

Minutes of the Meeting of the **GENERAL OPERATIONS COMMITTEE** held at the Town Hall, Swanage on **WEDNESDAY 1st AUGUST 2018** at **4.30 p.m.**

Chairman: -

Councillor J Bishop

Swanage Town Council

Present: -

Councillor M Bonfield

Swanage Town Council

Councillor G Green

Swanage Town Council

Councillor A Harris

Swanage Town Council

Councillor G Marsh

Swanage Town Council

Councillor S Poultney

Swanage Town Council

Also present: -

Dr M Ayres

Town Clerk

Mr G Brookes

Operations Manager

Miss C Johnston

Operations Department Administration Officer

Mr W Love

Grounds Maintenance Supervisor

Mr A Bennett

Prospect Allotment Association
(Until 5.10 p.m.)

Mr M Green

James Smith Funeral Directors
(Until 5.45 p.m.)

Mrs P Lancaster

Prospect Allotment Association
(Until 5.10 p.m.)

Public Participation Time

There were five members of the public present at the meeting.

1. Apologies

Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Councillors Finch and Lejeune, Mr M Jones (Prospect Allotment Association) and Roger Marsh (Swanage Fishermen's Association).

2. Declarations of Interest

Members were invited to declare their interests and consider any requests for Grants of Dispensations in accordance with paragraphs 9 – 13 of the Council's Code of Conduct and regulations made under chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011.

There were no declarations to record on this occasion.

The dispensation granted to Councillor Green in respect of Cemetery Matters was noted.

3. Matters Arising from Minutes of the Meeting of the General Operations Committee held on 4th April 2018

There were no matters raised.

4. Cemetery Matters

a) Godlingston Cemetery – update on extension and ceremony hall proposal

The Town Clerk provided an update on work carried out regarding the proposed extension to Godlingston Cemetery. It was explained that a decision would be required as to whether or not a new ceremony hall should be built as part of the

project. It had not been possible to draw-up costed proposals for consideration at this meeting, and it was therefore AGREED:

That a working party be appointed to consider proposals for the cemetery extension, consisting of the Chairman, Councillors Green, Poultney, Marsh and Bonfield, together with the representative from James Smith and relevant officers.

The Chairman invoked Standing Order No.1 p. to briefly suspend the meeting so as to allow members of the public to address the Committee, and respond to questions relevant to agenda item 4.b).

b) Northbrook Cemetery – Maintenance of war graves

Consideration was given to representations from a member of the public regarding maintenance of the Commonwealth War Graves (CWGs) in the council's cemeteries, and in particular the extent of the undergrowth in Northbrook Cemetery. It was noted that the grass in Northbrook Cemetery is allowed to grow over the summer as part of Dorset Wildlife Trust's Living Churchyard project, although pathways are maintained to the CWGs. The grass is also cut back in the autumn.

The concerned member of the public had offered to design signs to indicate the location of the CWGs and it was agreed that this was a useful suggestion. The possibility of interested volunteers working with the Council to better maintain the graves was also raised. It was agreed that officers should liaise with the member of the public to explore these ideas further and report to a future meeting.

5. Fishermen's Huts and Jetties

a) Fishermen's slipway project update

The Town Clerk advised on the grant application to the European Maritime Fisheries Fund, which is due to be signed off imminently. This had been delayed pending the issue of a licence by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO). It was currently anticipated that groundworks will commence at the end of August.

6. Allotment Matters

a) Allotment fire incident and management of sheds

The representatives of Prospect Allotment Association described the recent fire on one of the plots, which was reportedly started by a gas bottle cooker. The fire had destroyed a shed and burnt out the entire plot. Access for the fire brigade had been hampered by inconsiderate parking in the vicinity.

The Operations Manager reported the need to review fuel storage on allotment plots due to the explosion being caused by a gas tank. It was therefore proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Marsh, and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That a working party be appointed to liaise with Prospect Allotment Association to consider safety issues on the allotments.

The following points were also raised by the Allotment Association:

- The blind corner at the entrance to the allotments is still overgrown.
- The overhanging of trees from a neighbouring property.
- Grass not being cut around the car parks and inconsiderate parking.

It was AGREED:

That concerns over parking around Rabling Green and Prospect Crescent be referred to the next meeting of the Transport Committee in November.

b) Membership of the National Allotment Society

Consideration was given to a briefing note outlining the benefits of membership of the National Allotment Society, the Council's membership of which had recently lapsed. Whilst Members were broadly in support of the Council re-joining (at a cost of £66 per annum), it was agreed that the matter should be given some further consideration by the relevant working party.

Mr A Bennett and Mrs P Lancaster left the meeting at 5.10 p.m.

The Chairman invoked Standing Order No.1 p. to briefly suspend the meeting so as to allow members of the public to address the Committee, and respond to questions relevant to agenda item 7.

7. King George's Field

a) Proposed community activity path and Park Run

Consideration was given to a proposal put forward by two local residents to establish a Park Run at King George's Field in Swanage. These free weekly running events are already established in Poole, Weymouth and Blandford, and are promoted as a unique event for runners, walkers and joggers bringing considerable benefits for people's wellbeing.

Some concerns were raised with regard to litter, dog mess, cost and impact on the sports pitches in that location. The need to ensure that ground conditions were improved where necessary, such as by the creation of an appropriate path, was also highlighted.

It was proposed by Councillor Green, seconded by Councillor Bonfield and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That a working party be appointed, consisting of Councillors Bonfield, Green and Poultney, to discuss the matters raised above with the Park Run volunteers.

8. Commemoration of centenary of armistice

Following recent discussion at a meeting of the Royal British Legion Remembrance Committee, consideration was given to the purchase by the Town Council of a number of "Silent Soldiers". It was agreed that these silhouette military figures could be stationed at prominent points in the town, such as at the two "Welcome to Swanage" signs.

It was suggested that the image of a sailor should be considered as well as one of a soldier and representative of the RAF. It was reported by the representative of James Smith Funeral Directors that Douch Family Funeral Directors would be happy to sponsor the cost of one of these images.

Given the level of interest in this matter, and the discussion concerning where to site them, it was AGREED:

That officers give the matter further consideration and then consult a working party consisting of the councillors that sit on the General Operations Committee.

9. Public Conveniences – Consideration of a letter requesting dementia friendly signage

Consideration was given to a letter requesting improvements to signage in Council-run public toilets to help those suffering from dementia. A discussion ensued as to how the signs could be improved with suggestions of more appropriate and clearer signage. The possibility of consulting the local Admiral Nurse was raised. It was AGREED:

That the Operations Manager be asked to make improvements to the signage where possible, following a meeting between Councillor Bonfield and the local resident who had brought the matter to the Council's attention.

10. Operations Manager's report

The Operations Manager provided an update on health and safety at work and was pleased to report that during the last quarter there had been no reported incidents of slips and trips causing injury, nor of RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences). There were three reported minor incidents at the depot with none requiring medical attention. It was reported that staffing levels at the depot had become critical due to vacancies and long-term sickness.

The following matters were also noted.

- Fire risk assessment reviews are imminent.
- Shore Road festive lights have been checked by a contractor.
- The clock on Shore Road is now fully operational.
- Toilet upgrade project – the disability discrimination compliant public toilets at Beach Gardens are now operational and the snagging list has been addressed.
- The installation of skate park equipment at King George's has now been completed.
- Portable appliance testing has been completed and safety checks are ongoing.
- Beach raking is carried out on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.
- The problem of dog fouling continues.
- Vandalism continues to be a problem in particular at the public conveniences – Mermond Place toilets have suffered a broken window.
- Recycling banks at North Beach car park – the three recycling units are yet to be removed.

Further to the above, it was requested that information about vandalism be made public on social, together with an estimate of the costs to rectify.

Mr M Green left the meeting at 5.45 p.m.

11. Items of Information and Matters for Forthcoming Agendas

a) Railings Shore Road to Santa Fe Fun Park –

The Chairman raised a request from a member of the public for a hand rail to be installed to assist when walking up from Shore Road to the Santa Fe Fun Park.

12. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting has been scheduled for 4.30 p.m. on Wednesday 14th November 2018.

The Meeting closed at 5.50 p.m.
