

Minutes of the Meeting of the Operations Committee Held on Wednesday 17th April 2013 at 10.30am in the Community Office

Present:

Councillors:

Barry Adby – Chairman
Ted Backhouse – Vice-Chairman
Robert Barber
Tim Horton
Ian Hill
Linda Nicholson – Co-opted Member

Officer:

Kristina Tynan

Members of the Public:

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36/13 Apologies for Absence
Tony Williamson

37/13 Minutes of the Meeting held on 20th March 2013 which were accepted by Council on the 9/4/2013 to be agreed

Resolved: That these minutes were a correct record of this meeting and that they be signed by the Chairman.

38/13 Declarations of Interest

Tim Horton declared pecuniary interests in agenda items 6b, 6c, 8.1 and 8.2 as he is the Chairman of Watlington in Bloom. He signed the 'Declaration of Interest' book and left the room for these items.

39/13 Matters arising

Car Park Noticeboard – Shire Roofing will do this in warmer weather which will hopefully be soon.

Boiler in Community Office – This has been repaired at little cost.

40/13 Outstanding Issues

1. **Hedge in Car Park** – RBr stated that he has had a look at this hedge and thinks that giving the mix and scarcity of the hedge it will be unable to be laid. He will speak to Nigel Adams with urgency to confirm this.

Resolved: That we cut this hedge down to 3cm, unless Nigel Adams has a different opinion within the next 48 hours.

[Nb: There is a covenant on this hedge with Mr Irons and he will need to be consulted on any works proposed)

2. Paddock works

Railings – The metal railings (recycled from the old recreation ground childrens play area) have been installed. We had enough to do half the area. We could look in the future to purchase new railings to complete the area which would cost in the region of £1500. It was noted that they look very good. 2 railings need to be painted green to match which will be done by our caretaker. It was noted that the wooden gates to the children's play area do not lock. Our caretaker to look at these in the first instance.

Willow Hedge – It was noted that we need to have a qualified horticulturist to deal with this hedge which needs doing.

Resolved: That we spend up to £300 and get this hedge sorted out.

Grassed Area by Trees (Library End)- TH stated that last year our caretaker re-seeded this area which gets worn due to the playing of football, it is now looking worn again and asked that it is re-seeded for this year.

Resolved: That we get our caretaker to re-seed this area.

Flooding by Library Gate – It was agreed that this needs to be looked into. All members of have a look and bring suggestions to resolve this issue back to the next meeting.

Tree Scheme for Paddock – RBr to bring this scheme forward.

3. **Recycling Bins in Car Park** – SODC have confirmed that these bins will be moved on 1st May. The Air Ambulance clothing bank has been relocated. Rbr stated that it was an inspired place to move it to. The other banks have been contacted and asked that their bins be removed.

4. **I-Play** – We now have a 2 year contract in place with Playdale. They have done some works needed but there is still a problem with the computer. TH stated that he has had an exchange with Playdale which looks into the future. TH to come back with information on this when he has been given a definite offer on this piece of equipment. TH has spoken to them about a 10 or possibly 15 year contract. It was noted that as well as the contract there is also an annual £200 connection cost which allows scores to be available nationally. It needs to be seen if anyone in Watlington is actually accessing this information. If not perhaps we need to discuss whether we need this facility. LN stated that there is an impression with people at the recreation ground that they do not expect the I-Play to work all the time.

5. **Trees in Mansle Gardens**- This is on-going.

41/13 Property

1. Car Park

a) **Drains in Car Park** – BA reported that we have tried to clear these drains but have not been very successful. Draingain have put a camera down but only managed to get one minute of footage before tree roots got in the way. They are suggesting that they put down a flail. However this will require a large quantity of water. They do now have a bowser. BA to further investigate the water issue and KT to obtain a quote for the flailing from Draingain. A suggestion was made that we approach the

Fire Brigade to see if they could help with the water issue.

There are no kerbstones by the tree area (Watcombe Road) inside the car park and Draingain have suggested that we dig out some of the grass area and put down sleepers.

Regarding cleaning out the drains LN has a hand auger that she will loan us to help clear out the drains in conjunction with the post shovel that we have purchased.

TH said that the entrance to the car park (Watcombe Rd end) is part of the problem. What can be done to regulate this in a sensible way. There should be a comprehensive re-design of this area by opening up the area. We could take a radical view and ask that the Co-op be asked to fund part of this as it would help with the problem with their lorries. The drain area could be tidied up. This could be a solution that we address for the next 2-3 years. BA stated that the 6 wheeled lorries are the main problem, we could ask that they only use 4 wheeled lorries. RBr stated that water should stay where it falls. We would need 2-3 strips that the water could soak away without putting water into the water system. It was noted that there may be funding for a major scheme with environmental elements.

Resolved: That we have a site visit at this location at 11.30am on 15th May 2013 which will be followed by the Operations Committee meeting in the Community Office at 12.30pm.

b) Central Reservation Area in Car Park

This issue was discussed and TB stated that the new owner of the Bread Bin is looking into using the Undercroft at weekends for safe bike storage in Watlington as it has been said that people will not leave their expensive bikes in the car park. If this is agreed it was noted that the white lining for this would be an extra expense on our quotation for the other lining. RBr said that drainage is potentially a problem if more bollard are to be installed and it was stated this proposal does not include any more bollards that already are installed as we could not agree to any holes being dug in the car park until we know where the drains and electrics go.

Proposal by Watlington in Bloom (WiB)

Watlington in Bloom would like to propose an alternative scheme for the Operations Committee to consider on Weds. April 17th. The scheme we wish to propose is that the cars be separated by at least 1.5metres as discussed previously but that we revert to the simpler idea of 3 planters instead of three holes with trees. The planters should be the same as in front of the Town Hall, large half oak butts, and we propose that we will plant them up in a similar manner to those in front of the Town Hall as well i.e. not with large trees. Watlington In Bloom have a watering solution and the WI and Girl Guides have offered to help care for the planters so that they shall be an asset to the town.

Furthermore, if this scheme is approved we also ask that Kristina order said half butts as soon as possible as this is becoming an urgent matter.

This issue was discussed and it was:

Vote: 2 in favour, 1 against

Resolved: That we agreed the car park to have a 1.5m space in the middle and that this be marked up and lined when we get the white lining done. Also agreed that 3 planters can be put in this location.

c) Lining for Car Park – KT reported that if we wish the work to be done on a Sunday this will cost an extra 15% of the total price. KT needs to check if the car

park needs to be cleaned prior to the works. It was noted that as well as the white lining for the car park spaces and the yellow lining for the two disabled spaces, arrows need to be moved to nearer the hedge on Johnson's alley and the middle of the car park be lined with a 1.5m space in the middle. The no entry signs also to be done. KT to check if any cleaning is necessary prior to the lining. KT/BA to get a revised price including the extra works.

Resolved: That all the lining and marking go ahead as long as the price does not exceed £1200 (net).

2. Public Conveniences

1. Future Improvements – It was noted that we have not moved forward. However RW had suggested that we just have one disabled toilet and use the other space for storage. It was agreed that this be discussed with SODC to see if they would agree in principle to this. To be discussed again at the next meeting.

2. Water Bills – It was noted that we have just received a very high water bill. KT and TB have analysed all the bills over the last 3 years and they have definitely increased over the years. Our caretaker has turned the flow to low and is monitoring it on a daily basis for a week. Our plumber is booked to come out and give his opinion on whether there is anything untoward going on. Will discuss again at the next meeting when we have more information. It was suggested that we talk to Thames Water about this issue, to explain why volume charges change so much on the bills.

3. Community Office

1. Update of Phone/Broadband following meeting with British Telecom – BA and RBr met with BT to discuss this issue. Without installing another phone line we cannot get another phone on the system. They had no packages they could offer us. KT suggested that if another phone was necessary it may be cheaper to get a monthly mobile deal.

Resolved: That we ask the Finance Committee to look into the phone issue.

2. Energy Prices for WPC owned property- BA is still investigating this issue.

3. Outside Painting of Community Office – We have received one quote and need to get a second quote. KT/BA to do this.

4. Computer in Office – We have had to have the engineer in to repair KT's computer and he advises that there is damage to the hard drive and cannot say how long it will last. IH is looking into options for a new computer. It was noted that the current computer is 12 years old. It was agreed that we need to get a new computer asap.

42/13 Open Spaces

a) Who to commission to Annual Playground Inspection for 2013 – KT/BA are still investigating companies. It was agreed to check what price Playdale charge for inspections also. It was agreed also to ask that when the inspections are being done that a representative from WPC be present.

b) Zip Wire in Recreation Ground – The wooden surround on the base near to the metal fence will be moved about 18" to enable a strimmer to access the grass area more easily. It is a relatively simple job and will be done by our caretaker.

43/13 General Issues

1. **Finger posts by Town Hall** – WiB have offered to paint these and this was agreed. They will be using black and white hammerite. Regarding the Belisha Beacon posts, KT will check with OCC if they are happy for these to be painted by WiB.

2. **Watlington In Bloom Planting Proposal**

WiB would also like to propose that the planting scheme of the Memorial Cross and the Hanging Baskets on the Town Hall could please coordinate with the Scheme we have chosen for the planters so that there is continuity, cooperation and collaboration. The scheme chosen is to reflect the colouring of the lovely architecture in Watlington, i.e. Mainly Silver, Blue , & White, with an accent of Red.

This issue was discussed with the context of the note on finances from TH (given out at the beginning of the meeting). It was noted that they have been given £500 out of our County Councillor's budget. In brief it was noted that WiB needs to find £640, It was noted that the tub/tree base planting amount within the budget could account for £300, which leaves £340. It was suggested that we allow WiB £200 from the Operations Contingency Budget. Comment was made that WiB could perhaps reduce their compost costs by buying ½ tonne bags rather than smaller ones and save some costs by doing this. It was:

Resolved: It was agreed that we will co-ordinate the hanging baskets at the Town Hall to reflect their colour scheme. However as regards the War Memorial, we have met with a representative with the British Legion and agreed a planting scheme which will be in red, white and blue but will include not silver. That the Parish Council allocated the tub/tree bases planting budget item (within total grass cutting budget) of £300 to WiB and also that WiB can spend £200 out of the Operations Contingency item.

3. **Infrastructure Improvements Funding** – information on this was attached to the agenda. There is £7812 available to apply for. Discussion took place and it was agreed that there are a number of things that we could apply for funding:

- Parking problems on Shirburn Street/Love Lane improvements
- Town Entrance signs and planters
- Car Park Improvements
- Cuxham Road Crossing
- Public Toilet

Resolved: That this issue be passed to the Strategy Committee to discuss.

Business Association for Shop front improvements

Resolved: That we send a letter to the Business Association to ask if they have any views on improving shop frontages. IH/KT to do this.

4. **Lighting in Davenport Place** – There is a resident from Davenport Place who has written to OCC and WPC asking for more lighting in this area. We note that OCC are making the lights in this area more energy efficient by putting new bulbs in and they are also making the light cover more of the area. OCC will not pay to install a new light in this area. The cost of installing a new light would be approximately £1200. It was noted that we have not had any other resident complain about lighting in this area. It was agreed that WPC are not in a position to fund a new light in this location.

44/13 Action List

To note any outstanding actions if needed. The latest list will be emailed to Councillors.

45/13 Correspondence

OCC – Gritting Love Lane – they have on their agenda for discussion winter treatment to schools so Love Lane will be reviewed.

46/13 Any Other Business

Light out at Stoner Green – BA to investigate whose responsibility this is – OCC or are they privately owned lights.

Hedge on Hill Road – RBr reported that they failed to get it flailed and Watlington Environment Group have started clearing it back by hand. A third has been done already and they will continue until it is finished.

46/13 Future Issues for Discussion

Community Office Boiler – Annual Servicing Agreement – May Meeting

New Gate for Children's Play Area in the Paddock

Grit Spreader for next winter

Water Bills

Public Conveniences – Improvements

THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS THE MEETING CLOSED AT 12.30PM