

AMENITIES & LEISURE COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Amenities & Leisure Committee held in the Council Chamber at the Council Offices, Radstock Lane, Earley, Reading on Wednesday, 4th March 2015 which commenced at 7.45 p.m.

Present

Chairman – Councillor M J Firmager

Councillors Mrs L Chambers, D Chopping, Ms M de Jong, Dr N Holloway, K Miall, Dr N Page and Miss J Rance JP

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor G Grandison (Ill Health).

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, the Chairman expressed his thanks to Officers and Members of the Town Council who had helped with this Committee during the past year.

70. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14th January 2015 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

71. VEHICLES & PLANT

Consideration was given to the attached inventory of vehicles and other major items of plant owned by the Town Council with a view to formulating a replacement policy.

The Town Clerk advised that the Mitsubishi Pick up and the Ford Ranger Supercab Pick-up had now been replaced and the original vehicles would be sold for spare parts. A Member suggested that there was a need to look at the breakdown costs and compare them with the depreciation of new vehicles. The Town Clerk further advised that the Richie Slitter would be used for the parks and open spaces under the Town Council's control plus any areas that might be acquired in the future.

RECCOMENDED that consideration be given to a plan for the replacement of vehicles and plant

RESOLVED that the matter be put on the Agenda for the meeting scheduled to be held on 29th October 2015.

72. PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

Following the decision at the Town Council Meeting on 18th February, the Committee was invited to consider whether to set up a small Working Party to consider the "mechanics" of the proposed competition, or to deal with this item in an alternative way. There needed to be a format with regard to the categories, age groups, prizes, judges and a date when the competition would be held.

The Town Clerk further advised that he was of the opinion that the activity would fall under Section 145 (1) (d) and (e) of the Local Government Act 1972. Members noted that both Councillors D Chopping and B Wedge wished to be involved in the competition and Councillor Mrs P Jorgensen had offered to donate a trophy.

In response to a suggestion from a Member that a Working Party be formed prior to the forthcoming elections, the Town Clerk offered to circulate a note to Councillors requesting them to inform him if they wished to be members of the suggested Working Party. He further advised Members that the administration would have to be implemented by that Working Party.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk circulate a note to Members as outlined above.

73. COMMUNITY & YOUTH CENTRES

73.1 Centrepoint

The Committee was advised that a Youth Club activity was being planned for an evening session at Centrepoint and the initial sessions would be staffed by volunteers led by the JAC team.

It was anticipated that this could grow to include the previously proposed Youth Café initiative. The Town Clerk reminded Members that, when the Town Council took over the running of the Centre, there was no Youth Activity or staff resources to build something up. However, following initial work by the JAC team and the Facilities Manager, a Youth Club was set up on Saturday 28th February. Additionally, the Town Council had been able to secure additional use of the Studio Hall at the Leisure Centre for the Youth sessions.

The Facilities Manager added that there were four JAC volunteers together with two Earley Town Council employees at the first meeting plus around twenty five to thirty invited guests who contributed to the event which ran from 7.00 to 9.00pm. He hoped to increase the venue time in due course, possibly to include a midweek session.

RESOLVED that the planning of an official launch be referred to the Youth & Community Sub-Committee.

73.2 Community & Youth Centre Leases

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of a confidential report.

74. SOL JOEL PARK

74.1 Inclusive Play Equipment Project

Members were reminded that Town Council Officers, in partnership with Officers from Wokingham Borough Council, had been working on a project to provide inclusive play equipment at Sol Joel Park, funded entirely from Section 106 monies. The aim of the project was to provide an area which could be used both by able bodied children and by children with a range of disabilities. In addition, because of its proposed location within the existing play area at the Park, it was integrated with other existing equipment which allowed groups and families to enjoy the Park's facilities together.

There had been a number of consultations with potential users of the facilities, including local groups who supported children with a range of disabilities, and the Special Educational Needs Department from Earley St. Peter's School. This had culminated in an exhibition of the designs being offered by three shortlisted

companies in the Council Chamber in autumn 2014. As part of the exhibition, potential users were asked to list the type of equipment which they would like to see provided and also to highlight any specific items of equipment being offered by any of the individual companies which had been shortlisted. The completed feedback forms were analysed and it appeared that the overall design most favoured was the one submitted by Jupiter Play, but that some specific items of equipment from the other companies were favoured. As a result, Jupiter Play was asked to draw up the final design, taking all feedback comments into account and also including any specific items of preferred equipment from other manufacturers.

The resulting design was available for Councillors to view at the meeting.

The Town Clerk advised that it was a requirement of the funding for the project that significant consultation should take place with the user groups and that the resulting feedback should be incorporated into the design. Because of that, it had not been possible to follow the Town Council's formal tender process.

It was anticipated that the equipment would be in place by the school summer holidays Members were, therefore, requested to consider the following:

- In view of the way the final design for the play area, as detailed above, had been achieved, and if Councillors were mindful to approve the quotation, it was requested that the appropriate Financial Standing Order 11.1(b)(i) be suspended.
- The quotation from Jupiter Play in the sum of £90,431.79 for the Inclusive Play Area at Sol Joel Park be approved.

RESOLVED that

1. In view of the way the final design for the play area, as detailed above, had been achieved, the appropriate Financial Standing Order 11.1(b)(i) be suspended
2. The quotation from Jupiter Play in the sum of £90,431.79 for the Inclusive Play Area at Sol Joel Park be approved.

75. PROPOSAL FOR A COMMUNITY ORCHARD

Further to Minute 66 of the last meeting of this Committee held on 14th January 2015, Members were requested to note that an order had been placed for heritage trees for the Paddick Drive site. The planned planting had taken place today.

The Senior Park Ranger advised that the Paddick Drive site had been planted up with twenty trees by members of the Earley Environment Group together with the Mayor and Councillor T Chambers. A journalist from the XN magazine was also in attendance and it hoped that there might be an article in the new Wokingham newspaper.

The Town Clerk advised that there was an ongoing review of all the Community assets and he would be meeting with Wokingham Borough Council Officers on 11th March to look at alternative sites for more Community Orchards. He added that Earley was one of the first of the Town and Parish Councils to be reviewed.

76. FINANCIAL REVIEW

76.1 Cemeteries & Allotments

76.1.1 Cemeteries

Members were reminded that the Town Council managed the Cemetery in Mays Lane. Different fee scales were charged, dependent on the place of residence as previously agreed by this Committee

The Income and Expenditure for the Cemetery for 2014/15 was as follows:

Expenditure

<u>CEMETERY</u>	<u>Est.14/15</u> £	<u>Rev.14/15</u> £	<u>Act. to</u> <u>30/11/14</u> £	<u>Est.15/16</u> £
Rates	300.00	188.40	188.40	195.00
Maintenance	2750.00	4000.00	3271.23	2800.00
Spoil Disposal	500.00	500.00	134.19	530.00
Tree Removal	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Wages	19055.00	19055.00	12703.37	19625.00
Gatekeeper	2125.00	2025.00	1350.76	2070.00
Grass Cutting	7000.00	7000.00	6510.00	7200.00
Unsafe Memorial Repair	156.00	156.00	0.00	156.00
Water Rates	360.00	360.00	103.62	400.00
Memorials/Trees	200.00	200.00	153.90	200.00
Sundries	50.00	50.00	26.00	50.00
New Spine	700.00	1162.25	1162.25	800.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	33196.00	34696.65	25603.72	34026.00

Income

<u>CEMETERY</u>	<u>Est.14/15</u> £	<u>Rev.14/15</u> £	<u>Act. to</u> <u>30/11/14</u> £	<u>Est.15/16</u> £
Cemetery Charges	46000.00	48000.00	32001.95	50000.00
Licence Fee	6838.91	8197.76	8197.76	8197.76
TOTAL INCOME	52838.91	56197.76	40199.71	58197.76

NET EXPENDITURE	-19642.91	-21501.11	-14595.99	-24171.76
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The Committee was requested to note that income from burials and cremated remains in 2014/15 was expected to be higher than forecast. However, the Town Council could only base estimates on past results and had no control over the outcome.

Because of the volume of burials in 2014/15, this meant that two new spines had to be constructed; thus expenditure on this item went over budget.

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that, when internments commenced in the extension area, the budget would need to be increased. Therefore, when reviewing fees in the future, the Town Council would need to be mindful of the costs that would arise when the current burial area was full up and the extension was being utilised.

76.1.2 Allotments

Members were reminded that the Town Council managed the allotment site in Culver Lane.

The Income and Expenditure for the allotments for 2014/15 was as follows:

Expenditure

<u>ALLOTMENTS</u>	<u>Est.14/15</u> £	<u>Rev.14/15</u> £	<u>Act. to</u> <u>30/11/14</u> £	<u>Est.15/16</u> £
Maintenance	600.00	1450.00	1359.69	620.00
Pest Control	500.00	500.00	280.00	520.00
Wages	1580.00	1580.00	1053.35	1620.00
Water Rates	515.00	515.00	0.00	600.00
Sundries	0.00	50.00	0.00	0.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	3195.00	4045.00	2687.04	3360.00

Income

<u>ALLOTMENTS</u>	<u>Est.14/15</u> £	<u>Rev.14/15</u> £	<u>Act. to</u> <u>30/11/14</u> £	<u>Est.15/16</u> £
Charges (income from rental)	3000.00	3000.00	0.00	3200.00
Insurance Claim	0.00	1218.00	1218.00	0.00
TOTAL INCOME	3000.00	4218.00	1218.00	3200.00

NET EXPENDITURE	195.00	-173.00	1469.04	160.00
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The Committee was requested to note that the estimated income was based upon the expectation of uptake of the allotment plots and that the allotment year ran from 1st January. Therefore, this estimate had to be made almost one year in advance. Nevertheless, the actual income from allotment rents was £3,010.50 as at 25th February 2015.

Members were also advised that a differential rate was charged for new plot holders in order to move towards the allotments being self-funding.

Members noted that the wages outturn for both the Cemetery and the Allotments was a reflection of the apportionment of time between different aspects of the services across the Committee.

77. PUBLICATIONS

The Committee noted that the following items had been received and were available for viewing in the Council Chamber:

Berkshire Youth:	News – January/February 2015
National Association of Memorial Masons	Newsletter 2015

78. PRESS RELEASES

RESOLVED that

1. the item relating to the Community Orchard should receive emphasis
2. the items relating to the Centrepont Community & Youth Centre and the photographic competition should receive emphasis at the appropriate times.

79. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 9.20pm.