

MINUTES OF THE WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE COMMITTEE HELD AT UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HALL ON TUESDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2023 AT 6.00 PM

Present: Councillor M McGuffie (Chairman)
Councillors M Barr, C Booth, C Govier, M Lithgow and K Wheatley

In attendance: David Farrow (Town Clerk)
Councillor J Lloyd for agenda items 8 and 9.
Steve Saunders, Footpath Liaison Officer for agenda item 6
James Chapman, Somerset Council Tree Strategist for agenda item 15(i)
One member of the public
One member of the press

335 APOLOGIES

No apologies had been received

336 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

337 MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2023

338 QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A member of the public spoke to raise concerns around how the management company on the Longforth Farm development was managing the ponds and the negative impact its actions would have on wildlife.

The Chairman said he would be changing the order of the agenda so that those attending the meeting for specific items would not have to wait for their item.

339 TREE STRATEGY(item 15(i) on the agenda)

James Chapman explained the Somerset Tree strategy and how they could support the Town Council in delivering its Tree Strategy for example by accessing funding that the Town Council may not be able to directly. The Town Clerk advised that Mr Chapman and a colleague would be visiting the Green Corridor on the 24 November and he would be showing them round. It was agreed that the Town Council Tree Strategy and Plan would be sent to Mr Chapman.

340 BASINS ALLOTMENT ADVISORY BOARD (item 8 on the agenda)

Councillor J Lloyd provided a briefing on the meeting of the Bard which took place on the 2 November 2023. Two allotment holders had attended the meeting rather than the four that was hoped for.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to the Town Council that a charged service is offered to tenants to remove rubbish from their plots at a minimum amount of £25.00 for 2 compost bags of rubbish. Anything more to be inspected by a Council Officer and quoted accordingly. Tenants to pay up front. A day once a month to be allocated for the Community Warden to collect.

341 LONGFORTH FARM ALLOTMENTS (item 9 on the agenda)

Councillor J Lloyd updated the committee on progress being made in relation to the Longforth Farm Allotment site. The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to the Town Council:

- (i) That the Town Council take ownership of the land from the developer
- (ii) That as soon as possible the site is secured with stock proof fencing costs to be covered by the £10,000 already set aside for the Longforth Allotments
- (iii) That the Council apply for S106 funding of £50,000 to cover set up costs for the allotments.

342 FOOTPATH UPDATE (item 6 on the agenda)

Steve Saunders gave an update on the work of the footpath volunteer team which had carried out around 70 hours of volunteering in the last month.

343 HERITAGE UPDATE (item 5 on the agenda)

Amy Kemmish was unable to attend the meeting. Her report had been circulated with the agenda and was noted.

The Town Clerk reported that Jo O'Hara would be leaving Somerset Council at Christmas and the Committee asked that a letter of thanks be sent to her for all that had had done for Wellington. The Town Clerk said that he was concerned that in the current context of Somerset Council's finances, heritage at risk advice and support would not be a priority and he was considering recommending to the Council that, as part of the budget setting process, a sum be set aside next year to commission specialist advice and guidance. The Committee agreed that this was something that should be considered.

344 GENERAL UPDATES (item 15 on the agenda)

(i) Climate Change Strategy

The Town Clerk reported that he had reached agreement with Stephen Tate from the Somerset Leves Climate Change Forum to work for the Council for two days a week for six months to develop and start delivering an action plan to deliver the Council Strategy.

(ii) Crown Estate Land Purchase

The Town Clerk reported that the Weavers Reach Play Area purchase was close to completion but that there was no update on the other Crown Estate Land around the Basins. He said that he had asked Somerset Council for the engineer's report on the culvert at the bottom of Linden Drive that led to the notice saying that it was a dangerous structure.

345 GAY CLOSE PLAY AREA (item 13 on the agenda)

Councillor C Booth gave an update and reported that a draft licence had been received from Somerset Council for the land and that the Town Clerk had raised a couple of questions on it for which he was still awaiting a reply.

346 GREEN CORRIDOR ADVISORY BOARD (item 7 on the agenda)

The notes of the meeting held on the 7 November along with the presentation made by Hannah Montag on the Biodiversity Audit had been circulated with the agenda and were noted.

347 MAINTENANCE OF GREEN SPACES BY SOMERSET COUNCIL AND MANAGEMENT COMPANIES (item 10 on the agenda)

The Town Clerk reported that given concerns raised by the member of the public at the beginning of the meeting and another member of the public at the November Council meeting he was seeking advice from Somerset Council on what arrangements were in place to ensure that management companies and contractors were not operating in a way that was harmful to the environment.

348 BRIDGE BETWEEN WEAVERS REACH AND FOX'S FIELD (item 11 on the agenda)

The Town Clerk explained that the Community Warden had recently had to undertake some emergency repairs on the bridge to address a significant health and safety risk. The Committee **RESOLVED** that before considering whether to purchase the bridge from the Crown Estate a survey of the bridge should be commissioned and authorised the Town Clerk to commission a survey and spend up to £3,000.

349 PATH AT WEAVERS REACH PLAY AREA/BURCHILLS HILL (item 12 on the agenda)

The Committee **RESOLVED** that a Conipave path be installed on the pathway that goes down the side of the play area to Burchills Hill at a cost of £1,960.

350 TONEDALE/RICHARDS CLOSE PLAY AREA (item 14 on the agenda)

A paper had been circulated with the agenda and was considered.

- (i) Path Options – the Committee considered that it needed more information before it could make a decision. It wanted to understand whether the issues with tree routes mitigated against any form of pathway and also wanted more quotes before agreeing a particular option. It agreed that the work on the railings should be undertaken subject to ensuring that permission wasn't required from Somerset Highways before moving them.
- (ii) Monkey Bar Steps – it wasn't clear from the report how many steps were needed. The Committee **RESOLVED** to authorise spend of up to £1,000.
- (iii) Artwork Update – the Committee was concerned regarding the potential cost and asked that initially the Town Council carry out a survey, as it did with the play equipment, to see what people wanted to inform a more detailed costing of the work.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.00 pm

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Councillor M McGuffie
Chairman