

Marlborough Town Council



Amenities & Open Spaces Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee held Monday,
13 January 2025 in the Council Chamber, Marlborough Town Hall at 7pm

PRESENT	Councillor Mark Cooper	Chair
	Councillor Kym-Marie Cleasby	Town Mayor
	Councillor Andrew Ross	
	Councillor Lisa Farrell	
	Councillor Mark Luson	
	Councillor Susannah O'Brien	
	Councillor Emily Trow	
	Councillor Mervyn Hall	Observing
	Richard Spencer-Williams	Town Clerk
	Nigel Weatherly	Grounds Manager
	Dawn Whitehall	Corporate Services Officer
ALSO		
PRESENT	Sue Round	Marlborough.News

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions.

336/24 APOLOGIES
Apologies for absence were received from **Councillors Sheppard** and **Shantry**.

337/24 DECLARATIONS
Councillors Cooper and **Luson** – agenda item 14 – Allotments – non-pecuniary interest.

338/24 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS
There were no announcements.

339/24 MINUTES
RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held 14 October 2024 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

340/24 ACTION LOG

Members noted the updated action log.

341/24 STONEBRIDGE MEADOW

Members noted the minutes of the Stonebridge Meadow Management Committee meeting held 31 October 2024. **Councillor O'Brien** had been unable to attend and, with **Councillor Shantry** not present, no verbal update was available.

342/24 GROUNDS MANAGER'S REPORT

Members noted the Grounds Manager's Report and asked him to convey the Committee's thanks to the team. Discussion points included:

- Capacity: at the previous meeting Members had noted the Staffing Committee was in active discussion to address capacity issues in the Grounds Team. The Finance & Policy Committee had agreed a budget for temporary staff and the Grounds Manager was making contact with people who might wish to help out on a casual basis to cover staff shortages. The use of additional staff to help with planned projects (e.g. biodiversity planting) was also being considered
- The team was congratulated on the construction and installation of a storage rack for the new watering cans replacing those that had been stolen at Marlborough Cemetery
- The team had a litter bin ready to be installed next to a bench at Salisbury Road Recreation Ground
- The stone wall bordering Jubilee Field at Bridge Street, Manton requires repair. Budget was available from Ear Marked Reserves. A traffic management plan would be needed while the work was underway, and a meeting had been scheduled to draw up plans. Ideally the work would be carried out during the Easter school holidays.

343/24 TREE REPORT

Members noted the most recent report on the management of the Town Council's trees. The Grounds Manager advised that tree works had also been undertaken recently at Salisbury Road Recreation Ground to deal with a storm-damaged tree leaning on a fence.

344/24 FINANCE REPORT

Members noted the finance report for Amenities and Open Spaces at month 8 with no issues arising.

345/24 WORKSHOP EXTENSION

The Town Clerk provided a verbal update on the project to extend the Grounds Team workshop at Salisbury Road Recreation Ground:

- More detailed plans had been drawn up to satisfy building regulations
- A slight delay to the start of physical work had been caused by a requirement to dig a test hole to understand the condition of the foundations

- Final costs had been agreed with the Chair of the Property Committee and Wilkins had been appointed as the preferred contractor following a tender process
- Following a site meeting with the Town Council's agent and the contractor, it was expected that the next phase of work would begin w/c 27 January, to complete at the end of April

346/24 CEMETERY EXTENSION

Members noted the Town Clerk's update report. Discussion points included:

- Whether the target end-stop handover date of March would be achievable, as there had been slow progress by GreenSquareAccord in terms of both actions and communication
- Some work to rectify the rough ground (e.g. creating a layout to include hedges and path/s) was required, but work could not start until the land had been transferred to the Town Council. Ideally a costed, agreed layout plan should be in place by April 2025
- There may be an opportunity to benefit from Thames Water's Community Fund to create a gate and access following planned work that would necessitate heavy plant on the site
- Separate from the proposed Common land transfer, Members discussed the play area to be handed over from GreenSquareAccord, including questions about the manufacturer, warranty and timing: the area could not be used until grass seed had been sown and a period of time allowed until the grass could be walked over

RESOLVED: to draw up a costed landscape plan for agreement, including contribution by Thames Water and the critical conditions for the formal handover, by April

347/24 LONDON ROAD WAR MEMORIAL PLANTING SCHEME

Members noted the Town Clerk's report and considered a planting scheme for the 7th Battalion Wiltshire Regiment Memorial. Discussion points included:

- The flowering period for the suggested flowers (day lilies, foxgloves, cornflowers and poppies) and whether there would be any blooms remaining in November
- Support for mixing flowers with evergreen shrubs such as Lavender, Hebe or Heather
- That heathers provide a colourful display year-round
- Whether to reconsider planting at the next meeting (April), and whether this would be too late in the planting season to create a good display this year
- Whether to go ahead with the proposed planting scheme and review it in 2026
- Whether to go ahead with all the proposed flower varieties or a smaller selection
- That other plants could be incorporated, e.g. spring bulbs

RESOLVED: to go ahead with the poppy and cornflower mix together with evergreens (e.g. Lavender, Heather, Hebe) and anything else the Grounds Manager feels is appropriate to replace the roses at the 7th Battalion Wiltshire Regiment Memorial

348/24 INFORMAL CAR PARK

Members noted the Town Clerk's report and considered the proposal in the Marlborough Area Neighbourhood Plan (MANP) to create an informal car park on The Common, adjacent to the existing Town Council car park next to the Marlborough Rugby (MRFC) clubhouse.

On 28 October 2024 the Finance and Policy Committee (*Min. No. 251/24*) requested that the matter be considered by this Committee:

“It was noted that the £9,000 committed for matting at Marlborough Common was to protect areas that received high traffic as a result of parking for sports matches or other events and was not for the creation of an informal car park as outlined in the Marlborough Area Neighbourhood Plan. Members requested that the Amenities & Open Spaces (A&OS) Committee be asked to provide an update on plans to progress the latter.”

Councillor Hall (Chair of the Property Committee and former Chair of the MANP Steering Group) explained the background and need for additional free parking spaces, especially for people who work in the town or who live on nearby streets with no off-street parking availability.

Discussion points included:

- The MANP was Made following a Referendum in March 2023. Policy 5 sets out the creation of an informal car park at Marlborough Common in response to a parking survey that identified the need for an additional 100 parking spaces in the town
- Policy 5 in MANP supports the criteria as:
 - The car park will comprise a grass grid, permeable surface only
 - There will be no permanent buildings or structures or other urbanising effects such as paved footways or landscape bunding
 - Its use will be confined to cars and not any high-sided vehicle
 - Vehicular access is in a location and of a type to be agreed with the Highways Authority
 - The length and width of the car park shall retain a meaningful nib of land between its southern end and Hyde Lane and shall retain the continuous swathe between its eastern edge and Free's Avenue
 - Any impact on the amenities of adjoining residents can be satisfactorily mitigated
- Vehicle access point would be the existing entrance (from St Luke's Court) with the additional parking created in line with the existing; this would likely require consultation with the Highways Authority

- Whether the drawing in the MANP shows an area big enough to accommodate up to 60 cars
- That the current car park adjacent to the clubhouse is a Town Council car park and not owned by the Rugby Club, and is available to anyone at any time, although routinely used by the Rugby Club for games and events
- That the MANP was Made following a Referendum with this car park included, which may negate the need for further consultation
- Whether any further planning permission is required or whether the Made Plan implies planning consent
- That consent may be required under Section 38 of The Commons Act 2006: the Town Clerk had already made enquiries with Defra to seek to clarify this
- That any changes to Common land will be of interest to the public and careful communication will be required
- Rules would be required for those using the car park (e.g. height restriction; not to be used for untaxed or uninsured vehicles)
- A sum of £10,000 had been set aside although a costed plan was still to be drawn up; a communications plan would also be required
- The preferred demarcation would be to create grassed bunds with pedestrian gaps, but the MANP policy as written prohibits this. Alternatives such as posts would be more obtrusive and could be vulnerable to removal by others. Bunding was the best way to protect the land from unwanted vehicle access
- Members considered whether the MANP should be updated to remove the reference to bunding, or an alternative demarcation method should be found: a minor revision to the MANP was preferred

RESOLVED: that the A&OS Committee supports the creation of an informal car park subject to:

- (i) a minor revision to the wording of Policy 5 of the Marlborough Area Neighbourhood Plan
- (ii) reinforcing the public availability of the existing informal car park
- (iii) an agreed communication plan
- (iv) an agreed costed plan

349/24

ALLOTMENTS

Councillor Luson gave a verbal update including:

- The last meeting of the Allotment Association (AA) was on 4 November
- A meeting had been called between the AA and Town Council representatives on 21 January
- The AGM had been postponed until after the 21 January meeting
- It was now a year since the flooding at Stonebridge allotments; it would be safe to consume produce planted from now on as the soil should be free of the contaminants from the flood water
- A pedestrian mower loaned to the St John's site was to be handed back to the Town Council
- A designated contact at Stonebridge site was required in order for the Grounds Manager to coordinate activities; currently it was difficult to access the site by vehicle because of nearby construction works

350/24 CEMETERY REPORT

- (i) Members noted recent grants of Exclusive Rights of Burial that had been issued
- (ii) Members noted memorial inscriptions that had recently been approved

351/24 MEMORIAL BENCHES

RESOLVED: that the request for a Memorial Bench at Marlborough Common for Allesandra Bedford is approved

The meeting closed at 8.09 pm

Signed:
Chair

Date: