

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF COLESHILL TOWN COUNCIL'S PROCEDURES & AMENITIES COMMITTEE**

**12 DECEMBER 2019 IN THE HUDSON ROOM AT THE TOWN HALL**

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**Present:** Cllr. C. Symonds (in the Chair)  
Cllrs. Battle, P. Symonds, Sparkes and Wallace

**Also attending:** Cllrs. Clayton, Reilly and Richardson

**27. APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies received – full committee attendance.

**28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr. Reilly declared a personal interest in item 39 as he was on the executive committee of the Civic Society.

**29. PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The minutes of the 23 October meeting were proposed by Cllr. Battle seconded by Cllr. P. Symonds and **ACCEPTED** unanimously as a true record, without amendment.

**30. APPEAL AGAINST DECISION ON PUBLIC GRAVE HEADSTONES**

The resident making the appeal was present and made a claim for reversal of the decision in order to have a personal headstone on a public grave where his infant brother was buried.

He advised that he was prepared to name other children's names on the headstone if he was allowed to purchase one and highlighted that there were other examples of public graves with memorial stones in the Cemetery. He was requesting a stone that was flat to the ground rather than upright and was not pursuing any future requests for interments in this plot.

Members discussed the matter in private. They were keen to not compound any previous error with a new one or intentionally go away from ICCM guidance to not allow personal headstones on public graves. The appeal and **REFUSED** by unanimous vote, as proposed by Cllr. C. Symonds and seconded by Cllr. Battle. It was stressed that the office should reiterate its offers to the family member, as given in its first letter to him.

**31. TOWN HALL KITCHEN**

A major budget item for 2019/2020 was the renovation of the kitchen in the Town Hall, which had been as a request from the previous Council and hirers. This was deemed necessary, given the increased numbers of hirers in the Town Hall and demands from Environmental Health to improve items such as tiling and sink provision, to be in line with Health and Hygiene regulations.

Three quotes have been sought from commercial kitchen suppliers to offer better on-site catering facilities. The Town Clerk noted that these quotations were to allow members to agree a way forward, which might include having a small working group and were not in any way at a commissioning stage. The cost of gutting out the existing kitchen also had to be considered.

A number of members supported Cllr. Wallace's view that an extension to the existing kitchen space should be sought in the first instance. Suggested areas for it were to

where the bins were stored or into the cupboard area between the kitchen and the passageway to the push button side doors. The **Town Clerk** would seek quotations.

It was further agreed nem. con. that Cllrs. Battle and Wallace should be on any Working Group.

32. **RoSPA ANNUAL REPORTS**

The 2019 RoSPA report for the Town Council-run open spaces has been received, listing the action points and recommendations as either Low risk, Medium risk or Fail observations.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the work was due to be started in the spring as it was not easy in the winter months. She recommended that members look to adding the resurfacing of the Skatepark cost to the 20/21 budget as this was worn.

It was reported that the cracks appearing in the Memorial Park small child's play area surfacing was mare's tail, which was cleared before the handover to the Town Council. Its reappearance cannot be the responsibility of the contractor, so the Council will need to keep treating it.

33. **CEMETERY FEES**

In April 2019, the grave technician who carried out all of the interment work within the cemetery increased his charges by £25 per interment. Councillors felt that this increased cost should be reflected in the charges to families. Members also preferred a small, inflation-linked increase per year rather than to not increase for a few years followed up by a sudden larger rise. The previous Council felt that the increase should be 1% to all Residential and Non-Residential ERBs and interments plus an extra £25 per burial but this increase had little effect upon the cemetery charges levels when rounded to the nearest pound.

Cllr. Symonds proposed and Cllr. Battle seconded a 2.5% increase in charges, to take effect from 1 April 2020. This was **AGREED** nem. con.

34. **ALLOTMENTS AGM REPORT**

At the November AGM, there were 17 allotment holders in attendance, with the sites occupied as follows:

Stonebridge (48 plots): Let 34 plots; Vacant 14 plots; plus 8 large 'Community Orchard' plots.

Gilson/Grimstock/Beggars Well (46 plots): Let 45 plot; Vacant 1 plot.

Blythe Gardens (16 plots): Let 16; Vacant 0.

Vacancies were higher Stonebridge, possibly because of the uncertainty of the site in relation to the Local Plan and the poor condition of the Community Orchard. It was felt that paying thousands of pounds to have it cleared was not financially viable. It was proposed by Cllr. Battle, seconded by Cllr. C. Symonds and **RESOLVED** that it be covered for the winter to kill the weeds and then offered as individual plots in the spring.

35. **MAYOR'S BANK ACCOUNT**

The operation of the Mayor's Charity bank account has been discussed at a previous meeting of this Committee. The November full Town Council then recommended that this Committee should undertake a further review of these banking arrangements.

At the October meeting of this Committee, Cllr. Wallace advised that the Mayor's Charity bank account had been, for a number of years, operated as 3 trustees as signatories who were volunteers. To make matters easier for the Council, Cllr. Wallace agreed that the Mayor's Charity bank account funds could be transferred to one run by the office but she warned that this was therefore going to entail officer time. Members were content with that, citing similar arrangements at other local authorities, the need for transparency and openness and to protect everyone's interests in probity. It was proposed by Cllr. C. Symonds, seconded by Cllr. P. Symonds and **AGREED** nem. con. The **Town Clerk** agreed to investigate a Unity Bank account, as an alternative to another HSBC one.

36. **CEMETERY TURNING CIRCLE**

The Parish Church Reverend had requested use of the Cemetery turning circle to park wedding cars before groups took photographs on the Croft. A member decision was sought.

Members **REJECTED** the proposal, as any bridal cars could affect the users of the cemetery, even if there were only small numbers of cars.

37. **OPEN SPACES WORKING GROUP**

Informal notes had been taken by Mr. Allan Taylor from the Open Spaces working group meeting in November. A number of suggested improvements had been put forward in relation to the Memorial Park and the Croft and this had been useful for member-officer understanding of the issues.

Cllr. Wallace requested that a drainage solution for the Memorial Park playing fields should be included in the 20/21 budget. Councillors noted Danny Green's observations about the planting of the WWI tree in the requested location near the corner of the James Munday pitch. Members were content with a £500+ cost of a sufficiently sturdy oak tree for the commemoration and accepted there would be further costs for a protective sleeve and mesh. The group had considered a suitable location but the **Deputy Town Clerk** was to arrange for the grounds staff to mark the spot, for member approval, before purchasing and planting the tree.

There were no obvious locations for taking up the donation of beech saplings.

38. **BUILDING HIRE CHARGES**

The last review of the building charges happened in December 2016 in advance of them being implemented in April 2017.

These changes caused a certain amount of animosity from hirers at the time, with the chairman of the committee receiving complaints regarding what hirers felt were unfair increases. The chairman at that time therefore felt that no further increases should take place for the following two years while hirer upset was allowed to diminish.

At this meeting, Cllr. C. Symonds and Battle proposed and seconded that the matter be deferred to the next meeting, to allow more consideration of the effect of any increase in charges, which was **SUPPORTED** nem. con.

39. **OLD MARKET HALL**

The last meeting of the Committee discussed an initial request from the Coleshill Civic Society for the Town Council to take on the management of the Old Market Hall. Cllr. C. Symonds and the Town Clerk were authorised to progress the detail with the Civic Society.

An exploratory meeting has taken place and a cost summary for 2018 had been provided. Although the cost summary suggested an excess of expenditure over income, members were aware that the Town Council would be able to generate a better income level and potentially reduce some utility charges.

The main mutual benefits for the two organisations were that the heritage collection would be safeguarded and it would allow the Civic Society to concentrate on its civic protection purposes. In addition, both would be able to work more closely on heritage and tourism events involving the building which would thereby give more options to support the High Street.

The committee was content to **SUPPORT** nem. con. the principle of taking on the lease, as proposed by Cllr. Battle and seconded by Cllr. P. Symonds. The next stage was for the Civic Society to seek approval for the lease transfer from the Digby Estate and its agent, Fisher German. Mr John Hoyle had written to the agent in November but had not, to date, had any response. The Council wanted to see that lease agreement before taking it on, in case there was anything that needed to be challenged.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9:57 p.m.

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Chairman