



Devizes Town Council

www.devizes-tc.gov.uk

RECREATION AND PROPERTIES COMMITTEE

Date: Tuesday 1st December 2020

Time: Immediately following Planning Committee

Zoom meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88420961968?pwd=UVNNeTZaRXUzYkc4ZFVMcHhVUVVsdz09>

Meeting ID: 884 2096 1968

Passcode: 584772

Enquiries: 01380 723333

The Town Mayor: Councillor Gay

Chairman: Councillor Giraud-Saunders

Councillors:	Corbett	S Evans	Greenwood
	Parsons	Rose	Rowland
	Stevens	Von Berg	

AGENDA

1. MINUTES

To approve as a correct record and authorise the Chairman to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd November 2020 and which have been circulated alongside the agenda.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3. 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.

4. 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

5. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – MARKETS DURING LOCKDOWN 2

The second lockdown was implemented on Thursday 5th November and so had an immediate effect on the markets. Fortunately, we have been able to secure many of our regular traders during the lockdown, so that we have continued to have a good selection of market produce, currently three fruit & veg stalls, one fish, two dairy and three cake stalls, as well as the Hoover repair trader.

In the Shambles, the café and soup units have remained open throughout to provide a takeaway service, and the sweet and pet shops have also been trading full-time. On Thursdays this is further augmented by cakes and biscuits stalls, a bakery, a trader who makes face coverings and another selling eco-products.

6. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – DIRECT SERVICES COVID-19 UPDATE

The Government's COVID-19 Winter Plan will come into effect on 3rd December and officers have scrutinised the initial plans to analyse the impact on the direct services offered.

If Wiltshire is placed in Tier 1 (Medium Alert) or Tier 2 (High Alert) on 26th November, the venues can re-open for business meetings, book fairs, training sessions, indoor performances etc. and the Café in Hillworth Park can re-introduce indoor seating. Weddings can once again go-ahead, although numbers are again limited to 15.

If we are placed in Tier 3 (Very High Alert), officers are confident that smaller business meetings can resume and, again, weddings for parties of up to 15, can also take place. The Café will continue to offer takeaways.

Regardless of which Tier we are moved into, the team will continue to ensure the venues remain COVID Secure, both to protect visitors and the staff. Officers will continue to monitor the guidelines in the event of any future changes.

7. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – OPEN SPACES REPORTS

Since June 2020, when the asset transfer was finalised, the Parks and Open Spaces Team have taken a pro-active approach on, for example, leaf collection, weeding and litter picking. As such, the number of reports received from residents with concerns or issues have reduced since we first began to work alongside ID Verde in 2019.

Month	Nov 2020	Oct 2020	Sept 2020	August 2020	July 2020	June 2020
Tree/Hedges/Grass	1	1	1	4	11	4
Fly Tipping/Fly Posting	2	1	2	1	0	2
Play Areas	1	0	0	0	3	1
Weeds (incl. leaves)	1	0	1	0	0	0
Litter/Bins/Streetscene	2	2	5	3	2	4
Totals	7	4	9	8	16	11

Officers are currently working on formalising operational standards however, already a pattern has emerged of how the reports are dealt with. Namely, issues of litter; fly tipping; leaves or weeds are assessed immediately by one of the Street Scene team and, if appropriate are dealt with then and there.

Similarly, play areas are checked immediately. However, as we now maintain and inspect the areas ourselves on a weekly basis, we are aware of most issues already.

If a question regarding grass cutting is raised, this usually can be dealt with quickly as, again, the team know which areas they cut and are responsible for.

Tree and hedge reports are taken very seriously and an initial assessment is usually made on the same day as to their safety. Officers have instructed a local tree contractor who is currently working to update the existing surveys.

Members will see that we do regularly receive reports of fly-tipping. As the team are out and about, they also pick up abandoned white goods and rubbish, which never get reported. Officers are currently working with Grist Environmental to look at ways to safely dispose of all large items, including fridges.

8. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – VIRTUAL CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH ON

This year's Lights Switch On will be broadcast on the new Devizes Town Council Christmas YouTube Channel. Officers have been working with a number of parties over the past weeks to film the whole process of how the town is decorated. A time lapse film of the erection of the main tree has already garnered 400 views.

To ensure the virtual event is truly magical, officers have been working with a contact in Iceland who has agreed to appear as Father Christmas and will walk us through his grotto which will have lots of references to Devizes.

Alongside this project, the Parks and Open Spaces team hand built a large post box which was sited in the Shambles and we have encouraged children to post a 'Letter to Santa'. More than 300 children have responded and everyone will receive a personalised letter back.

Twenty-five lucky children will also have their letters read out by Father Christmas on the YouTube channel before the lights are 'switched on' by Santa.

9. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – COMMERCIAL PROPERTY WORKING PARTY

The inaugural meeting of the commercial property working party was held on Tuesday the 24th of November 2020 via zoom.

Members were fully briefed in advance of the meeting with the properties in the current portfolio, the relevant return on investment and any areas of vulnerability.

Members concentrated on core principles/policies which the Town Council would adopt with relation to the future management of the commercial property portfolio.

Officers will be preparing a report detailing the outcome of these discussions for agreement and or further discussion at a meeting of the working party which will be held before the end of 2020.

Recommendations of the working party will be presented as an agenda item at a meeting of this committee in 2021.

10. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – QUAKERS WALK ALLOTMENTS CONSULTATION

A questionnaire was despatched to all allotment holders at the Quakers Walk allotment site at the same time as requests for payment of the allotment fee were despatched in early September 2020. The annual charge for an allotment was £12.25.

36 questionnaires were received back from Quakers Walk allotment holders.

44% of those questioned stated that site security could be improved. Allotment holders have requested a push button lock on the gate as theft of produce continues to be a problem. The canal side allotment has not been cultivated since the passing of Colin Hopgood leaving the site vulnerable on this side of the site.

83% of allotment holders felt that there were sufficient water troughs at Quakers Walk

100% of allotment holders felt that the current rent offered good value for money.

97% also felt that the majority of allotments were in good order.

100% of respondents rated the sites as good or satisfactory whilst 97% felt that the Town Council administered the sites to a satisfactory or good level.

When asked if allotment holders would be prepared to take part in a 'clean up day', 86% stated that they would.

When given the opportunity to give general comments these were as follows:-

Would like plot 41N designated as a Wildlife area.
Would like some manure in the Spring
Would like the option to pay online
Would like the Town Council to clear the footpath regularly
Plots after number 32 should be free as full of mares' tail
Ban the use of slug pellets
Trees on canal bank very high

Table by noticeboard so allotment holders can leave spare plants.
Dumping by allotment holders of rubbish behind sheds on the canal side.
Would like communal lawnmower
Path damaged by badgers
Used to be 4 communal wheelbarrows on site – only 1 left
Regular provision of a skip
More water troughs.

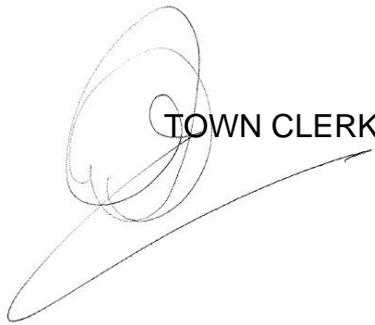
11. QUESTION TIME

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

12. EXEMPT REPORT FOR INFORMATION

Concerning commercial properties.



TOWN CLERK