

MINUTES

At a meeting of the Neighbourhood Services Committee held on MS TEAMS Tuesday 5th October 2021 at 19.00 hrs.

Present: Councillors: Allsworth, Blackmore, Bryant, Cavill, Cooper (Vice Chair), Lincoln, Palmen, Piazza and Vigar.
Officers: Mr K Buckingham, Mr C Maddox (Neighbourhoods Officer) and Mrs A Quick (Minutes).
Additional attendees: 0
Public: 1 Press: 0

1051 APOLOGIES

RESOLVED to accept apologies received with reasons from Cllr Blakemore.

1052 MINUTES

- a) **RESOLVED** to approve the Minutes of the Neighbourhood Committee meeting held on Tuesday 22nd June 2021.
- b) There were no questions arising from those minutes.

1053 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

1054 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr Cavill had no announcements.

1055 OPEN FORUM

Mr Mitchell requested to speak on item 2.2.5 of the report.

1056 THE FACILITIES MANAGER'S REPORT TO NEIGHBOURHOODS SERVICES

The committee considered the Neighbourhoods Services report, a copy of which had been previously circulated with the Agenda.

1. **Staff** – Recruitment of a Grounds Operative has changed to a Street Sweeper driver as the previous role advertised received few applicants and one applicant was without a driving licence. Responsibilities have been reduced in the hope of appealing to more candidates.
2. **Town Park** – Cllr Palmen asked for an update on the pond. FM responded that water is needed in the culvert for the pump to run, this requires rainfall, however the pond is currently full.

2.1 All Things Green – Drawing plan was submitted from the Eco group. They have funding of around £900 for Woodland Glade areas with Bluebells, border plants and Trowbridge Teazel Triangle. Permission will be needed to paint the storage unit. Cllr Palmen asked what our policy on planting is around the town? It could be useful to have a quick summary. This used to be supported by Trowbridge in Bloom. It can be looked at by the committee in terms of sustainability. Cllr Cooper asked how the high degree of theft/vandalism has affected any of these plans? FM stated there hasn't been a high degree of vandalism but previously hanging baskets have been taken. Residents and volunteers have been looking after flower beds and should be thanked. There will be more presence in the park once the anti-social working group has investigated options.

2.2.5 Bowls – Contractor had received a default in performance letter resulting in a meeting on Friday. It was down to the park keeper. We needed representation from all parties to witness the work and even on the day the machine was faulty, it wasn't done successfully therefore a replacement machine was hired instead. The council is seeking compensation for a lack of service

provided. For this year the bowls club have been asked to pay with the assurance that all works will be done correctly going forward. The root of the problem is the green so we will get this sorted.

2.2.5 Public WC – Mr Mitchell is worried about the modular type building which is planned. The location needs to be considered. It potentially would be an eye sore. This needs to be carefully considered.

3.1 Play Areas – A resident was upset about the grass cutting so it was explained to him that this is Wiltshire Council's responsibility. We will need to replace the seesaw which will be approx. £3k which needs identifying as a cost. A child got injured from a trip hazard next to the seesaw which needs earth filling in and compacting. Residents are cutting the grass themselves. We could remove fencing but only a small section to minimise people going in through the hedges. Main purpose of the fences is to stop dogs going into the play area.

Carl had a conversation with a contact at Wiltshire Council. There will be a new Head of Green Spaces imminently. We are in a management agreement with them so we need to get approval from Wiltshire Council should any playareas be closed and allocated to green spaces. Cllr Vigar stated that a resident requested whether he could acquire The Poplars play area. Cllr Bryant had a similar request and was advised that WC have a strong policy of not giving up any land. Cllr Palmen stated the legal costs of transferring land would be expensive which might be why their policy is as stated. Cllr Cooper asked about the asset transfer over 10 years, would these then belong to us? Cllr Palmen advised the management agreement wouldn't allow this.

4.1 Street Cleaning – There is currently difficulty in obtaining diesel. The back-up fuel station is no longer on the scheme. We are adding another fuel card 'AllStar' but we don't get the discount we get with BP so this will be used as a 'back-up'

Cllr Piazza asked about the bollards at the park club. Three club members have been trying to contact us through numerous Cllrs. They have a church service on a Sunday and have previously had keys to move the bollards. Our Grounds Access need to have a key all the time but the other key needs to be signed out on request for events. No vans were supposed to be going through the park and we don't provide direct access to residents. We have to consider liability as most insurance doesn't cover vehicles on land. Potentially we could bring the bollards 3-4 metres into the park to allow easier access but this isn't acceptable to them. Cllr Cooper highlighted that we can't be giving preferential treatment to any group or individual. We have a duty of care to any person or animal in that park. FM stated that in order to declare Green status we need to avoid fossil fuelled vehicles in the park. We could issue a form to anyone that borrows the key to highlight the responsibility is theirs once they have the key loaned out and also the Park Club needs to investigate whether their insurance will cover their cars if they enter the park and must be capable of safely controlling their cars, which is unlikely to fit the green status and meet H&S obligations.

Action: Karl Buckingham to put forward a recommendation at the next committee meeting but immediately cease this service as it was not a council decision.

1057 PARK TREE WORKS (Report Item 2.1.3)

One of the trees was inspected in the avenue which was found to have a fungus and will need to come down. This tree will need to be re-planted. The exact wording for the planning application has been specified by the Tree Preservation Officer.

The Committee considered the following RECOMMENDATION and it was;

RESOLVED: Park Tree Works Budget allocation of £4k to budget each year starting 2022/23.

Proposed by Cllr Bryant, seconded by Cllr Palmen.

All voted in favour.

1058 RECYCLING STATIONS (Report Item 2.1.9)

The Committee considered the following **RECOMMENDATION** and it was;
RESOLVED: That the Facilities Manager is tasked with providing proposals to the Town Council on ways it can expand its recycling facilities ~~within the town park~~ to encompass items not yet recycled by Wiltshire Council and items already recycled by Wiltshire Council.

Proposed by Cllr Cooper, seconded by Cllr Palmen.

Cllr Piazza asked why 'town park' is specified in the recommendation? An amendment was agreed to remove 'town park'. Cllr Bryant asked if schools are being included to involve recycling from packed lunches etc. It was agreed that this would be a good idea.

All voted in favour.

1059 PLAY AREAS (Report Item 3.2)

The Committee considered the following **RECOMMENDATION** and it was;

RESOLVED That the Neighbourhood Services Committee approves the cost of £13,378 for the replacement of all safety surfacing at Worsted Close which includes the provision of training staff to undertake such works in the future on other sites;
Seeks a Policy & Resources Committee virement from General Reserves;
Closes Woolpack Meadows as a Play Area returning it to a general green space.

Proposed by Cllr Cooper, seconded by Cllr Vigar.

Cllr Allsworth asked if this is a fixed price? FM stated the cost would remain fixed even though some materials prices are increasing. We may need to make a small cut to ensure the price remains fixed. We asked 3 companies to quote, this sits below the normal tender threshold of £20k. Worsted is currently closed as it is too bad to use.

All voted in favour.

1060 TREE PLANTING (Report Item 3.6)

The Committee considered the following **RECOMMENDATION** and it was;

RESOLVED: To commit £5k each year for funding the purchase and installation of trees to the council sites, to show the council's commitment in reducing its carbon footprint and promote biodiversity.

An amendment was agreed to include 'promote biodiversity' in the recommendation.

Proposed by Cllr Vigar, seconded by Cllr Palmen.

All voted in favour.

We need to look at sites as we can get trees/whips for free but we would need to consider the work involved in getting them planted and installed. There will be 31 for the Grove, 40 for Studley.

Cllr Palmen left the meeting at 20.27, returned at 20.29.

1061 BONFIRES (Report Item 3.8)

The Committee considered the **RECOMMENDATION** and it was:

RESOLVED: In line with the council's strategy of reducing the carbon footprint, the council adopts the policy to restrict bonfires on the allotments to container fires only from 2023.

Proposed by Cllr Cooper, seconded by Cllr Allsworth.

Cllr Palmen asked whether a site could be available for people to drop waste together. Carl Maddox highlighted that this was tried unsuccessfully before. Broken washing machine drums or alternatives can be used without the expense of a bespoke drum. We are giving almost 2 years notice to allotment owners.

All voted in favour.

1062 GMC (Report Item 8.1)

The Committee considered the **RECOMMENDATION** and it was;

RESOLVED:

- 1. Consideration of the FM's Report and Grounds Maintenance and the Recreational Area improvement plan taking into account additional services due to be transferred from Wiltshire Council. The report will contain options for which one is to be voted for by committee at the December meeting.**
- 2. Set the budget for Neighbourhoods Services based on the decision in (1) and also to consider any additional areas where budget should be allocated and earmarked for reserves if unspent.**

Proposed by Cllr Palmen, seconded by Cllr Cooper.

FM is due to make some changes in structure & financing of NS. It is anticipated that Wiltshire do not want to increase their budget so further cuts in grass cutting services are expected next year. This will cause frustration to residents. We can look at calculating the cost of grass cutting by contractor's vs doing the job internally. Cllr Vigar asked whether the November meeting is to discuss other items? FM responded that it will allow him to plan the workload ahead. The extension to the current contractor by Wiltshire has been extended to Nov 2022. Recommendation is we could take over some if not all services in April. This needs to be considered. Cllr Palmen highlighted we need to open negotiations with Wiltshire Council.

All voted in favour.

Mr Mitchell left the meeting at 20.41 hrs.

1063 QUARTERLY MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS (Report Item 10)

a) The Committee considered the QI accounts, previously circulated with the agenda and it was;

RESOLVED to approve the QI Accounts, copies of which had been previously circulated with the Agenda.

I064 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 23rd November 2021 at 7.00pm. In person at The Civic Centre.

I065 MEDIA RELEASE

The Committee **RESOLVED** to approve the following press/social media releases:

- NS has budgeted for park tree planting starting 2022/23.

The meeting closed at 20.43 hrs.

Signature..... Dated.....