

**MARLBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL
AMENITIES AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the **Amenities & Open Spaces Committee** held **Monday, 1 September 2020** at
8pm via videoconference

PRESENT: Councillor D. Heath
Councillor M. Cooper
Councillor B. Castle
Councillor A. Ross
Councillor N. Barrett-Morton
Councillor L. Farrell
Councillor M. Hall
Councillor P. Cairns
Councillor V. Hillier

Chairman
Town Mayor (*ex officio*)

ALSO PRESENT: Mrs S. Parker
Mrs D. Whitehall
Councillor S. Dobson
Mr N. Goodwin
Plus 8 members of the public

Town Clerk
Administrator
Wiltshire Councillor – Marlborough East
Marlborough.News

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions.

150/20 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

151/20 DECLARATIONS

There were no declarations of interest.

152/20 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

This Committee's resolution to recommend that a Climate Emergency be declared (*Min. 43/20*) would be considered at the next meeting of the Full Town Council on 7 September 2020.

The Chairman expressed his thanks to Marlborough Town Rugby Football Club for the recent work undertaken to improve the surface of the Rugby Club car park and to construct a surrounding bund to help prevent vehicular access to grassed areas beyond the car park itself.

153/20 MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held 22 June 2020 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman

153/20 GROUNDS MANAGERS REPORT

The Grounds Manager's report was noted. It had been a challenging period for the team and the Chairman highlighted:

- The effort that had gone into looking after the Common, including preparation for haymaking with the team carrying out extensive hand weeding
- Cleaning up Stonebridge Meadow following an encampment of travellers
- Compliments from residents on the bedding displays which had been achieved when availability of supplies had been limited

- Coronavirus pandemic: the combination of reduced staffing combined with a high level of use of public spaces during and after lockdown had impacted all open spaces but the team had recovered well
- Additional workload due to a requirement to carry out daily sanitising and monitoring of play equipment

The **Town Mayor** paid tribute to the team for doing a fantastic job in difficult circumstances and asked the **Grounds Manager** to pass his thanks back to the team.

154/20 STONEBRIDGE MEADOW

Members noted the minutes of the Stonebridge Meadow Management Committee (SMC) held 17 June 2020. There were three items for Members to consider:

Works at Wetland

The wetland requires de-silting to make the central section deeper; a task likely to need repeating every five years or so. Quotes had resulted in an overspend due to larger than standard machinery being required. The best value quote was £2,064 against a budget of £1,000 and ARK had asked the Town Council to share the overspend.

RESOLVED: (i) to proceed with work to de-silt the wetland area and to share the costs of the overspend

Additional Bins

Marlborough Town Football Club (MTFC) had requested additional litter bins in two locations, one at the entrance to the Meadow where a new gate is to be installed, and another outside the Meadow but between the allotments and the club's patio area. This would encourage the proper disposal of dog waste. Members noted that this would incur additional cost as well as add to the workload for the Grounds Team, but also acknowledged that the area was popular with dog walkers and certain bins filled up quickly as a result.

RESOLVED: (ii) to purchase two additional litter bins as requested by MTFC

New Gate and Stile/Kissing Gate

RESOLVED: (iii) to agree to the shared costs of a new gate and kissing gate and delegate to the Town Clerk and Grounds Manager to take forward

155/20 MARLBOROUGH COMMON

Members noted a report by the Town Clerk and considered three items:

Marlborough Rugby Club – Request for a Third Pitch

With 400+ players, and looking to set up a SEN and a ladies team, MRFC was struggling to accommodate numbers and had requested a third pitch which would enable 8/9 age groups to train and play matches simultaneously. All three pitches would only be used at the same time on a Sunday for 60% of the rugby season. Three potential layouts had been identified. Discussion points included:

- There were many other users of the Common, and it would be important to consult with all before deciding whether to grant permission
- Whether to hold a public consultation
- There was a lack of pitches generally in the town
- The benefit of providing sport facilities for children
- No legal restrictions applied concerning the use of common land as it would be for recreation
- Whether the Common was big enough to support all users
- MRFC was an asset to the town and Members were keen to support it

- Some levelling or other work may be required depending of the preferred location

RESOLVED: (i) to continue to meet with other users of the Common and review at the next A&OS meeting

Recycling Area

Following a complaint from a member of the public about the recycling area used for spoil dug from graves, the composting of grass clippings and a skip, a meeting took place on site with the complainant and a member of the Open Spaces Society (OSS). Concerns were raised about health and safety and whether it was in breach of regulations around management of the Common as set out in the Commons Acts of 1899 and 2006 and may require permission from the Secretary of State. Three possible actions were discussed:

- To contact the appropriate authority at the Planning Inspectorate about how permissions can be obtained to retain the area as an environmentally friendly composting space
- To level the area and make good after identifying an alternative site
- To retain the site as part of an area for a possible swap of land to accommodate the need for a cemetery extension, replacing it with common land elsewhere in the town

RESOLVED: (ii) to continue to use the area in the short term while investigating the appropriate permissions

Memorial Benches

Several locations had been identified as suitable sites for the placing of two memorial benches.

RESOLVED: (iii) to delegate to the Town Clerk to work with the sponsors of the memorial benches to agree locations as suggested by the Grounds Manager.

156/20 COOPERS MEADOW

During a suspension of Standing Orders, **Marian Hannaford-Dobson** explained her concerns about the dwindling population of ducks, asking whether the Town Council would include actions to protect wildfowl in the management plans of Coopers Meadow, Stonebridge Meadow and Jubilee Field (Manton). Suggestions including the creation of small islands or other actions to protect wildlife habitats and no restrictions on members of the public feeding ducks.

The **Chairman** regularly walked all parts of the river and had observed ducks in quieter stretches and wondered whether the recent increase in the use of open spaces by residents may have had an impact on their moving away from public parks. He also acknowledged mixed messages in the past 18 months about whether and what to feed ducks. He would make a note of ducks on his regular walks in future. Other points raised included:

- It was important to support and encourage wildlife
- It wasn't possible to intervene with nature if wildfowl had chosen to settle at different stretches of the river
- For young children, feeding the ducks was often their first encounter with nature and this should be encouraged
- Recent evidence showed that there were now otters in the Kennet. This indicated a healthy river but, as an apex predator, otters will take eggs, ducklings and even adult birds
- The Wetland & Wildfowl Trust had noted a general decline in duck populations nationwide although an increase had been noted in Devon
- Rats would also predate nests/ducklings
- Ducks had a normal range of up to 12 miles
- Whether ducks would return to Coopers Meadow if there was a ready food source available – preferably grain, or wholemeal bread but not white bread

RESOLVED: to monitor the duck population and review quarterly at A&OS meetings

Some members of the public left the meeting

157/20 CEMETERIES

RESOLVED: (i) that recent Grants of Exclusive Rights of Burial were noted

RESOLVED: (ii) that recent approved memorials and inscriptions were noted

Members considered signage at the car park to indicate clearly that parking was for cemetery visitors only, and whether to extend the parking area:

Signage

- Some people may not be aware that the road leads to a cemetery – the only signage is near the gates
- Whether the example signage was large enough
- Whether to go ahead with smaller signs in the interim while pursuing larger signs
- Whether to have an arc sign above the entrance to read “Marlborough Cemetery”

RESOLVED: (i) to go ahead with A3 signage as an interim measure while obtaining quotations for larger signs

Car parking space

- Whether to create a spur from the turning circle to provide additional parking
- Whether to use mesh to create temporary, additional parking
- Whether creating additional parking would prevent possible extension of the cemetery in future
- How to ensure any additional parking would only be used by visitors to the cemetery
- Whether clearer signage would resolve the availability of parking for cemetery visitors – currently it was used by dog walkers, leisure users, walkers and people attending sporting events
- In the current pandemic it was even more important to be sensitive to the needs of people wanting to visit the cemetery
- In the longer term, the forthcoming Neighbourhood Plan would include parking with any cemetery extension plans

RESOLVED: to draw up potential options for additional parking for discussion at the next A&OS meeting

158/20 PLANTING AT WAR MEMORIAL AND ELCOT TRIANGLE

Members considered the planting of flowers at the War Memorial and Elcot Triangle.

RESOLVED: to retain the formal grass and hedging at the War Memorial and to replacing the planting at Elcot Triangle with flowers

159/20 TOWN MILL MACHINERY

Members considered a request about the Town Mill machinery which was currently located at the Ropeworks thanks to the generosity of the owner and the help of local volunteers who moved it there in 2015. The site was now being developed and the owner no longer had space for it.

The **Town Clerk** had spoken to the gentleman who had offered to take on ownership of the mill wheel machinery and to store it temporarily at a nearby location (Clatford) while a permanent location was identified.

Discussion points included:

- Whether signing the equipment over could include a condition that the machinery must remain in Marlborough
- Whether other museums such as Devizes would be suitable

A proposal to discuss a location with Wiltshire Museum failed, as Members believed the machinery should be located in Marlborough.

RESOLVED: to accept the offer for temporary storage and to work with the owner of Ropeworks to make sure the machinery is located at a permanent site in Marlborough

160/20 MARLBOROUGH IN BLOOM (MiB)

There had been no meetings of the Committee since the last meeting.

161/20 ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

Members noted the minutes of the most recent meeting of the Allotment Association which included groups mentioned that might like allotments. The **Town Clerk** confirmed that allotments were for individuals only and could not be offered to groups.

The meeting closed at 9.37pm

Signed: Date:
Chair