

YEOVIL TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of a meeting of the **GROUND AND GENERAL MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Town House, 19 Union Street, Yeovil on **Monday 10 November 2014**

(7:00pm – 8:50pm)

Present:

Dave Dollard – Chairman
Martin Bailey
Philip Chandler
Kaysar Hussain
Andrew Kendall
Mike Lock
Manny Roper
Darren Shutler
Alan Smith

Also Present:

Tony Lock	Yeovil East Ward Member
Alan Tawse	Town Clerk
Sally Freemantle	Assistant Town Clerk (Job Share)
Rachel Whaites	Countryside Ranger (SSDC)
Rob Parr	Senior Play and Youth Facilities Officer (SSDC)
Steve Barnes	Play and Youth Facilities Officer (SSDC)
Steve Fox	Principal Horticultural Officer (SSDC)
Chris Cooper	Streetscene Manager (SSDC)

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments from members of the public.

8/271 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 1 September 2014, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

8/272 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from J Vincent Chainey, Dave Greene, and Wes Read.

8/273 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Manny Roper declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in agenda item 13, Allotment Rent Review due to his allotment tenancy with Yeovil Town Council.

8/274 **CORRESPONDENCE**

There were no items of correspondence.

8/275 **YEOVIL COUNTRY PARK UPDATE**

The Committee considered the Yeovil Country Park Update (Agenda item 5 refers) and received a verbal report from the Countryside Ranger. The Chairman thanked Rachael Whaites for the thorough and interesting report, and asked about the clearing of the upper ponds. It was explained that this work was planned and proposals would form part of the application to the Heritage Lottery Fund in the forthcoming year. The team were congratulated on their hard work and excellent results.

RESOLVED

that the matter be noted.

8/276 **PLAY AREA UPDATE REPORT**

The Senior Play and Youth Facilities Officer gave an overview of the work carried out since the last meeting, explaining that there was both planned and reactive maintenance, removal of dangerous items and an on-going schedule of painting. Summerhouse View Play Area and Milford and Yew Tree Skate Parks were amongst the sites which had benefitted from fresh paint. Work at the ball courts at Westfield was also planned. Some safety surfacing had been replaced at Fielding Road, Howard Road and Monks Dale Play Areas. Some equipment including swing seats (Summerhouse View Play Area) and a zip wire (Yew Tree Park) had also been replaced and a final part was awaited for the double zip wire.

A query was raised regarding Westland Road Play Area roundabout and Rob Parr explained that a bespoke bearing was needed which may cost more or as much as a new piece of equipment, therefore an assessment of the costs was required. It was suggested that a local engineering firm be asked to make the bespoke bearing.

RESOLVED

that the matters be noted.

8/277 **SUMMERHOUSE VIEW PLAY AREA UPDATE REPORT**

The Committee considered the report of the Senior Play and Youth Facilities Officer (Agenda item 7 refers). Members considered and welcomed the drawings and proposals for Summerhouse View Play Area.

RESOLVED

- (1) that the matter be noted; and
- (2) that approval be given to the drawings and proposals for the upgrade of Summerhouse View Play Area.

8/278 **FREE HOLIDAY ACTIVITY PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered the report of the Play and Youth Facilities Officer (Agenda item 8 refers). Discussion took place regarding the excellent attendance rates and positive feedback and the Play and Youth Facilities

Officer explained how the areas accommodated the roller disco by using a venue close to the usual function room where the usual function room was not suitable for this activity. It was confirmed that sometimes in excess of 80 young people attended the roller discos.

RESOLVED

- (1) that the matter be noted;
- (2) that the success of the 2014/15 Free Holiday Activity Programme (including the extension to include the Yew Tree Park area of the Town) be noted and welcomed;
- (3) that the planned provision of a free open access Holiday Activity Programme in 2015/16 for young people in targeted areas of Yeovil be supported; and
- (4) that the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee be recommended to set a budget allocation of £8,380 for the provision of a free open access Holiday Activities Programme for young people in targeted areas of Yeovil for 2015/16, on the basis that both SSDC and Yarlington Housing Group allocate £6,690.

8/279 OPEN SPACES REPORT

The Committee considered the report of the Principal Horticultural Officer (Agenda item 9 refers). In answer to queries it was confirmed that the Sensory Garden was due for its 2nd of two phases of improvements and that Steve Fox would check the work to be carried out on the footpaths as part of the improvements to the banks at Hollands Walk.

RESOLVED

that the matter be noted.

8/280 ALLOTMENT MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

The Committee considered the Allotment Maintenance Schedule (Agenda item 10 refers).

RESOLVED

that the Schedule be noted.

8/281 ALLOTMENT TENANTS WORKING GROUP MEETING

The Committee considered the minutes of the Allotment Tenants Working Group meeting held on 18 August 2014 (circulated separately).

RESOLVED

that the Allotment Tenants Working Group meeting minutes be noted.

8/282 **NEW INITIATIVES BUDGET**

The Committee considered the report of the Streetscene Manager (Agenda item 12 refers) and the Committee noted the proposed timescale of installation, with the anticipation that the installation of the Outdoor Green Gym would take place during the 2015/16 financial year.

RESOLVED

- (1) that the matter and progress made so far be noted; and
- (2) that, bearing in mind the anticipated project delivery date, the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee be requested to continue earmarking the sum of £10,000 provisionally allocated from the New Initiatives Budget to help meet the costs of the delivery of the Outdoor Green Gym Project.

8/283 **ALLOTMENT RENT REVIEW**

(Manny Roper having declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in this item left the room during its consideration and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon)

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk (Agenda item 13 refers).

The report included a proposal by the Finance Working Group to recharge allotment tenants the actual cost of mains water provision on a site-by-site basis using the approach set out in the report. Bearing in mind that the total cost of mains water provision in 2013/14 amounted to £6,984 – which was 66% above the allocated budget – the Working Group felt that the current arrangements whereby such charges were paid direct by the Town Council, were inequitable and unsustainable.

Under the proposed approach, the total cost of mains water for each site would be divided by the number of plots with regard being given to the size of each plot. The tenants of those plots below 125 sq. m (standard half plot) would be charged 50% of the charge to tenants of larger plots.

Details of how this could impact on tenants were given at the meeting and, by way of example, it was noted that taking the average of the past four year's water usage, the annual charge to tenants of the Goar Knap allotment site under this proposed arrangement would be £4.42 for smaller plots and £8.84 for larger plots. However, it was acknowledged that a greater use of water recycling by tenants would help to reduce these costs further and at the same time achieve environmental benefits.

Following a discussion about the merits and practicalities of this proposal, the Committee agreed to support the approach put forward by the Finance Working Group which it was noted if implemented would not only ensure that all tenants were given direct control over these charges, but would ensure that tenants would be meeting almost 60% of the cost of providing and maintaining allotments rather than the present 50%.

It was noted that this was in line with Council policy which stated that given the individual benefit of allotment plots to individual tenants, the Town Council sought to recover an increasing proportion of the net cost of providing allotments from the tenants thereby reducing the level of subsidy by council taxpayers.

The Committee noted that the Finance Working Group had further agreed that, in light of this proposed change, there was scope for this year's increase in allotment rents to be kept to 1p per square metre - which equated to an extra £1.43 per year (or 3p per week) for the average plot.

To put matters into perspective, it was indicated that the average annual rent of an allotment plot was currently £41.47, which equated to 79.5p per week. An increase of 1p in the current rate of 29p per square metre would result in an additional annual charge of £1.43, which equated to an extra 3p per week - making a new yearly total of £42.90 - equivalent to 82.5p per week.

It was noted that if these proposals were agreed by the Town Council, both of these changes would come into effect in December 2015 after tenants had been given twelve months' notice of their planned introduction.

The Committee also acknowledged that the approach taken by some tenants to grow their crops - including the use of polytunnels and similar structures - undoubtedly contributed to the level of mains water usage. With this in mind, the Committee supported the inclusion of a new condition requiring all future applications for polytunnels to include an adequate water collection and retention system.

The Town Clerk indicated that the Allotment Tenants' Working Group would be advised of these proposals and any representations received would be reported to the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee and to the Town Council.

RESOLVED

- (1) that the matters be noted;
- (2) that the proposed recharging arrangements for mains water provided on allotments sites be supported along with an increase of 1p per square metre in allotment rents;
- (3) that the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee and the Town Council be informed of this Committee's views on these proposals; and
- (4) that, as a matter of policy, all new applications for polytunnels must include an adequate water collection and retention system, and the conditions relating to allotments be amended to include this requirement.

8/284 COMMITTEE REVENUE ESTIMATES – 2015/16

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk (Agenda item 14 refers).

RESOLVED

- (1) that the Budget Strategy drawn up by the Finance Working Group be supported;
- (2) that the draft estimates, attached as an appendix hereto, be supported and referred to the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee for consideration; and
- (3) that no objection be raised to the suggestion by the Finance Working Group to change the management of the Town Centre Environmental Improvements budget to come under the Grounds and General Maintenance Committee and this view be referred to the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee.

8/285 **FINANCIAL STATEMENT – AUGUST / SEPTEMBER 2014**

The Committee considered the Financial Statement for the period 1 August to 30 September 2014. (Agenda item 15 refers).

RESOLVED

that the Financial Statement be noted.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments from members of the public.

Chairman

SF
18/11/14

YEovil TOWN COUNCIL - ESTIMATES

GROUNDS AND GENERAL MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE

		YEAR 2013/14		YEAR 2014/15		YEAR 2015/16				
NOTES	Item	Allocated	Spent	Allocated	1/2 year spent 30.09.14	Full year estimated spend to 31.03.15	Estimated over spent	Estimated under spent	Estimated required	To be allocated
INCOME 2014/15	Materials and equipment	840	695	750	263	750			760	
1/2 Year to 30/09/14	Water Mains Refurbishment/Repairs	2,200	0	2,000	0	2,000			2,040	
	Water charges	4,200	7,006	4,280	321	4,280			0	
Lease 1044	Allotment Maintenance (SSDC)	7,650	8,759	7,810	5,586	7,810			7,970	
Taps & Keys 55	Allotment Maintenance (Tenants)	3,280	3,246	3,350	1,754	3,350			3,420	
Allotment rents 589	Allotments - Fence Repairs	1,920	1,535	1,960	141	1,960			2,000	
1/2 Year 1688	Leases	400	335	400	0	400			400	
	Goar Knap - Building	1,430	1,111	1,330	660	1,330			1,360	
ESTIMATED INCOME	Newsletter	160	140	140	0	140			150	
2014/15	Best Kept Allotments Competition	230	192	210	158	210			220	
Taps & keys 100	Labour	15,150	12,896	15,300	6,466	15,300			15,610	
Rent 14311	Vehicle	970	1,119	990	453	990			1,010	
Lease 2088	Protective clothing	160	68	160	0	160			160	
Est 2014/15 16499	Dog Bins	210	500	220	0	220			230	
	Open spaces:									
	Open Spaces	142,150	142,150	145,000	72,500	145,000			147,900	
ESTIMATED INCOME	Play Area Repairs/Enhancements	11,260	11,260	11,490	0	11,490			11,720	
2015/16	Country Park	30,220	30,220	30,830	7,708	30,830			31,450	
	Enhancements	3,210	3,210	0	0	0			0	
Taps & Keys 100	Play and Landscape Officer	11,480	11,480	11,710	0	11,710			11,950	
Rents 14806	Holiday Playscheme contribution	5,000	3,335	8,380	0	8,380			8,550	
Lease 2088	Door Step Green	740	847	760	274	760			780	
Est 2015/16 16994	Yew Tree Park - Gate Opening	1,470	1,375	1,500	580	1,500			1,530	
	Total expenditure	244,330	241,479	248,570	96,864	248,570	0	0	249,210	0
Notes:							Estimated underspend (-)			0
										249,210
1	Budget prepared on a year on year basis, with adjustments made for previous year's accruals						Estimated 2015/16 income			16,994
2	Water mains refurbishment/repairs budget allocated to meet planned programme of phased improvements									232,216
3	Income of £2,090 pa receivable from lease of land at Higher Ryalls						+ contingencies @ 5%			11,611
4	Enhancements budget used to increase Holiday Playscheme contribution - to help meet cost of new scheme in Yeovil South Ward									243,827