



Yeovil Town Council

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The Meeting... **Grounds and General Maintenance Committee**

The Time... **7.00pm**

The Date... **Monday 11 January 2010**

The Place... **Town House, 19 Union Street, Yeovil**

If you need this information in large print, Braille, audio or another language, please ring 01935 382424



Alan Tawse

Alan Tawse
Town Clerk

5 January 2010

Please contact Sarah Hunt at the Town House for more information about this meeting

Grounds and General Maintenance Committee

To: All Members of the Grounds and General
Maintenance Committee

J Vincent Chainey

Philip Chandler (Ex-officio)

Dave Gooding

Pete Goodman

John Grana

Dave Greene (Vice Chairman)

Steve Hawker

Simon Hester

Wes Read (Ex-officio)

Alan Smith (Chairman)

Jon Trevett (co-opted non-voting)

A G E N D A

PUBLIC COMMENT (15 Minutes)

1. **MINUTES**

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 November 2009.

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

4. **CORRESPONDENCE**

5. **COMPOSTING AND RECYCLING ON ALLOTMENT SITES**

To receive a presentation by Hilary Manning, Community Waste Action Officer for the Somerset Waste Action Programme on composting and recycling on allotment sites. Hilary will outline potential opportunities to introduce improved initiatives for the Council's sites and will be happy to answer questions.

6. **PLAY AND YOUTH FACILITIES UPDATE**

To consider an oral report from the Play and Youth Facilities Officer on the maintenance and improvement of sites managed by the Town Council.

7. **PLAY AREA REFURBISHMENT UPDATE**

To consider a report from the Play and Youth Facilities Officer at page 3 on Yew Tree Park and Monks Dale Play Areas' Regeneration.

8. **WATER REFURBISHMENT UPDATE**

To consider a report from the Assistant Town Clerk, attached at page 4.

9. **BOUNDARY MAINTENANCE AT SUNNINGDALE ALLOTMENTS**

To consider a report from the Assistant Town Clerk. Attached at page 5.

10. **ADDITIONAL NON-CORPORATE ALLOTMENT MAINTENANCE BUDGET BIDS**

To consider the follow-up report by the Assistant Town Clerk at page 6.

11. **PROMOTIONS AND ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE**

To consider a report from the Town Clerk, attached at pages 7 and 8.

12. **ALLOTMENT TENANTS WORKING GROUP**

To consider the outcomes of the meetings of the Allotment Tenants Working Group held on 23 November 2009 and 4 January 2010. Copies of the minutes have been separately circulated.

13. **FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

To receive the Financial Statement for the period 1 October 2009 to 30 November 2009. See attached Financial Statement at pages 9 to 16.

PUBLIC COMMENT (15 Minutes)

PLAY AREA REFURBISHMENT UPDATE

Yew Tree Park Play Area

The construction phase of the project starts during week commencing 4th January 2010. It is expected to take 8-10 weeks to complete. The tender includes all the equipment as stipulated in the initial project brief. I will be overseeing the works. I don't envisage any delays, unless the winter cold snap is prolonged or if there is a lot of snow.

There is a proposed official opening of the play area planned for early April 2010. The Town Council are leading on this, supported by the Steering Group as well as South Somerset District Council.

Monks Dale Play Area

The initial Steering Group meeting was held on Friday 18th December 2010. Town Councillor Ruth Kendall kindly agreed to be Chairman of the Group. The current budget stands at £15,000 from the District, £15,000 from the Town Council and £11,170 from Section 106 grants, making the sum of £41,170 capital available for the project.

The consultation and design of the play area will be completed by a selected play area/landscape design company. The successful contractor will be chosen during January. Consultation will include working with the local school and will commence during March 2010. Following the consultation period, the design brief will then be written, with input from all parties involved. The chosen play area/landscape company will then be tasked with designing a suitable play area. It is anticipated that the project will be concluded before the end of 2010.

(Stephen Barnes, Play and Youth Facilities Officer (01935 462408))

WATER REFURBISHMENT UPDATE

Hillcrest is one of the allotment sites with the oldest pipework and is therefore being put forward as one of the next sites to benefit from refurbishment (Minute 7/196 refers).

It is proposed that tenders be invited for the necessary works. However, to establish the likely costs, an indicative estimate of costs has been obtained from a previous contractor to carry out the required work at Hillcrest allotment site and the quoted cost of replacing the pipework and adding one additional standpipe amounts to £2,600.

The water refurbishment budget is £1680 for 09/10; this is currently unallocated. This leaves a potential shortfall in the budget of £920. The approved 2010/11 budget allocation is £1720. It is proposed to use some of next year's budget to fund the shortfall, leaving a balance of £631 to be put towards the next phase of the refurbishment programme.

If the cost of water refurbishment at Hillcrest allotment site is supported, tenders will be sought as soon as possible with a view to the works being carried out during the winter months when the water supply is switched off.

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to note the matter and approve the allocation of the estimated additional funding required of £920 from the 2010/11 budget to carry out the works at Hillcrest.

(Sarah Hunt – Assistant Town Clerk, 01935 382424)

BOUNDARY MAINTENANCE AT SUNNINGDALE ALLOTMENTS

Late in the summer of 2009, I was asked by the Sunningdale Allotment Representative to investigate the untidy vegetation all along the western boundary of the site, including the wildlife area.

I visited the site in early December, when most of the leaves had fallen, with Mark Mulley and Phil Poulton, SSDC Arboricultural Officer. We agreed that all along the allotment boundary, the original hawthorn and hazel hedging had been allowed for some years to grow upwards and outwards from its original neat layering, resulting in some very tall, untidy, spindly growth and leaving sizeable gaps between trunks and stumps. This has resulted over time in the creation of a wilderness, which has in turn provided a hiding place for fly tippers and left the boundary vulnerable to trespass.

Phil Poulton examined the age and type of the trees and hedges that were growing and advised that we could not only save but also regenerate the whole length of the hedge boundary by cutting the existing hedge line right down to approximately two feet, whilst maintaining an existing, well shaped tree every few metres to screen neighbouring properties and to provide some canopy for local birds and other wildlife while the rest of the hedge is growing back. Phil also suggested planting some hazel and hawthorn whips and a few maples to provide interest and variety. I was reassured that healthy re-growth would be swift and vigorous, subject to the work being carried out during the winter months, while the vegetation is dormant and before the birds start to build their nests.

To further secure the boundary after the hedge cutting has been carried out, the Town Clerk has suggested that directly behind the existing hedge line, it would be an appropriate time to erect 40 metres of chestnut fencing, which would protect the new/cut hedging, secure the site and in time blend in with the established hedge.

This would be a significant piece of work, requiring a team of three with sawing equipment and a wood chipping machine for about two weeks plus a couple of days to erect the fencing. We have obtained a quote from our maintenance contractor, who has confirmed that the work can be done by the end of February. The quoted cost for this work is £2,399. We would also seek two other quotes for this work to ensure value for money.

The 09/10 fencing repairs budget currently has £1,455 unallocated. Should the Committee support the proposed works, it is suggested that the additional estimated costs of £944 be met from the anticipated under spend in the Corporate Allotment Maintenance budget.

Every consideration would be given to existing wildlife, to ensure that the work would be carried out sympathetically and without unduly disturbing fox holes or other natural habitats. Phil has indicated that because the work would be done on Council owned land, we would not need to seek any specific permissions to cut down the hedge, particularly as no mechanical digging equipment would be used to remove any part of it.

Prior to the commencement of the work, the Town Council would carry out a consultation exercise with allotment holders and local residents to describe the works being undertaken and to reassure them that it would benefit the landscape and the wildlife in the months and years to come.

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to note the matter and to approve the suggested funding for the proposed maintenance and fencing project at Sunningdale allotment site for completion by the end of February 2010.

(Sarah Hunt – Assistant Town Clerk, 01935 382424)

ADDITIONAL NON-CORPORATE ALLOTMENT MAINTENANCE BUDGET BIDS

At the last meeting on 2 November 2009 (Minute 7/194 refers), the number of bids for skips from allotment representatives exceeded the amount available in the non-corporate allotment maintenance budget of £435.

It was therefore agreed to prioritise demand and following consultation with the tenant representatives of the relevant sites, skips were ordered for Sunningdale, St. Georges, Elizabeth Flats, Hillcrest and Rustywell.

The Town Clerk and Chairman of the Grounds and General Committee, Alan Smith, reviewed the Grounds and General budget and concluded that enough funds would be available to order the remaining skips, due to projected savings in the Corporate Allotment Maintenance budget. This ensures that all of the tenant representatives' requests would be met.

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to note and support the matter.

(Sarah Hunt – Assistant Town Clerk, 01935 382424)

PROMOTIONS AND ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Introduction

At the last meeting of the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee, reference was made to the merits of disbanding the Promotions and Activities Committee and the potential savings that might arise therefrom.

It was proposed that the matter be considered during the January cycle of meetings to give all the committees that would be affected by such a change an opportunity to consider the matter and express their views to the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee before a decision was made by the Town Council.

History

The Promotions and Activities Committee was established by the Town Council in May 2004, and was allocated a number of subsumed duties from other committees of the Council which continue to exist. The following extract from the current Delegation Scheme sets out the Committee's current terms of reference and highlights the previous arrangements. It is assumed that should the Committee be disbanded, these would be returned to their originating body:

- (v) **Promotions and Activities Committee**
 - (a) *Yeovil in Bloom. (GGM)*
 - (b) *Development of Town Centre initiatives, activities and events. (NEW)*
 - (c) *Yeovil Town Centre Partnership. (PRF)*
 - (d) *Town Centre Streetscene development. (NEW)*
 - (e) *Festive Lights. (PRF)*
 - (f) *Publication of town guide and other promotional literature. (BCM)*
 - (g) *Customised Souvenirs. (BCM)*
 - (h) *Policy on Banners in the Town Centre and use of the Entertainments Area. (P&L)*
 - (i) *Town Crier - appointment, conditions of service, uniform and the Annual Town Criers' Competition. (BCM)*
 - (j) *Policy on requests for the use of the Town Crest. (NEW)*

As indicated above, two *new* responsibilities were added to the Committee's remit upon its inception, namely:

- (b) *Development of Town Centre initiatives, activities and events*
- (d) *Town Centre Streetscene development*

The following *additional* responsibility was subsequently added at the suggestion of the Committee:

- (j) *Policy on requests for the use of the Town Crest*

Should the Promotions and Activities Committee be disbanded, these would need to be transferred to an alternative committee's remit.

Costs

A detailed analysis has been carried out of the costs of administering the Promotions and Activities Committee, which has taken into account the additional costs that would be incurred should it be disbanded and its responsibilities dealt with by the other four committees of the Town Council.

Estimated savings in staff overtime of £305 per annum would be achieved along with £300 in administrative costs (including stationery, postage, photocopying, heating and lighting) which equates to an overall total of £605 per year.

Budgetary Issues

It is assumed that should the Committee be disbanded, the relevant budgets would be incorporated into the appropriate committee which takes on the allocated responsibilities.

The proposal, if implemented, would cause no problems for the Town Council's SAGE financial reporting and monitoring system and again, the relevant budget headings and income and expenditure would be incorporated into the appropriate committee's spreadsheets, which are presented to members on a regular basis.

Way Forward

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to consider the matter and to express its views to the forthcoming meetings of the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee and the Town Council.

(Alan Tawse, Town Clerk – 01935 382424)