

WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE HELD ONLINE VIA ZOOM ON TUESDAY 19TH JANUARY 2021 AT 6.00P.M.

Present: Councillors M McGuffie (Chairman), J Lloyd, M Lithgow, V Stock-Williams, S. Pringle-Kosikowsky,
In attendance: Councillor Thorne
David Farrow, Town Clerk
Annette Kirk, Deputy Clerk
Alice Kendall, Assistant Clerk
Dr J O'Hara, Somerset West & Taunton Council
11 members of the public including members of the Wellington Mills CIC and Transition Town Wellington

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor C Booth and Tom Borg (PPL0)

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Pringle-Kosikowsky declared a general interest as an employee of South West Heritage Trust who often make comment on items such as Tonedale Mill.

3. In lieu of public speaking to receive any representations from members of the public

No written submissions had been received.

4. Footpaths

(a) To receive a verbal update on Footpaths

As Tom Borg had given apologies for the meeting, a report was circulated by e-mail and was noted.

(b) To make representation on the attached Public Path Diversion Order relating to path WG 14/6

It was understood that this was an official process for a diversion that is already in place. It was agreed that there were no comments to be made.

(c) To discuss condition of unadopted paths across the wildlife pond area adjacent to the Basins and the Sports Centre

The Chairman reported that he had been contacted by a member of the public regarding boggy paths in this area. However, it is difficult for the Town Council to give funding for works on land that is not owned by themselves. It was agreed that too much work to the paths would affect the environment of the setting. It was understood that the Rugby Club may have some wooden bark chippings that could be laid. Councillors re-iterated the importance of appropriate footwear when walking in the winter months. It was further reported that decking around the ponds also require work.

RESOLVED to suspend standing orders to allow a member of the public to speak briefly.

Standing Orders were re-instated.

It was agreed that Somerset West & Taunton officers be contacted to further discuss the matter.

5. Update from somerset county council ref climate emergency Fund

(a) Correspondence has been received from the County Council informing that decisions on Grant awards has been delayed until after the closing date of the second application window (12th January).

A letter was circulated and noted.

(b) Consideration of how Street Tree project will be managed should it be successful in attracting a grant.

It was agreed that a plan needs to be made detailing who will manage the project in the first stages and what is required going forward (maintenance etc.). The Town Clerk will discuss with staff to ascertain what is required.

6. To consider cycling provisions

(a) Consideration of current cycling provision and steps that can be taken to encourage cycling (including a possible cycle path to Taunton).

(b) Discussion of potential stakeholders for a cycling forum for Wellington (including public bodies and local organisations / residents / cyclists)

(c) Note and consider contents of Taunton – Wellington cycle path feasibility study.

A Copy of the Taunton to Wellington Cycle Route Feasibility Study was circulated by e-mail before the meeting. It was understood that a bid has been made to the County Council to enable further investigation.

Councillor Lithgow felt it important that the project to replace the bike racks in Town using the Emergency High Street Fund is completed as soon as possible to help encourage cycling.

RESOLVED to approach Sustrans to find out what professional advice can be sought to promote cycling and walking. Also, to contact other stake holders (police, schools etc.).

It was felt that perhaps the in-town proposals in the feasibility study could be carried out using CIL or 106 monies.

It was further agreed that a presentation on the feasibility study was expected as it was partly funded by the Town Council. The Town Clerk will contact the Taunton Area Cycling Campaign to arrange this for a future Council meeting.

7. To consider land parcels and update on land ownership at the basins

- (a) Consideration of various small public land parcels and the process for identifying these and possible transferring them to WTC ownership.**
- (b) Consider also scope for transfer of larger parcels owned by other local authorities into the ownership of the Town Council.**

Councillor Stock-Williams read a note she had received regarding the ownership of 6 parcels of land at the Basins. The Town Clerk reported that he had investigated past communications with Burges Salmon, the solicitors for the Crown Estate, but more work is required. It was agreed that a legal firm would need to be employed to find out what land parcels the Town Council could take ownership of.

RESOLVED to set up a working group, to include Dr Jo O'Hara, to discuss this matter further and set out more information for a future meeting.

8. Fox's' Field

District Councillor Marcus Kravis joined the meeting for this item. He thanked all those involved in getting this project to its current position. Anita Roy (Wellington Mills CIC and Transition Town Wellington) gave a detailed update on the project's history and what is now required to move forward. A community consultation will soon take place to gather information on wish list items for the site. She further reported that the Transition Network have awarded the project a grant of £3,500. She re-iterated that the project would not be possible without the Town Council's support which she hopes will continue. The Chairman thanked Anita and Councillor Kravis for attending.

9. Dormouse Wood

The Town Clerk had circulated a report from C G Fry detailing that they propose transferring the woodland area to the Town Council with a commuted sum payment of £50,000 subject to heads of terms etc. being agreed.

RECOMMENDED to Full Council that the offer be accepted subject to heads of terms etc. being agreed.

10. Tree Planting

Councillor Lithgow gave an update on the free tree scheme provided by SWT. Between the Town Council and Transition Town £100 worth of trees were obtained. This amounted to approx. 30 trees that were planted in an area at the Dormouse Wood.

11. Town Walk

Councillors Lithgow and McGuffie reported that they had met briefly to discuss the possible locations of finger posts. The Chairman encouraged Councillors to report any possible issues they notice while in the town.

12. Benches

Councillor Lloyd asked about the current position on the bench offered by the League of Friends to possibly be placed in the Basins. The Assistant Clerk reported that they had been directed to the Basins Volunteer group to discuss possible

locations. It was agreed that the bench held in stock could be place in Tonedale, near the One Stop store. Councillor Thorne reported that he had previously identified several locations for benches, including Tonedale, which was submitted to the previous Town Clerk. The Assistant Clerk will try to find this report.

Councillor Pringle-Kosikowsky asked if Town Council benches were available for dedications/sponsorship. The Assistant Clerk will prepare further information on this and report back to the next meeting.

13. Reduction of use of resources (refuse/reduce)

The Chairman had added this to the agenda to give consideration to the scope for environmental efficiencies in the Town Council's current and future activities. It was suggested the Town Council look at moving to paperless meetings. Officers were asked to think about the source of electricity supplies for Council property.

14. Areas of interest statement – identification of future activities (council / community)

- (a) Reduction of use of resources (refuse/reduce)
- (b) Increasing sustainability (reuse, repair, recycle)
- (c) Increasing resilience (localism)

The possibility of trees being planted on the Town's large roundabouts was briefly discussed. As a result of this discussion, Councillor Lloyd reported that she had seen an article in the Wellington Weekly News reporting a possible change in conditions to the proposed highways/roundabout works as a result of the Bagley Road development. She will be taking this matter further.

It was agreed that this will be a standing agenda item for future meetings with Biodiversity added to the list.

15. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting was set for Wednesday 14th April 2021 at 6pm

The meeting closed at 7.55 p.m.