

Minutes of the **Open Spaces Committee** held in the Council Chamber, North Street, Ilminster on  
Tuesday 9 July 2019 at 7.30pm

**Present:**

Chairman: Councillor M Gunn

Committee: V Higgins, S Shepherd, R Swann, and F White.

**In Attendance:**

Councillors: Burton, Hamilton, Shearman, James

Officers: Mr A Barnett (Grounds Manager) Miss J Norris (Town Clerk),

4 members of the public attended the meeting

The Chairman introduced and welcomed Adam Barnett the new Grounds Manager.

**Speaker 1**

Representing Ilminster Sports Club and wishing to speak with regard to agenda items 9 and 10 - the Archie Gooch car park and Britten's Field access.

The original building plan for the Archie Gooch Pavilion had 2 specific places for rainwater dispersal; water from the roof and the car park would run into a ditch and from there into the canal. The car park has porous tarmac so any run-off is now minimal.

The canal need to regularly cleared out, in the past Councillors Swann and Miller used to remove lots of the items that had been thrown in.

For a very long time any water run-off from Herne Hill, the Ridge Path and the surrounding farmland has found its way into the Canal

The rainwater disposal / run offs were part of the planning permission for the Pavilion which was built for community use

When builder went bust, Ilminster Sports Club Ltd took on the landscaping element of the project trying to make a better environment so it is well aware

If the Town Council wished to install dropped kerbs at the Archie Gooch car park it would need to consult with the Archie Gooch Pavilion tenant in accordance with the lease

The speaker was given the response that the Angling Club had asked about canal maintenance and raised the issue of run-off from the car park thus it was on the agenda for formal consideration. The matter of the dropped kerbs had been raised with Councillors by several members of the public and was being considered as part of the aim of making the Town Council owned open space accessible.

**Speaker 2**

Asked that when the town Council was considering projects it included a Green Gym and possibly including a green roof on any new bus shelters.

**Speaker 3**

"Re-imagining the Levels" is a project encouraging all parishes to plant trees; there is a meeting on 2 August to which the Town Council should have received an invitation.

**Speaker 4**

The Greener Ilminster project would like to work with the Town Council to identify areas where there could be tree planting or wild flower areas created.

**OS223 Apologies for Absence**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Len Wilcock.

#### **OS224 Declarations of Interest**

No Declarations of Interest were made in respect of any items on the agenda.

#### **OS225 Minutes**

a) The draft minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2019 were considered

**RESOLVED** to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2019 as a correct record subject to amending OS 215 to read November 2018 rather than November 2019

b) The Office Action Plan relating to the Committee was considered.

Issues raised or discussed during consideration of this agenda item included:

- The Market Town Investment Group (MTIG) is still running –meeting dates need to be sent to Cllr James

**RESOLVED** to note the report.

#### **OS226 Police Report**

This agenda item provides an opportunity for the Police to report on any matters relevant to policing in Ilminster. There was no written police report nor were any items raised.

#### **OS227 Financial Monitoring**

Information about the Open Spaces Committee income, expenditure and commitments compared with the 2019/20 budget was received.

Issues discussed during consideration of this agenda item included:

- Vehicle and machinery costs

**RESOLVED** to note the report

#### **OS228 Rec Users Group**

The notes of the Rec users group held on 20 March 2019 were presented for information

Issues discussed during consideration of this agenda item included:

- The Rec Users Group is a public meeting which anyone can attend without notice
- The Rec Users Group is an important way of providing information about the Town's Open Spaces and also getting information from people who use the space
- The Town Clerk and Chair are actively looking at dates for the next meeting

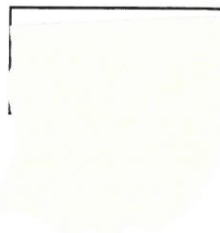
**RESOLVED** to note the report

#### **OS229 Grounds Team Report**

A report about the recent work of the Grounds Team was considered.

The grounds Manager highlighted the following points:

- Cemetery wall – one of the current temporary staff has building experience and will be looking to see if he can repair the wall where it has fallen away
- A volunteer is coming in weekly to help with grass cutting, especially the cricket outfields
- Watering of the various planters is happening 3 times a week
- Ash die back disease has the potential to make a big impact on trees on Town Council owned or managed land. The Grounds Manager will be making a plan for regular tree inspections and to plan replacement planting
- New bee-friendly weed killer is working





**RESOLVED** to note the report

**OS230 Wharf Lane Recreation Ground Play Area Refurbishment Module 1 - Skatepark**

Consideration was given to the quotations for the planting and step trail around the skatepark area.

Issues discussed during consideration of this agenda item included:

- Fencing around children's play area
- Types of tree and planting – is Scots Pine appropriate for the area?

**RESOLVED**

- (i) That the quotation from Contractor B for the installation of the activity trail and the planting be accepted
- (ii) That the quotation from Contractor B for the supply of plants be accepted.

**OS231 Canal**

Consideration was given to the Town Council's position regarding a project to "dredge" the Canal and the related issues of access and silt disposal.

The Committee Chair reported that had met with representatives of the angling club and they have requested that weed is not pulled out of the canal at the moment because of the fish spawning and the effect on the oxygen levels in the water.

The reducing depth of the Canal is a concern to anglers and it is believed the canal was last dredged in 1974.

Issues discussed during consideration of this agenda item included:

- The Environment Agency may have ideas and suggestions as to a good way to proceed
- Sunlight is needed to help oxygenate the water
- Cllr Swann will volunteer to help with manual weed removal
- Water from the Rec drains into the Canal

**RESOLVED**

- (i) to investigate the Town Council and the Angling Club's responsibilities regarding the Canal
- (ii) to ask the Environment Agency for their views on water quality and depth and the practical steps that can be taken to make improvements

**OS232 Archie Gooch Car Park**

Consideration was given to the impact of the car park surface on the canal due to water run off.

It was explained that the Angling Club have raised a concern with a Councillor that something spilt on car park surface Oil for example will run into the Canal and contaminate the water as there are no filters or sumps

As part of the building requirements it is believed that the Environment Agency were contacted the appropriate discharge permissions obtained; confirmation of this is being sought.

Issues discussed during consideration of this agenda item included:

- Need to keep a sense of proportion as to the likelihood of their being a contamination issue or a flooding issue

**RESOLVED** to note the on-going action regarding tracing the Environment Agency permissions.

Chair's Initials

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### OS233 Britten's Field Access

Consideration was given to:

- (i) The possibility of installing drop down kerbs at the access to the Rec and Britten's Field from the Archie Gooch Car Park

Issues discussed during consideration of this agenda item included:

- The suggestion is that drop down kerb on both sides of the pavement could be installed just before the car park, adjacent to the road
  - Difficulties for wheelchair users and mobility scooters
  - People are parking on the pavement
- (ii) To consider the installation of path from the Archie Gooch car park alongside the football pitch and canal hedge as the second element of implementing the footpaths on the Rec and Britten's Field (the first having been from The Tony Rice Shed to Canal Way)

**RESOLVED** to obtain prices for a combined job to provide a drop down kerb and a path alongside the football pitch and canal hedge.

### OS234 Netball Court Provision

Consideration was given to a request to have a netball court marked out on an existing tennis court and giving permission for a local netball club to use the court on a regular basis. The Chair explained that netball is the biggest growing sport in the country and Ilminster has a team that meets twice a week on a Monday and a Thursday and plays all year round.

It would be possible to put a netball court at 90degrees to the existing tennis court but the netball club would need to supply and store the nets themselves.

Issues discussed during consideration of this agenda item included:

- Use of the tennis courts by a group on two evenings a week could be seen as reducing the availability of a public facility
- The Tennis Court nearest the road is the most used
- It is understood that the MUGA at Swanmead has to be made available free of charge for a certain amount of hours for community use
- Every tennis court is not used all the time

#### **RESOLVED**

- (i) To find out if Swanmead can be used free of charge
- (ii) Ask the netball club to provide more specific information about their requirements
- (iii) Get prices for marking out a netball court at 90' to the tennis court on the court farthest from the road.

### OS235 Greening of Ilminster

Consideration was given to the following:

- (i) If the Town Council supports the principles of creating wildflower verges or areas where practicable in Ilminster, secondly to create communal vegetable "plots" around the town where town's people can both plant and pick free of charge.
- (ii) If the Town Council has any suitable sites for creating wildflower areas or communal vegetable "plots" around the town where town's people can both plant and pick free of charge.

Chair's Initials



- (iii) How the Town Council may work with community groups to create wildflower areas or communal vegetable plots

Issues discussed during consideration of this agenda item included:

- The advantages and disadvantages of wildflower planting at Heren Hill, Cleeves Close, and the Cemetery
- Frog Lane is not owned or managed by the Town Council but would be an area that could potentially benefit from wild flower planting
- The possibility of planting the Town Council troughs on the approaches to the town with wild flowers

**RESOLVED** to work with the volunteer group to identify potential wild flower sites

**OS236 Exclude the press and public**

**RESOLVED** to take Agenda item 13 Cemetery Grass Cutting, Agenda item 14 Memorial Safety Testing, Agenda item 15 Cemetery Tree Inspection, Agenda item 16 Cemetery Initiatives and Agenda item 17 Grounds Maintenance Equipment without members of the public and press present due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, i.e. financial information and items subject to negotiation

**OS237 Cemetery Grass Cutting**

Consideration was given to continuing the current outsourcing of grass cutting at the cemetery to South Somerset District Council until 31 March 2020.

Issues discussed during consideration of this agenda item included:

- The work done by community payback team
- Need for the Town Council to be fully staffed before long-term decisions should be made about contracting out work

**RESOLVED** to accept the quotation for grass cutting until 31 March 2019 from South Somerset District Council in the sum of £2,403.15

**OS238 Memorial Safety Testing**

Consideration was given to placing an order with South Somerset District Council for memorial testing in Ilminster Cemetery.

**RESOLVED** to place an order with South Somerset District Council for memorial safety testing in Ilminster Cemetery at a cost of £146.00

**OS239 Cemetery Tree Inspection**

Consideration was given to placing an order with South Somerset District Council to conduct an inspection of trees in Ilminster Cemetery with a view to developing a tree work and maintenance schedule.

**RESOLVED** place an order with South Somerset District Council for Tree Inspection in Ilminster Cemetery at a cost of £405.08

Chair's Initials

**OS240 Cemetery Initiatives**

- (i) Consider was given as to whether or not the Town Council supports the principle of establishing a memorial plant bed within the cemetery

**RESOLVED**

- (i) That the principle of establishing a memorial plant bed within the cemetery is agreed
  - (ii) That work is done to identify a suitable location within the cemetery, identify suitable plants and memorial plaques and
  - (iii) Costs and charges for items in (ii) above are calculated
  - (iv) That the information from (ii) and (iii) above are reported back to the Committee for approval
- (iii) To consider whether or not the Town Council supports the principle of having a columbaria within the cemetery

Issues discussed during consideration of this agenda item included:

- Any structure needs to be in keeping with the existing memorials in terms of size and materials
- The large upright structures would not be appropriate

**RESOLVED** investigate suitable designs and costs and report back to the Committee

**OS241 Grounds Maintenance Equipment**

**(i) Stiga Ride-On Mower**

- a) Consideration was given to whether the Stiga ride-on mower should be repaired or disposed of and whether or not it should be replaced.

Issues discussed during consideration of this agenda item included:

- Whether it is better to lease or buy grounds maintenance equipment
- The length of time it takes to cut an area with the Ferris compared to the length of time it takes to cut a similar area with a ride on mower
- The Ferris can go cut longer, tougher grass than a ride-on mower
- Ride-on mower can be more maneuverable

**RESOLVED**

- (i) To dispose of the stiga which is beyond economic repair
- (ii) To defer making a decision on whether or not a new ride-on mower is bought pending information being made available about
  - Whether or not the Town Council's Ferris has a mulching deck / blades
  - If the Town Council's Ferris does not have the mulching equipment what it would cost to purchase and how would its acquisition improve the cut
  - The possibilities of leasing a ride-on mower
  - The possibility of trading in the broken Stiga

**(ii) Buggy**

The Committee was given information on recent repairs to the buggy and the Grounds Manager's research into replacement vehicles and likely costs.

The meeting closed at 21:50hrs

Chair's Signature & Date

10/9/19