

LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING – 2014/09/22 – 12

MINUTES OF THE AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING held in the Council Chamber, Claremont House, Lydney on Monday 22 September 2014 at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT: Cllrs B Thomas (Chairman), B Berryman, J Bevan, D Biddle, R Bonser, C Harris, V Hobman, H Ives, W Osborne, B Pearman, S Rudge and C Vaughan

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 Cllr Preest.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr B Pearman – Agenda Item 7 (Allotments)

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the Amenities meeting held on 21 July 2014 were confirmed as a true record. **Proposed by Cllr Harris, seconded by Cllr Hobman.** Vote carried with two abstentions.

4. **OPEN FORUM**

Mr B Hobman, 31 Albert Street, Lydney – advised of footpath at the rear of Albert Street which was overgrown with brambles. Whilst it was noted that the land was not in the ownership of the Town Council, enquiries could be made with Forest of Dean District Council/Gloucestershire County Council to ascertain if either Authority was responsible for maintaining the footpath, it was becoming increasingly evident that a number of areas in the Town were not owned/maintained by any organisation. Members were advised that if the Council wished to take on the maintenance of the area it would take on the maintenance in perpetuity. It was agreed that the matter would be an agenda item for the next meeting and that the CEO would make enquiries in the meantime.

Action by – the CEO

5. **COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

Replacement of Water Heater in Disabled Toilet

Prior to the meeting Members were provided with a copy of the quotations which had been obtained in line with minuted instruction. It was **proposed by Cllr Bevan, seconded by Cllr Harris** that the quote for £468.00 would be accepted from JAS Gas Services. Unanimous.

Action by – the CEO


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Re-carpeting of Council Chamber/CEO's Office

Members were provided with a copy of the two quotations which had been obtained, and were informed that one Lydney based organisation had declined to provide a quotation. Attention was drawn to the fact that both organisations advocated the use of carpet tiles, rather than carpet, due to the type of table utilised in the Chamber. Cllr Bonser expressed concern over the cost of the quotations which had been received and suggested that the Council should investigate the use of non-commercial off-cuts. Members were reminded of the need to ensure that the material provided was of a commercial grade and of the recommendation from both organisations that carpet tiles, not carpet, be used.

It was suggested that consideration of the quotations be deferred until the next meeting, however, Cllr Harris reminded her fellow Members of the need to consider the matter during the current meeting, due to the health and safety risk posed by the current worn carpet. Cllr Harris reminded Members of their Duty of Care to Members of the public and Council employees. Accordingly it was **proposed by Cllr Harris, seconded by Cllr Biddle**, that the quotation from Contractor 1 (Apollo Carpets) be accepted. Vote carried.

Action by – the CEO

Responding to a question raised by Cllr Bonser, the CEO advised that the replacement of the carpet would be funded by any residue which remained in the Amenities budget, or via the Council's Health and Safety budget/General Reserves.

6. GRASS VERGES/GATEWAY ENTRANCES

Cllr Thomas regretted that it had not been possible for members of the Working Party to meet with the Contractor, therefore, no progress had been made since the last meeting.

Due to the resignation of Ms Matthews from the Council, Members were asked if they wished to appoint a replacement to the Working Party; Cllr Berryman offered to join the Working Party. Members were asked to discuss the maintenance of the flower beds with the Contractor as if Groundstaff were required to undertake maintenance of said beds in 2015 it may have an adverse effect on their workload.

Cllr Osborne highlighted the need to ensure that any wildflower seed was permitted to become established prior to the onslaught of winter; Cllr Thomas suggested the advice from the Contractor be followed and spoke in favour of utilising any residual funding in the budget to plant additional daffodils at the gateways. Cllr Osborne advised that historically Lydney Park Estate had agreed to replace a quantity of daffodils which had been removed when they undertook work to improve their entrance. Whilst it was noted that the Head Groundsman had ordered a quantity of daffodil bulbs for planting in the entrance, it was **proposed by Cllr Bonser, seconded by Cllr Osborne**, that in the future the Council would try to source a modern version of the Wild Daffodil.

Action by – the CEO

7. ALLOTMENTS

Allotment Holders Meeting

Cllr Thomas informed Members that he had requested that the meeting scheduled for 6 October 2014 be cancelled, as the Committee had yet to decide how it wished to proceed.



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Cambourne Meadow

Cllr Thomas provided all Members with a copy of his costings for the provision of ten raised bed plots on an area of land in Cambourne Meadow. Cllr Thomas advised that according to his calculations it would cost £8,882 to provide 10 raised bed plots utilising scaffold planks, or £11,100 if Council wished to utilise railway sleepers. In view of the above Cllr Thomas felt that the Council would incur an extreme cost for the benefit of 10 people.

During discussion it was suggested that should the Council wish to utilise direct sowing at Cambourne Meadow it would be required to have the soil tested at an unknown cost. Accordingly, Members felt that it was not financially prudent to pursue the utilisation of Cambourne Meadow at this moment in time.

South Road Allotment Site

Members were reminded that two former grass verges leased from Two Rivers Housing could not be utilised, due to rock/building material which had been discovered just below the surface. Cllr Thomas felt that if the Council wished to utilise raised beds on one of the verges it would incur a cost of £1,500 which would only benefit two tenants. Cllr Biddle suggested that consideration should be given towards including a sufficient sum in the 2015/16 budget to cover the work. Cllr Hobman raised the possibility of garden sharing for properties in Albert Street and Cllr Thomas gave a commitment to raise the matter at the next Allotment Holders Meeting.

Potting/Tool Sheds

Cllr Bonser asked that the matter be deferred until the next meeting, as she had not had time to review the information.

Action by – the CEO/Cllr Bonser

8. PLANT CONTRACT

Members noted that Cllrs Hobman and Thomas, together with the CEO, would consider the received plant Tenders on 10 October 2014, with a recommendation then presented to Full Council on 13 October 2014.

Councillors commented on the wonderful floral display which had been planted by Ground staff during the summer, photographs of which had been published in the local press.

9. DOG WASTE BINS/Footpath between Cemetery and Lychgate Mews

Prior to the meeting Members were provided with a copy of the response from Mr R Gembariski, Robert Hitchins Limited, following a request from a member of the public that a dog waste bin be provided on the footpath between the Cemetery and Lychgate Mews.

Whilst it was noted that the land concerned was owned by Robert Hitchins Limited, Mr Gembariski had offered to supply and install a dog waste bin if the Council would cover the ongoing cost of emptying.



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It was **proposed by Cllr Berryman, seconded by Cllr Harris**, that the Council would decline the offer by Robert Hitchins Limited. During discussion it was noted that the Town Council already emptied a number of dog waste bins in the Town, and that Forest of Dean District Council emptied the dog waste bins provided in Newerne Street Car Park. The motion was then put to a vote which was carried with one abstention.

Members then noted a number of other concerns which had been raised by the member of the public which related to Lychgate Mews, namely:

- A quantity of dumped tyres which had been left in a corner of Lychgate Mews.
- Overgrown brambles/fallen limbs from trees, etc which have not been cut back/collected by Robert Hitchins Limited's contractor.

10. WEED KILLING/GRASS CUTTING

Weed Killing

Cllr Harris advised that the Working Party had identified what they felt to be the priority areas in the town which would require weed spraying and gave a commitment to inform the CEO of the exact areas to be sprayed (area to be marked on the map previously provided to Cllr Harris),

Action by – Cllr Harris

Cllr Harris informed Members that the Working Party had agreed to concentrate on undertaking weed spraying in the main part of Town, with no weed spraying being undertaken in outlying areas due to budgetary constraints. Members were reminded that should the decision be taken in 2015 that the Council wished to undertake weed spraying in outlying areas this would require the outsourcing of the work to a contractor as, due to the area involved, it was not practical/cost efficient for Ground Staff to undertake the work. Members were also reminded that they had not included any financial provision in their 2015 budget for said work.

During discussion it was suggested that the Council contact Two Rivers Housing to ascertain what level of weed killing was undertaken on land within their ownership; concern was also expressed over the amount of weeds which were evident at Lydney Bus Station; the appearance of Silverbourne Court; the amount of briars which were preventing members of the public from safely walking along Station Road. It was felt that Gloucestershire County Council had arranged for their contractor to flail the overgrown hedgerows along Station Road in the Autumn.

Grass Cutting

Members were asked to consider the request by the Head Groundsman that Town Council staff be permitted to address additional cuts to improve the standard of specific areas (e.g. The Meend, Lydney Lake, Lydney Recreation Trust areas) in the future.

During discussion it was noted that the current grass cutting contract would expire in 2016 and the desire to bring this facility in-house was expressed by the CEO. Accordingly, Members were apprised of the need to ensure that sufficient budgetary provision had been included in the 2015/16 budget in order to allow for suitable equipment to undertake the work to be purchased. Members were therefore asked to approve the inclusion of £8,500 in the 2015/16 budget towards the cost of purchasing a



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rotary mower which would be suitable for the work, and £400 plus VAT for the purchase of an additional heavy duty strimmer. It was **proposed by Cllr Bonser, seconded by Cllr Harris** that aforementioned amounts would be included in the draft budget for 2015/16. Unanimous.

11. LYDNEY IN BLOOM

Speaking on behalf of the Working Party, Cllr Harris advised that since the formation of the Group work had been undertaken on an area of land located opposite the Bus Station, however, work in this area was still outstanding. Cllr Harris expressed concern that no residents were now involved in the project, despite initial interest being shown.

Cllr Harris expressed an interest in taking on the responsibility for planting the raised flower beds at Hylton Court, Newerne Street and advised that the landowner (Mr J Thurston) was supportive of this approach and would be willing to provide a donation towards the cost of the planting/provision of topsoil but would only do so if a separate account could be set up for Lydney In Bloom use. Cllr Vaughan felt that members of the Youth Council (when re-formed) may wish to get involved with the project and Cllr Rudge advised that the Dean Forest Railway Gardeners would also be interested in getting involved. Cllr Harris stated that Mr Thurston had enquired if Lydney In Bloom would be interested in creating flower beds in the former seating alcoves located at the front of the British Legion building, for which he would be willing to provide a further donation to cover the cost of plants/topsoil.

Cllr Biddle agreed to relay Cllr Bevan's suggestion to Lydney Dial-a-Ride that the grassed area to the side of the old Bus Station be converted into a wild flower bed.

After a short further discussion it was **proposed by Cllr Harris** that Delegated Powers would be bestowed to the Working Party (Cllrs Vaughan, Thomas and herself), to progress the planting of the raised flower beds at Hylton Court. **Seconded by Cllr Osborne.** Unanimous.

Action by – the CEO and Cllrs Vaughan, Thomas and Harris

Cllr Bevan commended Ground Staff on the magnificent floral displays which had been created this year.

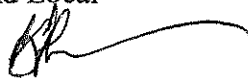
Donations

Members were asked to consider setting up an additional subsidiary account for Lydney In Bloom "earmarked" in respect of any financial donations which may be received for In Bloom project work. During discussion it was suggested that whilst the account would be used to fund planting requirements; should there be insufficient funding available Lydney In Bloom would be eligible to apply to the Council for a donation. It was **proposed by Cllr Harris** that a subsidiary account be created. An **amendment was proposed by Cllr Osborne** that to set up the account the Council would provide a donation of £10.00. **Seconded by Cllr Hobman.** Unanimous.

Action by – the CEO

Branding

Members were asked to consider if they wished to apply a "branding" to the floral displays in the Town, as this was utilised by other "In Bloom" Associations and Local Councils.



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Members were informed that enquiries had previously been made with a local supplier to design Town Crest plaques for each of the large tubs, however, the supplier had failed to provide examples for assessment. It was agreed that the matter would be an agenda item for the next meeting; meantime the CEO would contact the supplier once again in a bid to provide examples.

Action by – the CEO

During discussion the cultivation licence for the roundabouts in the Town was raised. Cllr Harris stated that Mr B Watkins, Local Highways Manager, Gloucestershire County Council had advised that the vegetation on the roundabouts would be cut back in the next three months to improve visibility and that the Bypass would also be cut back. Cllr Osborne suggested that consideration be given towards removing all the shrubs which were planted on the roundabout in order that they may be replaced with plants. It was agreed that the matter would be an agenda item for the next meeting.

Action by – the CEO

12. PLAY AREAS

Prior to the meeting Members were provided with a copy of the Annual Play Inspection report which had been received from Monmouthshire County Council. Members were also provided with a copy of the quotation which had been obtained from Monmouthshire County Council for £135.00 in respect of supplying a replacement cradle seat. The CEO advised that the Rocking Horse would also require a minor repair in order to cover a small hole which had appeared at the rear of the equipment. It was **proposed by Cllr Bonser** that the funding for both repairs be taken from the £8,000 funding held for new play equipment for Primrose Hill Meend if there were insufficient budgetary reserve. **Seconded by Cllr Osborne.** Unanimous.

Removal of Wooden Picket Fence

Members were asked to consider the removal of the wooden picket fence at the Meend which was no longer fit for purpose, and the purchase of a quantity of top soil/grass seed in order to “make good” the area.

During discussion a number of Councillors felt that the issues which had been had been raised by Ms Matthews had been historical and were no longer present on the site, however, one Councillor did highlight the presence of a tree root on site. It was **proposed by Cllr Harris, seconded by Cllr Pearman**, that the fencing should be removed and a quantity of top soil and seed be purchased to reinstate the area. Unanimous.

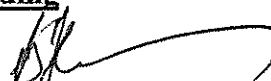
Action by – the CEO

Provision of New Play Equipment

Cllr Thomas advised that members of the Working Party would meet Mr T O'Donovan, Monmouthshire County Council at 10.00 am on Wednesday 24 November 2014 in order to discuss the type of equipment which could be installed on the site.

Gloucestershire County Council – Active Together Funding

Deferred until the next meeting.



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13. **FALLERS FIELD**

Members were informed that Gloucestershire County Council would now produce the Engineer's Report for Faller's Field. During discussion it was felt that the best solution to the problem would be to prevent the water from reaching Faller's Field which may be possible if solutions were installed further upstream. Members were also informed that the possibility of installing an attenuation pond in the play area at Faller's Field had been discussed during Flood Defence meetings and it was not thought to be a viable solution.

14. **CCTV PROVISION**

Prior to the meeting Members were provided with a copy of the quotation which had been obtained from Redhand for installing CCTV on Primrose Hill Meend, in order that such provision could be included in the Committee's 2015/16 budget. It was **proposed by Cllr Berryman, seconded by Cllr Bonser**, that no action would be taken at this time. Unanimous.

15. **CHRISTMAS**

Prior to the meeting Members were provided with a plan detailing the locations for the Christmas Light features for this year's display which were based on the display which should have been provided for 2013. Cllr Harris advised that the Working Party would meet again at 7.00 pm on 2 October 2014 to finalise arrangements for the event, after which information would be forwarded to the office in order that it would then be possible to produce the Risk Assessment.

Action by – Cllr Harris

Members were also provided with a copy of the Carol sheet which had been designed by Cllr Hobman and were informed that 75 copies of the document would be produced in-house, as this had been calculated to be the most cost effective option for such a low number of copies.

16. **BUS SHELTERS**

Prior to the meeting Members were provided with a copy of the letter which had been received from Mrs M Instey requesting the installation of bus shelter in Bream Road, by the old toilets in Bream Road car park.

Consideration of the letter was deferred until the next meeting in order to allow the Working Party to review the area.

Action by – Cllrs Pearman, Bevan and Preest

17. **FINGERPOSTS**

Members noted that the fingerpost signs had been received and would be installed by the Town Council's Ground staff over the winter months.

18. **WILD BOAR**

Prior to the meeting Members were provided with a copy of the letter which had been received from Dr John Dutton, Project Leader, University of Worcester, detailing a project which the University was undertaking on behalf of the Forestry Commission. It was noted that the University wished to undertake a "parish focus" study in order to gather pertinent information on public safety issues, social impacts and economic impacts.



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Cllr Thomas advised that the University wished to include an article on their work in the next edition of the Town Council's newsletter and were seeking to obtain views from both sides of the debate.

19. LYDNEY STATION CAR PARK

Members noted that a meeting had still not taken place between the Town Council, Forest of Dean District Council and Gloucestershire County Council to discuss the potential lease of an area of land adjacent to the car park at Lydney Railway Station.

The CEO drew attention to the list of items which Members had been asked to previously consider, these being:

- *How long would the lease be for?*
- *Would we be able to see a copy of Network Rail's proposed lease with GCC? We would need to view the site too.*
- *What maintenance issues are involved?*
- *Would we be able to charge for parking (if so, who would set charge/collect money/inspect tickets/install-maintain machines).*
- *Would GCC ensure that the surface and lighting is adequate when the area is initially used as a car park (and also address any "Change of Use" consent, if necessary).*
- *On-going charge for electricity for the lights?*
- *Would the car park be rateable?*
- *Would the main car park be retained by GCC/Network Rail – overgrown vegetation in the original car park?*
- *Could the provision of a footbridge be a condition of LTC/FODDC taking on?*
- *Vandalism for anything put on site (bus shelter was previously vandalised then removed).*
- *CCTV coverage of the area, due to its remoteness?*
- *Is there any commitment from Arriva to expand train provision in the future*

The assumption that the Town Council would jointly take on the lease was highlighted to Councillors and the CEO expressed concern over the future expense which would be incurred by the Council as a result. Accordingly, Members were asked if the Council was prepared, in principle, to take on a joint lease of the area. Cllr Bonser felt no decision could be taken prior to a meeting being arranged between representatives from Gloucestershire County Council, Forest of Dean District Council and the Town Council. Cllr Harris felt that the Council would need to be presented with details of the definitive costs involved prior to making a decision. Members were reminded that the Council had previously been informed that the cost of the lease amounted to £11,000 annually, however, this would be divided amongst those organisations named in the lease.

It was agreed that consideration of the matter would be deferred.

20. OWNER/OCCUPIERS LIABILITY – TREE INSPECTION & MAINTENANCE

Members were informed that due to personal circumstances R Cole Contractors had withdrawn from undertaking the formal tree survey. Accordingly, Members were asked if they wished to accept the quotation which had been originally provided by Trunk Arb. Acceptance **proposed by Cllr Harris, seconded by Cllr Pearman.** Unanimous.

Action by – the CEO

21. OAKDALE

Prior to the meeting Members were provided with a copy of the letter which had been sent to Forest of Dean District Council requesting the introduction of recycling facilities. Noted.



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22. **ONGOING & FUTURE PROJECTS (2015/16 BUDGET PROVISION)**

Members were provided with a copy of the draft budget for 2015/16. Attention was drawn to the financial provision which had been included for previously minuted elements (e.g. funding for additional play equipment at Primrose Hill Meend).

During discussion Members were reminded that they had previously voiced their intention to expand on the wild flower seed planting in the gateways, provision for which had been included in the budget; that provision needed to be included for the repair of street furniture; that additional provision had been included for dog waste disposal (due to Committee's decision to work in partnership with FODDC to provide a dog waste bin in Centurion Road).

It was **proposed by Cllr Harris, seconded by Cllr Berryman** that the draft budget for 2015/16 of £70,430 would be approved. Unanimous.

23. **COUNCILLORS REPORTS**

Cllr Bonser reported that the path between Dene Court and Primrose Way was overgrown with nettles/brambles together with a significant amount of dog waste evident. Cllr Bonser also reported that parts of boundary fences had been taken down.

Cllr Berryman voiced his disappointment that the Council had previously taken the decision not to cut the grass on the entrances back to the boundaries as brambles/weeds were visible in said areas.

Cllr Osborne reminded Members of the Citizens Act of Remembrance which would take place at the War Memorial at 11.00 am on 11 November 2014.

Cllr Vaughan advised Members of tree which had fallen across the water and into a car park owned by Watts Group at the rear of ETB. It was noted that the land owner had been informed of the problem.

Cllr Harris informed Members of brambles originating from The Greyhound Inn were once again encroaching onto the footpath.

Cllr Bevan expressed concern over the vegetation which had encroached onto Station Road, thereby making the footpath virtually impassable.

Cllr Thomas advised that he had recently attended an allotment training course, the details of which would be forwarded to the CEO.

24. **MEETING DATES**

Members noted that the next Amenities Committee meeting would take place 17 November 2014 at 7.00 pm.

The meeting closed at 8.44 pm.

Chairman .. 

Date .. 17th NOV 2014