

LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING – 2015/02/16 – 30

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MINUTES OF THE AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING held in the Council Chamber, Claremont House, Lydney on Monday 16 February 2015 at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT: Cllrs B Thomas (Chairman), B Berryman, R Bonser, C Harris, V Hobman
J Openshaw, B Pearman and S Rudge

Two members 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 Cllrs Biddle, Greenwood, Preest and Vaughan.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr B Pearman – Agenda Item 7 (Allotments)

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the Amenities meeting held on 17 November 2015 were confirmed as a true record. **Proposed by Cllr Harris, seconded by Cllr Rudge.** Unanimous.

4. **OPEN FORUM**

No requests to speak were received.

5. **EMERGENCY EXITS**

Members were reminded of a suggestion made by a member of the public at a previous Full Council meeting for consideration towards the provision of a second fire exit in the Council Chamber and they were asked to balance this against the term “*reasonably practicable*”. Members were reminded that the Council had been based in the building from 2006 and that the windows in the Chamber opened outwards, thereby providing an additional means of exit.

After a short discussion it was **proposed by Cllr Bonser, seconded by Cllr Harris**, that a quotation would be obtained for changing one of the existing windows to a fire exit, with the quotation considered at the next meeting. Vote carried.

Action by – the CEO

6. **WILD FLOWER GATEWAY ENTRANCES**

Cllr Thomas reported that due to the absence of his fellow Sub-committee Members he had met with the CEO and the Head Groundsman to consider the provision of flower beds at the Cross Hands and Aylburton entrances.

Based on last year’s display the decision had been taken to provide two beds at the Aylburton entrance and create a new flower bed at the Cross Hands entrance.

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Furthermore, that the decision had been taken to abandon planting the Hedgerow mix as it had not been suitable for the location of the flowerbeds.

Members were informed that under Delegated Powers an order had been placed for seed in order that it may be planted at the designated time. Cllr Thomas reported that the cost of the seed amounted to approximately £800 for all areas. Noted.

Prior to the meeting Members were also provided with a copy of the response which had been obtained from Mr B Watkins, Gloucestershire County Council, following the Committee's request for vegetation on the roundabouts to be cut back. It was noted that Mr Watkins had requested that a Tree Specialist from Gloucestershire County Council's contractor (Amey) inspect the area and provide recommendations.

7. ALLOTMENTS

Prior to the meeting Members were provided with a copy of the plan which had been obtained from Western Power Distribution detailing the location of electrical services which lay under the allotment site. It was noted that two types of electrical services ran beneath the verges which had been leased from Two Rivers Housing. Cllr Thomas felt that it would not be possible for a digger to be used on the verges to remove the stones/rubble which lay beneath the surface. Cllr Thomas also informed Members that both current and prospective allotment tenants had been invited to attend the meeting to comment on the suggested provision of sheds; three tenants had advised that they would not require a shed with no other responses being received.

Members were asked if they had given further consideration towards providing raised beds on the above areas. Cllr Thomas felt that the creation of raised beds could potentially cost £2,000 and responding to a question raised by Cllr Harris Members were reminded that the Council's Allotment Waiting List exceeded the requisite number whereby they had a Statutory Duty to consider allotment provision. Cllr Hobman spoke in support of raised beds being provided in order to cater for people who experienced mobility problems and Members were informed that sufficient funding remained in the Council's budget to fund the creation of raised beds, subject to funding being vired from other budgetary headings.

During a short discussion Cllr Thomas felt that that it may be possible to provide six raised beds of 2m x 1m size and it was noted that members of the public now preferred to utilise smaller sized plots. It was **proposed by Cllr Harris, seconded by Cllr Berryman**, that the Council would create up to six raised allotment beds on the leased verge areas. Vote carried.

Action by – the CEO

Cllr Thomas recommended that pressure treated sleepers be used in the construction of the raised beds and Cllr Bonser reminded all present that sufficient spaced needed to be left between each bed in order to allow access for wheelchair users.

Prior to the meeting Members were also provided with a copy of the letter which had been received from the British Weights and Measures Association regarding units of measurement – gardening allotments. Noted.

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Potting Sheds/Tool Storage – South Road

Members were reminded of the response which had been received from current/prospective allotment tenants who had also been invited to attend the meeting at Cllr Thomas's request, rather than organise a separate meeting. Noted.

8. ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING POINT

Prior to the meeting Members were provided with copies of an approach which had been received from Gloucestershire County Council regarding the provision of an electrical vehicle charging point in the Town.

Members were reminded that the matter had been deferred to the Committee for consideration from both Charitable Trusts. During discussion Members noted that whilst the proposal would provide the Council with an income stream (subject to a suitable site being found), after the third year of the agreement the Council would be liable for the equipment's maintenance costs, the cost of which was unknown. It was **proposed by Cllr Bonser, seconded by Cllr Harris**, that the Council would not pursue the matter as it was not felt demand for the facility existed. Vote carried.

9. LYDNEY IN BLOOM

Prior to the meeting Members were provided with a copy of a letter which had been sent to Mr J Thurston regarding the possibility of improving the area around Hylton Court. The CEO reported that a donation towards improving the area had been received from Mr Thurston; that whilst Groundstaff could clear the raised beds volunteers were required to assist with the planting of same, once a meeting had taken place with Mr Thurston to agree the areas which were to be improved.

Cllrs Harris, Rudge and Bonser offered their assistance with planting the raised beds and the CEO reminded Members of the very limited timeframe between the date of the meeting and the start of the growing season. With this in mind it was **proposed by Cllr Pearman, seconded by Cllr Hobman**, that the CEO would organise a meeting with Mr Thurston and arrange for Groundstaff to clear the raised beds around Hylton Court. Unanimous.

Action by – the CEO

10. PLAY AREAS/OPEN SPACES

Prior to the meeting Members were provided with a copy of the Assessment Reports which had been received from Gloucestershire Playing Field Association for Beauchamp Meadow, Court Road, Faller Fields and Primrose Hill Meend.

Whilst the contents of the reports were noted, Cllr Bonser felt that the report for Primrose Hill Meend highlighted the lack of facilities and the effect of the damage caused to the site by Wild Boar.

Primrose Hill (The Meend)

Prior to the meeting Members were provided with a copy of the quotation which had been received for the reinstatement and reseeded of the ground following the damage which had been caused by Wild Boar.

During discussion it was felt that damage was still being experienced at the site due to Wild Boar and it was noted that Mr K Stannard, Forestry Commission, would attend

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a meeting in March 2015 at Forest of Dean District Council to discuss the issue of Wild Boar. Concern was expressed that unless action was taken to level the ground the Council's contractor would not be able to mow the area during the 2015 summer season. It was **proposed by Cllr Bonser** that the whole quote would be accepted, however, the grading and levelling of the area would be initially conducted with the re-seeding work undertaken at a later date once the Council could be assured that the Wild Boar had moved onto another location. **Seconded by Cllr Harris**. After a short further discussion the motion was then put to a vote. Unanimous.

Action by – the CEO

Cllr Bonser called for the Head Groundsman and the Committee Chairman be consulted on the best time for the area to be reseeded.

11. **WILD BOAR**

Prior to the meeting Members were provided with a copy of a letter which had been received from the Office of Mr M Harper MP, regarding the decision taken by the Council not to erect fencing to prevent Wild Boar from accessing the Meend. Members were also provided with a copy of the reply which had been tendered by the CEO; the contents of both documents were noted.

12. **CHRISTMAS 2015**

Despite not attending the Working Party meeting through illness, Cllr Harris reported that the Christmas Lights Switch On would take place on Saturday 28 November 2015; that a further Working Party meeting would take place on 5 March 2015; that discussion had yet to take place regarding a "celebrity" to switch on the lights.

13. **OWNER/OCCUPIERS LIABILITY – TREE INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE**

Members were informed that the inaugural Tree Inspection had now been undertaken by TrunkArb and a copy of their report was awaited.

14. **ONGOING AND FUTURE PROJECTS (2015/16)**

Members were asked to consider future projects which they may wish to undertake within the Town.

Cllr Bonser felt that consideration needed to be given towards installing fingerposts in the Town in order to promote the location of the Park/Lake. Members were reminded of the additional signposts which had been installed during the Winter months; Cllr Thomas suggested that Members be provided with a plan detailing the location of the signposts together with the information shown on them. Cllr Harris suggested that a further fingerpost sign be located at the Hylton Court/Hams Road junction depicting the way to the Skatepark, Lake, Recreation Ground, Park, etc.

Cllr Rudge advised that he had been made aware that Gloucester City Council were organising a "Gloucester Day" and he suggested that the Council consider organising a similar event for Lydney. Discussion then took place on the possibility of organising a local market and Members were reminded that the Council had resolved to join the Gloucestershire Market Town Forum which it was felt would provide advice/invaluable contacts should the Council wish to pursue such avenues.

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Regarding the creation of a “Lydney Day” it was suggested that the Council may wish to work in conjunction with Lydney Town Hall. Cllr Openshaw called for careful thought and planning to be given towards any event and highlighted the need for the Council to decide its strategy. Cllr Pearman emphasised the need for the Council to work in partnership with local organisations and whilst it may not be possible to organise an event for Summer 2015, he felt that it may be possible to organise an Autumn/Christmas event.

It was **proposed by Cllr Harris, seconded by Cllr Rudge**, that at a recommendation be submitted to Full Council at a future meeting date (new Council) regarding the formation of an Events Committee to consider events in the Town. Unanimous.

Action by – the CEO

15. COUNCILLORS REPORTS

Cllr Berryman questioned who was responsible for litter collection at the gateways and the frequency of which it was conducted. The CEO advised that Forest of Dean District Council’s contractor, Biffa, were responsible for the litter collection, the frequency of which was determined by Forest of Dean District Council.

Cllr Bonser reported that she had been contacted by numerous members of the public regarding Primrose Hill Meend and highlighted fly tipping which was occurring at Forest Parade. Members noted that the issue had already been reported to Forest of Dean District Council’s Streetwardens.

Cllr Thomas advised that “Walkers are Welcome” had erected signs every 400 yards from the Railway Station to the Harbour in order to encourage members of the public with limited mobility to gauge their progress.

16. MEETING DATES

Members noted that the next meeting would take place on Monday 22 June 2015 at 7.00 pm.

The meeting closed at 8.00 pm.

Chairman 

Date 22nd June 2015