

LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING – 2013/04/22 – 34

MINUTES OF THE AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING held in the Council Chamber, Claremont House, Lydney on Monday 22 April 2013 at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT: Cllrs B Thomas (Chairman), D Biddle, R Bonser, C Harris, V Hobman, C Matthews and W Osborne

Mrs J Smailes – Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Miss C Wheeler – Executive Officer (EO)

Cllr Thomas informed all present that no practice fire evacuation had been scheduled for the duration of the meeting. All attendees were then informed of the locations of the nearest fire exits.

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence had been received/noted from Cllr Berryman and Cllr Edwards who, whilst not a Committee Member, had wished to attend the meeting.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the Amenities meeting held on 18 February 2013 were confirmed as a true record. **Proposed by Cllr Biddle, seconded by Cllr Harris.** Unanimous.

4. **OPEN FORUM**

No public were in attendance.

6. **ALLOTMENT PROVISION**

IBCs (South Road Allotment Site)

Prior to the meeting Members had been provided with costing for the purchase of IBCs for the site and the replacement of the existing boundary fencing.

Regarding the provision of IBCs, it was noted that the Council would also need to provide a roofing and guttering system in order to harvest rainwater. Furthermore, the CEO advised that a commitment for purchasing IBCs had been included in the 2012/13 accounts which had been carried forward to 2013/14. Members noted that the provision of IBCs had already been discussed with the existing allotment tenants who had favoured the idea.

After a short discussion it was **proposed by Cllr Bonser, seconded by Cllr Hobman**, that the Council would cover the cost of purchasing up to three IBCs and would provide a roof and guttering system over same. However, if the allotment tenants wished to enclose the IBCs the cost of the additional work would need to be covered by the tenants (such work would commence once fencing had been replaced – see following item). **Vote carried.**

Action by – the CEO

Fencing (South Road Allotment Site)

Members were advised that three organisations had been requested to quote for the replacement of the existing boundary fencing at the front of the site, however, only one

LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING – 2013/04/22 – 35

Company had chosen to return a quotation. Accordingly, it was **proposed by Cllr Harris, seconded by Cllr Hobman**, that the quotation from CGP Contracting Ltd for picket type fencing (at a cost of approximately £2,796.00 including VAT) be accepted. Vote carried.

Cambourne Meadow (Potential Site)

Members were provided with a further copy of the e-mail received from Richard Cole Contracting advising on a process to eradicate Japanese Knotweed, together with providing costings for the provision of a survey to establish the extent of the problem on site.

Cllr Matthews spoke in favour of undertaking a survey to ascertain the extent of the problem. Cllrs Thomas and Biddle felt that Japanese Knotweed was only located in one area close to the gas governor. The CEO advised that Mr Cole had offered a “free of charge” single spray of the affected area, however, differing views were then given regarding the most appropriate time to spray.

During discussion Cllr Thomas identified an area of land off Julius Way which he felt may also be suitable for allotment purposes. Cllr Matthews felt that the land was owned by Gloucestershire County Council, however, Cllr Thomas requested that the CEO commence investigations to confirm ownership of said land as well as exploring the feasibility/cost of securing the strip of land currently owned by Two Rivers Housing at the South Road site.

Action by – the CEO

It was suggested that a decision on the survey would be delayed until such time as the Japanese Knotweed had grown sufficiently in order that Trustees would be able to view its presence in said location. Whilst the offer of a “free of charge” spray was accepted, Trustee Biddle reminded Members that it would only cover the area of infestation visible.

Bees

Members were provided with a copy of a request which had been received from a member of the public that areas be provided where local bees could find “friendly” areas to feed. Cllr Biddle advised that the request be duly noted. Cllr Bonser felt that the matter may be something which Lydney Recreation Trust may wish to consider at a future date.

6. LITTER/DOG FOULING

Prior to the meeting Councillors were provided with a copy of an e-mail received from a member of the public in which they raised concern over the amount of littering and dog fouling which surrounded their property. Councillors were also provided with copies of the responses received from Mr N Brain, Street Warden Team Leader and Mr R Aston, Environmental Contracts Officer.

Cllr Matthews highlighted that a number of complaints had been received regarding the failure of some dog owners to collect and dispose of their animal’s waste. Cllr Thomas reminded Members that the Street Wardens had previously conducted an exercise to “spray” dog waste which had not been collected and **Cllr Matthews proposed** that the Street Wardens be asked to undertake a similar exercise around Lydney at some point. Cllr Bonser highlighted that problems were experienced in the walkway between Forest Road and the Co-operative Store, despite dog waste bins being provided. Accordingly, she felt that any campaign would only be successful if it were to be enforced through action by Street Wardens. Cllr Bonser also suggested that emphasis should be placed on certain areas (e.g. Summerleaze, alleyway leading to Primrose Hill School, Lancaster Drive).

LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING – 2013/04/22 – 36

It was unanimously agreed that the CEO would work with the Street Warden service to arrange for an exercise to be conducted in the Parish when capacity existed.

Responding to a question which had been raised by Cllr Bonser, the CEO advised that the cost of new dog waste bins would amount to £83.66 plus VAT per bin, plus the cost of emptying. It was noted that Forest Equipment Services would be able to install any dog waste bins the Council wished to purchase.

All Councillors were requested to inform the CEO of areas to be targeted.

Action by – all Councillors

7. **CHRISTMAS EVENT 2013 (Christmas Sub-Committee update)**

Cllr W Osborne reported that an order had now been placed for the purchase of the Christmas Lights, however, the CEO advised that an order acknowledgement had yet to be received from the supplier.

Cllr W Osborne advised Members that Cllr Harris had attempted to arrange a meeting between Sub-Committee Members, however, it had not been possible for a meeting to take place due to other commitments. Cllr Harris urged her fellow Sub-committee Members to agree a date for a meeting immediately, as she believed that Mrs L Callow (LTHTMC) was becoming disillusioned with lack of action by the Sub-Committee regarding arrangements for the switch on event. Cllr Thomas requested that the appointed Members provide details of their availability to Cllr Harris.

Action by – Members of Sub-Committee

Cllr W Osborne suggested that the Council may wish to discontinue the Annual Christmas Window Competition as he felt that the funding could be used to purchase an additional lighting column. However, the CEO reminded Members that if they wished to pursue the matter a decision would need to be taken by Full Council as the competition could be construed as "Civic" as the £100 allocated came out of the Civic budget which fell to the Mayor's discretion. Cllr Thomas requested that Cllr W Osborne raise the matter at a future Full Council meeting under the specific agenda item if he still felt it to be appropriate.

Action by – Cllr W Osborne

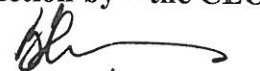
8. **LYDNEY CEMETERY/ST MARY'S CHURCHYARD**

Garden of Reflection

The CEO advised that the newly created Garden of Reflection was nearing completion and that Damells had kindly agreed to donate a piece of stonework free of charge. It was noted that an official opening would take place on 8 May 2013 to which all Councillors would be invited.

Members noted that Cllr Berryman had expressed a desire to have the bottom section of the fence between the Garden and the Public Footpath replaced. Members had been provided with a copy of the quotation from C.G.P Contracting Ltd amounting to £1,320.00 (including VAT) for the work prior to the meeting; CEO advised that the cost of the work could be included in the current budget for the project by utilising the commitment which had been made for the purchase of a sculpture. It was **proposed by Cllr Matthews, seconded by Cllr Harris**, that the quotation would be accepted. Unanimous.

Action by – the CEO


17th June 2013

LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING – 2013/04/22 – 37

Trees

Councillors were asked to consider authorising the removal of a row of Chemmycypress trees. The CEO advised the trees were encroaching onto nearby headstones and that Cllr Berryman had suggested that the removal of the trees could possibly create additional burial space. Members were advised that the cost of the work (£1,250.00 plus £350.00 for grinding out tree stumps) was in addition to their current budget. It was **proposed by Cllr Biddle, seconded by Cllr Harris**, that the work be undertaken. Vote carried with one abstention and one vote against.

Action by – the CEO

It was noted that advice would be sought by the Contractor from Forest of Dean District Council regarding the ability to undertake work during the nesting season.

Public Footpath

It was noted that Robert Hitchins Limited had withdrawn their consideration to that of allowing the Council to purchase the freehold title to the Public Footpath between the Cemetery and the Lychgate Mews development.

Interment Options

Cllrs were asked to consider alternative methods of interment (e.g. above and below interment options). Cllr Thomas suggested that a working group be formed in order to consider future interments. The CEO suggested the formation of a new Committee in order to consider both the Cemetery and also matters relating to St Mary's Closed Churchyard. Members were advised that at a recent staff meeting Ground Staff had raised the matter of the deterioration of the stone wall between the Churchyard and the Park; this would therefore need to be addressed in the near future. The CEO reminded Members that the Council had a legal obligation to maintain the Churchyard (LGA 1972 s215(1)).

It was **proposed by Cllr Bonser, seconded by Cllr Biddle**, that a recommendation be submitted to Full Council that a new Committee be formed to consider burial and churchyards.

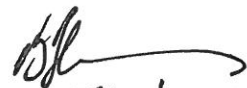
Action by – the CEO

9. LAND AT SWAN ROAD/SWAN LANE, LYDNEY

Prior to the meeting Members were provided with a copy of the response which had been obtained from Mr G Ellis, Francis Law LLP regarding the approach made at the April meeting by Cllr Cooksley who had requested that Council consider registering the land in its own name.

It was noted that the legal advice agreed with the advice given previously by the CEO (i.e. that it was not possible to register land if the legal owner was not known and the Council did not have a ground to claim right to (e.g. occupation)). Furthermore, Mr Ellis had highlighted maintenance issues on the ground (e.g. Japanese Knotweed) which may prove to be a significant liability for the Council.

It was **proposed by Cllr Biddle, seconded by Cllr Harris**, that no further action would be taken on the matter. Unanimous.


17th June 2013

LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING – 2013/04/22 – 38

10. PLAY AREAS

Primrose Hill

Prior to the meeting Members were provided with copies of the inspection reports which had been obtained from Touchwood (including risk assessments for the equipment) and Monmouthshire County Council. Councillors were also provided with a copy of the quotation which had been received from Touchwood detailing the cost of rectifying the problem with the zip wire equipment.

The CEO advised that a letter to the equipment designer/installer was currently being drafted by Forest of Dean District Council's Legal Department and would include an invitation for the equipment designer/installer to meet on site and either correct or remove the equipment.

Responding to a question which had been raised by Cllr Bonser the CEO advised that the reports received had recommended the removal of the zip wire and remedial work be carried out on other items of equipment. Furthermore, the equipment designer/installer would be requested to either replace the surface matting which they had installed or reimburse the funding which had been expended. Cllr Matthews recalled that she, together with Cllrs Bonser and Biddle had previously met the equipment designer/installer on site to discuss the matting situation (and others). Cllr Matthews recalled that at the meeting the equipment designer/installer had agreed to replace the matting and questioned if the work had been undertaken. The CEO advised that a quantity of the matting had been replaced by the equipment designer/installer however, the reports highlighted the work to be unsatisfactory.

Cllr Matthews then voiced her dissatisfaction with the swinging rope which the above group had, following a meeting with equipment manufacturer/installer, recommended as a replacement for the swinging log which had originally been installed.

Cllr Bonser proposed that a letter be sent to Primrose Hill School to inform pupils that the Council was attempting to find a solution to the problem and to give a commitment that it would install some form of play equipment in the area. **Seconded by Cllr Matthews.** Unanimous.

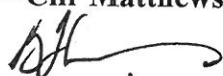
Action by – the CEO

11. UNDER 5S PLAY EQUIPMENT (LAP)

Cllr Matthews requested permission to apply to Awards for All for £10,000 funding in order to provide said play equipment and stressed the amount of ground work (including steel/iron fencing) which would need to be undertaken on site.

Members were reminded by the CEO that they had previously been provided with an itemised list of the quotations which had been obtained, and she stressed that the quotations did not include the provision of fencing. Cllr Bonser felt that the Committee should approach Full Council for an additional £10,000 funding should Cllr Matthews's submission to Awards for All not be successful. It was noted that a possible source of funding could be via the Health Lottery's "Health Local" scheme. The CEO also advised Cllr Matthews to view Playdale's website as it detailed current sources of funding for play equipment.

Action by – Cllr Matthews


17th Jun 2013

LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING – 2013/04/22 – 39

It was proposed by Cllr Matthews, seconded by Cllr Harris, that FODDC should also be requested to apply for compensation from the equipment designer/installer of the play equipment on Primrose Hill. Unanimous.

Action by – the CEO

12. COUNCILLORS REPORTS

Cllr W Osborne noted that an e-mail had been received from the grass cutting Contractor regarding the failure of his employees to observe the requirement to leave a 1 meter gap from the boundaries (where possible). Members were reminded that the Contractor had advised of the need to ensure that the grass did not grow beyond a certain height, as it would cause maintenance problems for his machines, and had indicated that he may undertake a number of “free of charge” cuts in order to achieve this aim. Also, that as the Council had elected not to “collect” grass cuttings, by leaving the grass for too long a period this may result in further complaints. Cllr Thomas requested that Cllr W Osborne monitor the situation.

Action by – Cllr W Osborne

Noting that the “Walkers are Welcome” group were attempting to obtain signage illustrating the route to Lydney Docks, Cllr Biddle questioned if funding would also be available for signage at the roundabout. Cllr Thomas advised that funding was available for the permissive path from the Industrial Estate to the Docks, with “Walkers are Welcome” a separate project. Cllr Biddle felt that “Walkers are Welcome” were expending their funding on signage from the roundabout to the Docks, together with a new walks booklet and the CEO suggested that the organisation may wish to approach the Committee and request that they cover the cost of signage at the roundabout. Cllr Biddle was asked to progress, as the “Councillor Champion” for signage. It was noted that the Town Council had already advised that it could not provide administrative support to “Walkers are Welcome”.

Action by – Cllr Biddle

Cllr Hobman advised that a resident of Templeway West had indicated that they wished to undertake a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme and had been advised by Gloucestershire Police that the Council would cover the cost of signage (£30.00 per sign). Cllr Bonser, as the Council’s representative to Gloucestershire Police, was requested to take the matter forward through the Neighbourhood Police meetings. Cllr Matthews proposed that the Committee also write to the Police Commissioner, to request that the signage be funded by the Police. Seconded by Cllr Harris.

Action by – Cllr Bonser and the CEO

13. MEETING DATES

Members noted that the next Amenities Committee meeting would take place on 17 June 2013 at 7.00 pm.

The meeting closed at 8.24 pm.

Chairman 

Date ...17th June 2013.....