

LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING – 2014/11/17 – 21

MINUTES OF THE AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING held in the Council Chamber, Claremont House, Lydney on Monday 17 November 2014 at 7.03 pm.

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

Dr J Dutton – Warwick Ecology Team (presentation only)

10 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.

Cllr Thomas welcomed Dr J Dutton, Warwick Ecology Team, to the meeting. Mr Dutton explained that the Team had been asked to look at the impact of the Wild Boar on public safety in order to gather data to enable the Forestry Commission to make an informed decision. As well as gathering factual data, Dr Dutton advised that the Team would seek to understand the public's feelings towards the Wild Boar (e.g. do they now feel threatened when out walking due to the presence of Wild Boar). Members noted that Dr Dutton was seeking to make contact with as many organisations/individuals as possible; intended to issue a questionnaire for completion by the Public; voiced an intention to also host small "workshop" discussions locally. Dr Dutton expressed a desire to obtain the assistance of the Town Council regarding the distribution of the questionnaire to residents.

Responding to a question raised by Cllr Bonser, Dr Dutton stated that he hoped that the questionnaire would be finalised in the next few weeks, with it then issued between January and March 2015, due to the fact that the Forestry Commission required a report by June 2015. Dr Dutton voiced an intention to hold "workshops" in February/March and suggested that the questionnaire could be either completed on-line or via a .pdf download. It was noted that Dr Dutton would investigate the use of the Town Hall for the purpose of holding a "workshop" in the Town.

Noting that Dr Dutton had been involved with the Forestry Commission regarding the fencing which had been erected at Beechenhurst, Cllr Thomas advised that Agenda Item 9 – Play Area/Open Spaces would be discussed directly after Agenda Item 4 – Open Forum, however, the minutes reflect the order as shown on the agenda.

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received and noted from Cllrs Osborne, Preest and Vaughan.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr B Pearman – Agenda Item 6 (Allotments)



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3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Amenities meeting held on 22 September 2014 were confirmed as a true record. **Proposed by Cllr Harris, seconded by Cllr Berryman.** Vote carried.

4. OPEN FORUM

Mr R Holmes, 72 Primrose Hill, Lydney – highlighted that the Wild Boar was an emotive subject, however, not all members of the public who had wished to listen to the discussion had been able to gain access to the Council Chamber. Cllr Thomas advised that a Public Meeting would be held (if required) at an alternative venue, should the discussion warrant.

Mr C Shaw, 29 Primrose Hill, Lydney – questioned if the Council had given consideration towards designing a policy to deal with Wild Boar. Cllr Thomas advised that the Council was only concerned with the issue of Wild Boar on Primrose Hill Meend at this time and that the two issues were entirely separate.

Mr J James, Lynwood Road, Lydney – questioned what consideration had been given towards the type of fencing which could be used. Dr Dutton was invited to speak by the Chairman and advised that the Forestry Commission had experienced damage at Beechenhurst due to Wild Boar and Wild Boar/human inter-action. After considering the issue with the Forestry Commission he advised the decision was taken to erect 1.2m high fence constructed of specialised mesh which was buried 1' into the ground and 1' out from the bottom of the fence. It was noted that the construction of the mesh prevented the animals from getting their snouts in and that 2km of fencing (with self-closing gates) had been erected around Beechenhurst. Dr Dutton advised that the only problems which had been experienced was when the self-closing gates had been propped open by cyclists; that any Wild Boar which did manage to get through the fence were shot due to the issue of Health and Safety. Discussion then focused on the cost of providing such fencing on the Meend and Cllr Thomas advised that from his discussions with the Forestry Commission's contractor he estimated that it would cost £1,974 (at £5.98/m) to erect a fence at the front of the wooded area which bordered the Meend; that approximately a further £2,000 would be required if the Council wished to totally enclose the Meend with fencing; £265 would be required for self-closing gates and he stressed the need for members of the public to be vigilant regarding the closing of the gates some of which would need to be erected on Forestry Commission owned land.

Ms S Moats, 130 Primrose Hill, Lydney – highlighted the speed at which traffic travelled along Primrose Hill and questioned if traffic calming measures could be introduced. Ms Moats was advised to bring the matter to the attention of the Council's Planning and Highway Committee. Ms Moats then questioned why the refuse collection lorries drove at such speed and highlighted that it was quite frightening when they drove at speed around the blind corner by her property. Cllr Greenwood advised Ms Moats to contact Forest of Dean District Council as they were responsible for the organisation's contract.

Question raised by a member of the public – are the Wild Boar damaging any other areas in the Town? It was noted that Wild Boar travelled great distances overnight and that they had been sighted on land opposite Bathurst Pool which was managed by Lydney Park Estate.



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Question raised by a member of the public – referencing Dr Dutton's comments earlier in the meeting, they felt that action needed to be taken to address the issue of Wild Boar prior to June 2015 and questioned what action could be taken by the Town Council to address the situation. It was noted that based on the last thermal survey, the Forestry Commission intended to cull 419 over Winter in order to reduce the population to 400, however, it was highly likely that the animals had bred several times since the last survey had been undertaken.

5. GRASS VERGES/GATEWAY ENTRANCES

Cllr Berryman reported that during the Working Party's site meeting with Richard Cole Contractors it had been agreed that the Town Council staff would undertake the required groundwork on the flowerbeds (e.g. treating the weeds and rotovating). It was noted that quantities of Fat Hen had been removed from the flowerbeds by Groundstaff and that the areas would be weedsprayed and rotovated in Spring. The problems which had been experienced with slugs and Docks were highlighted to Members and Cllr Pearman was asked to approach Chepstow Town Council to ascertain the actions which they had undertaken to solve such problems and to ascertain how they maintained their flowerbeds.

It was noted that of the three beds (Aylburton approach) which had been planted, only two of them had germinated and it was agreed that consideration would need to be given toward two beds located away from the trees and additional site at the Crosshands junction. The CEO advised that the Council would need to hire a rotovator for use on the flowerbeds at a cost of £113.00 plus VAT and stressed that the work would need to be undertaken in suitably dry conditions. The hire costs for the rotovator were **proposed by Cllr Harris, seconded by Cllr Rudge**. Unanimous.

It was noted that Lydney Park Estate had agreed to cover the cost of purchasing three bags of daffodils to replace those which had been lost through their fencing work.

Attention then turned to the budget which had been agreed for the purchase of wild flower seed. It was noted that the Council had agreed to utilise £500 from its 2014/15 budget and Cllr Thomas reminded Members that the Committee had not exhausted its seed budget this year. Attention was then turned to the areas which were to be planted and it was **proposed by Cllr Harris, seconded by Cllr Hobman**, that the Council would consider extending its wild flower planting to include Bream Road in Spring 2016. Unanimous. It was noted that the Working Party would select the seed mix which was to be utilised.

6. ALLOTMENTS

South Road Allotments

Members were asked to consider how the Committee wished to "make good" two areas in South Road in order that they could be fully utilised as allotment plots, thereby reducing the Council's Allotment Waiting List by a potential four members of the public.

Responding to a concern voiced by Cllr Thomas, the CEO advised that Two Rivers Housing had not been able to supply any utility plans for the areas prior to the Council leasing them and Members were reminded of the previous suggestion which had been made that raised beds be utilised on said areas. It was **proposed by Cllr Thomas** that Delegated Powers would be bestowed on the CEO to obtain utility plans for the area up to the value of £50 per organisation. Unanimous.

Action by – the CEO



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Allotment Holders Meeting

Members were asked to consider if they wished to convene an Allotment Holders Meeting (meeting due to be convened late September was postponed at the request of the Amenities Chairman).

It was **proposed by Cllr Greenwood** that a meeting would be convened. **Seconded by Cllr Bonser**. Vote carried with one abstention.

It was **proposed by Cllr Bonser** that a meeting would be convened in February 2015. Cllr Thomas proposed an amendment that the meeting would be held immediately prior to the February Amenities Committee meeting. **Seconded by Cllr Berryman**. Vote carried.

Action by – Cllrs Thomas and Hobman

Sheds

Cllr Bonser advised that she had viewed a number of sheds on the internet which could be provided in either wood or metal for £80-£190. Cllr Harris reminded Members that the Council would be permitted to erect “potting sheds”, however, planning consent was likely to be required for a shed. The CEO confirmed Cllr Harris’s understanding to be correct and suggested that the Council would be required to purchase potting sheds of a specific dimension and then levy a charge on any allotment tenants who wished to avail themselves of the facility. A suggestion was made that the area in South Road which was currently not used (by entrance) could be utilised in order to provide for both sheds/tool storage. Members were reminded that if allotment holders chose to erect sheds themselves they would be responsible for obtaining planning consent. It was **proposed by Cllr Harris, seconded by Cllr Biddle**, that further consideration of the matter should be deferred until the Allotment Holders Meeting. Unanimous.

Cambourne Meadow

It was **proposed by Cllr Bevan, seconded by Cllr Harris**, that the Council did not wish to explore the provision of allotments at Cambourne Meadow at this time. Vote carried.

7. WEED SPRAYING

Following the Working Party meeting Cllr Harris advised that the Party wished to recommend that weed spraying was undertaken as per the areas identified on the map, a copy of which had been provided to Members prior to the meeting. Noted.

Cllr Bonser proposed that the area from Lydney Mainline Railway station to Church Road be added to the map. **Seconded by Cllr Bevan**. Unanimous.

Action by – the CEO

Members were reminded that Ground staff could only undertake weedspraying activities on foot, and if the Council wished to include any other additional areas they would need to consider contracting out the work which would need to be a future agenda item.

8. LYDNEY IN BLOOM

On behalf of the Working Party, Cllr Harris reported that no meetings had taken place recently and she spoke of the need to convene a meeting with interested parties. Cllr Harris advised that Mr J Thurston had provided the In Bloom Group with a donation of £500 in order to plant the raised borders located outside Hylton Court. Cllr Rudge



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reported that Mr Thurston had arranged for his gardener to clear and turf a small raised border as it could then be used as a Memorial Garden and he indicated that Mr Thurston may also erect metal railings around said border.

The CEO offered the services of Groundstaff to clear the raised beds and obtain suitable plants for same, once Cllr Harris had provided a date when the Group wished to commence planting. It was noted that Mr Thurston had also offered the Group a further £200 if they wished to construct and plant raised flower beds outside of 3 Hill Street.

During discussion Cllr Harris voiced a desire for the raised flower beds to be planted with spring flowers and for the current shrubs to be pruned back and/or removed. Consideration was given to the possibility of utilising the services of the Community Payback Team to assist with clearing the raised beds. It was noted that the Community Payback Team would levy a charge for their services (£50 for 6 members) and the need for a member of the Group to be present to ensure that the work of the Community Payback Team was carried out to an acceptable standard was stressed.

After a short discussion it was **proposed by Cllr Harris** that the Community Payback Team would be contacted to ascertain their availability to clear the raised flower beds by the second week in February 2015. **Seconded by Cllr Bonser.** Unanimous.

Action by – the CEO and Cllr Harris

Branding of Floral Displays

Members were advised that the CEO had been provided with a number of “sample” signs depicting Lydney Town Council’s crest which could be affixed to the floral tubs in order that they may be evaluated. It was **proposed by Cllr Hobman, seconded by Cllr Harris**, that the “sample” signs would be affixed to the tubs on a trial basis. Unanimous.

Action by – the CEO

9. **PLAY AREAS/OPEN SPACES**

Primrose Hill (The Meend)

Members noted that there was no S106 outstanding in respect to The Meend.

Members were advised by Cllr Thomas that the Council was facing a charge of at least £4,000 to erect a fence at the rear of the Meend to prevent Wild Boar from accessing the ground and he questioned if Members wished to utilise the £8,000 which had been allocated towards additional play equipment for the Meend to cover the cost of the fence. It was **proposed by Cllr Bonser, seconded by Cllr Harris**, that the matter would be deferred to Full Council, as the £8,000 funding had been earmarked towards additional play equipment. Unanimous.

Action by – the CEO

Cllr Thomas advised that the Working Party would need to arrange a further meeting with the Landscape Officer from Monmouthshire County Council to gain a better view of the play equipment required for the Meend in addition to the funding needed once the Wild Boar issue had been resolved.

Active Together Funding

Item deferred.



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Wild Boar

Cllr Thomas advised that he had personally priced for a fence to be erected between the woodland and the Meend, however, he highlighted that the Meend had never been registered with Land Registry, nor could the Council prove title to the land. The CEO advised that the Council had managed to locate a Conveyance from 1948 between itself and Lord Bledisloe to convey a strip of land adjacent to the Meend into the Town Council's ownership. Members were also advised that ownership of a small area on the Meend had been registered by Mr Townley as being in his ownership (site of a former garage). The CEO advised that according to the Conveyance the Council had been required to erect a stock fence to its boundary in 1948 but this was no longer in evidence.

Responding to a question which had been raised by Cllr Bevan, the CEO advised that the wood at the rear of the Meend was previously in the ownership of Lydney Park Estate (now Forestry Commission). Cllr Bevan and Thomas spoke in support of erecting a fence to prevent Wild Boar from accessing the Meend. Cllr Openshaw highlighted the vandalism which had previously occurred on the Meend and questioned if any objections had been received regarding the erection of a fence adjacent to Primrose Hill Road. Cllr Thomas advised that opinion was divided amongst residents regarding the total enclosure of the Meend with fencing. Once again, Members were reminded that ownership of a small section of the Meend had already been registered by Mr Townley.

Noting that the Forestry Commission had taken a pro-active approach to protect Beechenhurst, Cllr Bonser called for the Council to decide the way forward for the Meend and to also consider a long-term view as to how the Meend could be better utilised. Furthermore, Cllr Bonser felt that if a fence was only erected on one side of the Meend it would be circumvented by the Wild Boar and she spoke in favour of providing a safe area for children to play. Attention was drawn to the Amenities budget level which could not afford the cost of erecting a fence on the Meend. Accordingly, Members were informed that the matter would need to be considered by Full Council if they wished for the work to be funded by General/Earmarked Play Reserves. Cllr Thomas stated that he assumed that the erection of a fence could be funded by the £8,000 which the Council had allocated towards new play equipment.

Cllr Thomas sought confirmation that, subject to Full Council approval, Members were agreeable to erect a fence on the Meend in order to prevent access by Wild Boar. Responding to a question which had been raised by Cllr Openshaw, Cllr Thomas advised that the fence would be erected at the front of the land which had been Conveyed to the Council and would span from wall to wall on the houses located at either side of the Meend and that two self-closing gates would be provided in line with the Public Rights of Way. At this point Members were advised that formal planning consent may be required for the erection of the fence. It was **proposed by Cllr Biddle, seconded by Cllr Bonser**, that the Council would explore the principle of erecting such a fence subject to Forestry Commission approval. Unanimous.

It was **proposed by Cllr Greenwood, seconded by Cllr Harris**, that the Council would assist Dr Dutton with the promotion of his questionnaire, within means. Unanimous.

Action by – the CEO



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After a short discussion it was suggested that the CEO would produce a press release on the current situation.

10. **FALLERS FIELD**

Members were reminded that the Engineers Report which was due to be received from Amey (on behalf of Gloucestershire County Council) had been deferred to the Flood Defence Meeting for consideration.

11. **CHRISTMAS**

Members were reminded of the arrangements which had been outlined at the November Full Council meeting. Noted.

Cllr Harris advised that Cllr Biddle had managed to obtain a PA system which could be used at the event. Cllr Hobman advised that she had been contacted by Mr C Higgs who wished to ascertain if his presence was still required as he had not received any letter of confirmation. Cllr Harris apologised that she had not asked the CEO to issue a letter of confirmation to Mr Higgs and it was noted that neither the Town Council staff or Cllr Harris possessed Mr Higgs's contact details. Accordingly, Cllr Hobman was asked to provide the CEO with Mr Higgs's contact details.

Action by – Cllr Hobman and the CEO

12. **BUS SHELTERS**

Cllr Pearman requested that the matter be deferred to the next meeting due to an impending meeting with Officers from Gloucestershire County Council which may impact on the requirements for a bus shelter in Bream Road.

Action by – the CEO

13. **LYDNEY STATION CAR PARK**

Deferred to next meeting, due to the impending meeting with Officers from Gloucestershire County Council.

Action by – the CEO

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

Members noted that TrunkArb had agreed to undertake the tree survey and honour the quotation which they provided earlier in the year.

15. **OAKDALE**

Members noted that recycling facilities at the development had been considered at the November Full Council meeting.

16. **FOOTPATH REAR OF ALBERT STREET**

Whilst it was noted that Forest of Dean District Council were responsible for the footpath and had stated that they had already cut back the vegetation, Cllr Harris felt that the action had not been undertaken. Cllr Rudge felt that vegetation had only been cleared between Waterways and the Lydney Gateway Project.

17. **BYELAWS**

Members were reminded that the Bathurst Park and Recreation Trust and Lydney Recreation Trust previously appointed a Working Party to review the current Byelaws. Members were reminded that the Byelaws covered Bathurst Park, Primrose Hill Meend



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and also Lydney Recreation Trust and whilst the Working Party had been provided with a copy of the Model Version of Byelaws, they had not been observed.

Members were advised of the need to closely observe the Model Byelaws as they would need to be approved by the Secretary of State; the Council would need to obtain consent from the Secretary of State for any deviation from the Model Byelaws.

It was **proposed by Cllr Pearman**, that the Working Party which had been formed by the Bathurst Park and Recreation Trust would be authorised to examine the Model Byelaws, with input from the CEO; the Working Party's recommendations would be tabled before the Committee at a future date. **Cllr Harris proposed** an amendment to the motion that the Working Party would consider the Model Byelaws on behalf of the Council/Charitable Trusts in order that they would cover all areas (e.g. Bathurst Park, Primrose Hill Meend and Lydney Recreation Trust). Cllr Pearman accepted the amendment to his motion; **Cllr Harris then agreed to second** the motion. Unanimous.

Action by – Cllrs Pearman, Vaughan, Thomas, Rudge and Osborne

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

Members noted that the cost of a Rotary Mower and Heavy Duty Strimmer (approximately £5,500) would be shown as a carried forward commitment from any residue of the budget and would not form part of the approved £70,430 2015/16 budget. Furthermore, that the equipment would be purchased ahead of the growing as of 1 April 2016. Noted.

19. COUNCILLORS REPORTS

Cllr Rudge reported that an on-going problem were occurring with stray dogs in Hopes Close. Cllr Thomas advised that the issue should be reported to Forest of Dean District Council.

Cllr Harris queried why blue grit bins had been removed from Woodland Rise and Cherry Walk. The CEO advised that all blue bins were classed as "temporary" allocations and had been collected once the risk of adverse weather had passed. Furthermore, that following the issue of blue grit bins the Council's Planning and Highway Committee would consider said requests and determine if it wished to purchase a permanent yellow grit bin for the location.

Cllr Ives reported that unfortunately a member of the public had to withdraw from performing at the Christmas Lights Switch on in 2013 and he questioned if it would be possible for the individual to participate in this year's event. Cllr Harris advised that it would not be possible, at this late stage, to include an additional performance as all arrangements had now been confirmed.

20. MEETING DATES

Due to the discussion which had taken place earlier in the meeting it was **proposed by Cllr Harris**, that the meeting with the Allotment Holders would take place at 6.00 pm on 16 February 2015, however, the motion was not seconded.



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Noting agenda item 11 (Lydney In Bloom) of the minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2015, Cllr Thomas called for a vegetative cut of the roundabouts to be included as an agenda item for the next meeting.

The CEO advised that Gloucestershire County Council had addressed in the past and confirmed she would e-mail them accordingly to request the same.

Action by – the CEO

The meeting closed at 9.52 pm.

Chairman.....

Date ..16 FEB 2015.....