

OLNEY TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of the Recs & Services Committee held at The Olney Centre on Monday 28 June 2021 at 7.00pm

Present: Cllrs Geach, Varley, Brock, Ward, Stokes, Brown, Geary, Rodden, Bethune, Pibworth, Rowland

Public Forum: There was one question from a member of the public.

- 1) As no chair of the Committee was elected, Cllr Geach opened the meeting and read out a letter from a member of the public relating to the provision of dog poo bins on Yardley Road. The writer also asked that the Council consider the number of bins in view of the new houses being built.

RS21/12 Apologies for absence

Apologies received from Cllr Whitworth

RS21/13 Elect a Chair of the committee

Cllr Geach then asked the committee to move onto the business of electing a chair of the committee. Cllr Varley was proposed by Cllr Stokes seconded by Cllr Pibworth. The vote was unanimous.

Resolved: Cllr Varley was elected as Chair of the Recs & Services Committee

RS21/14 Declarations of interest on items on the agenda

Cllr Varley declared an interest at Item RS21/18 as a member of the Committee Orchard Committee.

RS21/15 To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 8th February 2021

Resolved: As no one was present at the previous meeting, the Chair received the minutes.

RS21/16 To consider the remit of the Recs and Services committee and to review the Terms of Reference.

The Committee were invited to comment on the Terms of Reference of the Recs and Services Committee. It was unanimously agreed to remove Item 9 as this was deemed as being a task outside the remit of the Committee and one for the Clerk and/or Deputy Clerk.

Signed: Cllr J Varley, 16th August 2021

Proposed Cllr Geary Seconded Cllr Geach Unanimous

It was also unanimously agreed to amend Item 12 to read as follows:

‘Overseeing the maintenance and management of buildings other than The Olney Centre, used or managed by the Town Council.’

Proposed Cllr Bethune Seconded Cllr Geach Unanimous

Resolved: that the Terms of Reference are received and approved with amendments made as outlined above

RS21/17 To consider an Open Space Policy

The Committee had received an Open space policy to consider. There was some consternation as to what the policy was trying to achieve.

Resolved: to review the Open Space Policy again and a draft be presented back to Recs & Services later in the year.

Cllr Pibworth had to leave at this point and gave his apologies.

RS21/18 To receive a report about the Allotment field from interest residents

Cllr Varley declared an interest as she sits on the Community Orchard Committee. Cllr Geach took over as Chair.

A representative from the Community Orchard Committee explained that she would like the Committee to consider repositioning the Orchard to the area where the mature trees are currently situated. The Orchard Committee had taken advice from a tree expert, and this was a strong recommendation to ensure that trees grew and thrived. She provided further details relating to the reasons for the repositioning and explained that it would be a slightly wider piece of land but that the total area would remain the same.

Resolved: that the Community Orchard be repositioned pending a motion for full Council to approve the change.

Proposed Cllr Geach Seconded Cllr Rowland Unanimous

Cllr Varley re-joined the meeting.

The Community Orchard representative then went on to ask the Council to consider ensuring that the Allotment Field be retained as a wildflower meadow.

Cllr Varley said that she believed the area was dedicated to allotments and the potential for future allotments on the Neighbourhood Plan.

Cllr Stokes asked whether there were cost implications for having the area dedicated as a wildflower meadow – for instance maintenance.

The Community Orchard representative replied that it would actually probably save costs as the meadow would need to be mown and the hay removed twice a year. There was no other maintenance apart from mowing a couple of paths through the area to enable walkers to have a path.

Cllr Geary backed this up. Cllrs Geary and Rodden suggested that a full maintenance plan be developed, recorded and circulated to the office, the grounds staff and to the full Council so that everyone in future would know what the plan was and be able to reference it. To be taken to full Council.

Issues surrounding parking at the allotments were discussed. Cllr Varley asked that we shelved the issue of parking as it was going to be dealt with holistically for the whole town by the Working Group that Cllr Brock was setting up.

There followed a discussion about the state of the track running from East to West at the allotments. Cllrs Geary and Geach had visited the site recently. Cllr Geach said that he felt the section of track running East to West should be closed until some basic maintenance could be carried out. He felt that the potholes had become so severe that it was only a matter of time before someone took out a sump driving over them.

In the meantime, the East West track would be closed and signage put up to explain why.

Proposed: Cllr Geary Seconded: Cllr Geach 10 in favour, one abstention. Passed

Resolved: 1) that the Community Orchard be repositioned pending full approval from full council

- 2) that a motion will be put forward a motion to full Council recommending that the Allotment Field be retained as a wildflower meadow unless the demand for allotments grew to the point where additional areas need to be given over for that purpose.
- 3) that the Groundstaff fill in the holes in the track at the allotment with hardcore and hire a whacker to compact it as a temporary fix. To then obtain quotes to find out how much it would cost to lay a permanent track and to temporarily close the east west track with signage stating why.

RS21/19 Review of inventory of land and other assets including buildings and office equipment (inc allotments roads and state of) (inc state of the rec letter received from resident last month read out at OTC Meeting)

The Committee had been asked to carry out a review of inventory of land and other assets, including buildings and office equipment. Cllr Stokes asked if we had received a list of land and assets as this wasn't circulated with the agenda.

Cllr Geach said he believed this was related to the series of photographs that we had received prior to the first Council meeting and that these, in themselves, were meaningless.

Cllrs Bethune and Geach suggested that it would be a good idea for a smaller group to walk round the town with an inventory list of land, buildings and assets to carry out a review of the state of the estate. The Committee agreed this was a great idea. Cllr Varley said she would try to obtain a schedule of assets from the office.

Resolved: Cllrs Varley, Geach, Bethune, Stokes, Rowland, Brown and Rodden volunteered to attend a Saturday morning walk to review the current state of the estate

RS21/20: To agree new dog bins for the new Yardley Estate

Some discussion was had relating to new dog bins for the Yardley Chase Estate. Cllr Geary said that these would come out of Section 106 money, and that we needed to tell the developers where the bins should be sited. It was agreed that we should obtain plans for the Yardley Chase Estate.

Cllr Bethune also stated that she felt a bin on the Yardley Road is needed now as it is one of the main entry points to the circular walk. She also reported that several are in a poor state of repair and need to be replaced.

Cllr Brock said she has been approached by a company wanting to sponsor dog bins. She was asked to send these through to the office.

Resolved: to replace damaged bins and install a new one at Yardley Road to be taken to full Council for approval.

RS21/21: To consider an arboretum in memory of the Covid deaths in Olney.

Resolved: As the scale of deaths in Olney as a result of the Covid pandemic is currently unknown and the situation has not yet been resolved, the Committee resolved to consider the idea of having an arboretum later in the year.

The meeting closed at 20.30

Signed: Cllr J Varley, 16th August 2021