

LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING – 2013/02/18 – 25

MINUTES OF THE AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING held in the Council Chamber, Claremont House, Lydney on Monday 18 February 2013 at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT: Cllrs B Thomas (Chairman), B Berryman, D Biddle, C Harris, B Hobman, C Matthews, S Osborne and W Osborne

Cllr R Bonser
Cllr D Cooksley
Cllr B Pearman
Mrs L Callow – Lydney Town Hall Trust Management Committee
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**
No apologies for absence were received.
2. **TO CONSIDER INCREASING THE MEMBERSHIP COUNCILLOR NUMBER OF THE AMENITIES COMMITTEE**
Cllrs were asked to consider appointing Cllr R Bonser to the Committee. **Proposed by Cllr Berryman, seconded by Cllr Matthews.** The proposal was put to a vote which was carried.
3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
Cllr C Matthews – agenda item 9 – Allotment Provision
4. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**
The minutes of the Amenities meeting held on 19 November 2012 were confirmed as a true record. **Proposed by Cllr W Osborne, seconded by Cllr Harris.** Unanimous.
5. **OPEN FORUM**
No public were in attendance.
6. **GRASS CUTTING TENDERS (April 2013 – October 2016 – 4 year Contract)**
Cllr Thomas advised that he and Cllr Biddle (Chairman of Lydney Recreation Trust) had attended the Council's office to open the tenders which had been received in respect of the grass cutting contracts. Members noted that only one tender had actually been received amounting to £14,705 for the Town Council's contract. Furthermore, that the cost of the tender would be partially off-set by the contribution received from the Environment Agency regarding the work conducted at Lydney Docks.

During discussion it was noted that the contractor possessed all the required management and health and safety information (e.g. risk assessments/CoSHH/etc). Attention was also drawn to the fact that the Contractor would cover both the grass cutting contracts for the Town and Lydney Recreation Trust. Whilst no objection was made to the appointment,

LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING – 2013/02/18 – 26

Members' attention was drawn to the reduction in the number of cuts (from 13 to 11, with the proviso for two "ad hoc" cuts if required) which it was hoped would reduce the likelihood of unnecessary cuts. Consideration was also given to the extent of the area which should be cut back to the boundary at the gateways to the Town. It was **proposed by Cllr Osborne** that a 1 meter strip from the boundary should be left (where practical) in order encourage the growth of wild flowers, and that said strip should not be cut until the middle of August. **Seconded by Cllr Harris**. The motion was put to a vote which was carried and it was noted that the motion would not result in any cost savings.

Councillors also noted that the contract would not permit the appointed contractor to sub-contract the grass cutting to another contractor and it was **proposed by Cllr Hobman, seconded by Cllr Harris**, that that the grass cutting contract for the Town and Lydney Recreation Trust would be awarded to Richard Cole Contracting.

Action by – the CEO

7. AMENITIES EQUIPMENT

Prior to the meeting Councillors were provided with a quotation which had been received from Dean Mowers with regard to the equipment which would be necessary to undertake grass cutting in the Cemetery/St Mary's Churchyard and also gritting/snow clearance on the pavements in the Town. Members were also provided with a copy of the guidance which had been received from WPS Insurance (the Council's insurers) regarding the need to adequately insure any unlicensed vehicles (e.g. grass cutters).

Members were provided with a copy of the agreed 2013-2014 budget and reminded that the Council had already agreed that it would undertake grass cutting in the Cemetery/St Mary's Churchyard in 2013-2014. During discussion it was noted that Dean Mowers had already demonstrated the use of the equipment to Ground Staff, who had all expressed their satisfaction with the equipment which had been proposed. Furthermore, it was noted that Dean Mowers would provide full training on the operation and daily maintenance which should be conducted on the equipment, together with the provision of full head/face protection for all staff for use when using the Brushcutters. Attention was drawn to the discounted cost of the machinery (£13, 721.62 including VAT).

Responding to a question which had been raised by Cllr Bonser, the CEO spoke on the need to purchase the new equipment, and that the Council did not possess any machinery which could be sold to fund the purchase of the equipment. Cllr Thomas reminded members of the requirement to insure any new equipment.

It was **proposed by Cllr Osborne, seconded by Cllr Harris**, that the Council would proceed with the purchase of the equipment in the new financial year (2013-2014). The motion was put to a vote which was carried.

Action by – the CEO

8. SNOW CLEARANCE/GRIT BIN PROVISION

Councillors welcomed the fact that the above grass cutting machine could also be used to grit/clear pavements.

Grit Bins

Councillors were informed that, following requests by residents, it had been necessary to place 15 temporary grit bins in various locations throughout the Town during the last

LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING – 2013/02/18 – 27

period of adverse weather. Attention was drawn to the fact that provision remained in the current financial year for the purchase of 15 additional grit bins and Members were provided with a list of location where it had been necessary to locate temporary bins. It was **proposed by Cllr Biddle, seconded by Cllr Hobman**, that the Council would purchase 15 new bins at a cost of £1,170.00 plus VAT. Unanimous.

Action by – the CEO

It was noted that contact would be made with Gloucestershire Highways to establish that the new bins would be added to the grit filling schedule.

9. ALLOTMENT PROVISION (Cllr B Thomas)

Cllr Matthews declared an interest in this matter.

Allotment Meeting

Cllr Thomas provided Members with an overview of the last meeting with the allotment holders/prospective tenants, including the presentation which had been given by the Forest of Dean Allotment Society. As a result of the meeting Councillors noted that investigations would take place in to the provision of IBCs (water bowsers) and the replacement of the fencing which surrounded the current allotment site. It was also noted that the allotment waiting list now stood at 13.

Members were informed that a quotation had been received for £2,796 inc VAT to replace the fencing at the front of the site with wooden fencing, however, if Council wished to use chain link fencing the replacement cost would be approximately £6,500 inc VAT.

Cllr Thomas noted that the Council was continuing to seek alternative allotment space and suggested that it may be possible to approach Two Rivers Housing to see if it would be possible to utilise the grassed area in their ownership located to the front of the allotment site. For this reason and the consideration of the fencing, the matter was deferred until the next meeting.

Japanese Knotweed

The CEO advised that Richard Cole had visited Cambourne Meadow earlier in the day to assess the extent of the plant on site and had offered to meet with Councillors to discuss how the plant could be eradicated. Cllr W Osborne advised that the Allotment Liaison Officer had already researched this matter and he felt that no action should be taken until the start of the growing season, to allow the extent of the problem to be viewed. It was agreed that no further action would be taken on this matter and that it would be an agenda item for the next meeting.

Allotment Charges

Members were asked to consider if they wished to apply a 10% increase on the rental charges. Cllr W Osborne felt that a higher increase should be applied, however, Cllr Matthews spoke against any increase in charges, as she felt that the Town fell within a high area for obesity. The CEO reminded Members that if the allotment holders elected to form an Allotment Society, any income generated through the rental of the allotments would be paid to the Society, who would then manage the facility. Cllrs Hobman and S Osborne (as Allotment Liaison Officers) were called on to give their views and both Members voiced their satisfaction with a 10% increase. Accordingly, it was **proposed by Cllr Matthews, seconded by Cllr Hobman**, that a 10% increase should be applied on rates from April 2013

LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING – 2013/02/18 – 28

(Adults = £24.00, Concessions = £12.00). The motion was put to a vote which was carried.

Action by – the CEO

10. STREET FURNITURE/SIGNAGE

It was noted that the flower tubs had now been sited at each of the Gateways and throughout the town. Furthermore, that signage/maps have been ordered and delivery was anticipated prior to the end of February, with installation taking place shortly afterwards. It was also noted that the Cultivation Licences had been obtained from Gloucestershire County Council Highways Department for the cultivation of the Gateways/Roundabouts.

Members were provided with a copy of an e-mail received from Mr Heanley in which he expressed his appreciation of the newly planted flower tubs.

Signage

It was noted that the CEO was waiting for a response from the gateway signage provider, as they had originally agreed to provide the signage by the end of January 2013, however, the date for delivery had now changed to the end of February 2013. It was noted that the gateways had previously been planted with a quantity of daffodils, which may now have to be trampled over in order to install the new signage, once it was actually received, however, every effort would be taken to minimise this.

Sponsorship

Members were informed that the Council had received two approaches from organisations interested in sponsoring the new flower tubs. However, it was agreed that the approaches would be declined at this time whilst Councillors considered other locations which they would prefer to be sponsored. Attention was drawn to the e-mail which had been obtained from Forest of Dean District Council regarding the possible need to obtain advertisement consent for such signage; the contents of which was noted.

11. LITTER PICKING/DOG BINS

Councillors were reminded that Forest Equipment Services Limited would address the litter collection contract as of 1 April 2013. Member were provided with copies of the e-mail which had been received from the aforementioned Company which confirmed that they were licenced to dispose of dog waste, should the Council wish to expand its dog waste bin provision.

Dog Waste Bins

Members were asked to consider if they wished to increase the current provision of dog waste bins, as requests for same had been received from a resident in Linwood Road.

During discussion Cllr Thomas suggested that a geographical list of requests be produced in the future and it was noted that Forest of Dean District Council were responsible for emptying the dog waste bins in the Newerne Street (and overflow) car park. Responding to a question which had been raised by Cllr Bonser, the CEO advised of the problem experienced when seeking to determine the responsibility for clearing dog waste which depended on its location on the highway. Cllr Bonser highlighted that a problem was experienced with dog waste on the footpath leading from the overflow car park to Forest Road, including the fact that “filled” bags of dog waste and soiled nappies

LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING – 2013/02/18 – 29

were being deposited over the nearby wall. Cllr Thomas called for the Street Wardens to erect a notice detailing contact numbers for the reporting of litter problems.

12. CHRISTMAS EVENT 2013/LIGHTS (Cllr Osborne)

Mrs Callow informed Members that it appeared that Lydney Traders Association would cease functioning due to lack of interest. Accordingly, Mrs Callow felt that it would be advantageous for the Council to join with Lydney Town Hall Trust Management Committee (of which she was a member) in order to organise an event for this year. It was noted that the Switch On date had been set at 30 November 2013, and Mrs Callow suggested that it may be possible to organise two events 1) the switch on of the Christmas lights with traditional stalls and a craft fair, 2) one week later organise a hot roast and carols, etc in the Town Centre. It was stressed that the aforementioned were merely suggestions at this stage, with further discussion required later in the year. Cllr Harris spoke in support of organising an event in the Town Centre and also at the Town Hall and she stressed that if the Council wished to include a Christmas Market it would need to immediately investigate availability of same.

During discussion Cllr W Osborne advised that complaints has been received over a lack of an event in Newerne Street and he recalled that in previous years a procession had been organised which had demonstrated the Council's involvement. Accordingly, Cllr W Osborne felt that an event needed to take place in the Town. Cllr Berryman reminded his fellow Councillors of the arrangements which would need to be put in place if the Council wished to organise a procession through the Town. It was **proposed by Cllr Matthews, seconded by Cllr Berryman**, that the Christmas Lights Sub-Committee would assist Mrs Callow in organising a joint event this year. The motion was put to a vote which was carried. Members were then asked by Cllr Thomas to consider co-opting Mrs Callow onto the Sub-Committee. Unanimous.

Resolved: That Mrs Callow would be co-opted onto the Christmas Lights Sub-Committee in order to organise a joint Christmas Switch On event for 2013.

Mayor's Window Competition

It was noted that the windows would be judged by the Mayor on Monday 25 November and that two LTC Account signatories would need to report to the Council Office to sign the prize cheques outside of the Full Council meeting.

Christmas Lights

Cllr W Osborne advised that the Sub-Committee had received seven quotes in total; each quote had been individually assessed and the Sub-Committee recommended the acceptance of the quotation from Lighting and Illumination Technology Experience Limited (LITE). Cllr W Osborne advised that the MD of LITE lived in Gloucester and had given a personal assurance that he would arrange for any units which became damaged to be fixed.

Cllr W Osborne advised that the Sub-Committee had considered both options (hiring and buying). Whilst there were positives and negatives to each option (e.g. the need to store and annually PAT test if purchased, versus the need to pay 42% of the cost of the unit as a hire charge each year), Cllr W Osborne advised that if the Council elected to purchase a quantity of units LITE had offered to store and PAT test them for £500.00 per annum.

LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING – 2013/02/18 – 30

Responding to a question which had been raised by Cllr Matthews, Cllr W Osborne highlighted that if the Council elected to hire the units, rather than purchase them, within 2½ years it would have been charged more than what it would have cost to purchase the lights initially.

Cllr Thomas felt that the Council needed to consider the precise number of lights require/location to be illuminated. Cllr Berryman highlighted that should the Council elect to purchase the lights, it would then be held to the same display each year. Cllr Matthews spoke in support of purchasing a quantity of lights and voiced a preference for the display to be restricted to one colour. Responding to a question which had been raised by Cllr Bonser, Cllr W Osborne advised that should the Council elect to purchase the lights it would, in future years, be able to retain the original framework and then refurbish the lights. Cllr Bonser expressed concern over purchasing the lights, due to the speed at which technology changed, and raised concern over committing £13,000 towards a lighting scheme which may be felt to be out of date in five years' time. Cllr Bonser stressed that the Council would need to ensure that it was completely happy with the equipment, should it wish to purchase the display. Cllr Thomas questioned if it would be possible to hire the display in the first year, with the Council then purchasing the display if it was completely satisfied. Cllr W Osborne gave a commitment to investigate this option and also highlighted the amount of money which would be expended in five years if the Council elected to hire its display.

Action by – Cllr W Osborne

The CEO questioned how much LITE would charge to visit site to replace a vandalised unit/replace a faulty time clock. Furthermore, Members were advised that the CEO and EO had attended conferences organised by the Society of Local Council Clerks, at which the hiring of displays had been advocated, rather than the purchasing of same, as it enabled a Council to vary its display and stay abreast of technology.

Whilst Cllr W Osborne was unable to provide the costs of hiring/purchasing a display from LITE during the meeting, he recalled that it would annually cost £3,000 to install the lights, plus £500.00 to store/PAT test same. It was not known if the Council would need to pay for the lights in one transaction, or if the cost could be spread over two years, however, Cllr W Osborne advised that the quotation by LITE would enable the old type connections to be replaced within the current budget and that LITE was the cheapest and all four members of the Sub-Committee had thought them to be the best.

Cllr Thomas questioned if Members wished to delay making a decision on the matter until they had been provided with sufficient information, however, Cllr Matthews felt that action needed to be taken on the matter in order that the Council was not faced with the same situation as the previous year. Accordingly, **Cllr Matthews proposed** that the Committee accept the Sub-Committee's recommendation. The motion was not seconded.

As Responsible Finance Officer, the CEO felt that the matter could not be considered further until such time as the financial information had been submitted to Councillors, including the number of lights required, estimated cost of electricity, etc. Members were reminded of the need to ensure that the Christmas light spend and the Christmas event remained within its budget. Cllr W Osborne then suggested that it could cost £318 - £440 plus VAT per light (depending on design), resulting in expenditure of £7,800 plus VAT to purchase; that the display would cover Hams Road to Templeway West (excluding CCTV

LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING – 2013/02/18 – 31

streetlights as will impair vision) a total of 21 lights (excluding Tesco). Members' attention was drawn to the budget for the lights and **Cllr W Osborne proposed** that the Council would buy the lights, rather than hire. The motion was not seconded. Responding to a question which had been raised by Cllr Matthews, the CEO reminded Councillors of their desire to limit the increase in the precept, which had therefore affected the amount of funding which could be allocated towards the potential purchase of the lights. Members were reminded of the need to obtain Full Council's consent to take funding from its General Reserves to cover any deficit against its budget. It was **proposed by Cllr Matthews, seconded by Cllr Osborne**, that the Council would spend up to the total amount of £12,000 in the 2013/2014 budget. The motion was put to a vote which was carried.

The CEO sought clarification that the Committee would spend up to a maximum of £12,000 including VAT. No objection/comment was made regarding this.

Cllr Bonser clarified that the decision taken was to therefore allow the Sub-Committee to produce an expenditure list (listing lights, tree required, etc) and whether the units should be purchased/hired.

Cllr Thomas called on the Sub-Committee to submit its planned expenditure to Council and details of additional funding required from Full Council General Reserves (if required) in order that a decision could be taken at the April Full Council meeting

Action by – Christmas Lights Sub-Committee

13. LYDNEY CEMETERY

Members noted that work had commenced on the creation of the Garden of Reflection. Attention was drawn to the planting scheme which had been designed by the Head Groundsman which he had taken the time to produce in his holiday. It was noted that later in the meeting Members would discuss the possible purchase of the land adjacent to the Cemetery which it was felt may be used to provide additional burial space, and that consideration may need to be given towards the diversion of the existing public footpath.

Burial Charges 2013-2014

Prior to the meeting Members were provided with copies of the proposed burial charges which would be applied for the 2013/2014 financial year. It was **proposed by Cllr Matthews, seconded by Cllr Hobman**, that a 10% increase in charges would be applied, with delegated powers to the CEO to set the charges for the memorial plaques/vase blocks once the Council's supplier had provided their 2013 price list. Unanimous.


Action by – the CEO

Garden of Reflection

It was unanimously agreed that delegated power would be bestowed on the Head Groundsman to continue with the planting/landscaping scheme for the area, provided the expenditure kept within the allocated budget (to include shrubs/plants/fencing/sculpture/etc).

Miscellaneous Charge

Prior to the meeting Councillors were provided with the current charges in respect of memorial benches and flower troughs. It was **proposed by Cllr Biddle, seconded by Cllr Matthews**, that the following charges would be set:


22 April

LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING – 2013/02/18 – 32

- Memorial Bench - £363.00 plus VAT
- Flower Trough - £550.00 plus VAT

Additional Burial Space

CEO advised that Robert Hitchins Limited had stated that they would be willing to sell the strip of land adjacent to the Cemetery for £5,000 which included legal fees. Whilst it was not known the number of additional plots which could be created on the section, Cllr Berryman spoke in support of the purchase. It was noted that if the Council did agree to purchase the land, it would need to reinstate a section of the boundary hedge which lay between the site and the Lychgate Mews housing development. Accordingly, it was **proposed by Cllr Berryman, seconded by Cllr Biddle**, that the Council would purchase the land. The CEO sought clarification that the Council would consider the possible diversion of the existing public footpath once the purchase of the land had been completed.

Action by – the CEO

Staff Welfare (Re: Working in Cemetery)

Members were then asked to consider a request from Ground staff that the Council consider purchasing a stove and heater (including peripherals) in order that Ground staff may have the opportunity to get warm/make hot drinks whilst taking their breaks in the Cemetery. After an extensive discussion it was **proposed by Cllr Harris, seconded by Cllr Biddle** that that Council would purchase a stove and heater. The motion was put to a vote which was defeated.

14. TREE SURVEYS

Prior to the meeting Councillors were provided with information on the Owners Occupiers Act and attention was drawn to the obligation to manage trees sited on land within an organisations ownership.

Members were advised that the Council's Ground Staff were embarking on a process to catalogue all trees. Whilst the process was initially commencing in Bathurst Park, it was noted that the procedure would be extended to all areas.

15. PLAY AREAS

Prior to the meeting Councillors were provided with copies of the reports which had been received from Touchwood and Monmouthshire County Council which had been commissions on the zip wire. Due to the complexity of the matter it was agreed that consideration would be deferred until next meeting.

Members were advised that guidance was still awaited from Ms Kate Wyatt, Community Engagement Officer, Forest of Dean District Council and that said Officer was discussing the current situation with the District Council's Legal Department.

16. UNDER 5s PLAY EQUIPMENT (LAP)

Cllr Matthews reminded Councillors that she had previously requested additional funding for the replacement equipment and the CEO advised that Playdale listed details of all grant funding currently available. Cllr Matthews gave a commitment to provide a report at the next meeting.


22 April

LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING – 2013/02/18 – 33

17. **SWAN ROAD/SWAN LANE, LYDNEY**

Following the request by Cllr Cooksley that the ownership of the bank between the road surface and the River Lyd be established, attention was drawn to the fact that the land in question was not registered. Accordingly, Councillors were asked to consider if they wished to register the land and then be responsible for maintenance of same (e.g. grass cutting, maintenance of trees, etc.).

Cllr Cooksley addressed Members on the need for someone to clear and maintain the area and he spoke on his efforts to ensure that a road sign was provided to define Swan Lane from Swan Road. During discussion Cllr Cooksley advised that he had previously cleared the section of land in the past in a personal capacity and confirmed that he would be happy to continue to undertake such work, however, he felt that such work may require a cultivation licence and questioned if the Town Council would be willing to fund same. Furthermore, Cllr Cooksley confirmed the presence of Japanese Knotweed in three areas on the site. Cllr W Osborne felt that the land in question may be compulsory purchased in the future, should the Swan Road Link be realised.

The CEO advised that as the land was not registered to the Town Council it could not be proved that it had previously maintained the land, nor could it prove Title to the land. It was agreed that the CEO would seek guidance from the Council's legal representative regarding the steps which would need to be taken should the Council wish to register the land. Furthermore, the CEO advised that the Council could not sanction the actions undertaken by Cllr Cooksley on a personal basis.

Action by – the CEO

18. **COUNCILLORS REPORTS**

Cllr Matthews reported an increase in fly tipping and advised that she had received a complaint from a member of the public who was being prosecuted by the Forest of Dean District Council as a result of someone extracting the recycling from the unit in which it had been deposited.

Cllr Thomas questioned if a refund should be provided as a result of the Green Waste Collection service.

19. **MEETING DATES**

Members noted that the next Amenities Committee meeting would take place on 22 April 2013 at 7.00 pm.

The meeting closed at 8.53 pm.

Chairman 

Date 22 April 2013