

Marlborough Town Council



Amenities and Open Spaces Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee, which was held on Monday, 11 July 2022 in the Council Chamber, Marlborough Town Hall at 7pm

PRESENT	Councillor Jo Waltham	Chair
	Councillor Nicholas Fogg	
	Councillor Noel Barrett-Morton	
	Councillor Mark Cooper	
	Councillor Donald Heath	
	Councillor James Sheppard	
	Councillor Mark Luson	
ALSO		
PRESENT	Richard Spencer-Williams	Town Clerk
	Dawn Whitehall	Corporate Services Officer
	Susan Round	Marlborough.News

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions.

88/22

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from **Councillors Thomas** and **The Town Mayor**. **Councillor Barrett-Morton** would need to leave the meeting at 8.30pm.

89/22

DECLARATIONS

There were no declarations.

90/22

CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr Waltham was pleased to announce that the new fence at Coopers Meadow was now erected, and that the sheep would soon be returning.

The Interview date for an additional Grounds Person was set as 21 July 2022.

91/22

MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held 25 April 2022 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair

92/22

ACTION LOG

Members noted the updated action log.

93/22 GROUNDS MANAGER'S REPORT

Members noted the Ground's Manager's Report. The Grounds Manager's request to carry out crown reduction work on trees in Priory Gardens along the side of Figgins Lane near River Park at a cost of £3100 was considered.

RESOLVED: to carry out crown reduction work to trees in Priory Gardens near Figgins Lane and River Park

94/22 QUARTERLY BUDGET REPORT

Members noted the Amenities and Open Spaces budget report for Quarter 1 2022-23.

The Committee noted the Quarter 1 2022-23 report.

95/22 PROJECTS OVERVIEW

Members noted the Town Clerk's report, current progress and proposals for taking the Committee's projects forward:

Specifically, Members discussed the **priority order** for each project. Discussion points Included:

- the merits and risks
- funding options of each project
- the health and safety implications of the wall at Figgins Lane
- the funding opportunity for the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) funding and the need to submit this in time for North Wessex Downs consideration between now and the end of March
- the complexity of, and need to research, the steps required to create a new cemetery
- recognition that bio-diversity management now features in increasing areas of the Council's work
- that some play areas were in more need than others
- Wiltshire Council has yet to confirm when the s106 funds attributed to Salisbury Recreation Ground will be transferred
- Although not complete, much of the work for the training area on Marlborough Common has for now been carried out

RESOLVED: (i) that the priority order for A&OS projects should be:

1. Wall at Figgins Lane (immediate)
2. Rabley View/ land at Tin Pit FiPL application and feasibility (2022-23)
3. Cemetery (2022 27)
4. Biodiversity Management Plan (2023-24)
5. Play Areas – Wye House Gardens and the Common (2022-24)
6. Salisbury Road Recreation Ground (2023-24)
7. Training Area on the Common (ongoing as needed)

Further site-specific **resolutions** were:

Rabley Wood View /Land at Tin Pit

RESOLVED: (ii) to work in partnership with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust in pursuit of a joint FiPL funding application, initially aimed at specific funding capacity for a feasibility study in pursuit of a development and management plan for our combined land interests adjacent to the River Og

Wye House Play Area and Marlborough Common

RESOLVED: (iii) to form a working party of **Councillor Luson** and the **Town Clerk** to work with relevant sectors of the community and develop a costed concept plan; and for funding options to be then considered and reported back to the Committee.

ACTION POINT: the Town Clerk to provide a site plan showing the access rights and site boundary of Wye House Gardens and Play Area

Salisbury Road Recreation Ground

Points of consideration were:

- The s106 funding and when it would be available
- Contact had already been made to start fact finding about Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGA) and costs
- It may be possible to fit two or three MUGA facilities on the proposed hard standing site which would meet a wider range of need, but would cost more
- Previous experience of using dedicated project management services for play areas had proved to deliver excellent outcomes e.g., Coopers Meadow, and Jubilee Field Manton
- Some ideas presented may not now be so relevant e.g., antisocial behaviour had not been such an issue as 'post lockdown'
- Installation of additional CCTV at the Community and Youth Centre may mean a car park barrier would not be needed
- Budget consideration to allow for project management and equipment

RESOLVED: (iv) to obtain a quote for services to project manage Salisbury Recreation Ground Project/s for budget consideration at the next Committee meeting

Biodiversity Management Plan

- Recognition that this is a growing area of responsibility and work for the Council
- Whether to create capacity in-house or commission services as needed
- The need to understand what any such post or service would be asked to do
- That the 'Green Audit' was commissioned to address carbon footprint and reduction, it does not directly address protecting and developing biodiversity
- That funds would need to be allocated to support this work in the 2023 24 precept and budget setting process

The Chair and committee noted that this item linked to ITEM 12, and that further consideration of this matter would be covered later in the meeting.

RESOLVED: (v) that a bio-diversity plan was needed

Priory Gardens

Discussion included:

- It was agreed that the wall at Figgins Lane was in need of immediate repair. It was also recognised a planned approach to its maintenance was preferable.
- Whether a heritage grant could be obtained towards the ongoing cost?

RESOLVED: (vi) to proceed with the work to Figgins Lane wall as a priority, with a request to the Finance and Policy Committee for release of sufficient reserves to cover the cost of repair

RESOLVED: (vii) to consider the need for funds for the ongoing repair of the whole wall during the budget setting process.

96/22

NEW CEMETERY

Members noted the Town Clerk's Report and initial work undertaken towards securing additional cemetery land. Discussion points included:

- That additional external services would be needed to undertake this project
- Thus far some useful contacts had been made for such services
- The allocated EMR is not sufficient to fund the services offer, and it is likely more funds will be needed
- The potential need for a land swap to ensure the 'common land' offer remains in Marlborough
- Time was limited so steady progress would be needed
- How this project links in with the project at Rabley View/Land at Tin Pit
- DEFRA and Wiltshire Council planning implications, and how in particular the support of the former (via its due processes) was key to advancing the proposed location

RESOLVED: (i) to seek guidance from the Planning Inspectorate in Bristol (DEFRA) as to the feasibility of the proposed land option and land swap site, and to report this to the Committee at the next meeting

RESOLVED: (ii) that the New Cemetery should be a standing item on the agenda until completion

97/22

BENCHES AND TREES AT COLLEGE FIELDS AND BARTON PARK

Members considered a request received from College Fields and Barton Park Residents Association (CF&BRPRA) for five trees with benches to be installed around the neighbourhood area to provide resting places and contribute towards the Queen's Green Canopy. Discussion points included:

- The Town Council is not the landowner for any of these locations
- That benches should preferably be made from hardwood

- The Grounds Manager recommended native hardwood trees such as Oak or Beech for larger spaces
- The Grounds Manager recommended suitable trees for smaller spaces including Handkerchief trees, Flowering Cherry; Flowering Hawthorn, Judas Tree Katsura, Gleditsia
- Costs: benches were estimated at £400 each plus installation costs, and trees between £50-150 each
- Installation and maintenance, and impact on workload
- Recognition that there had been offers from the CF&BRPRA to assist with the planting and installation of trees and benches, and the possible sponsorship of trees

RESOLVED: that the Committee supports the request with the offer of:

- i. Professional advice and Town Council labour to assist with tree planting
- ii. To cover the cost of the purchase of trees if no sponsor can be found for the tree at the same time as the bench, with the latter being the preferred outcome
- iii. To add the locations for benches to the Council's 'memorial bench' list, and to work with and support CF&BRPRA in identifying possible sponsors
- iv. To support the CF&BRPRA request and liaise with Wiltshire Council to support the request and seek relevant permissions
- v. To assume ongoing maintenance for the trees
- vi. To assume ongoing maintenance for the benches in line with the Council's existing practice for memorial benches

98/22

RAIN GAUGE AT TIN PIT

Members considered a request from the Environment Agency to site a rain gauge on land owned by the Town Council at Tin Pit.

RESOLVED: to support the Environment Agency's request to site a rain gauge at Tin Pit (as described)

Councillor Barrett-Morton left the meeting

99/22

CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT OFFICER

Members considered a proposal to create a new staff position to progress the Town Council's actions and projects related to environmental and climate protection. Discussion points included:

- The Town Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2020 and adopted an Environment and Climate Protection Policy Statement in 2021
- Wiltshire Council's commitment to become carbon neutral by 2030 and Wiltshire Council's aspiration for the whole county to become carbon neutral
- Government aspirations for UK to be carbon neutral by 2050 and pledge to reduce national emissions by 68% by 2030
- Similar roles had been created at Corsham, Frome and Salisbury
- Whether to create a 0.5 FTE Climate and Environment Officer post

- Whether to outsource the role
- The additional capacity would allow for the creation of a biodiversity management plan, execution of existing actions and any new actions arising from the forthcoming Environmental Impact Assessment audit and building community engagement
- Any decision would be subject to ratification by the Staffing Sub Committee and budget considerations
- Whether to conduct an audit prior to defining the role or service

RESOLVED: for the Town Clerk to prepare or obtain for consideration at the October Committee meeting a:

- costed specification for a 'biodiversity audit'
- relevant Climate and Environment officer Job Description and cost
- comparative commissioned service offer

100/22 CEMETERY REPORT

Members noted Grants of Exclusive Rights of Burial issued and Memorials and Inscriptions approved.

101/22 ALLOTMENTS

Councillor Luson provided a verbal update on the allotments and Allotment Association (AA). He was pleased to report the gate had been installed at Stonebridge Lane and asked for the AA's thanks to be conveyed to the Grounds Team.

The AA has asked whether the regulations at Stonebridge Lane could be updated. Currently no artificial pesticides or slug pellets are allowed due to the proximity to the river Kennet. The request was for an amendment to allow organic pesticides in line with more recent regulations. **Councillor Sheppard** pointed out that to prevent any harm to the river it should be noted that even 'organic' pesticides were noxious and could be harmful. It was suggested that advice be sought as to whether there are any safe organic options; for a list of requested options be drawn up for consideration, and whether bodies such as ARK or WWT could provide advice.

ACTION POINT: **Councillors Luson, Waltham, Heath** and the **Town Clerk** to liaise

102/22 FESTIVAL OF FLOWERS

Members noted that the Festival of Flowers Walking Trail and photo album were live. As the Festival ran for the whole of July, Members were encouraged to submit photographs and/or encourage others to take part. The **Chair** asked for thanks to be conveyed to the Grounds Team for the new planting in the London Road phone box.

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm

Signed:
Chair

Date: