town Meeting – 23 March 2020

Summary - This report is to remind Members about the Annual Town Meeting scheduled for Monday, 23 March 2020 which will take place in the Assembly Room. It also asks them to consider a format.

1. Background

Although the Annual Town Meeting is convened and chaired by the Town Council, it is not a Town Council meeting but, a meeting of registered electors. (*These are referred to as Annual Parish Meetings where there is a parish council*). It must be held between 1 March and 1 June (LGA 1972 sch 12 para 4) and the Town Mayor should preside. It's an opportunity for the local electorate to raise local issues and even request a poll (there is legislation laid down governing the procedure).

Residents should leave the meeting not only feeling satisfied with the way their town or parish council handles business and spends the precept, but also that they have learned more about local issues and that there was an opportunity to have their views heard. Even better if they leave feeling that they would like to become involved as a volunteer in the community or as a Town Councillor.

2. Format

Part of the meeting must include an overview of the Council's work over the course of the municipal year and usually an update from Chairs on the work of their committees. (The Town Clerk writes an Annual Report in consultation with Chairs which is launched at the meeting too). That is the official side of things. Disappointingly, a common experience among most town and parish councils is poor turnout and most are looking at innovative ways of making the meeting more relevant and interesting to local residents. These include:

- Eye catching promotion and better use of social media
- Interesting speakers
- Refreshments (perhaps served by local brownies/guides/scouts)
- Presentation of the council's achievements for the year and plans for the following year
- Reports/displays from local groups who have benefitted from funding grants
- Reports from the local Policing Team
- A chance to showcase local businesses e.g. promotion of locally produced food/drink
- Funding surgery just ahead of the meeting – a number of funding organisations offering advice to local groups
- Presentation of civic and mayoral awards
- Presentation by the Mayor of cheques to his/her Mayoral charities

3. Points to Note

- The best attended meetings in recent years have been when the Mayor handed out cheques to mayoral charities and presentations have been made and where a hot topic has been discussed (e.g. parking)
- At the last ATM, (15 April 2019) – the Mayor updated all on progress made during the year, a representative from Wiltshire Police gave an update and there were presentations from two organisations which had been awarded grants during the year – Marlborough parkrun and Marlborough Rangers following their visit to Marlborough Massachusetts. Thirty members of the public attended.

Town Clerk's Recommendation

The Town Clerk recommends that Members consider making some changes to the format and/or promotion of the Annual Town Meeting to help improve community engagement and attendance.

Town Clerk – 25 February 2020