

RECREATION AND PROPERTIES COMMITTEE

18th January 2022

Present: Chairman: Councillor Giraud-Saunders
Mayor: Councillor Gay

Councillors:	Britten	Brown	Corbett
	Greenwood	Ormerod	Pennington
	Stevens	Wallis	Wooldridge

Officers: Simon Fisher, Town Clerk
Jan Rendle, Committee Clerk

Members of the Public: Ten

439. MINUTES

Councillor Wallis queried Exempt Minute 389 from the meeting held on the 14th December 2021, which had been circulated to all members, but was content to wait to raise the issue later in the meeting during exempt session. In the meantime, the minutes were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

440. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Rose.

441. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were none.

442. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were ten members of the public present, some of whom wished to address the meeting.

443. FOR INFORMATION – PARK CAFÉ PERFORMANCE AND MARKETING UPDATE

The committee received and noted the report,

444. FOR INFORMATION – VENUES INCOME PERFORMANCE

Members expressed concern that Venues was still experiencing losses due to the downturn in demand as a consequence of the pandemic. The Finance group aimed to establish with greater clarity the gross margin from Venues activity.

445. FOR DECISION – RESIDENTIAL PARKING ON THE GREEN

There was a wide-ranging discussion about the general shortage of parking for residents in the area of Southbroom Road and the Green, with members of the public requesting the Committee's support to resolve the problem. Councillors expressed a willingness to work with residents to investigate how parking could be improved for town centre residents.

It was however noted by the Committee that the Green is an important asset within the Conservation Area which should be conserved and enhanced, and local opinions canvassed by Councillors had reinforced the view that it would be unacceptable to lose any of the Green to car parking.

It was proposed by Councillor Ormerod, seconded by Councillor Corbett and AGREED UNANIMOUSLY

THAT the Committee rejects the request to create a car parking area on the Green adjacent to Heathcote House.

446. FOR DECISION – MOTION TO SUPPORT MOVING THE SHAMBLES AND MARKET PLACE PROJECTS AND WORKING PARTIES TO THE SUPERVISION OF THE RECREATION & PROPERTIES COMMITTEE

There followed a long discussion in which it was repeatedly noted that Council had resolved that the Shambles and Market Place project was for Full Council to decide: the two working parties had been established with the full agreement of members, to be overseen by Full Council. This was to ensure that all Councillors have an opportunity to discuss, have some input and to vote at every stage of the project, so that any decision is made collectively and as a united front.

It was further clarified that a precedent had been set for this model of co-operation, as the previous extensive refurbishment of the Corn Exchange was proposed by a working party with every major decision being referred to Extraordinary Meetings of Full Council to ensure that it had the full support of all members collectively.

Members were reassured that the issue of the Shambles maintenance was rightly dealt with by the Recreation & Properties Committee as a relatively non-substantial operational matter, but this was a separate issue to the overall Shambles project which is a policy matter.

Councillors reiterated the need to progress to a decision about the future of the Shambles at pace, whether that meant ultimately deciding to do nothing or to move forward with radical changes.

It was proposed by Councillor Wallis, seconded by Councillor Greenwood and AGREED UNANIMOUSLY

THAT the two working parties would each prepare a presentation for discussion at the next Forward Planning Meeting on 1st February 2022, with proposals being put forward to the Full Council meeting on the 10th March; and henceforth the Shambles would appear as a standing item on Full Council agendas.

447. QUESTION TIME

Councillor Wallis reported a note of thanks he had received following the Town Clerk's and Open Spaces Team's intervention to deal with a resident's report of antisocial behaviour. It was suggested that data should be recorded to monitor the Council's response to such reports and complaints, and with so much good work currently going unreported, it would be beneficial to publicise those positive outcomes. Officers confirmed that the Communications group was already looking at doing so.

Councillor Wallis queried what progress had been made on obtaining a new microphone system for use in Council meetings. Officers advised that quotes had been received, and with the funding having been allocated within next year's budget, it could now be progressed and would be presented to members for consideration and approval.

448. PROCEDURE: CONFIDENTIALITY OF EXEMPT BUSINESS

It was proposed by Councillor Greenwood, seconded by Councillor Gay and AGREED

THAT In view of the confidential nature of the remaining exempt items of business to be considered, this is dealt with In Committee in the absence of the press and members of the public.

CHAIRMAN