

Marlborough Town Council



Amenities and Open Spaces Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee
held Tuesday, 15 April 2025 in the Council Chamber, Marlborough Town Hall at 7pm

PRESENT	Councillor Mark Cooper	Chair
	Councillor Andrew Ross	
	Councillor Mark Luson	
	Councillor Kelvyn Shantry	Vice Chair
	Councillor Emily Trow	
	Richard Spencer-Williams	Town Clerk
	Dawn Whitehall	Corporate Services Officer
ALSO		
PRESENT	Councillor Caroline Sadler	Observing

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A written question had been received from **Adam Woodford**:

- “1. How much, if anything, will the Rugby Club be contributing to the cost of their new "informal" car park
2. How much is such a facility worth annually to the Rugby Club?
3. Have the Council yet identified what land is to be handed over to the Rugby Club when the entire Common has already been handed over?”

The **Chair** confirmed that neither the existing or proposed informal car park were the Rugby Club’s (MRFC) – both belonged to the Town Council and anyone could use them free of charge, and this would be the case for the proposed extension, allowing people who work in the town centre to park for free all day. All agreed that better signage might help to draw attention to this fact, and this could be something for the Committee to consider in 2025-26. It was noted that from time to time MRFC cordoned off spaces or placed cones there, which could give the impression that other people couldn’t park there. In terms of question 3 about land, there were two pitches and an informal training area added following a public consultation: the land had not been handed over to MRFC.

Separately, on behalf of a resident **Councillor Luson** asked whether the number of litter bins had been reduced. The **Town Clerk** explained that the Town Council looked after (and added) bins in parks and open spaces, but anything else was the

responsibility of Wiltshire Council via its contractor. It was possible that bins may have been removed and not replaced if they had been damaged but further investigation would be needed to be able to answer this question.

455/24 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from **Councillors Farrell, Sheppard, O'Brien**, the **Town Mayor Councillor Cleasby** and the **Grounds Manager**.

456/24 DECLARATIONS

Councillors Cooper and **Luson** – agenda item 14 (Allotments) – non-pecuniary interest.

457/24 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

A picnic bench had been placed at Stonebridge Meadow.

The Chair thanked Members for their hard work over the past year, with a big thank you to **Councillor Ross** for his service and hard work on behalf of the town over a number of years.

458/24 MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held 13 January 2025 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair

459/24 ACTION LOG

Members noted the updated action log.

460/24 STONEBRIDGE MEADOW

Members noted the minutes of the Stonebridge Management Committee meeting held 13 February 2025, and received a verbal update from **Councillor Shantry**:

- It was good news that the new picnic bench had been placed in the meadow
- There was an ongoing issue with dog fouling, and perhaps more signs were needed? Free bags (to bag it and bin it) were available at the entrance to the meadow, provided by Action for the River Kennet
- To give the public a better view of the river, a 10m strip of vegetation alongside the riverbank was to be cut back by volunteers with nearby log seating available

The **Chair** thanked **Councillors Shantry** and **O'Brien** for their representation at the Stonebridge Management Committee.

461/24 GROUNDS MANAGER'S REPORT

Members noted the Grounds Manager's report and passed their thanks to the team. Discussion points included:

- The **Chair** had recently visited the Cemetery and it looked very good
- Members noted that the Town Council would bear the cost of tree works at Priory Gardens to enable Aster to extend its car park for Priory residents and/or staff

- **Councillor Ross** drew the team's attention to broken kerbstones and rutting caused by construction vehicles at The Recreation Ground and also asked for the temporary storage area to be raked, seeded and made good as soon as possible. The **Town Clerk** confirmed the damage had been noted during a site meeting and would be put right once the workshop build project was complete

462/24 TREE REPORT

Members noted the report on the Council's trees.

463/24 FINANCE REPORT

Members noted the Amenities & Open Spaces finance report for month 11.

464/24 WORKSHOP EXTENSION

The **Town Clerk** gave a verbal update on work to extend the Grounds Team workshop at Salisbury Road Recreation Ground:

- The roof was on, doors had been installed and work was starting on the internal fittings
- Some of the surrounding land would need to be rationalised, e.g. to create easy slopes to allow for the use of wheelbarrows or trolleys
- The current phase should be complete by the end of April 2025
- Members discussed whether to hold an opening ceremony, and perhaps to name the building – it was important to celebrate what had been a big project for the Town Council. The option of asking a VIP such as a Deputy Lieutenant to open it was also considered

465/24 CEMETERY EXTENSION

Members noted the Town Clerk's update report and considered the draft plan for Hawthorn Meadow. Discussion points included:

- Although there had been delays in the handover of the play area and land to the Town Council, work by GreenSquare Accord was ongoing to reach a point where all the relevant signoffs could be achieved allowing the handover to take place
- A concern was whether the warranty period on the play equipment would be adequate – the kit had already been on site for a year
- Whether some areas could be handed over early, with corresponding funding given to the Town Council for tasks that its team could take on, e.g. seeding or turfing the banks
- The proposed plan for Hawthorn Meadow included a proposed path allowing continuous access through to Bay Meadows, with a new access gate wide enough for Town Council vehicles

RESOLVED: that the plan for Hawthorn Meadow is agreed in principle

466/24 VICTORIAN CEMETERY

Members considered a request by the Friends of the Victorian Cemetery to set up a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) with a Town Council Trustee:

- **Councillor Sadler** explained her role with the Friends group, and their aims to improve biodiversity
- A website was being created to allow the public to identify the plants
- Other proposals included a potential open day in June
- The main purpose of the CIO was to allow better access to funding and to work with the Town Council on a partnership model

RESOLVED: that the Committee supports the request to create a Charitable Incorporated Organisation for the Victorian Cemetery with a Town Council Trustee, and that this should be recommended to the Full Town Council for ratification

Councillor Sadler left the meeting

467/24

INFORMAL CAR PARK

Members considered the indicative plan for implementation of an informal car park on The Common. Discussion points included:

- Timing and perception: residents were rightly protective of The Common. The recently opened training area, a proposed Cemetery extension and a new car park added up to a lot of activity there
- Cost: rough estimates were that it would cost up to £100,000. There was £10,000 set aside as an earmarked reserve and it would qualify for CIL funding
- The proposal in the Neighbourhood Plan was for 60 spaces
- Policy 5 as written in the Neighbourhood Plan included specifying that ‘there will be no permanent buildings or structures or other urbanising effects such as paved footways or landscape bunding’. To prevent unwanted vehicle access to other areas on the Common, some type of boundary would be required and bunding was the best solution in terms of visual impact on the landscape. This would require the Neighbourhood Plan to be revised, and the Town Clerk explained the process to revise the plan
- That a new Neighbourhood Plan working group would need to be created
- It was noted that the National Planning Policy Framework would be changing, and the Wiltshire Local Plan was not yet agreed. Members discussed whether the review of the Marlborough Area Neighbourhood Plan (MANP) should be reviewed once both had been published, so that all implications for Marlborough could be understood
- Whether to take the project forward over the next few years, carrying out an internal review before entering a formal process once the MANP was ready to be reviewed
- Whether, with the project not being funded, it could turn into an ‘activity trap’ for the Town Council and should therefore be delayed (i.e. reviewing the MANP was a big job; and to consider whether £100,000 for 60 spaces represented good value)

RESOLVED: that the current plan for an informal car park is supported in principle, and the Town Council should look to incorporate material changes that would be required to the MANP into a wider review of the MANP informed by future updates to the National Planning Policy Framework and Wiltshire Local Plan, and to recommend this to Full Town Council

468/24 ALLOTMENTS

Members noted the Town Clerk’s report, and considered a draft plan for the Stonebridge Allotment site and whether to create separate committees for each of the three allotment sites.

Councillors Cooper and Luson did not vote on this agenda item

RESOLVED: (i) that the Allotment Committee moves to three smaller committees, with a Stonebridge Lane Allotment Committee meeting more frequently until such a time that everyone involved is confident the site will be able to be more sustainable to a satisfactory standard; and that each of these are supported by a Councillor, the Town Clerk, Grounds Manager and the Office Manager (if required)

RESOLVED: (ii) the draft outline plan for Stonebridge Allotments is supported in principle subject to further consideration and consultation with allotment holders, St Johns Trust and ARK, and that a supporting budget is identified

469/24 CEMETERY REPORT

Members noted recent Grants of Exclusive Rights of Burial that had been issued, and recently approved Memorials and Inscriptions.

The meeting closed at 8.38 pm

Signed:

Chair

Date: