

Minutes of the Meeting of the Operations Committee Held on Wednesday 16th November 2011 at 10.00am in the Community Office

Present:

Councillors:

Barry Adby – Chairman
Ted Backhouse – Vice-Chairman
Roger Beattie
Linda Nicholson
Tim Horton

In Attendance:

Robert Barber – for the Watlington Hill Issue

Officer:

Kristina Tynan

Members of the Public:

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104/11 Apologies for Absence

Tony Williamson

105/11 Minutes of the Meeting held on 19th October 2011 which were accepted by Council on the 8/11/2011 to be agreed and signed by the Chairman

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

106/11 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

107/11 Matters arising

Rubbish in garden of house behind the Public Conveniences – BA to investigate this.

108/11 Outstanding Issues

BT Phone Box in Hill Road Car Park – Awaiting response from BT re their schedule of re-painting. It was agreed that we chase this up by letter.

Triathlon – Meeting will be set up as discussed at the Full Council meeting on 8/11/11 after responses have been received from other Parish Councils. BA has also spoken to Roger Belson regarding this issue. This meeting is important as it needs to run better next year.

Emergency Plan – Further to the agreement of this at the Full Council meeting held on 8/11/2011, LN and KT to distribute this document to the relevant people.

109/11 Property

1. Car Park

Morning and Evening monitoring – This has not been done as yet but will be done before the next meeting by BA and TB.

Space Markings- It was agreed that this be done in the Spring. Quotations to be updated nearer the time. It will need to be in next years budget if possible.

Leaf-fall – TH stated that the car park is looking quite good at the moment. However the leaf-fall and heavy rainfall is impeding the drains. The Clerk to speak to BT regarding clearing this. TB said that we have spoken before about getting the drains rodded. BA to investigate to see if this is necessary.

Hedge (Johnson's Alley Side and Watcombe Road side) – It was noted that this hedge was cut back last year. TH stated that it is about 12-15ft high and said that he thinks it should be cut down to about 6-8ft. Discussion took place on this and it was agreed that prior to the January meeting we meet at the Car Park to look at his issue on site. It was also agreed that we ask our Tree Wardens for their comments.

Lights – It was noted that one light is permanently on and BA to investigate this.

2. Public Conveniences

Roof - BA has met Colin King on site and there are a number of issues that need to be addressed eg roof and barge boards. He has given an estimate of about £1000. It was noted that it is safe at the moment but will need to have something done on it soon. CK will be sending in a quotation and 2 others to be sought.

Rubbish behind Public Conveniences – The Clerk to ask BT to clear up the rubbish so that at least 300mm of the damp course is exposed.

Urinal in Mens – BA and HB have looked at this and think it is not draining away properly as it has not been sited correctly. The drains need to be looked at.

Insurance – It was noted that this building is insured for £80,000.

Floor – It was agreed that there is no point doing anything further to the floor until the drainage issue is looked at. The floor will be kept as clean as possible and then a washer/scrubber to be used on it.

Future improvements

Tim Horton asked for several issues to be considered for the future in the light of the Reserves held for this building and the following were discussed:

1. Replacement of Pans in Men and Ladies – 3 pans would be needed.
2. New Urinal in Mens or pods may be better
3. Repainting of Tiling
4. Specialist Cleaning of Floor

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: That we spend up to £6,000 out of the Public Conveniences Reserves which will include the necessary work to the roof, 3 new toilet pans, 2 pods for the Men's toilet (Possibly one adult, one child) and other items as above depending on cost.

110/11 Open Spaces

Recreation Ground

Half Pipe/Skatebowl –Regarding a new scheme, the young people will be invited to meet us on site. Names of the young people to be sent to KT. TH said that it would be a difficult task to change the Bowl.

Flying Fox – The woodchip levels need to be increased, as per the Rospa report. KT/BA to order this. OPFA to be contacted regarding suppliers.

Trees in Sports Field – It was noted that these need some work. The Clerk to obtain quotes and it was noted that we would need to write and ask permission for these works from Beechwood Estates.

Trees in the Town – It was agreed that this be an agenda item for the next meeting and a list to be compiled of all the trees and their location prior to the meeting. It was noted that these trees will be in the Conservation Area and therefore would need permission from SODC for any work that needs to be carried out. It would therefore be sensible to put in one application for all the trees that need work carried out. These works would be best done over the winter period.

111/11 Financial Issues

1. **Budget update 2011/2012** – Budget Update will be sent separately – The Budget was noted and it was felt all was in order to date.

2. **Budget – 2012/13** – any issues which need to be reported to Finance Committee- See above re Public Conveniences Improvements.

112/11 General Issues

Lorry Watch – This will be done before the next meeting. It was noted that Trading Standards did a check on 11/11/2011. They stopped 8 lorries, 3 were illegal and will get fined in due course. They also caught 5 cars speeding and 1 person using a mobile phone while driving. Trading Standards have said they will be checking on a regular basis in Watlington.

Rats in the Town – An email has been received regarding this from a resident in Couching Street. It was noted that SODC Pest Control will not do anything as regards the Town as a whole, they will only come out to private residences (cost of £26 per visit). Most rats live in drains but Thames Water will not usually do anything about it. **Resolved:** That we write to Thames Water about our on-going concern about rats in the Town and ask if it is possible for them to look at this problem.

Purchase of a large garden trolley

Resolved: That we purchase a garden trolley at a cost of £64.99

Watlington Hill - Robert Barber

Robert Barber reported on his conversation with Nick Worboys, Estate Manager for Beechwood Estates. He said that they intend to clear the site by flailing. He explained that the larger scrub will be cut with a circular saw and the arisings transported to fire sites established in areas of little value where there is presently dense scrub. The stumps will be treated to prevent re-growth. The smaller scrub will be topped and precautions taken to minimise damage to the grassland during the operations.

Future control will rely primarily on rabbit and deer grazing rather than domestic stock and there is no proposal to erect new fencing. A total of 49% of the area will be cleared, concentrating on the areas of most value and prospective value. All Juniper present will be protected. Nick Worboys stated that he is are open to suggestions from local interested parties and are in touch with locals with expertise and experience of scrub clearance on the Chiltern escarpment.

Robert Barber said that the all the information given appears very positive and WPC should strongly support such a strategy.

Resolved: That we respond to Beechwood Estates regarding this letter with the points stated above.

Signs on gates at the entrances to the Town – It was noted that an Estate Agent has put up some signs on these and they will be removed.

Resolved: To write to OCC asking if we could put the Watlington signs on the gates, which would be a tidier option and would also stop the gates being used for advertising.

Gate on Britwell Road – This needs fixing and BA will do this.

Diamond Jubilee arrangements – Tim Horton reported that the Diamond Jubilee arrangements are going well. There will be some issues that will need to be discussed by the Parish Council at an appropriate time.

113/11 Correspondence

1. J Moses – The amount of estate agent signage around Lewknor – **KT has spoken to the Lewknor Clerk regarding this.**
2. R Mortimor- rats in the town – Reply to R Mortimor stating that we are getting in touch with Thames Water regarding this.
3. Beechwood Estates – Re Watlington Hill- **Discussed above.**

114/11 Future Issues for Discussion Mansle Gardens

115/11 Any Other Business

Sewers in the Town – These have all now been adopted by Thames Water due to new legislation.

THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS THE MEETING CLOSED AT 11.25AM