

# Marlborough Town Council



## Amenities and Open Spaces Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee held  
Wednesday, 1 March 2023 in the Council Chamber, Marlborough Town Hall at 6pm

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**PRESENT** Councillor Donald Heath Chair  
Councillor Nicholas Fogg  
Councillor Noel Barrett-Morton  
Councillor Mark Cooper  
Councillor Mark Luson

### ALSO

**PRESENT** Richard Spencer-Williams Town Clerk  
Nigel Weatherly Grounds Manager  
Dawn Whitehall Corporate Services Officer

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### PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public in attendance.

### 264/22 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from the **Town Mayor** and **Councillor Thomas**.

### 265/22 DECLARATIONS

**Councillors Cooper** and **Luson** – agenda item 8 – Amenities & Open Spaces Charges – pecuniary interest.

### 266/22 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

### 267/22 MINUTES

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meeting held 10 October 2022 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair

### 268/22 ACTION LOG

Members noted the updated action log.

## 269/22 **GROUNDINGS MANAGER'S REPORT**

Members noted the Grounds Manager's Report. **Mr Weatherly** answered questions about safety fencing and damaged play equipment at The Recreation Ground, damaged fencing at Orchard Road Play Area and repairs to the wall at Priory Gardens, and the capping stones.

To prevent heat stress to roses at the 7<sup>th</sup> Wiltshire Regiment War Memorial, Members agreed to the Grounds Manager's recommendation to relocate the roses to beds within the turf and for the existing rose beds to either be planted with seasonal bulbs/wildflowers or turfed to the pavement edge.

**ACTION:** provide a design and pricing for the 7<sup>th</sup> Wiltshire Regiment Memorial garden layout

## 270/22 **BUDGET REPORT**

Members noted the Committee budget report for Q3 2022-23, and that the budget was on track.

## 271/22 **AMENITIES AND OPEN SPACES CHARGES**

*Councillors Cooper and Luson did not vote on this item*

**RESOLVED:** that the Committee agrees a 10% increase for the Cemetery and Open Spaces rates for 2023-24

## 272/22 **PLAY EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE COSTS**

Members considered play areas, their equipment, and whether to create an asset management and investment plan for annual budgeting purposes. Discussion points included:

### **Wye House Gardens – Toddlers' Play Area**

- Since the report was produced this toddlers' play area had been closed for safety reasons and would remain so
- A recent invitation to tender had resulted in only one response
- Whether to repeat the invitation to tender
- Whether to reframe the tender exercise to emphasise and attract landscaping companies rather than play equipment manufacturers
- Whether to link the upgrade to a Coronation theme and/or other similar projects in the town
- Whether to work with schools to create a sensory/protected space for young children and their families
- Whether to create an ornate children's garden to match the theme of Wye House Gardens, with perhaps one or two items of play equipment
- Whether to create a safe and level environment and then to involve others, e.g. schools, to develop the space in partnership with the Town Council
- Whether to consult with residents

**RESOLVED:** to draft an updated invitation to tender and consult with St Mary's School

## **The Common**

- Whether to replace the swings with a design more in keeping with the natural environment
- Whether to remove the swings, and when
- That the swings, while not visibly appealing, were very well used
- Whether to replace or extend the children's trim trail to provide a discreet exercise trail for adults and teenagers around the Common
- Whether budget could be shared with the Wye House Gardens Play Area project
- To be mindful of the sensitivities of placing any equipment on common land

ACTION: Town Clerk to create a report of options based on the ideas discussed

### **273/22 TRAINING AREA ON THE COMMON**

Members noted the Town Clerk's report, and that the Planning Application had not yet been decided by Wiltshire Council.

### **274/22 QUEEN'S GREEN CANOPY**

Members noted the Town Clerk's report, and that all 70 trees for the 70 years of Queen Elizabeth II's reign had now been planted.

### **275/22 NEW CEMETERY**

Members noted the Town Clerk's report setting out proposed next steps to this long term project.

**RESOLVED:** to recommend to Full Town Council to support the project in principal and to apply for a Public Works Loan for funding

### **276/22 MARLBOROUGH COMMON GOVERNANCE**

No meetings had taken place as the Chair, Councillor Jo Waltham, had resigned from the Town Council.

**RESOLVED:** to place this working party in abeyance and reappoint members at the start of the 2023/24 Council year

### **277/22 CEMETERY REPORT**

Members noted the Grants of Exclusive Rights of Burial that had been issued, and Memorial and Inscription Applications that had been approved.

### **278/22 ALLOTMENTS**

As it was the winter season there had been no meetings of the Allotment Association, and the Association members had no issues to raise with the Committee.

### **279/22 STONEBRIDGE MEADOW**

**The Chair** reminded Members that prior to the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, budget had been set aside in Ear Marked Reserves (EMR) to contribute to a new bridge to link Stonebridge Meadow with the boardwalk on the other side of the river to create a

circular walk. The project had not progressed. He proposed that some of the funds be reallocated as follows:

- Bird Watching Panels: three wood and woven willow panels used by schools and the public for bird watching had been vandalised beyond repair. The panels had been removed by Action for the River Kennet (ARK) volunteers and it was proposed that they be replaced.
- Boardwalk near Poulton Bridge: this short boardwalk had sunk, and the grass path it joined was becoming increasingly waterlogged. It was proposed to lift, replace and extend the boardwalk as far as the gate to the livestock area so that the area would be more accessible in wet weather.
- Material costs for both was estimated at £3,800. ARK would pay for installation and had asked whether the Town Council could pay for the materials.
- Ideally the work should be done in the late spring.

The **Town Clerk** noted that there was £1,182 remaining in the A&OS budget for 2022-23, also that there is an EMR for Stonebridge Meadow.

**RESOLVED:** in collaboration with Action for the River Kennet, to replace bird watching panels and repair and improve a section of boardwalk at Stonebridge Meadow, with a Town Council contribution of £3,800 for materials

**280/22 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED:** that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential or commercial nature of the business to be transacted

**281/22 BIODIVERSITY PLAN**

Members considered quotations to commission a service to create a biodiversity plan. A decision had originally been scheduled for January, and it may now be too late to begin this work which should take place in the spring. If the work was to roll over into 2024, it allowed more time to develop the proposal and explore options for creating a plan.

**RESOLVED:** to consult with partner organisations to gather more information and defer a decision to a future meeting

The meeting closed at 7.08 pm

Signed: .....  
Chair

Date: .....