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**Public Session**

The Chairman instructed that public comments would be heard within the agenda.

Minutes of a Meeting of **Shepton Mallet Town Council's Open Spaces Committee** held in the Committee Room at Mendip District Council Offices on **Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2018**

**Present:** Councillors J Hardy, C Inchley, N Shearn, D Towner, D Losey, P Steven with Sam Winter, Town Clerk.

There were 7 members of the public present.

**OS19.1 To receive any apologies for absence.**

Cllrs N Chambers and H Reader

**OS19.2 To receive any declarations of interest in matters on this agenda**

None

**OS19.3 To receive and approve the Minutes of the Open Spaces Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2018**

**Resolved** that the Minutes of the Open Spaces Meeting were approved as a correct record and signed as such by the Chairman.

**OS19.4 Past Subject Matters – for the purpose of report only**

None

**OS19.5 A. To receive the Town Clerk's report (*abridged for minutes*)**

(1) Railway embankment, West Shepton

Residents have voiced concerns that works being carried out along the old railway line in West Shepton might have endangered wildlife specific to this location. Reports have previously been made to the Police and SCC wildlife conservation officers, but without resultant action. No planning applications have been made at the railway site.

(2) 2018 Christmas Tree, tree switch-on event and market.

The Christmas lights will be installed during the last week in November. This year the Chamber of Commerce has had to conclude that it cannot afford to provide the tree. The Chamber will proceed as usual with a tree switch-on event. *Costs were provided to the meeting for the tree purchase, installation and dismantling.*

### (3) Events Partnership

The Open Spaces Events Partnership was set up to bring together interested parties to support & organise events in the town centre in the hope that footfall would be increased, thereby positively impacting on the social scene and traders. The group has seen a very successful development of the Fairy Trail and the History Group have put together a 700 Market Charter event to take place at the November Sunday Market. The group also supported the Somerset Taste events, but feedback has been limited. These events would have progressed without the Events Partnership and, had the organisers needed support, they could have been dealt with under Open Spaces. Although part of the answer to helping increase footfall in the town centre could be through good quality events, at this time, there isn't the volume of activity from the Partnership that had been anticipated. The Markets have formed a big part of the conversation for the group, therefore the Town Council might prefer to instead take a longer term corporate view as to what degree it might become involved in the Markets.

### (4) Town Centre Operational Partnership

TCOP was set up to forge a partnership between external bodies, key town stakeholders and the Town Council for the purpose of revitalising both the social and street scene in Shepton Mallet Town Centre, with the aim of strengthening the town's economic and social vitality. The group has succeeded in engaging with MDC to encourage the creation of a 'Town Economic Partnership' for Shepton Mallet, and it has forged the symbiotic relationship to share information and build cooperation. MDC has been provided with enough material to make initial progress with the Economic Partnership and we are awaiting developments.

### (5) Town Clock

The clock mechanism was converted to an electric system some years ago. Each Autumn and Spring the clock auto-adjusts to correspond with daylight saving. However, over the course of 6 months the clock either loses or gains time. At 11:45 on 11/10/18 the clock showed the time as 13:50. There have been instances when less obvious errors have caused confusion to some who have attempted to rely on it. *Costs options were provided to the meeting.*

### (6) Proposed event to celebrate the history of Shepton Mallet

Neil Watkins had described to SMTC his idea for a new annual community event to be held in the Market Place, starting on 4/08/19. The proposed event would celebrate all aspect of Shepton Mallet's history and has been well received by interested groups. The first year would be a celebration of all things wool and will include demonstrations and workshops. Neil described the intention that the demonstrations will include the shearing of the sheep, spinning the wool and knitting an end product that will be sold off in a charity auction. The Committee is asked to support the concept of the event in the town centre.

### (7) New dog bins – installation under contract

The installation of 2 bins included under the grounds maintenance contract have been installed at the Bowlsh end of The Meadows, and at the junction of Wells Road and Bowlsh Lane. Permission has been granted and an order placed for the installation of a litter bin at Charlton Road (not a dog bin as there is already one near the site). Permissions are being obtained for the other sites.

(8) S.106 funds: multi-user path, Fosse Lane – A37

The May Open Spaces discussion on the Dobbies 106 fund (OS17.6(2)) welcomed use of the fund at an alternative location to the old railway. The Committee resolved that, if an alternative route is likely to be agreed, it would be willing to recommend to full Council that the Cycle Track EMR is used to support any shortfall. The meeting didn't suggest an alternative route, but recognised the validity of observations that there is a desire line through fields at the edge of Whitstone Rise. It is up to SMTC (not MDC) to identify a route that it considers a useful addition to the network. SMTC should then present that route to MDC and ask for the 106 to be used in the construction. SMTC would be expected to identify to MDC the location of the path, find the additional money to fund the works and lead on the permissions, procurement and construction process. This s.106 fund expires on 15/05/19.

(9) Drugs Bus in the town

An outside body has arranged for Resilience Voyage to take the Drugs Bus to Whitstone School on 03/11/18 between 10am and 6:30pm to carry out youth engagement. In light of this, unless the Committee identifies otherwise, there is currently no reason for the Council to duplicate the invitation.

(10) Unplanned expenditure

The meeting received details of expenditure agreed by the office, outside of a meeting

(11) The Shambles

Despite being much reconstructed and replaced, the structure is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 for its special architectural or historic interest. Ownership and responsibility for the structure is unclear and the shambles is unregistered. This office has no documentation to show ownership, but the Town Council has historically carried out extensive repairs to the listed structure and has it covered under its public liability insurance. Ownership of the structure should be formalised. This process will enable any other interested party to come forward if they wish to contest the application. The structure is missing pantiles and the table section is sloping, it is therefore being assessed for works required.

(12) Road gritting

Earlier this year when snow and ice fell across the region, Shepton Mallet suffered from slippery roads and paths across the town centre and Collett Park. This winter, grounds contractors will ensure that when ice or snow are forecast, the entrances to the Park will be gritted and cleared as required.

Gritting and snow clearance for the town centre is uncertain as there is no specific agreement under the SMTC SLA. If the cleansing operatives cannot carry out street cleansing, then they will assist the County Council with ice and snow clearance. However, if cleansing operatives are able to work as usual then they will not undertake the clearance. If Town Rangers have the equipment to undertake the task they are available to grit the main paths in the town centre. *Costs for equipment and grit were provided to the meeting.*

**B. To receive the Allotment Officer's report**

(1) Allotment rent charges

*Current costs and income were provided to the meeting.*

(2) Whitstone Road allotment for use by Youth Club

SMTC is advised that the Youth Club do not require an allotment.

(3) Hitchen Lane allotment lease

The Duchy of Cornwall were contacted to find out if any plans were in place for development of the site after the expiry of the lease in 2024. The Duchy confirms that there are no intentions to develop the allotment site at this time and they have not had any discussions with the adjacent developer. The only reason the Duchy would not consider a new lease to SMTC of the allotment site is if the site was not being utilised and/or was overgrown and untidy. The Duchy would consider sale of the site to the Town Council if that was proposed.

(4) Progress with S.106 application

A *wish list* for all allotment sites has been compiled for submission to MDC. Should Open Spaces agree the requests it should acknowledge that it will be responsible for the on-going maintenance of any infrastructure and water usage.

The Chairman invited allotment holders Peter Martin & Linda Meadows to speak.

Peter Martin listed the additional requests submitted by Hitchen Lane allotment holders, to include: noticeboard, 2 additional water troughs and the construction of a drop-off area for bulk goods in place of plot 14, accessed from The Sidings.

Linda Meadows stated that she would like to better understand the S.106 process and wants to see swift progression of the application.

**OS19.6 For resolution or note.**

- 1) To resolve to apply for funding for specified projects under s.106, item 2012/0842 ‘enabling & providing allotments’.**

**Resolved** that the Allotments Officer should proceed with the wish list, as per the report.

- 2) To resolve to support the concept of Neil Watkins’ new event to be held on 4/08/19, celebrating the history of Shepton Mallet**

**Resolved** to support the concept of the event.

- 3) To agree to purchase a Christmas Tree for the Market Place.**

**Resolved** that a budget of £1500 is approved to enable the Office to proceed with the provision of a town centre Christmas tree.

- 4) To consider concerns regarding ground works being carried out at the railway embankment, West Shepton, and agree any appropriate action**

**Resolved** that the SCC Wildlife Officer will be requested to carry out a full investigation of the site and any impact on it by the associated groundworks.

- 5) To review the rent charges on allotments**

**Resolved to increase allotment rents as follows:**

Under 500sqft	£12.50 increased to £15 per year
Between 500sqft and 1100sqft	£18.00 increased to £21 per year
Over 1100sqft	£30.00 increased to £35 per year

**6) To resolve any recommendations to be made to Mendip District Council in relation to the s.106 fund 105941/049, footpath between A37 and Fosse Lane**

**Resolved** that the office should carry out investigations with MDC, landowners and others to ascertain the viability of creating a footpath through the field along Whistone Rise.

**7) To consider future arrangements for cold weather gritting.**

Discussions were held as to the most effective way to ensure cold weather gritting of the town centre in light of cut backs by SCC.

**Resolved** to delegate to the Town Clerk the purchase of a vehicle mounted gritter up to a cost of £6000, along with a supply of grit, all subject to storage space being identified.

**8) To review the performance and administration of the Events Partnership and resolve future arrangements**

**Resolved** to suspend the Partnership until further notice.

**9) To review the performance and administration of the Town Centre Operational Partnership and resolve future arrangements and Terms of Reference.**

**Resolved** to continue with the Partnership, but aim to make it more dynamic by involving in a meaningful way, town centre traders.

**10) To consider the costs in adjusting the town clock and agree future arrangements.**

**Resolved** to delegate to the Town Clerk the task of commissioning the clock's repair to the value of c.£1600.

**11) To receive the budgetary position as at 30/09/18 and agree the Committee's budget for the financial year 2019/20**

**Resolved** to recommend to full Council that the Open Spaces budget is increased by £2,590 on 18/19, which represents a 3.5% increase

**12) To express thanks to Ellis & Co for repairing, free of charge, the missing stone from the Market Cross.**

The meeting sincerely expressed the gratitude of the Town Council for the works undertaken by Ellis & Co.

**OS19.7 Date and time of next Meeting – 7pm, Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2018**