

DAVENTRY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parks, Open, Spaces and Environmental Committee held at 3, New Street, Daventry on Monday 20th November 2023 at 6.30pm

PRESENT: Lynne Taylor - Chairman

Councillors:

Mike Arnold
Holly Steenson
Katie Thurston
Karen Tweedale

IN ATTENDANCE: Deborah Jewell – Chief Officer (CO)
Sarah Fox – Responsible Finance (RFO)
0 Member of the press
0 Members of the public

OPEN FORUM

None

APOLOGIES

None

OS2307.1. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.

None.

OS2307.2. MINUTES

RESOLVED	That the Minutes (Appendix 1) of the Parks, Open Spaces and Environment Committee meeting held on Monday 19 th June 2023, be approved, and signed as a correct record.
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OS2307.3. COMMITTEE BUDGET.

The Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) spoke to her report (Appendix 2) and highlighted the overspend in the provision of litter bins and suggested members approve a virement from unspent funds in the tree works budget to cover the shortfall.

The RFO further advised that funds had now been agreed and received from Highways in relation to the maintenance of the highway land and verges. Trees on highways owned land was no longer the responsibility of the Town Council, any maintenance and costs relating to the maintenance of trees within their boundaries was agreed to be their responsibility.

Members asked about the budget for income from licences to use the open spaces, the Chief Officer advised that due to concerns with the condition of the culvert running across Eastern Way the Operations Officer was reluctant to agree a licence for any events that involved heavy vehicles crossing the land e.g., circuses and any requests received would be directed to use The Hollow.

RESOLVED	That approval be given for the virement of £1000 from Tree Works to Litter Bins budget line.
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OS2307.4. LICENCES

Report (Appendix 3) noted.



OS2307.5. ALLOTMENTS

Members referred to the report (Appendix 4) and noted the need to review and agree pricing for the letting of allotments for the financial year 2025/26 and it was,

RESOLVED	That a report from the RFO and Allotment Officer be submitted to the Finance & Policy Committee for them to consider the fees in relation to the Council's budgetary requirements for the financial year 25/26 and make a recommendation to Council thereon.
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OS2307.6. OPEN SPACES

Having read the report (Appendix 5), members recognised the work of both the grounds maintenance contractors and the town council office staff in meeting the challenges in maintaining the cemeteries, open spaces, ditches and ponds, multiple play areas, verges, hedges and trees.

Members considered the item within the referencing a report by AquaServe on the introduction of angling on water spaces in Daventry Town. Members noted that the report highlighted that Daventry had a good mix of free and paid for angling and concluded that although angling could provide an additional community amenity the impact on the health of the lake and the surrounding area would be too costly to manage and maintain.

Members discussed the quote to replace and repair play equipment on the New Street Recreation Ground and The Hollow and agreed that rather than approve a replacement swing, unanimously agreed this open space would benefit from an enhanced play area and requested that further research be undertaken, and an options report submitted to this committee for further consideration.

Members referred to the report on the work being done by the Cemeteries Officer, especially in relation to the memorial testing during what has been a busy year for burials and internments. Having undertaken extensive research in relation to sourcing land to provide more burial space for the future and concluding suitable land is not available within or near to the town, they agreed with the Cemeteries Officer's request to research and report on developing land within the boundary of the existing cemetery to extend the burial area.

Members noted the need to carry out restorative works to the Burton Memorial and requested the submission of a report with scope of works and costs for further consideration.

The Chief Officer reminded members of the partnership initiative lead by the Neighbourhood Policing Team and West Northamptonshire Council (Well Northants) Operation Fragment. The initiative was to work with the Southbrook community to resolve social issues and encourage civic pride. Following a consultation with residents, a request was received for a bench to be installed to replace the bench removed due to anti-social behaviour by the hedge on the field. As this location was inappropriate, it was suggested a bench be installed at a cost of no more than £2k by the bin on the pathway that led to/from Town/Southbrook. Members agreed this was a good solution and advised the CO to authorise the works.

The Chair referred members to the item on future investment and the purchase of a street cleaning machine to enhance the cleaning of pavements. Although supportive of investing to improve services within the town members felt the cost was prohibitive, at this time, and would be something to consider in the procurement process when the service goes out to tender in 2027.

Members also noted the use of private vehicles for site visits and transportation of equipment to events and concurred that there was insufficient need for a pool vehicle, at this time and staff were able to claim mileage, should they need to use their vehicle to travel to site. They



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agreed that the Council may consider purchasing a utility vehicle when it considers future grounds maintenance contract options.

RESOLVED	(i) That the Council doesn't introduce angling to its water spaces and retains its water spaces to encourage all forms of wildlife. (ii) That further research be undertaken, and an options report be submitted to this committee to consider recommendation on the provision of a new play area on The Hollow. (iii) That further research be undertaken to consider approval of the restoration of the Burton Memorial. (iv) That further research be undertaken to consider approval of a project to extend the burial area within the confines of the Welton Road Cemetery. (v) Authorisation be given to install a bench on the pathway from/to the Town Centre/Southbrook via Fishponds. (vi) That the CO research and report on options to appoint an external procurement professional to review the future grounds maintenance contract.
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OS2307.7. DRAFT BUDGET 2024/25

Members referred to the draft Parks, Open Spaces and Environment Committee budget (Appendix 6), noting the final financial detail for the Norse contract for 24/25 was an estimated figure as the contracted indices (Fuel, CPI and NJC uplift) in November, were yet to be announced. The RFO further advised that the office was currently contesting the proposed estimated percentage uplift of 7% for the National Joint Council 24//25 award, as the publicised estimate was currently 5%.

RESOLVED	That the draft Parks, Open Spaces and Environment Committee budget of £844,804 be submitted for consideration within the Council budget and precept for 2024/25 – with adjustments being made on receipt of the final cost of the grounds' maintenance contract for 2024/25.
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OS2307.8. CORRESPONDENCE

None.

OS2307.9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Parks, Open Spaces and Environment Committee will be held on Monday, 4th March 2024.

Meeting Closed at 20:05 hrs.

Signed  Date 