



Devizes Town Council

www.devizes-tc.gov.uk

RECREATION AND PROPERTIES COMMITTEE

You are summonsed to attend a meeting of the Recreation & Properties Committee at the following, place and date.

Date: 30 MAY 2017

Time: Immediately following Community & Civic Resources Committee

Venue: Council Chamber, Town Hall, Devizes

Enquiries: 01380 722160

The Town Mayor: (Councillor Carter)

Councillors:	Burton	S Evans	Geddes
	Giraud-Saunders	Johnson	Parsons
	Rowland	Shaw	Wooldridge
	Greenwood		

AGENDA

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

To elect a Chairman of the Committee for the municipal year 2017/2018.

2. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

To elect a Vice Chairman of the Committee for the municipal year 2017/2018.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the Community and Civic Resource Committee held on the 17 January 2017 were signed at the meeting of the Joint Governance Committee held on the 28 February by the Chairman of the Community and Civic Resources Committee.

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

5. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

To receive any disclosure(s) of interest by a Councillor or an officer in matters to be considered at this meeting, in accordance with provisions of Sections 94 or 117 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the National Code of Local Government Conduct.

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

At the Chairman's discretion, members of the public attending the meeting will be allowed to ask questions, make a statement or address the Council upon a matter of concern to that person which is relevant to the Council. A time limit of 5 minutes per person will be permitted, but this may be extended at the Chairman's discretion and a maximum period of 20 minutes has been allocated by the Council for this item of business

7. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – VENUES INCOME FIGURES

Officers would normally provide members with cumulative monthly venues income and expenditure data. The meeting however falls too early in the financial year to provide meaningful data.

8. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – VENUES OCCUPANCY FIGURES & MARKETING INFORMATION

Officers have met with Resolution Design to allow them to better understand the venues marketing needs. Our newly appointed Accounts Manager will present an action plan and a full report will be brought to the next meeting.

9. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – TOWN HALL BOILER

The new boiler has now been installed and commissioned. As part of the overall project, the plumbers also have lagged all pipework and flushed through the whole heating system. New heaters, which circulate 'free heat' from the boiler, have also been installed into the council offices.

10. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – SOUTH WEST IN BLOOM

The South West in Bloom judges will be visiting the town on Monday 10th July. The main tour will take place before lunch and the It's Your Neighbourhood entries will be judged in the afternoon.

Officers have drawn together the route and this has been circulated to the Open Spaces team, the Clean Up Devizes Squad (CUDS) and ID Verde to enable them to begin to weed and spray the main areas on the tour.

11. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – TOILETS ON THE GREEN

Following an incident where a user was unable to exit one of the toilets on the Green, the metal door was pulled off by the Fire Brigade in order to release her. The door was deemed too damaged to be re-installed and officers have approached three local companies to provide quotes for a new door.

The door was be-spoke made when the toilets were built and is not of a standard size and thickness. Coupled with this, the door forms part of an electrical system which incorporates a timer and lock system. All of the companies approached have stated that a new bespoke door, made exactly as the old one, could cost in the region of £4,000 to £6,000. However, each company has also stated that they are struggling to find somewhere that will make the door and incorporate the existing electrical system.

Officers have approached a local metal work company and they have stated they can patch repair the door for £400. The door can then be re-fitted and the toilet re-opened. If this repair looks unsightly, officers can then pursue other avenues to find a company that may be able to provide a be-spoke door.

12. REPORT FOR DECISION – PRICE INCREASE IN VENUES CHARGES FOR 2018/2019

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Committee accept an increase of 2% in the price it sets for chargeable services.

Purpose of the Report

To agree the Council's annual percentage price increase for 2018/2019.

Background

Each year the committee are asked if they wish to increase the level of prices that are set for those services for which the Council make a charge. Venues are reporting an increase in the number of enquiries for 2019 and beyond and will be shortly launching the new website and e-brochure. Therefore, it is imperative that the appropriate charging structure is in place.

Prices for 2017/18 were agreed previously. Officers are of the opinion that prices will need to rise marginally for the financial year 2018/2019. Although inflation rates have remained low, there are a number of operational costs which continue to rise.

It is therefore suggested that the prices charged for services provided by the Council should increase by around 2%. Prices will be rounded (up or down) to the nearest £.

Options Considered

The committee needs to decide if they want to accept or amend an increase in its prices for 2018/2019.

Implications & Risks

Financial and Resource Implications

Officers are conscious that in these difficult trading times it is not possible to say with any certainty what the financial implications may be, but reference has been made to current government figures and forecasts in this recommendation.

Legal Implications and Legislative Powers

The Council will be considering this matter under its General Power of Competence.

Environmental Implications

Officers are not aware of any environmental implications.

Risk Assessment

There are no risks.

Crime and Disorder

Officers are not aware of any issues the Council should consider under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder act 1998.

13. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – BELVEDERE AND NEWLANDS WOOD

Over a year ago the Town Council agreed that, in order to give the community access to the Belvedere and Newlands Woods and at the same time ensure it would become less attractive as a place for rough sleepers to camp, then it would take on the ongoing maintenance of the area under a peppercorn 5 year lease, provided the owners, the Merchant Venturers cleaned up the area and handed it over with no rough sleepers.

Whilst we as the Council have been pressing the Merchant Venturers to clear the woods, to date this still has not been completed and the area is still being used by rough sleepers.

The Council, Police, Housing Services and other agencies are working together to find a solution, but until the Merchant Venturers undertake their element of the work there is very little progress with this project.

Should there be any change in the position the committee will be updated.

14. REPORT FOR DECISION – WOODLAND MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY ORCHARDS AT WINDSOR DRIVE ALLOTMENT SITE

Recommendation

That the committee agrees a request by the Devizes and District Allotment Association to take on a greater role in managing the existing tree wind break at Windsor Drive allotment site and go on to develop a community orchard on the site.

Purpose of the Report

To decide if the Committee supports the Devizes and District Allotment Association's draft proposal for a tree management scheme at the Windsor Drive allotment site.

Background

The Devizes and District Allotment Association (DDAA) have been in discussion with officers over proposals to improve the woodland areas around the allotments at Windsor Drive and the possibility of planting some fruit trees to form a community orchard.

The DDAA have put some draft proposals together for which they would like the Council to give permission to progress with a view to starting some of the work over the winter, 2017/18.

If the Council were minded to agree the principle of the proposal, the DDAA would then enter into further consultation with organisations such as the Wildlife and Woodland Trusts to refine the proposal.

The general woodland plan is in a form provided by the Forestry Commission (FC) and a DDAA member has spoken to the local FC Officer who would be happy to review the plans and approve them subject to our consultation discussions.

Whilst the project would not need FC approval, the DDAA believe that doing so would provide a sound basis for future work.

A priority for DDAA would be the orchard project, for which they would seek grant support from Wiltshire Council and other sources.

Issued alongside to this agenda is the draft management plan for the trees on the Windsor Drive Allotment site, the draft proposal for the Orchard Project. The breakdown of the £1200 cost is set out in these attached documents.

Officers have reviewed the document and believe them to be fairly comprehensive and whilst the project is predicated on the DDAA having sufficient member support to carry out the work, currently the Council takes a fairly minimal intervention approach to tree management on the site and therefore any additional work will supplement the Town Councils current service standard. There are reviews dates built into the proposal, therefore should the scheme not be working as intended an alternative approach could be taken.

Options Considered

The Committee need to decide they wish to support the Devizes and District Allotment Association's project to enhance tree management develop a community orchard on the Windsor Drive Allotment site.

Implications and Risks

Financial and Resource Implications

Whilst the project proposal does not set out an increased financial or resource implication for the Council there is a requirement to raise funding for fruit trees and a request may be made at latter stage to support this.

Legal Implications and Legislative Powers

The Council will be considering this matter under its General Power of Competence.

Environmental Implications

Officers are unaware of any environmental implication for the Council associated with this decision.

Risk Assessment

Officers are unaware of any risk implication for the Council associated with this decision.

Crime and Disorder

Officers are not aware of any issues the Council should consider under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder act 1

15. REPORT FOR DECISION – APPEAL REGARDING THE PLACING OF FLORAL TRIBUTES AT DEVIZES CEMETERY

Recommendation

That the committee decided how it wished to respond to a request by a grave space owner to allow the family to place floral tributes way from the Headstone and maintain the grass around the graves themselves.

Purpose of the Report

To considered an appeal by the owner of a grave space in Devizes cemetery against officers advice that any floral tributes must be contained within the headstone

Background

In early May, officers wrote to a number of grave owners who are allowing floral tributes to spread onto the lawn area round their graves spaces. Whilst the Council understands that this issue is exceptionally emotional, there is a expectation by most of the visitor to the cemetery that the grass it regally cut and this is made difficult when the gap between headstone is blocked by tributes.

The policy states that:

"Receptacles for Flowers. *To ensure that the Cemetery can be effectively maintained, all floral tributes must be contained within a proper unbreakable container held within the headstone. From time to time cemetery staff may remove items from graves which are not in accordance with this policy. Should you wish to own a grave space which has a larger area for tributes, cemetery staff will be happy to discuss your options."*

The owner of one grave space has contacted officers requesting that the Council relaxes this policy in her case. In her appeal letter to officers the owner states;

"I would like to appeal against this request on the basis that we always cut the grass on and around this area, in fact we normally cut the grass right up to the path where I have a memorial bench for my son.

I understand that the sub-contractors will not be able to tell which graves are cut by the relatives of the graves, however, I was told at one point from someone who also cut the grass for their relatives, that they use to have an understand that if a stick was placed next to the grave the grass cutters would acknowledge that these graves were not to be touch. If you didn't want sticks maybe we could places something else?

I am happy to sign a letter to take on this responsibility, with a clause to contact you if my circumstances change and I can no longer or unable to carry on do it.

I do hope you consider my request and I look forward to your reply".

In the past, the Joint Burial committee has agreed on one or two occasion that families to extend the area for floral tributes stating that in sections EX2 and EX3, where an area of garden has been laid out, then they need not remove it provided it is within the designated grave area, it extends to no more that eighteen inches from the headstone, it is regularly and well maintained and that it poses no risk to staff who will be strimming the adjacent graves.

Options Considered

The committee needs to decide if they are to uphold the policy for floral displays on grave spaces or agree that for this request, there are circumstances which are relent, which require the policy to be more flexible. If the latter is the case these circumstances should be minuted.

Implications and Risks

Financial and Resource Implications

Officers are unaware of any financial or resource implication for the Council associated with this decision

Legal Implications and Legislative Powers

The Council will be considering this matter under its General Power of Competence

Environmental Implications

Officers are unaware of any environmental implication for the Council associated with this decision.

Risk Assessment

Officers are unaware of any risk implication for the Council associated with this decision.

Crime and Disorder

Officers are not aware of any issues the Council should consider under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder act 1998.

16. REPORT FOR DECISION – GREEN LANE ALLOTMENT SITE

Recommendation

That the committee reviews the following options and provide officers with a clear decision as to the two points raised by the Chairman of the Green Lane Allotments Association.

Purpose of the Report

To enable officers to give a response to the points raised by the Chairman of the Green Lane Allotments Association.

Background

The Green Lane allotment site has been administered since its inception by Roundway Parish Council, specifically Councillor Albert Wooldridge. Devizes Town Council took over the sites' management from 1 April 2017, dealing with the Green Lane allotment association and individual allotment holders.

An email, copy attached, was recently received from Mr Ian Collis, Chairman of the Green Lane Allotments Association making a specific request for decisions regarding the 'No Dogs' rule and the 'Keep the gates closed at all times' policy.

Members will note that all three sites contain the following statement in the allotment agreements which are signed by the individual allotment holders.

'The tenant must not keep or allow onto the allotment any animals whatsoever'

The locking of the gates at Green Lane is enforced even when allotment holders are in the site. The gate at Quakers Walk is open from the time that the first allotment holder arrives and is the responsibility of the last

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allotment holder of the site to check no one is left in the site and then to lock the gate on departure.

The main gate on the Windsor Drive allotment site does have a padlock but is rarely locked by allotment holders whilst the side gate to the site which is located at the top of Jump Farm Road has a combination padlock.

The use of combination locks on the gates to the allotment sites continues to be a problem for the Town Council. Whilst the combination lock on the Green Lane gate appears to be operating successfully, locks on the other sites on occasions continue to be problematic. Padlocks are routinely stolen should they not be welded on and indeed on occasions even when the Quakers Walk padlock has been welded on, an individual allotment holder can break the padlock off with the butt of a shovel.

Options Considered

The Committee needs to firstly decide if they either,

request officers to enforce the allotment agreement term relating to no animals on any allotment site, or;

remove the term relating to no animals from the allotment agreements on all sites.

secondly the committee needs to decide if either,

the existing arrangements for locking up the allotment sites remain in force,

the gates on all allotment sites must be locked at the end of the day,

the gates on all allotments sites remain open at the end of the day, or;

a pedestrian gate be established at the Green Lane allotment site.

Implications and Risks

Financial and Resource Implications

The replacement of padlocks on Windsor Drive and Quakers Walk has been part of the ongoing maintenance budget over many years.

Should members decide on the provision of a pedestrian gate at Green Lane, this would have to come from the general allotment costs budget of £2000 in 2017/18.

Legal Implications and Legislative Powers

The Council will be considering this matter under its General Power of Competence

Environmental Implications

Officers are unaware of any environmental implication for the Council associated with this decision.

Risk Assessment

Officers are unaware of any risk implication for the Council associated with this decision.

Crime and Disorder

Officers are not aware of any issues the Council should consider under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder act 1998.

17. EXEMPT REPORT FOR INFORMATION – RELATING TO COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES

18. QUESTION TIME

A short time is allowed at the discretion of the Chairman for councillors to ask questions on matters which are not on the current agenda but which are related to matters which have been previously discussed on an agenda relevant to the committee.

At least 24 hours' notice must be given to officers of the intended question. All other matters should be raised on an agenda and the request should be submitted through the Town Clerk

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per annum

The Town Council's legal representatives are currently drawing up

TOWN CLERK