

YEOVIL TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of a meeting of the **GROUND AND GENERAL MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Town House, 19 Union Street, Yeovil on **Monday 11 November 2013**

(7:00pm – 9.00pm)

Present:

David Dollard (Chairman)
Martin Bailey
Peter Brock
Philip Chandler
John Hann
Andrew Kendall
Mike Lock
Manny Roper
Darren Shutler
Jon Trevett (co-opted - non voting)

Also Present:

Tony Lock	Yeovil East Ward
Alan Tawse	Town Clerk
Juliet Sims	Assistant Town Clerk
Steve Barnes	Young Peoples' Officer (SSDC)
Chris Cooper	Streetscene Manager (SSDC)
Steve Fox	Principal Horticultural Officer (SSDC)
Katy Menday	Countryside Manager (SSDC)
Rob Parr	Senior Play and Youth Facilities Officer (SSDC)

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments from members of the public.

8/201 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 2 September 2013, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

8/202 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Alan Smith.

8/203 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Manny Roper declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Agenda item 12 (Allotment Rent Review) in view of his tenancy at Milford Dip Allotment Site.

8/204 **CORRESPONDENCE**

There were no items of correspondence.

8/205 **YEOVIL COUNTRY PARK - UPDATE**

The Committee considered the report and received a presentation by the Countryside Manager (SSDC) which set out the achievements of Yeovil Country Park over the past twelve months and its plans for the coming year (Agenda item 5 refers).

Attention was drawn to the progress being made in raising funding towards the development of an interpretive centre in the Park, which would be known as the Green Hub.

RESOLVED

that the report be noted and welcomed.

8/206 **MANAGING OPEN SPACES**

The Committee considered the report and received a presentation by the Streetscene Manager (SSDC) which outlined a proposed approach towards the management and development of open spaces across the Town (Agenda item 5 refers).

During the ensuing discussion, reference was made to the attractive design and layout of the majority of roundabouts in and around the Town. However, it was felt that the roundabouts at the bottom of Babylon Hill (A30) and next to the Red House Pub (A37) needed improvement.

The Principal Horticultural Officer advised Members that the Babylon Hill roundabout fell within the Dorset County Council area and that whilst the Red House roundabout was the responsibility of Somerset County Highways, it also formed part of a flood alleviation scheme which limited its potential for a planting scheme. However, he undertook to contact both organisations again to see if improvements could be made.

Attention was also drawn to the ongoing issue of vegetation obscuring signs and the emptying of gullies both of which were the responsibility of Somerset County Highways. It was noted that the level of service in these two areas of work had suffered owing to budget cutbacks.

RESOLVED

- (1) that the report be noted; and
- (2) that the proposed approach towards the management and development of open spaces across the Town be supported.

8/207 **OPEN SPACES REPRESENTATIVES' REPORT**

The Committee considered the verbal report of the Principal Horticultural Officer (SSDC) (Agenda item 6 refers).

The Principal Horticultural Officer confirmed that the appointed Ward representatives travelled with him around their respective Wards using a questionnaire to help check that grass cutting, shrub maintenance, litter collection and the maintenance of hard spaces were being undertaken to an acceptable standard.

The responses from the recent questionnaires showed 89% as good and 11% as fair.

RESOLVED

that the matters be noted.

8/208 **PLAY AREAS**

The Committee considered the report of the Senior Play and Youth Facilities Officer (SSDC) (Agenda items 8 refers).

RESOLVED

that the matters be noted.

8/209 **PRESTON PARK PLAY AREA UPDATE**

The Committee considered the report of the Senior Play and Youth Facilities Officer (SSDC) (Agenda item 9 refers).

He added that the project was almost complete and that preparations would now be made for the official opening of the Play Area on a suitable date.

RESOLVED

that the matters be noted.

8/210 **FREE HOLIDAY ACTIVITY PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered the report of the Young Peoples' Officer (SSDC) (Agenda item 10 refers).

During the ensuing discussion, Members expressed their support for the views of the Finance Working Group, which felt that the £3,280 provisionally allocated towards open space enhancements in 2014/15 might be better spent helping to provide an additional holiday play scheme in Yeovil South Ward at an estimated total cost of £6,610.

It was noted that this was the only ward where such activities did not currently take place, and that if this budget were to be re-allocated, the estimated shortfall of £3,330 would need to be met to enable a full year of activities to be delivered as outlined in the report.

RESOLVED

- (1) that the matter be noted;
- (2) that the success of the 2013/14 Free Holiday Activity Programme be noted and welcomed;
- (3) that the planned provision of a free open access Holiday Activity Programme in 2014/15 for young people in targeted areas of Yeovil be supported and extended to include the Yew Tree Park area of the Town;

- (4) that to help meet the £6,610 additional costs of extending the Programme, the £3,280 provisionally allocated towards open space enhancements in 2014/15 be transferred to the Holiday Activity Programme budget; and
- (5) that the other funding partners (South Somerset District Council and the Yarlington Housing Group) be approached with a request that they consider meeting the shortfall of £3,330.

8/211 **NEW INITIATIVES REPORT**

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk. (Agenda item 11 refers).

RESOLVED

that the proposals be noted and supported.

8/212 **ALLOTMENT RENT REVIEW**

(Manny Roper having declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in this item left the room during its consideration and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon)

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk (Agenda item 12 refers).

The Allotment Tenants' Representative referred to past rent reviews and felt that the level of proposed increase would create a degree of uncertainty amongst tenants over future rent levels.

The Chairman of the Finance Working Group indicated that, in common with other local authorities, all of the Council's budgets – including fees and charges - were reviewed on an annual basis having regard to the prevailing economic climate and taking into account all other relevant factors.

Following a brief discussion, the Committee agreed to support the approach proposed by the Finance Working Group which it was noted if implemented would ensure that tenants were meeting an equal share of the cost of providing and maintaining allotments rather than just over a third.

Whilst it was noted that the proposed increase of 7p per square metre was above the forecasted inflation rate, it was noted that the additional cost to the average plotholder would be £10.01 per year, which equated to an extra 19p per week.

RESOLVED

- (1) that the matter be noted; and
- (2) that a proposed increase of 7p per square metre in allotment rents be supported and the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee and the Town Council be informed of this Committee's views on the matter.

8/213 **ALLOTMENT TENANTS' WORKING GROUP**

The Committee considered the minutes of the Working Group meeting held on 21 October 2013.

The Town Clerk confirmed that he had written to the Tenant Site Representative for Sunningdale Allotments to advise on the progress of fly tipping and fence repairs, and that arrangements had been made for the Site Representative for the Rustywell Allotment Site to be consulted over the future positioning of skips within that site.

Reference was also made to the agreed procedure for circulating agenda and minutes on behalf of the Allotment Tenants' Working Group, and it was noted that copies of the agenda and minutes of the Grounds and General Maintenance Committee were freely available on the Town Council's website.

RESOLVED

that the matters be noted

8/214 **COMMITTEE REVENUE ESTIMATES – 2014/15**

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk (Agenda item 14 refers).

RESOLVED

- (1) that the Budget Strategy drawn up by the Finance Working Group be supported; and
- (2) that the draft estimates, attached as an appendix hereto, be supported and referred to the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee for consideration.

8/215 **FINANCIAL STATEMENT – AUGUST / SEPTEMBER 2013**

The Committee considered the Financial Statement for the period 1 August to 30 September 2013. (Agenda item 15 refers).

RESOLVED

that the Financial Statement be noted.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr Mackay of Wyndham Court expressed his support for the proposed development of an interpretive centre in Yeovil Country Park, which he felt would provide much-needed facilities and be of great benefit to the local community.

He also referred to his tenancy of a Town Council allotment plot and felt that the proposed increase in allotment rents was very modest.

Chairman

YEovil TOWN COUNCIL - ESTIMATES

GROUNDS AND GENERAL MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE

		YEAR 2012/13		YEAR 2013/14			YEAR 2014/15			
NOTES	Item	Allocated	Spent	Allocated	1/2 year spent 30.09.13	Full year estimated spend to 31.03.14	Estimated over spent	Estimated under spent	Estimated required	To be allocated
INCOME 2013/14	Materials and equipment	820	754	840	249	750		90	750	
1/2 Year to 30/09/13	Water Mains Refurbishment/Repairs	1,820	0	2,200	0	2,200			2,000	
	Water charges	4,120	2,675	4,200	648	4,200			4,280	
Lease 1044	Allotment Maintenance (SSDC)	7,500	6,831	7,650	3,486	7,650			7,810	
Taps & Keys 83	Allotment Maintenance (Tenants)	3,220	2,517	3,280	1,730	3,280			3,350	
Allotment rents 4949	Allotments - Fence Repairs	1,880	87	1,920	750	1,920			1,960	
1/2 Year 6076	Leases	335	335	400	0	400			400	
	Goar Knap - Building	1,400	1,105	1,430	671	1,300		130	1,330	
ESTIMATED INCOME	Newsletter	160	104	160	0	140		20	140	
2013/14	Best Kept Allotments Competition	220	178	230	160	200		30	210	
Taps & keys 100	Labour	15,000	14,790	15,150	6,451	15,150			15,300	
Rent 10857	Vehicle	950	1,166	970	377	970			990	
Lease 2088	Protective clothing	160	39	160	30	160			160	
Est 2013/14 13045	Dog Bins	200	0	210	0	210			220	
	Open spaces:									
	Open Spaces	139,360	139,360	142,150	35,538	142,150			145,000	
ESTIMATED INCOME	Play Area Repairs/Enhancements	11,040	9,645	11,260	8,909	11,260			11,490	
2014/15	Country Park	29,620	29,620	30,220	15,110	30,220			30,830	
	Enhancements	3,150	3,150	3,210	0	3,210			0	
Taps & Keys 100	Play and Landscape Officer	11,250	11,250	11,480	2,870	11,480			11,710	
Rents 14311	Holiday Playscheme contribution	8,000	4,387	5,000	0	5,000			8,380	
Lease 2088	Door Step Green	720	467	740	152	740			760	
Est 2014/15 16499	Yew Tree Park - Gate Opening	1,440	1,289	1,470	699	1,470			1,500	
	Total expenditure	242,365	229,749	244,330	77,830	244,060	0	270	248,570	0
Notes:							Estimated underspend (-)			-270
										248,300
1	Budget prepared on a year on year basis, with adjustments made for previous year's accruals						Estimated 2014/15 income			16,499
2	Water mains refurbishment/repairs budget allocated to meet planned programme of phased improvements									231,801
3	Income of £2,090 pa receivable from lease of land at Higher Ryalls						+ contingencies @ 5%			11,590
4	Enhancements budget used to increase Holiday Playscheme contribution - to help meet cost of new scheme in Yeovil South Ward									243,391