

Minutes of the **Open Spaces Committee** held in the Council Chamber, North Street, Ilminster  
on Tuesday 26 June 2018 at 7.30pm

**Present:**

Chairman: Cllr S Shepherd

Committee Councillors: P Burton, J Dewick, M James, L Taylor and F White.

**In Attendance:**

Councillors: J Fowler and A Shearman

Officers: Miss J Norris (Town Clerk), and Mr C Pearson (Senior Open Spaces Warden).

No members of the public attended the meeting

**OS 172. Apologies for Absence.**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gunn and Swann.

**OS 173 Declarations of Interest.**

No declarations of interest were made in respect of any item on the agenda at this stage of the meeting, however Cllr Shepherd did declare a personal interest in agenda item 12, Open Spaces Team support to other organisations, minute OS 183, as the item was being discussed.

**OS 174 Minutes**

a) The draft minutes of the meetings held on 24 April 2018 and 22 May 2018 were presented for confirmation.

**RESOLVED**

- (i) To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2018 as a correct record
- (ii) To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2018 as a correct record

b) The action list relating to the Open Spaces committee was considered.

**RESOLVED** to note the action list

**OS 175 Police Report.**

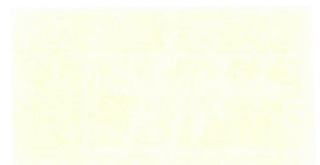
There was no police report and no policing matters were raised or reported.

**OS 176 Open Spaces Team Report**

The Senior Open Spaces Warden reported upon recent open spaces activities in Ilminster. Highlights and discussion of the report included:

- The Stiga needs some welding done on the grass cutting deck, this is a separate issue to the recent repairs
- The evening spent at the cemetery with Councillors and members of the public had helped to improve the general appearance of the ground and some badly neglected graves had been thoroughly weeded

**RESOLVED** to note the report



**OS 177 Financial Monitoring.**

Information about the Open Spaces Committee, income, expenditure and commitments compared with the 2018/19 was considered.

Issues discussed included:

- The Chair explained what earmarked reserves are and how they are used to save towards replacement equipment
- Paths in the cemetery, near where the new ashes plots are going will need maintenance

**OS 178. Rec User Group.**

The Rec User Group met for the first time on 17 May 2018 and the notes of the meeting were circulated for information.

**OS 179. Requests to use the Wharf Lane Rec.**

- (i) A request from Vaughan Lee House Residential Care Home for permission to use the rec to hold a Teddy Bear Picnic for residents of Vaughan Lee House, Hazelwell Lodge, Muchelney House and children from the town and their families.

Since the agenda was published the date of the event had been changed from Mon 13 August to Thursday 16 August from 2pm.

**RESOLVED** to give permission for Vaughan Lee House Residential Care Home to use the Wharf Lane Rec on Thursday 16 August to hold a Teddy Bears Picnic for residents of Vaughan Lee House, Hazelwell Lodge, Muchelney House and children from the town and their families.

- (ii) A request was considered from Daido Industrial Bearings Europe Ltd. to use the rec for a Families Day on a Saturday in August with estimated attendance of 50-100 people.

Issues discussed included:

- Good to see local business using the Rec

**RESOLVED** to give permission for Daido Industrial Bearings Europe Ltd to use the Wharf Lane Rec for a Families Day on a Saturday in August (with estimated attendance of 50-100 people) provided that the chosen date does not clash with any other activities.

**OS 180. Return of fair deposit.**

The return of the deposit that was taken from Herberts fair regarding the spring fair was considered. (The deposit is taken to cover any damage caused as a result of their use of the Wharf Lane Recreation Ground).

Issues discussed with regard to this agenda item included:

- the ground used by the fair had not suffered any damage

**RESOLVED** to refund the deposit paid by the fair regarding the spring 2018 fair

**OS 181. A hand rail along the wall in the Cemetery.**

The principle of the installation of a hand rail along the north west wall of the Cemetery was considered.

Issues discussed with regard to this agenda item included:

- The cemetery is on a steep slope and it is difficult to access the cremation plots where recent interments have taken place
- The steps to the toilet are not in good condition
- there are not any known interments immediately next to the wall that may be affected by installing posts

**RESOLVED** to investigate the cost of providing and installing a hand rail alongside the wall that runs from the cemetery lodge to the toilet and report back to a future meeting

**OS 182. Herne Hill Management Plan.**

To consider changes to the Herne Hill Management Plan so that it can be used as part of the application to designate Herne Hill as a Nature Reserve.

The Town Clerk reported that work to revise the Management Plan to include information connected with an application for designation as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is substantially complete. To have a LNR designation will be helpful in terms when planning applications for nearby sites are considered and may also assist in grant funding applications.

**OS 183. Open Spaces Team support to other organisations.**

The support that the Town Council can provide to other organisations, via the Open Spaces Team, was considered e.g. loan of equipment, carrying out extra grounds maintenance tasks.

Issues discussed with regard to this agenda item included:

- Volunteers have to be trained and pass a competency assessment to the Senior Open Spaces Warden's satisfaction for using the equipment e.g. driving the tractor
- Volunteers are covered on the Town Council's insurance
- The tractor and the buggy are the main items of equipment used
- The Open Spaces Team -have been trained to use the equipment and undertake ground maintenance tasks and would therefore probably be able to undertake tasks more efficiently safely than a volunteer
- Could there be a rental fee for the use of ITC equipment by another organisations
- the possible insurance implications of charging a rental fee for equipment hire
- If a volunteer breaks a piece of equipment it can impact upon the Town Council's work
- Have the OS team got time to do assist other organisations in addition to doing the work required for the Town Council
- It is the Town Council's land that is used by the cricket and football clubs
- Local clubs need support
- Helping clubs promotes community use
- Charging may help pay for replacement equipment

- **RESOLVED**

- (i) that the actual employee per hour costings for the open spaces team are reported to a future committee meeting
- (ii) That until any other decision is made the existing ground maintenance regime for the cricket club and the volunteers using ITC equipment for such ground maintenance continues

**Note:** 20:04 hrs Cllr Shepherd declared a personal interest in this agenda item as acting secretary and president of Ilminster Cricket Club

**OS 184. Grass cutting equipment.**

- (i) An overall strategy for the procurement and replacement of grass cutting equipment was discussed, this included purchases that maybe required in this financial year.

The Senior Open Spaces Warden has been researching what equipment may be suitable for the work that the Open Spaces Team undertake; this was focused on grass cutting equipment due to the recent machine breakdown and subsequent major repair

- The types of machine that may be suitable for the work the Open Spaces Team do
- The principle of keeping the Stiga for work in the cemetery and the Minster churchyard and getting another machine to use for the remaining areas
- Getting a walk behind machine rather than a ride-on
- Had a demonstration of a 4 wheel drive sit-on machine that was capable of working on steep slopes and cutting grass and scrub of approx. 1M
- The hire machine that was recently used to cut the cemetery and Herne Hill paths was a walk behind
- Leaflets were circulated to Councillors about the machines that are coming for demonstration on 5 July
- The gradient that machines can cut as at present steep slopes are cut using strimmers. The Stiga should not be used on an incline of more than 11degrees
- It is possible the flail owned by the Council could be sold or part exchanged

Issues discussed with regard to this agenda item included

- Would the walk behind take longer to cut than a ride on?
- What money is in reserves for the flail?
- How often a hire machine would be needed to cut the bluebell area and steeper slopes

- (ii) Consideration was given to the setting up of a small working group to look into the recent equipment failure which led to a significant reduction in grounds maintenance capability and identify ways to improve the handling of future similar situations.

Issues discussed during this agenda item included:

- that the working group may seek views from other Councillors
- that the working group would be talking to relevant officers
- that the main purpose of the working group was to identify learning that may help the handling of any future similar situations

- that it is not always appropriate to respond to comments on Facebook or in the media

**RESOLVED**

- (i) that a task and finish group is convened with the specific purpose of identifying learning from the recent experience when an equipment failure led to a significant reduction in grounds maintenance capability, especially where such learning may help the handling of future similar situations.
- (ii) that the task and finish group comprises the Chair and Vice- Chair of the Open Spaces Committee and the Mayor
- (iii) that the Task and Finish Group reports back to a future Open Spaces Committee meeting.

**OS 185. West Crescent Play Area.**

- (i) The results of the consultation with local residents was circulated to Councillors which showed the preferred new equipment would be the rock and rope climbers
- (ii) Taking into account 13(i) above consideration was given to the purchase of new equipment – including the funding arrangements

The Town Clerk circulated the prices obtained for the rock and rope climbers and explained they could be bought as single pieces of equipment or together. In addition to the purchase and installation costs the Town Council would need to supply heras fencing, water for mixing cement etc and some storage.

The Town Clerk also explained that the supplier operated a scheme whereby the cost of the equipment could be paid in 3 installments covering more than 1 financial year

Issues discussed with regard to this agenda item included:

- the value of the consultation and interaction with local people
- that the £2,000 Tesco Bags of Help award was specifically for new play equipment at West Crescent
- the amount of money in reserves for play equipment at West Crescent

**RESOLVED**

- (i) that both the rock climber and the rope climber are acquired for the purchase and installation cost of £3,053.90.
- (ii) that the Town Council will organise heras fencing for site safety and the water and storage requirements
- (iii) that the equipment will be funded by the £2,000 Tesco Bags Of help award and the balance from the reserves earmarked for play equipment at West Crescent
- (iv) that the purchase / installation costs will be paid in one installment.

The meeting closed at 20:54hrs

