

Minutes of a Meeting of the Amenities and Services Committee held on Tuesday 14th December 2021 at 10.00 in the Roden Suite, Edinburgh House, New Street, Wem

Present:- Councillor P Broomhall (Chairman), Councillors, R Drummond, A Everett, C Granger, M Hoffmann, M Meakin, E Towers, G Soul.

Mrs P O'Hagan (Town Clerk) Mrs A Roberts (Projects & Finance Assistant)

- 1 **Apologies** - To receive any apologies for absence.

Resolved:- to accept the apology for absence from Cllr Johnson (away).

- 2 **Declaration of Pecuniary Interests** - to receive declarations of interest.
Cllr Towers declared an interest in relating to Love Lane allotments as his wife is a tenant.
Cllrs Meakin, Drummond and Towers declared an interest in all matters relating to Wem Sports and Social Association as they are trustees of the Association.

- 3 **Minutes** - To approve as a correct record the minutes of a Meeting of this Committee held on 21st September 2021.

Resolved:- to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 21st September 2021 and they were duly signed as a true record by the meeting chairman.

Cllr Towers attended the meeting at 10.02.

- 4 **Progress Report on items raised at previous meeting** - for consideration.

Resolved:- to note the report.

- 5 **Toilets**

a) Recreation Ground Toilet Block – to consider quotes received for works required to the building and to discuss reopening old toilet block.

Cllr Everett attended the meeting at 10.15.

Quotes for works were considered and a discussion took place on this matter and views were expressed for and against reopening the toilets.
It was explained that it was difficult to make a final decision when the tax base had not been decided for the town or 2022 so the impact on the council tax of adding reopening costs to the budget was unknown.
A discussion took place on the need to consult with the wider community to see if there was a need for the toilets.

Resolved:- to recommend that

- A decision on this matter is deferred until the next meeting.
- Funds are allocated in the 2022-23 budget to cover year 1 running costs.

b) Cleaning contract – to award.

It was reported that despite posting the tender on Contract Finder, Social Media and the Website only two tenders had been received and it was

Resolved:- to

- **Suspend financial regulations to allow only two tenders to be considered.**
- **Award the 2022-25 Cleaning contract to Healthmatic.**

c) Income – for update.

Resolved:- to note income to date £1263.

6 Play Areas/Open Spaces

a) Recreation Ground railings to discuss quotes received.

A discussion took place on the condition of the railings and the potential restoration costs which would not be known until the railings were cleaned. Concern was expressed over the unknown repair costs. A suggestion was made that the railings could be removed then restored at a later date and re-erected at another location in the town e.g. back of Jubilee Square.

Resolved:- to recommend that due to the specialist nature of this work, the Clerk is instructed to seek a quote from Stokes of England for the following works

- **to write a specification for cleaning the railings as per the recommendations in their report and to seek quotes from 3 companies for sandblasting based on the specification drafted.**

The Clerk is given delegated authority in consultation with the Committee Chairman and Mayor to place an order to outsource the process of obtaining quotes for this work to Stokes of England up to a maximum of £1500.

b) Skate Park Replacement – to discuss funding options

The Clerk reported that the Project Assistant was currently looking at possible grants and until it was known what the Town Council's Neighbourhood Fund allocation would be in 2022 it was difficult to know how much funding was needed.

Resolved:- to defer any progress on this matter until 2022 when the allocation of Neighbourhood Funds are known.

c) Trentham Road – to consider request to prune tree and approve quote for 2022 tree inspection.

Resolved:- to accept the quote from Terry Marchant of £250 to undertake the biannual tree inspection and to defer a decision on whether to undertake any pruning works on the oak tree on Trentham Road until after this inspection.

7 Allotments

a) To receive a report on plot vacancies and outcome of recent inspection

It was reported that a recent inspection had taken place and all plots were deemed to be cultivated in line with the tenancy agreement. All plots were currently let and the remaining tenant on the Cemetery side would be moving plots in the New Year.

Cllr Towers declared an interest and left the room.

Resolved:- to note the report.

Cllr Towers returned to the meeting.

8 Cemetery

a) Cemetery extension – to discuss options following Clerks attendance on creating a garden of remembrance course.

The Clerk explained that the course had been very informative and that the Town Council could consider identifying an area in the Town that could be used as a scattering area which would provide lower cost means of scattering ashes for residents of the town.

It was also reported that The Clerk had approached one company concerning the design of the extension and was waiting to hear back.

Resolved:- that

- **The Clerk is authorised to identify a suitable location in the Town that could be utilised for the purposes of ashes scattering.**
- **The Clerk be instructed to seek quotes for cemetery extension design to incorporate a section for the interment of cremated remains.**

b) Policy Review – to consider establishing a working party to review all Cemetery Policies.

It was reported that due to more pressing work this had not been progressed and it would be useful if a small working party was set up to look at all policies in more detail.

Resolved:- to nominate the Chairman and Cllr Meakin to form a working party to review cemetery polices with the Town Clerk.

9 Streetlighting

a) Column replacement – to consider updated inventory and discuss column replacement programme.

Resolved:- to

- **Note the report and progress of the column replacement programme.**
- **Recommend that the column replacement budget is increased to reflect the increase in costs.**

10 Floral Planters – to approve draft watering and maintenance contract.

Resolved:- to approve the watering and maintenance contract.

11 2022-23 Budget

a) Wem Sports and Social Association - To discuss the financial request for 2022-23.

The Clerk reported that WSSA had submitted a contribution request for £19500 and that the increase was purely to cover 50% of the cost of the annual tractor service as this was something that had previously been carried out by The Groundsman.

Cllr Towers, Drummond and Meakin left the room and took no part in discussions.

Resolved:- to recommend that the WSSA contribution for 2022-23 is £19500.

b) To consider the budget report up to 30.11.21.

Cllr Towers, Drummond and Meakin returned to the room.

Resolved:- to note the budget report.

c) To consider first draft 2022-23 expenditure budget for the following assets and services

- Cemetery
- Bus Shelters
- Toilets inc. Old Toilet block
- Street Lights
- Play Areas
- Allotments
- CCTV
- Floral Planters

to discuss any other projects for inclusion in 2022-23 budget.

A discussion took place on the draft budget produced by the Town Clerk. It was explained that the budget had been compiled to reflect the work that was required to the existing infrastructure and the aspirations of the committee. It was acknowledged that the proposed budget was in excess of the 2% increase that was encouraged by Full Council however it was recognised that without a significant rise it was impossible to upgrade the existing infrastructure.

Resolved:- to recommend the total Amenities and Services Budget for 2022-23 is set at £109,700 as detailed in appendix A.

d) Fees and Charges – to review allotment fees and cemetery charges for 2022-23.

Cllr Towers left the room and took no part in discussions on allotment rents but returned to the room for discussions on cemetery fees.

Resolved:- to recommend that

- **Love Lane Cemetery fees are not increased in 2022-23.**
- **Love Lane allotment rents are not increased in 2022-23.**
- **That a comparison with neighbouring towns / parishes of allotment rents and cemetery fees will take place in 2022.**

12 **Date and time of meetings** - to note time and date of next meeting.

Resolved:- that the next meeting will be held on Tuesday 8th March 2022 time 19.00.

Meeting ended 11.25

Chairman.....