



# Devizes Town Council

[www.devizes-tc.gov.uk](http://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: 11 AUGUST 2015**

Time: Immediately following Planning Committee

Venue: Council Chamber, Town Hall, Devizes

Enquiries: 01380 722160

The Town Mayor: (Councillor Giraud-Saunders)

Chairman: Councillor Mrs Rose

Councillors:	Mrs Bridewell	Carter	Mrs Evans
	Johnson	Ody	Parker
	Smith	Wooldridge	

## **AGENDA**

### **1. MINUTES**

To approve as a correct record and authorise the Chairman to sign the minutes of the meeting held on the 30 June 2015 which have been circulated with 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 – VENUES INCOME FIGURES**

Document 5/1 is issued alongside this agenda

**6. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – VENUES - CUSTOMER SATISFACTION FEEDBACK**

Satisfaction feedback for June was 100%.

**7. REPORT FOR INFORMATION - VENUES ROOM USAGE**

Room bookings for the period January to May 2015 were slightly lower than for 2014. However, bookings for June 2015 were higher than the same period last year, which is largely due to an increase in corporate events held at both the Corn Exchange and the Town Hall. These events have been held by Wiltshire Council, however, there have been a number of bookings made by non-council organisations.

<b>Number of Bookings</b>	<b>April</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>June</b>
Corporate Events of which Wiltshire Council	12 14	15 13	27 15
Community	16	1	8
Club	5	6	4
Markets	5	4	4
Blood Donor Sessions	2	2	1
Citizenship Ceremony	1	1	0
Concerts	2	1	0
Auctions	0	0	1
Fairs	1	3	0

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Wedding Receptions	0	2	1
Wedding Ceremony	0	3	0
Dinners/Dances	0	1	0
Bluez & Zuz	1	0	0
Civic Event	1	1	0
Grace & Favour	2	4	0
Funeral Tea	0	1	0
Birthday Party	0	1	0
Free Use	2	3	0
Free Use - Devizes Arts Festival	0	0	19
Retirement Party	1	0	0
Luncheon	0	1	0
Twinning Weekend	0	0	5

**8. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – BALCONY 1 ALBION PLACE**

At the last meeting of this committee a report for information advised that concerns had been raised about the structural integrity of the balcony to the front of 1 Albion Place.

Given its location, officers believed that it would be prudent for a structural engineer to evaluate its condition. That report has been completed and it confirms that whilst the structure is out of square with the main elevation of the property, this probably happened during the original construction or soon thereafter. The report goes on to indicate that there has been no recent movement and therefore is not felt to be unsafe.

The report did observe that one of the storm drains has been recently blocked and recommends this is cleared. Given that it is unclear that any blockage could be as a result of the recent works, the Town Council has agreed to have the drains cleared.

**9. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – GREEN FLAG AWARD**

Hillworth Park has been again awarded the Green Flag. The Park was judged on how safe, welcoming, clean and secure it is. Other criteria included how sustainable the park is, how well managed and how effective the marketing strategy is. As last year, the park scored highly in all areas and overall was placed in the top score band.

The judges made a small number of recommendations, which include shortening the submitted management plan; introducing more dropped kerbs in the car park for greater disabled access and freshening up the café. These will be reviewed through the Hillworth Park Steering Group.

**10. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – WINDSOR DRIVE AND QUAKERS WALK ALLOTMENTS CONSULTATION**

A questionnaire was despatched to all allotment holders at the Windsor Drive allotment site at the same time as requests for payment of the allotment fee were despatched in early March 2014.

54 questionnaires were received back from allotment holders.

36% of those questioned stated that facilities could be improved.

Almost all allotment holders felt that the current rent offered good value for money.

86% felt that the majority of allotments were in good order.

When given the opportunity to give general comments these ranged from the challenging to those warranting discussion.

**Challenging**

Cull the rabbits  
Higher Fencing  
Provide skips once a month

**Discussion topics**

Increase security  
Allow use of community building to everyone  
More Inspections  
Council take no notice of questionnaires  
Reduce rent to £20 for pensioners  
Increase number of troughs  
Communal compost heap  
Sub-divide plots

A questionnaire was also 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 2014.

37 questionnaires were received back from allotment holders.

14% of those questioned stated that facilities could be improved.

94% of allotment holders felt that the current rent offered good value for money.

77% felt that the majority of allotments were in good order.

When given the opportunity to give general comments these ranged from the challenging to those warranting discussion.

### **Challenging**

Double number of troughs  
Provide a permanent skip  
Council should mow pathways

### **Discussion topics**

Police indifference to theft of produce  
Repair faulty trough  
Increase rents  
Burning facility

## **11. REPORT FOR DECISION – NEWLANDS AND BELVEDERE WOOD**

### **Recommendation**

That the committee guide officers in relation to the possibility of opening up Newlands and Belvedere Woods for public access to help manage the ongoing issue of rough sleepers using it.

### **Purpose of the Report**

To consider the views from a joint working group looking at the problems of rough sleepers in Newlands and Belvedere Woods and guide officers to what extent this Council would like to be involved in opening up the wood for public access.

### **Background**

For some time there have been rough sleepers using Newlands and Belvedere Woods, which are located next to Devizes Cemetery and these unwelcome inhabitants of the wood have been causing distress and frustration to nearby residents and users of the cemetery.

In an attempt to find a solution to the problem, a joint working group involving members of this Council, Roundway Council, Wiltshire Council and Police who have met to review various options. Attached are the notes from the meeting held on the 10 July, from with the start of an action plan being developed (doc 11/1). This has been summarised below.

- **Limiting Access to Water.** It is the working group's understanding that one of the principal advantages to using the woods as a place to sleep is the close proximity to fresh water. If this was to be removed then it would be less attractive.

The Joint Burial Committee have agreed to switch off the water at the stand pipes during the months of September and October.

- **Cleaning Up the Area.** The area is extremely dirty with domestic type litter left by the sleepers, needles and some human waste. If there is a desire to bring the woods into local management, as part that management plan the land owners, the Merchant Venturers, have agreed to fund a clean-up.
- **Open up to public access.** Whilst there is a general view that one of the most suitable ways to deliver a long term solution to the problem will be to provide open access to the woods, at the time of the meeting there was insufficient information to be able to consider this matter further. Since the meeting the Merchant Venturers have provided further information about how this could work. Which is as follows;

The Charity would grant a rolling five year lease to the Town Council on a peppercorn rent (indicated at £1pa).

The lease would be dependent on a management plan which would need to contain a strategy for clearing the site, usage, access and maintenance. As part of the discussion, ensuring that any woodland walk links to other important footpaths was given consideration and the Merchant Venturers have indicated they would be amenable to giving permissive rights of way over other sections of their land should the project move forward.

At this time no commitment has been made by the working group until the Town Council has had an opportunity to give its view on the initiative.

### **Options Considered**

The committee needs to decide if this is a project the Town Council should be leading on and if so, does it wish officers to work with the working group to develop a management plan that could lead to the Town Council leasing the land from the Merchant Venturers.

### **Implications and Risks**

#### **Financial and Resource Implications**

The development of a management plan will take little more than officer time. Any ongoing cost implications will be set out in future reports on the matter.

#### **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.

**12. REPORT FOR DECISION – PARKING IN LANE BY SKATE PARK**

**Recommendation**

To decide what if any action this Council wishes to take in respect of cars blocking Green Lane adjacent the pedestrian access to the skate park.

**Purpose of the Report**

To decide if the Council wishes to respond to a request to manage parking around the entrance to Drew's Pond Wood and the skate park.

**Background**

On the 26 July officers received an email from Councillor Woodridge advising that cars drive as far as the allotments, presumably users of the skate park facility and park in the lane.

Whilst the lane is not in the ownership of the Town Council and there is no restrictions as far as officers are aware regarding parking, it would appear that on occasions some users of the skate park do travel by car limiting vehicle access past the park. There is a layby by the entrance to the park for up to 5 cars.

Whilst officers have been advised informally that on occasions there have been difficulties, the scale and frequency of these is currently unclear.

There is now temporary signage advising visitors to the skate park facility, traveling by car, that they can use the main car park for Green Lane playing field and that others may need to access further along the lane.

**Options Considered**

The committee needs to decide what if any action they may wish to take to manage the potential problem.

**Implications and Risks**

**Financial and Resource Implications**

Whilst Officers are unaware of any significant resource implication, if it is decided to provide additional signage this will need to be funded through the signage budget.

**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.

13. **EXEMPT REPORT FOR INFORMATION – RELATING TO COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES**
14. **EXEMPT REPORT FOR DECISION – RELATING TO COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES**
15. **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.

DEPUTY TOWN CLERK