

Minutes of a meeting of the AMENITIES COMMITTEE held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, at 18.45 on Monday 12 June 2023.

PRESENT:

Cllr. D. Wakeman (Chair), S. Ashton, M. Best, T. Bond, N. Draycott, K. Head, J. Morris, J. Nathan, A. Samuel, A. Stuart.

In attendance: Town Clerk K. Sheehan, Deputy Clerk E. Wilkins, and approximately 28 members of the public.

OPEN FORUM

The Mayor read a statement noting that online abuse targeting councillors was unacceptable and reminding everyone that their constructive comments were welcome when expressed respectfully.

Seven members of the public spoke in relation to a recently erected fence at Happy Valley. Issues raised included:

- Reasons for the fence being erected were unclear and neighbouring property owners had not experienced any anti-social behaviour in the area.
- That the fence was preventing mobility scooter and pushchair access to the top part of the field.
- An accessibility gate, such as that at Bincombe Beeches, was suggested.
- Although improvements to paths and access would be welcome, it was felt this might be expensive compared to the easier option of removing the fence.
- This physical barrier to open spaces had alienated local residents at unnecessary public expense.
- The effectiveness of the fence and how it would be monitored was queried and initiatives such as Neighbourhood Watch and use of the Street Safe app were suggested.
- Improving surfacing of steep paths might inadvertently create bike or skateboard 'tracks'.

Cllr. Wakeman thanked everyone for their comments.

1 TO NOTE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

23/24

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs. D. Livesley and P. Maxwell (both personal).

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

23/24

Cllr. Samuel declared an interest in the item relating to access at Happy Valley by virtue of being employed at the neighbouring school. Cllr. Draycott declared an interest in the same item by virtue of living in close proximity to the site.

3 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

23/24

It was AGREED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Amenities Committee held on Monday 15 May 2023 be APPROVED.

4 HAPPY VALLEY

23/24 To consider comments received in respect of access to Happy Valley and consider a way forward

The Chair commented that he had attended the site with members of the public and assessed possible improvements to help mobility scooters and pushchairs. He proposed to ask the Clerk and Operations Manager to seek quotes for improvements to the path's gradient and surface and seek advice from the Design Out Crime officer and accessibility advisor.

Cllr. Bond commented that she felt the slope would still be too steep even after improvement works and Cllr. Head emphasised that she felt that the fence should be removed while access options were reviewed. Cllr. Stuart noted that the police and Abri had been consulted and that no formal Right of Way existed between the Southmead garages and Happy Valley. Cllr. Ashton stated that he felt that closing off access was disproportionate and that creating a dead end might actually increase incidences of anti-social behaviour.

It was AGREED to delegate to the Clerk and Operations Manager the authority to seek quotes for path improvements, seek advice from the Design Out Crime officer and accessibility advisor, and bring this information back to a future meeting for consideration. Furthermore, it was AGREED that the fence should be removed in the meantime and that any further discussions would take place in a formal council meeting, with all stakeholders to be consulted again.

5 VICTORIA HALL

23/24 To consider quotations received for the restoration of the Victoria Hall surface

It was AGREED to accept a quote from Total Floor Care for £2990.40 (excl. VAT) for this work. Councillors noted that there would be a change in the colour of the floor and agreed not to have the badminton court lines reinstated.

6 MATTERS OF REPORT

23/24

Cllr. Bond commented that a drain cover on North Street was still loose, despite reports to Highways. Cllr. Ashton reported that the Abri community pantry had sold out in twenty minutes on its first visit to Crewkerne. The Town Clerk clarified that the start date for the tennis courts refurbishment was anticipated to be w/c 19th June (weather dependent). Cllr. Stuart reported that there was a loose drain cover on Mount Pleasant and Cllr. Head reported that Crewkerne in Bloom were applying for permission to paint the town's BT cabinets.

7 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

22/23

Monday 10 July 2023 following the Planning & Highways Committee meeting – location TBC.

The meeting closed at 19.28.

Signed:

Dated:

Am13June2023