

Iminster Town Council

Minutes of the **Open Spaces Committee** held on the
6 April 2021 at 8-30pm.

In line with Statutory Instrument 2020 No 392 (The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, the meeting was conducted over Skype.

Present:

Chair: Cllr M Gunn

Committee Members: Cllr Swann, Cllr Shepherd, Cllr White, Cllr Hamilton

Officers: M Tredwin (Locum Town Clerk), J Earp (Deputy Clerk), A Barnett (Grounds Manager)

In attendance:

Councillors: Cllr Burton, Cllr Shearman,

Matt Arnold, Danielle Sweet, Lee Sweet, Sarah Hunt

Public Forum

Mr Arnold addressed the council with regards to an offer for the council to allow him to carry out culling of rabbits that were potentially overpopulating some of the Town Council's open spaces. He laid out his qualifications and experience as well as the fact he had insurance to allow this to take place.

Members discussed various issues relating to this that included if this was in fact necessary, and which many felt that there was in fact not a significant enough problem at this point in time.

The Chair thanked Mr Arnold and stated that members would consider if there was in fact a need in the future.

Danielle Sweet and Lee Sweet asked the council if there was a way that the cemetery could be made more accessible to disabled users.

The Chair explained how this may be an issue due to problems with the layout of the cemetery and also due to the fact that the area was in fact very full. It was agreed that the Cemetery sub-committee would however meet at the cemetery to look at the feasibility of making paths easier to use and to see if any further steps could be taken to make it more accessible to members of the public.

The meeting then went into session at 20:54 pm

OS344 Apologies for absence:

Cllr Wilcock

OS345 Declarations of interest:

No declarations were made in respect of any items on the agenda

OS346 Minutes: - **Proposed** by Cllr Shepherd and **Seconded** by Cllr Hamilton. Members resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on the 2 February 2021, of the Open Spaces Committee, were an accurate record.

OS347 – Action List

The Chair ran through the list of actions that were on the list.

The Grounds Manager stated that he had sent the prices for a rose garden to the previous Town Clerk.

Cllr Shearman identified that the drop kerbs at Britten's Field had been on the list a while and that it would be good to get this implemented.

Members noted the list

OS348 – Financial Monitoring

The financial monitoring report was considered and noted by members.

OS349 – Grounds Team Report

The Grounds Manager reported that it had been a busy few months preparing for the spring and summer periods. He reported that all machines had been serviced and that the grass cutting was proceeding slowly. He confirmed that all the outside works staff were being kept busy at this time.

Cllr Hamilton noted the good work being carried out and enquired about the benches along the Beacon. The Grounds Manager replied that these were being looked into with Dillington House as it is their responsibility.

The Grounds Manager responded to an enquiry regarding the "buggy" engine fire that it was now in the hands of the insurers and that it looked as if there would be estimated repairs of £3,500 required.

Cllr Swann praised the grounds team for the wood chippings along the path near the surgery and requested that more be placed around the kissing gate.

The report was noted

OS350 – Cemetery tidy up

Members were informed that a stump grinder would be required in order for tree stumps to be removed thereby allowing for additional cremation remains to be interred.

Proposed by Cllr Shepherd and Seconded by Cllr Swann members agreed unanimously to **Recommend to Full Council** to obtain quotes for removal of the tree stumps in the cemetery to create additional cremation plots and for officers to commence work on receipt of acceptable quotes.

OS351 – Cemetery Benches

Members considered the offer by members of the public to donate and maintain a memorial bench to be placed in the cemetery. It was confirmed that the bench would be firmly secured in between two trees at the bottom of the cemetery.

It was confirmed that any wording on a plaque placed on the bench would be checked for conformity purposes.

- a) Proposed by Cllr Hamilton and Seconded by Cllr White members agreed unanimously to **Recommend to Full Council agree** to a memorial bench to be located at the proposed location at the bottom of the Cemetery as requested by a member of public who will be funding the bench.

Members were informed that there had been an issue finding suitable metal benches for sale that could be installed at the canal. This was due to manufacturing facilities being closed during the Covid crisis.

A question was asked whether a bench could be moved from the cemetery to the canal to replace the broken bench. Cllr White raised her concern that this may become permanent, but it was pointed out that this was only a temporary measure until such time as additional benches could be sourced.

- b) Proposed by Cllr Shepherd and Seconded by Cllr Swann members agreed to **Recommend to Full Council** by four votes for and one against to temporarily relocate a bench from the cemetery to the canal pending the purchase of a permanent one.

The Deputy Clerk pointed out that officers had looked to source suitable benches locally but they had been very expensive and that there was a 8-9 month wait for new benches.

OS352 - Volunteers

There was an enquiry regarding the number of volunteers that could be helping out with Herne Hill. The Deputy Clerk had established that there was no insurance limit on how many volunteers were involved, however all must adhere to the policy in place.

The Deputy Clerk pointed out that the risk assessments would be the responsibility of the council's ground staff in consultation with the Deputy Clerk.

The report was noted.

OS353 – West Crescent

The report was presented to members.

Cllr Shepherd whilst admiring the prospect of an open meadow scheme, informed members that this was an area that had been identified in the proposed Neighbourhood Plan for possible self-build properties.

It was also mentioned that this was an area that the fair use when they visit, but members were informed that the seasonal cutting would be able to take place so the impact should be minimal.

Members were on the whole very supportive of the idea and hoped that any damage caused by the fair would be dealt with sympathetically.

Proposed by Cllr Swann and Seconded by Cllr White members agreed unanimously to **Recommend to Full Council** that a wild flower meadow be planted at West Crescent in line with the report provided.

Questions were asked of Sarah Hunt regarding the funding of the project. She informed members that there was funding available for the project of upto £1,500 which would include information boards about the wildflower meadow. A 10kg bag of wildflower seeds would cost £1,140.

Members enquired if there was funding in the budget for this and the Deputy Clerk confirmed that she would need to look at the budget in more detail. There were discussions held around the possible use of a bequest that had been left to the council, but more clarity on this was required before confirming that any of the money could be used for this purpose.

Proposed by Cllr Swann and Seconded by Cllr White members agreed unanimously to **Recommend to Full Council** that the planting of a wildflower meadow be planted at West Crescent to take place provided funds could be identified.

OS354 - Fencing the playpark

The Chair notified members of the committee that there had been a small number of people commenting upon Facebook and contacting the office with concerns that dogs had been making a mess. Whilst evidence of this was in

fact limited, it was felt that the only way to prevent issues such as this being raised in the future was to fence the Playpark area and then plant hedging around it.

Several members felt that it was important that the tuck shop and toilets be left out of the area and overall members felt that it would be a positive step to take.

It was felt that appropriate signage should be placed around the play area indicating that smoking and dogs in that area were prohibited.

Proposed by Cllr Swann and Seconded by Cllr Shepherd members agreed unanimously to **Recommend to Full Council** that a chain link fence be erected around the play park once a decision has been made on the area to be fenced

Members discussed the planting of the hedge around the fence and how it helped promote the climate emergency and also it would help to offset the carbon footprint in creating the playpark.

The Deputy Clerk pointed out that it would be possible for the chain link fencing to go up in the summer with the planting of the hedging in the autumn period.

Proposed by Cllr Hamilton and Seconded by Cllr Swann members agreed unanimously to **Recommend to Full Council** that hedging be laid around the chain link fence once it is in place.

OS355 – Recreation Ground

The Chair raised that a member of the council had asked for the matter of Public Spaces Protection Orders to be put in place on the open spaces in Ilminster. Following informal discussions to examine the impact of these orders, it had been established that they should only be implemented as a last resort measure to curb a problem of anti-social behaviour. It was clear that there would be a great deal of work involved in trying to get these measures in place and that this currently was a sledgehammer to crack a nut approach.

It was felt that a softer approach was required in the first instance such as putting signs in place and running a positive campaign to encourage people to comply.

Proposed by Cllr Shepherd and Seconded by Cllr Swann members agreed unanimously to **Recommend to Full Council** that no action be taken to instigate Public Spaces Protection Orders on Open Spaces in Ilminster.

Meeting ended 22.12 pm