

LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING – 2014/02/24 – 18

MINUTES OF THE AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING held in the Council Chamber, Claremont House, Lydney on Monday 24 February 2014 at 7.02 pm.

PRESENT: Cllrs B Thomas (Chairman), B Berryman, J Bevan, D Biddle, R Bonser, C Harris, V Hobman, C Matthews, W Osborne (late arrival), S Rudge, C Vaughan

Mr R Cole, Richard Cole Contractors – Agenda item 6 only

Mr L Carter, Rigby Taylor – Agenda item 6 only

One member of the public

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 were received and noted from Cllr Preest (non-Committee Member) who had requested the deferment of agenda item 11 – Bus Shelters, to a future meeting in order that he may speak on the matter.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the Amenities meeting held on 9 December 2013 were confirmed as a true record. **Proposed by Cllr Harris, seconded by Cllr Biddle.** Unanimous.

4. **TO CONSIDER INCREASING THE MEMBERSHIP COUNCILLOR NUMBERS OF THE AMENITIES COMMITTEE**

It was **proposed by Cllr Matthews, seconded by Cllr Biddle**, that Cllrs Rudge and Vaughan would be appointed to the Amenities Committee, subject to ratification by Full Council. Unanimous.

5. **OPEN FORUM**

None.

6. **GRASS VERGES/GATEWAY ENTRANCES**

Cllr Thomas welcomed Messer's Cole and Carter to the meeting. Mr Cole then provided Members with an overview of the issues which needed to be considered prior the sowing of wild flower seed (e.g. define area, identify services, knowledge of soil type, etc). Mr Carter spoke on the various types of seed which could be purchased and explained the difference between Euroflor (100% flower seed – annual mix) and wild flower seed (percentage of flower seed mixed with flower seed). Members also noted the work which Rigby Taylor had undertaken with numerous Universities in order to quantify the increase in bees, butterflies, etc, due to the sowing of their seed. Mr Carter



LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING – 2014/02/24 – 19

spoke on the need to ensure that any existing grass was removed from the chosen area prior to seeding and for the area to be lightly rotorvated. Mr Cole suggested two areas which could be sown with wild flower seed and it was felt that the Council's previous attempt to sow wild flower seed had not proved successful as the surface had been incorrectly prepared.

Responding to a question which had been raised by the CEO, Mr Cole explained the need to allow the matured flower heads to remain in situ until approximately the end of October/November, with the area then cut and "mulched in" to assist with germination of new plants. Mr Cole stressed the working practises which he had introduced over a number of years thereby increasing the number of bluebells and primroses at the entrances to the Town. Responding to a question which had been raised by Cllr Harris, Mr Carter suggested that the Council consider sowing wild flower seed on the "banked" areas at the entrances, with Euroflor then utilised on the other areas. However, Mr Cole explained that if the Council wished to sow the banks with wild flower seed the areas would need to be prepared by hand. Mr Cole was invited by the CEO to explain to Councillors the grass cutting schedule for the Town Council. Cllr Osborne arrived at this point.

Members were informed of the need to sow seed by the end of May at the latest, with native mix requiring sowing by the end of April.

Cllr Biddle then seized the opportunity to seek advice from Mr Cole regarding the eradication of Japanese Knotweed from an area of land in the ownership of Lydney Recreation Trust. Mr Cole advised that the area could be treated/re-treated with Glysohate, alternatively, Rigby Taylor had just launched a new product which could be used as a "one off" treatment for Japanese Knotweed. However, Mr Carter advised that the product did come with a number of restrictions (e.g. no composting/grazing/etc).

Mr Carter and Mr Cole then excused themselves from the meeting.

During discussion Cllr Osborne called for the Town Council's Head Groundsman to be consulted on the plans and felt that that the Council had attempted to sow wild flower seed approximately 14 years prior but had only scarified the area. However, Cllr Biddle felt that historically the wild flower seed had failed as the existing grass in the area had not been killed off. It was noted that the Head Groundsman had already been consulted over the suggestions made by Mr Cole and had voiced no objection.

After a further short discussion it was agreed that the matter would be referred to Full Council in order that a decision could be taken once further information from alternative suppliers had been received.

Action by – the CEO

7. ALLOTMENT/ALLOTMENT PROVISION

Prior to the meeting Members were provided with a copy of the suggested rental charges for the South Road allotments. **Cllr Harris proposed** that the suggested rental charges of £26.40 (standard charge) and £13.20 (concessionary charge) be adopted. Cllr Matthews spoke against the motion due to low income levels of local families and called for the current charges to remain. **Cllr Bonser proposed** that an increase of £1/£1.50 should be applied. **Seconded by Cllr Osborne.** At this point **Cllr Biddle agreed to**



LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING – 2014/02/24 – 20

second Cllr Harris's motion. Cllr Harris's motion was put to a vote which failed. **Cllr Bonser then amended** her earlier motion that an increase of £1.00 would be applied. **Seconded by Cllr Osborne.** Cllr Osborne advised that the amended motion had become the substantive motion and called for a further vote to be taken. Accordingly, it was **proposed by Cllr Bonser, seconded by Cllr Osborne** that an increase of £1.00 would be applied and the rates set at £25.00 and £12.50 respectively. Vote carried.

Action by – the CEO

Whilst the matter was an agenda item for later in the meeting, Councillors then turned their attention to the charges for memorial benches, memorial flower troughs and the hire of the Council Chamber. It was noted that a copy of the suggested charges had been provided to Members prior to the meeting. It was **proposed by Cllr Biddle, seconded by Cllr Harris** that the suggested increase of 10% would be accepted, these being:

Memorial Bench - £399.30 plus VAT
Memorial Flower Trough - £605.00 plus VAT
Chamber Hire - £13.20 per hour

Vote carried.

Action by – the CEO

Allotment Holders Meeting/Report to Annual Town Meeting

Cllr Hobman spoke in favour of holding a further meeting with allotment holders. Whilst she was in favour of holding a further meeting, Cllr Bonser spoke against the need for the allotment holders to provide a formal report to the Annual Town Meeting, however, she suggested that the issue could be raised with allotment holders at their next meeting, which should take place prior to the Annual Town Meeting.

Cllr Thomas suggested that the details for the allotment holder meeting would be left with Cllr Hobman to arrange and the CEO advised that she would liaise with Cllr Hobman accordingly.

Action by – Cllr Hobman and the CEO

Sheds

Prior to the meeting Members were provided with prices of storage/potting sheds which could be utilised at the allotment site. Responding to a question raised by Cllr Matthews, the CEO advised of the need for individual allotment holders to obtain planning consent if they wished to erect sheds on the land themselves, whereas the Council would not need to obtain formal consent due to Planning Law.

As an alternative, Cllr Thomas suggested that the Council should discuss the provision of garden storage containers with allotment tenants. **Cllr Matthews proposed** that allotment holders should be provided with a garden storage container, however the motion was not seconded. Cllr Bonser called for allotment tenants to be consulted on the matter.

Action by – Cllr Hobman



LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING – 2014/02/24 – 21

IBC Shelter

Members were provided with photographs of the IBC shelter which had been constructed by a member of Ground Staff. Cllr Hobman asked that the Council's thanks be passed on to the employee concerned.

Action by – the CEO

8. CHRISTMAS

Cllr Harris reported that a meeting of the Working Party had taken place on 13 February 2014 which had been attended by Cllrs Hobman, Vaughan, Rudge and herself, with apologies from Cllrs Bonser and Berryman.

As a result of the meeting the Working Party proposed that the Switch On event would take place on Saturday 29 November 2014 and it was noted that Lydney Community Centre and Lydney Town Hall would ensure that their respective Christmas events would be held on different dates this year.

Cllr Harris outlined the Working Party's discussions to date, these being:

- That Mr Chris Higgs would be asked to switch on this year's lights with the Mayor. (Mr Hobman to approach Mr Higgs re this).
- Cllr Hobman would approach The Co-operative store to secure the use of three disabled bays which would be used to site three gazebos (for adverse weather provision). One of the gazebos to be decorated as a Grotto by Working Party.
- That Cllr Rudge was in discussion with the Royal British Legion, Lydney Branch regarding the use of their gazebos.
- Cllr Rudge had arranged for the provision of a PA system and also lighting.
- Cllr Rudge was in the process of approaching a number of choirs to ascertain if they would be willing to perform free of charge at the event. Investigations were also being made re the possibility of the Town's three Primary Schools forming a joint choir.
- Cllr Hobman had kindly offered to produce the carol sheets for the event.
- Contact would be made by Working Party with Lydney Training Band to establish if they were available to perform at the event and to establish if they would require a donation.
- Contact would need to be made by Working Party with local press and radio in order to publicise the event.
- Cllr Harris requested that the Christmas lights for this year be installed at least seven days prior to the event.

Action – Executive Officer

- Enquired if it would be possible to change the colour of the Christmas tree from white to green; advised not as tree purchased.
- Enquired if it would be possible for Ground Staff to construct a picket type fence around the perimeter of the tree, rather than utilise the plastic barrier provided by the lighting contractor.

Action – Head Groundsman

- That Cllr Osborne had been approached to act as Father Christmas (DBS check already in place). It was stressed that a suitable suit would need to be provided for the role.

Action by – Cllr Osborne to provide copy of DBS check/confirm cost of suit



LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING – 2014/02/24 – 22

- Danters Fair would be requested to attend with their cup and saucer ride.
Action by – Executive Officer
- Approaches would be made by Working Party to local traders to establish if they would be willing to provide a number of small gifts which could be handed out to children.

Cllr Osborne suggested that the VAT reclaimed from the purchase of the Christmas lights and cone tree for the 2013 display should be allocated in the Council's Current Account to allow it to be used to purchase an additional two lights for use in the 2014 display. However, Members were reminded that such a motion had not been formally proposed; that the Council's accounts were operated in line with Local Government standards; that the Committee had already considered and agreed its budget for 2014; that the Committee was able to vire funding between its budget headings, should it so resolve. At this point it was **proposed by Cllr Harris, seconded by Cllr Matthews**, that the items outlined in Working Party's discussions shown above would be actioned as indicated. Unanimous.

Action by – Christmas Working Party

Discussion then took place on the cone tree which had been purchased by the Council for the 2013 display. Several suggestions were made to improve its appearance during daytime hours, including the possibility of utilising the cone tree outside the Council Chamber with the Town reverting to a natural tree. Responding to a question which had been raised by Cllr Bonser, the CEO advised that any surplus budget from the current year would be transferred to the Council's General Reserves, which would enable the Council to achieve the recommended amount of General Reserves. Members were then provided with an overview of how the Committee's and Council's budget was calculated (Policy, Budget, Precept) and advised of the need to obtain consent from Full Council if the Committee wished to utilise a portion of General Reserves to purchase additional Christmas lights for use in the 2014 display. It was **proposed by Cllr Osborne, seconded by Cllr Harris**, that the Council would continue to utilise the features/cone tree purchased for the 2013 display and that further consideration would be given to the requirements for the 2015. Unanimous.

Action by – the CEO

It was **proposed by Cllr Osborne, seconded by Cllr Thomas**, that the lights on the cone tree would be illuminated from 8.00 am until the daily termination time for the Christmas features. Unanimous.

Action by – the CEO

9. LYDNEY IN BLOOM

Cllr Matthews reported that due to her studies she had not had time to further this project. Noting that a Working Party had been formed to progress the project, Cllr Harris questioned if the Council was committed to taking the project forward. Cllr Osborne felt that a meeting should be arranged in April in order to formulate the project for 2015, however, Cllr Bonser felt that the Council should concentrate on improving its verges in 2014, with sufficient budgetary provision then being made to extend the planting to other areas in future years. Furthermore, Cllr Bonser suggested that the Council should only move onto an In Bloom scheme once it was satisfied with its work on the verges.



LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING – 2014/02/24 – 23

During a short discussion the CEO offered to forward details of the Breakfast Club meeting for businesses and traders to Cllrs Harris and Bonser. Cllr Bonser offered to represent Cllr Matthews at In Bloom meetings. Cllr Harris suggested that a Working Party meeting should take place at 7.00 pm on 10 April 2014 to discuss the project and urged her fellow Councillors to try and identify volunteers who may wish to participate.

Action by – all Councillors

10. **DOG WASTE BINS**

Due to a number of enquiries which had been received from local residents, Members were asked to consider if they wished to purchase a dog waste bin for Roman Park.

Cllrs Harris and Bonser spoke in support of providing a dog waste bin for Roman Park and suggested that said bin should be sited in an area where children play. Cllr Osborne felt that in the future the Council should formulate a policy as to when such bins would be provided. Members were advised of the need to obtain consent from the land owner (Forest of Dean District Council). Furthermore, the cost of purchasing, together with an on-going charge for emptying the bin, was highlighted to Councillors.

In view of the above, it was **proposed by Cllr Bonser, seconded by Cllr Harris**, that Forest of Dean District Council would be requested to provide a dog waste bin in the area. However, if the request was declined, the Town Council would provide such a bin. Vote carried.

Action by – the CEO

Cllr Osborne requested that the minutes reflect that the Council had not set a precedent to provide dog waste bins.

11. **BUS SHELTERS**

Deferred until the next meeting.

12. **THE TACK**

Prior to the meeting Members were provided with a copy of the letter which had been received from Mr S Payne, together with a copy of the response which had tendered by Cllr Thomas. Noted.

13. **2014-2015 CHARGES**

This matter was considered under agenda item 7.

14. **OWNER/OCCUPIERS LIABILITY – TREE INSPECTION & MAINTENANCE**

Members noted that three contractors had been approached to undertake a formal inspection of the trees on the Councils/Trust's land and it was anticipated that quotations for the work would be received shortly.

15. **PLAY AREAS**

Fallers Field

Members were reminded that this matter had been deferred to the Amenities Committee by Full Council.

The CEO advised that previously legal advice had been sought as a number of residents were not happy with the location of the play area; that the advice received was for the



LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING – 2014/02/24 – 24

residents to seek to vary the s106 agreement themselves. Members noted that a resident had therefore approached Bells (the developer) regarding the possibility of varying the s106 who had verbally agreed to the variance.

Following a letter from Mr Shamloo of 14 January 2014 it was noted that the residents had yet to form a working party to move the issue forward, but had been advised by Forest of Dean District Council that the land owner (i.e. the Town Council) would be required to submit planning consent to relocate the play area. Accordingly, Members noted that further legal advice had been obtained which stated that inhabitants of the land could submit a planning application to relocate the play area with implementation subject to the land owner's agreement. However, if the issue merely concerned the re-negotiation of the s106 agreement it would involve Forest of Dean District Council, the Town Council and the developer and that none of the parties could be forced to re-negotiate.

It was therefore felt that the residents should look to submit a formal planning application themselves to relocate the play area.

Primrose Hill

Members were reminded that the Committee's request to re-allocate £8,000 currently held in General Reserves in respect of under 5 provision to that of general play equipment had been ratified by Full Council. Accordingly, guidance was sought from Members as to how they wished to proceed. Cllr Thomas felt that the Committee needed to identify suitable equipment suppliers and called on fellow Councillors to provide suggestions/contractor information/form a Working Party.

Members noted that the Meend had also sustained damage by Wild Boar. Cllr Bonser expressed concern over the potential danger to children who may happen upon Wild Boar whilst using the area. It was agreed that the Town Council's Head Groundsman would be asked to re-instate the area and that the Committee would consider what steps could be taken to prevent the animals accessing the area, should they return in the future.

16. COUNCILLORS REPORTS

Cllr Vaughan reported that Oakdale residents were seeking to have a post box installed on the development. It was suggested that the Editor of Oakdale links should approach Royal Mail to discuss such a facility.

As a result of a walk with Mr D Street during which the relocation of a footpath onto Lydney Recreation Trust land was mooted, Cllr Biddle suggested that investigations could be considered by Lydney Recreation Trust in order to establish the ownership of the roadway leading from the J D Norman site.

Action by – Trust agenda item

17. MEETING DATES

Members noted that the next Amenities Committee meeting would take place 22 April 2014 at 7.00 pm.

The meeting closed at 8.37 pm.

Chairman

Date 21st July 2014.....