

Dorchester Town Council

Management Committee

13 March 2018

Present: Councillors C. Biggs, A. Canning, G. Duke, J. Hewitt, S. Jones, F. Kent-Ledger, T. Loakes, R. Potter, M. Rennie and K. Rice (Chairman).

In Attendance

Councillor T. Harries.

F. McLaren, Friends of the Borough Gardens for Minute No. 64.

Apologies: The Mayor (Councillor S. Hosford) and Councillor A. Lyall.

60. **Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 16 January 2018, adopted by Council on 30 January 2018, were taken as read and were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

61. **Site Visits to Council Owned Properties and Sites**

The Committee considered the notes of the site visit, to which all Members of the Council had been invited, held on 20 February 2018 (Appendix 1 to these minutes).

Resolved

That the notes of the site visit be received.

62. **Management Arrangements – Outdoor Services**

The Committee considered a report from the Outdoor Services Manager updating it on the work undertaken and the achievements made by the Outdoor Services Team since the last meeting of the Committee. The Outdoor Services Manager responded to Members detailed questions on the report.

Members wished to thank staff for all their work in keeping the town centre pavements traversable during the recent snow and ice. It was noted that there was a stretch of pavement from Brewery Square to the town centre which could usefully be added to the Council's gritting schedule.

Resolved

That the Outdoor Services Team update be noted.

63. **Borough Gardens – New Tennis Courts**

Following completion of the ground works Members were pleased to note that work to construct the new tennis courts on the old bowling green in the Borough Gardens had now

commenced. For the work to be undertaken safely it had been necessary to close the southern end of West Walks and West Walks Road and also suspend the residents and on street parking at the northern end of West Walks Road. The topsoil was being moved to Castle Park play area for future reuse. It was anticipated that the new courts would be completed by mid May and painted two weeks later once the new hard surface had settled and dried.

Resolved

That the update be noted

64. Tirah Information board – Borough Gardens

The representative from the Friends of the Borough Gardens addressed the Committee requesting that Members reconsider turning the Tirah information board around and, following discussion, Members agreed that this should happen.

Resolved

That the Tirah information board in the Borough Gardens to turned around 180 degrees.

65. Request for a Wheelchair Accessible Swing

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that since the last meeting of the Committee a further resident has come forward requesting similar facilities. A meeting had been arranged with the residents to discuss the matter and the outcome would be brought to the next meeting.

Resolved

That the update be noted.

66. Requests for Financial Assistance

The Committee considered requests for financial assistance from Dorchester Disabled Club and Dorset Youth Association. Members felt that more information should be sought from both organisations by way of them completing grant application forms and that consideration of assistance would be taken in line with the Council's grants policy.

Resolved

(1) That the Deputy Town Clerk, following consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee, be authorised to decide the request for financial assistance from the Dorchester Disabled Club following the receipt of a grant application.

(2) That the Dorset Youth Association's request be considered at a future meeting following receipt of a grant application form requesting support for a specific project.

(Councillor's K. Rice, S. Jones and J. Hewitt declared a personal interest in the respect of the above.)

67. **Task and Finish Group – Municipal Buildings**

The Committee considered appointing two Members to the Task and Finish Group, proposed by the Management Committee and established by the Policy Committee at its last meeting, to consider the future management and maintenance of the Municipal Buildings.

Resolved

That Councillors G. Duke and S. Jones be appointed to the Municipal Buildings Task and Finish Group.

68. **Cemetery Matters**

(a) **Exclusive Right of Burial and Interments and Burial of Ashes**

The Committee had before it a report with details of the Grants of Exclusive Right of Burial for grave spaces and the number of interments and burials of ashes together with South Chapel usage at Dorchester Cemetery, since the last meeting of the Committee.

Resolved

That the report on the Grants of Exclusive Right of Burial and Interments and Burial of Ashes since the last meeting of the Committee be noted.

(b) **Headstones and Inscriptions**

The Committee received and noted applications for the design of headstones and inscriptions. The Deputy Town Clerk reported on a request for a headstone at Poundbury Cemetery which would be six inches higher than allowed by the cemetery policy. It was noted that there was one headstone of this height in the traditional area which had been authorised in error. Members felt however that the policy should be adhered to and the memorial be not allowed.

Resolved

(1) That the action of the Town Clerk in approving designs numbered 4992 to 5001 be confirmed and the Register of Memorials be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

(2) That the request for an oversized headstone be not agreed.

(c) **The Purchase of Exclusive Rights of Burial – Poundbury Cemetery**

The Committee considered a report by the Burials Administrator on a proposal to amend the existing Poundbury cemetery policy which allowed residents to purchase an Exclusive Right of Burial (ERB) together with a specific burial plot in the cemetery. Being able to

choose a plot anywhere in the cemetery caused significant issues as were set out in the report.

In order to address the issues it was proposed that the policy to allow people to specify an exact plot in the cemetery should be discontinued. An ERB could still be purchased but it would only allow the right of burial in either the Traditional area, Green Burial area, Lawn area, Muslim area or Cremated Ashes area, and not the right of burial in a specified plot within those areas.

At the time of death the Council would allocate the plot which was next in line for use. In practice this would mean that grave spaces were dug one after another and next to each other. The revised system addressed all of those issues highlighted in the report and would enable the cemetery to operate in the most efficient manner. Those ERB's that had already been issued with a specific plot would be honoured.

It was noted that this system was used in Weymouth and many other local authority cemeteries. The policy change had been discussed at the annual meeting with Dorchester Funeral Directors, held in January 2018, who agreed that this was a sensible change to the cemetery policy.

Recommended

That the existing Poundbury Cemetery Policy to allow people to pre-purchase a specific plot in Poundbury Cemetery be discontinued.

69. Buildings Monitoring Reports

The Committee received the monitoring reports for the Municipal Buildings and Borough Gardens House.

Resolved

That the Buildings Monitoring Reports be noted.

70. Dorchester Arts

The Committee noted the minutes of the Dorchester Arts Board meeting held on 4 December 2017. It was suggested that an update in respect of progress with the Maltings from the Council's representative on Maltings Arts would be useful at a future meeting.

71. Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

Resolved

That in view of the fact that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the following matters the public and press representatives be excluded from this meeting during their discussion.

72. **Borough Gardens Kiosk**

The Deputy Town Clerk updated Members on the progress with re-letting the refreshment kiosk in the Borough Gardens.

The Committee noted the progress made and requested that further discussions be held with the interested organisation.

Resolved

That the Deputy Town Clerk, following consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee, be authorised to re-let the kiosk, initially for a year, to the interested organisation.

Chairman

Notes of a Site Visit held on 20 February 2018 at 4.15pm.

Sites visited – Municipal Buildings and Borough Gardens.

Attending: Councillors C. Biggs, J. Hewitt, S. Jones, T. Jones, F. Kent-Ledger, R. Potter, M. Rennie, K. Rice, P. Stein and D. Taylor.

Steve Newman, Deputy Town Clerk.

Carl Dallison, Outdoor Services Manager.

Ian Homer, Head Gardener (for Borough Gardens visit).

1. Municipal Buildings

The Deputy Town Clerk reported on the completion to the stonework renovations in the Town Hall and the repainting of all of the external woodwork. Members noted that the removal of the double glazing and the installation of blinds in place of curtains in the Town Hall had improved the space significantly.

Having viewed the buildings Members identified the following matters:-

Town Hall

- Skirting boards needed repainting
- Paintwork on walls and pillars needed touching up
- Some small window panes were cracked particularly in the bay at the oriel window end of the room, a check should be made to ensure that there was not an underlying issue in respect of that bay.

Council Chamber

- It was noted that the heating system had failed beyond repair, temporary heating was being arranged whilst a review of heating arrangements was undertaken.
- The wooden chairs were in need of inspection and repair.
- The clock should be moved to the back of the Council Chamber.
- Paintings needed straightening.
- There should be a photo of the current Mayor on display (it was later felt that this photo could be displayed in the lobby)
- More use could be made of the visitor book and / or the possible introduction of a photo book.

Corn Exchange

- Bulbs needed replacing in chandelier at the apps end of the room.
- Paintwork needed refreshing in certain areas.
- Inspections by THK's required to ensure hirers are not affixing items to the walls.
- It was noted that the task and finish group recently established would be considering the roof repairs and other major works.

Kitchen

- A more secure method of holding up the dishwasher stacking shelf should be introduced.
- Loose light fitting needed securing.

2. Borough Gardens

The Group visited the Borough Gardens and were updated in respect of the following projects:-

WiFi – The Council had previously agreed to contribute towards a town centre free WiFi initiative which included the Borough Gardens. To enable the WiFi in the Gardens it was necessary to install the main router equipment in the basement of the BG House together with a small ‘throwing’ device attached to the wall of the building which would connect with a similar device on a pole fixed to the corner of the tennis courts which, in turn, would connect with another device to be installed on a four metre black column to be installed into the shrubs near to the borehole, which would then finally connect to a device located on the top of the kiosk.

Members noted the arrangements.

Kiosk – It was noted that expressions of interest would now be sought for a new operator of the kiosk. It was hoped that the kiosk would be open again by the second May bank holiday if a local charity or community organisation came forward.

Clock – The Outdoor Services Manager explained the process with the stripping and repainting of the clock. Photos were circulated which showed the detail of the clock which could now be seen following the removal of eight layers of paint.

New Tennis Courts – The Group viewed the groundworks that had been completed in readiness for the construction of the new tennis courts which was due to commence on Monday 5 March 2018. Due to there being no access to the old bowling green for vehicles via the Gardens a road closure of the southern end of West Walks Road and West Walks themselves was required to use as a compound and to allow the many lorry movements for the removal of the topsoil and bringing in aggregate for construction. Residents of West Walks Road would be informed of the closure. It was noted that there would be no pedestrian access through West Walks from Bowling Alley Walk for the period of the construction although every effort would be made to open a walkway at some stage if it was safe to do so.

Generally – Members appreciated the growing numbers of snowdrops which had been planted year on year into the grassed area to the left of the Prince’s Street entrance and agreed that the planting of some Japanese Maples in this area would be a further improvement.

The Outdoor Services Manager reported on the works proposed to improve the entrance into the Gardens from Prince’s Street, how the Tirah bed was to be refreshed and the success of the recycling area which was to have some fencing around it to supplement the bamboo.

Members discussed what could be done with the pollarded trees next to the old bowling green and it was agreed to trial crown reinstatement (lollipopping).

Meeting closed 5.43pm.