



## Minutes of the Meeting of the Operations Committee Held on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2019 at 8pm In the Community Office

**Present:**

**Councillors:** Tom Bindoff (TB) – Vice-Chair  
Ian Hill (IH)  
Roger Beattie (RB)  
Terry Jackson (TJ)  
Fergus Lapage (FL)

**Co-opted Member:** Jenny Wilkinson (JW)

**Officer:** Kristina Tynan (KT)

**Members of the Public:** 0

14/19 Apologies for Absence  
Bob West.

15/19 Chairman's Remarks  
TB said that that it was sad to hear of the death of dear Tony, who had been a member of this committee since it came into being in 2008. It had also been coming around to nearly 30 years of him having served on the Parish Council. TB also said that there had not been much in Watlington that Tony had not been involved with.

16/19 Minutes of the Meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2019 which were accepted by Council on the 12/2/2019 to be agreed as a correct record  
**Allotments** (Minute 09/19 refers) It was agreed to take out the sentence, 'However, the land could be claimed'.  
**Resolved:** That with the above change, these minutes were a correct record of this meeting and that they be signed by the Chairman.

17/19 Declarations of Interest  
There were no declarations of interest notified.

18/19 Matters arising  
**Path to Allotment on Bottom of Love Lane** (Minute 09/19 refers) – TB will have a look at the condition of this informal path and report back on any issues.

19/19 Update on Outstanding /Completed Issues  
1. **Cherry Tree in Paddock** – KT to ask CwT for a price for a good prune of this tree.  
2. **Parking at bottom of Love Lane between Schools and Chequers** – RB will obtain some costings for the area that would need to be covered and will bring back to the next meeting.

3. **Kissing Gate with disabled access-** Awaiting Response from Watlington Public Charities following their meeting.
4. **I-Play** –Work Commissioned.
5. **Super User** - Training of people to officially identify potholes and repair them – MR has put something about this in the Watlington Times and once this is published it will be put on our blog and Facebook page.
6. **Moving car park tubs to Couching Street/Brook Street Junction** -TJ/TB will try to get one moved within the next month. Keith Jackson has also offered to help do this.
7. **Litter Bins for recycling in the Town** – TJ had a map of locations but will need to re-think these depending on the size and room on the pavements. She will bring this information back for the next meeting.
8. **MUGA** – RB reported that the Planning Application has been resubmitted. Residents were sent a letter informing them of this and other information such as the times the lights would be on etc.
9. **Deep Cleanse in Watlington** – 28<sup>th</sup> Feb – 5<sup>th</sup> March – TJ and other Councillors have suggested areas, and these will be sent to SODC. It was suggested that flyers be put on cars in specific areas to inform them that this will be happening.

## 20/19 Highway/Footpath/Tree Issues

### 1. Highways

a) **Pyrton Lane Improvements** – Awaiting response from OCC. KT has sent a chase up email to Steve Harrod.

### b) **Other Highway Issues**

**Hedges at the corner of Pyrton Lane-** It was noted that OCC have sent a letter to the owner asking for them to cut it back.

**Christmas Common Road/Verges Improvement Scheme** – KT reported that she has sent a chase up email to the Highway Officer in charge of this scheme asking for an update but has had no response. She has also asked Steve Harrod to chase up a response. It was noted that it has been sent to the Drainage Team for their comments.

**Outreach Meeting-** Due to purdah regulations and with Elections in May it was suggested that this be held in June 2019. KT will find out available dates for the Fox and Hounds.

**Couching Street recent road closure** – It was noted that this closure was for OCC to drill some bore holes to see what the underlying structure of the road is.

**Cuxham Road** (by railings to the brook) – It was noted that there is subsidence in this location which makes it dangerous. It was agreed to ask OCC to fix this urgently on safety grounds. KT will update FixmyStreet with this issue.

## 2. Footpaths

a) **Footpath 13** – The Clerk has sent a letter to the Landowner asking for permission for works to be done to improve the footpath as requested by TOE. TB reported that when a meeting was held with Rachel Sanderson (TOE) on site, she did have some suggestions of different ways to achieve a better surface which will be investigated.

### b) **General Footpath Issues**

There were none.

## 3. Tree/Hedge Issues

a) **Hedge Cutting Schedule 2019** – attached from Owain Devey. This was noted. However previously the committee had agreed to cut the Johnson's Alley side hedge every two years to an eight-foot height, due to one resident not wishing to be able to be overlooked by the car park, but the advice from OD is to cut it annually. This was discussed and it was noted that-cutting only every two years would be more expensive as it would need to different equipment due to the increased height. The resident has offered to pay the difference, but it was thought that this would not be appropriate as it would give the message that if you can afford to pay then you can get what you want.

**RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:** That the Parish Council cut the Johnson's Alley hedge on an annual basis in line with the hedges on the other sides of the car park. That it would not be appropriate for the Parish Council to receive funds from a resident to cut one of the hedges on a different schedule than the other hedges in this area.

## 21/19 Open Spaces

1. Grass Cutting 2019 – Update from Meeting 20/2/2019 attended by Mark Williams and Lee Collins and Cllrs, Ian Hill, Roger Beattie, Terry Jackson, Fergus Lapage and Jenny Wilkinson.

We had been informed by Berinsfield Community Office that after 17 years one Housing Association decided before Christmas to put their grounds contract out to tender and BCB did not win the renewal. After deliberation by the BCB Board it was decided to close the business and all employees will be made redundant at the end of the February

Mark Williams has said that Lee Collins is a Berinsfield resident, has been a long-standing subcontractor to BCB and more recently was a volunteer BCB board member. Lee has delivered BCB's parish work and private work and 70-odd housing association gardens each month for many years. He will be carrying out March parish cuts on behalf of BCB. Lee Collins has purchased the BCB equipment and would be happy to take on the contract for WPC at the current BCB prices. Mark Williams would assist him in the background during the season to organise health & safety accreditation, accounts and quality control.

There was much discussion and it was noted that at present Devey Tree Care have the hedge contract for WPC. BCB have been subcontracting Tracey Bilcliffe for the Paddock gardening and it was thought it would be best to employ her direct for this.

It was noted that it would be impossible to be able to tender for a grass contract now to start in March.

**RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL.** That we enter into a contract with Lee Collins for one year for the grass cutting contract. That we employ Tracey Bilcliffe directly for the paddock gardening. The Clerk will ensure that all contractors have the necessary paperwork.

The Operations Committee will keep a close eye on the work and will consider re-tendering in September 2019. The Clerk will ensure that all contractors have the necessary paperwork.

## 2. Outdoor Table Tennis Tables

These will be installed in March. RB said that everything is in hand.

## 3. Recreation Ground /Sports Field/Pavilion

### a) **Consideration of installing a pump track** – request from Martin Dix

It was thought that as there are a few projects currently being investigated that we should re-visit this in 12 months' time.

## 4. Paddock

### a) **Performance Space** – Awaiting SODC approval on the tree works application

## 5. Other Areas

### a) **Triangle on Cuxham Road** – KT needs to arrange a meeting with the Moggs. TJ said that we should consider installing a noticeboard here at some point.

b) **Willow Close** – Clearance along hedge- TB/TJ have visited the site and have slightly differing opinions on what should be done. TB said that none of the growth is beyond the edge of the road. There are 2-3 patches of brambles which could be removed. He also said the cover the hedge gives may be welcome for residents of Marlbrook and Site B especially during construction work on Site B. The existing debris could be moved but it will rot down so TB thinks it should be left. He suggested that there could be a mention of this on our Watlington Times page and a Facebook post that states that it is an offence to dump garden waste on public areas. TJ said that she thought the debris should be moved and it would not be that different to what the Friends of Watlington Hill do on the Hill and we could get a skip for the debris etc. TB said he thinks it would be too much for a Work Party to do. It was agreed to get a cost for a skip.

### c) **Green Area at Marlbrook** – Consideration of installing bollards to stop cars driving over and parking on the green – attached draft survey for residents.

The draft survey was considered. It was agreed that we add another question, asking if anyone would be prepared to join in a Working Party to clear up Willow Close.

## 22/19 Property

### 1. Car Park

**Recommendation from Strategy Committee:** That the Operation Committee consider the purchase and installation of new/improved highway signs on Shirburn Street, entrance to Pavilion car park, on the side of the Fish & Chip shop and Couching Street as well as the purchase and installation of a large new sign for the car park detailing the parking restrictions. Signs should clearly show blue 'P' and distinguish between short (Hill Road) and long stay (Pavilion) parking.

It was agreed to obtain costings in the first instance and then to consider these further. All members to visit the locations above before the next meeting.

**Recommendation from Strategy Committee** – That Operations Committee consider that additional 2 hour stay bays be designated in Hill Road car park.

**A vote was taken: 3 in favour, 2 against. CARRIED**

It was agreed that all members visit the site to consider where these would be best located and defer to the next meeting for further discussion.

**Mud in the Car Park** – JW asked if this is something the Task Force should be considering doing on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in April if the Payback Team cannot do it. KT will be meeting with the organiser of the Payback Team in March.

## 2. Public Conveniences

a) **Consideration of new hand units** – These units are now in excess of 20-year-old and Wallgate will no longer be able to give us a maintenance contract as some parts are now obsolete. A quote for new units is attached for discussion.

It was agreed to defer this to the next meeting. KT will email out information on these to members.

b) **British Toilet Association** – JW has stated that there does not seem any benefit to our joining them. The members are mostly industry product suppliers of cleaning materials, fixtures (eg Wallgate) and so on, not Parish Councils or individuals. The BTA did battle on for 10 years to get business rates removed from public toilets which came into force last year. They are also trying to get the government to take the provision of publicly available clean hygienic toilets seriously. The BTA have offered publicity for WPC Conveniences as they want to show what one small parish council can do.

JW said that our public conveniences are being used more and more and the Men's seem to be constantly in use. 40% of public toilets have been closed in the last few years.

JW asked for photographs of before and after the refurbishment. TJ said she was sure she had some before photos and will send to JW. We may be inspected and get some publicity. We should let SODC know about this.

JW said it would be useful to install some boot scrapers, with a sign asking people to clean their boots outside the loos so that less mud is brought into them by the many walkers.

## 3. Parish Office

a) **Carpet for Office** – new quote by John Hawkes – attached.

**Resolved:** That RB and the Clerk be delegated to bring a recommendation back to the next meeting.

## 23/19 Sub-Committees

### 1. **Allotments**

IH has checked with Land Registry and the Allotments are not registered.

**Recommendation to Council:** That the Parish Council register the Allotments with Land Registry.

### 2. **PSFC**

#### **Dogs on leads on the Sports Field**

**Recommendation to Operations Committee:** The PSFC would like the Operations Committee to investigate putting a by-law in place that dogs are kept on leads in the Sports Field and Recreation area.

It was agreed that IH investigate the issue of whether a by-law could be made and find out information on this for the next meeting.

## 24/19 General Issues

1. **Food Banks and Community Fridge Larder** – TJ said that many communities are putting in larder fridges in area where people can put in food and people in need can take it. There was concern about vandalism and how the fridges would be protected.

JW said she had been looking at providing a location for collecting toiletries, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrushes deodorants, sanitary products etc which can be given as parcels to the homeless and refugees. She said the Watlington Gives initiative is great, but it is only for one time of the year and things are needed all year round. The churches have collection boxes for food, and they contribute to 2 different charities and this should be left to the churches.

JW has spoken to the Co-op about having a box to collect toiletries in the store and they will check with Head Office. She would also be looking at getting volunteers to deliver these to Oxford if the scheme can go ahead.

**Re-filling of visitors' water bottles** – JW said that she is quite often asked to do this and is happy to do so. She asked if the café and pubs would do this also. JW will find this out.

2. **Great British Spring Clean** – TJ said that this will take place on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 11-1pm

3. **Mr T Levant – Asking to build a food outlet in the Car Park** - The committee unanimously agreed that this is not an appropriate place and that we would not allow any loss of car parking spaces.

**Resolved:** That we write to Mr Levant saying that his request is refused on the points made above.

4. **Walkers are Welcome** – FL asked for approval on the following:

1 set up a steering group

2 inform 'Walkers are Welcome' and apply for provisional membership at £40 for 12 months

3 agree a local mentor

4 carry out community development work and submit an application form for approval.

FL stated that the benefits may include more visitors to the town, increased business, more local participation in walking, perhaps an annual walking festival to celebrate the bluebells and a programme of new local walks to engage people, perhaps with different themes. He also asked for the following recommendation to be approved.

**Operations Committee is recommended** to approve a budget of £300 to cover development costs for the above work.

There was much discussion on this. TJ said that there are problems with big groups of workers especially if they all park in the car park. It was noted that a Walkers are Welcome group needs to be set up by the Community as it is proved that it does not work if Town or Parish Councils set them up. It was agreed that the first step should be to engage with the community to see if there is interest to set one up. RB said that there is a community run one in Henley and he will ask for information from them. It was agreed that this be further discussed at the next meeting.

## 25/19 Correspondence

1. PSCO Graham Devey – Do we wish to do a Speed Watch – the machine is available – To reply to our PCSO saying that we do not wish to do one at the moment.

2. AMGSport – projects for local authorities- Noted.

3. Gareth Batson – Looking for a 6000m gym area in Watlington- Noted

4, SODC Xplorer Event – Asking to use the recreation ground for an event - It was agreed that we give

permission for this.

26/19 Future Issues for Discussion/Implementation

Noticeboard for Children's Play Area

Deferred items above for the next meeting.

27/18 Any Other Business

**Table Tennis Club** - RB reported that there are now two table tennis groups which meet on two different days in The Social. Everyone is welcome to attend.

**THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS THE MEETING CLOSED AT 9.45PM**

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