

**Minutes of the Property and Amenities Committee Meeting held at
Corsham Town Hall on Wednesday 12 April 2023**

Present Councillor T Ellis (Chair)
Councillors S Abbott, H Belcher, N Brakspear and A Brown.

In Attendance J Whittleton (Head of Technical Services).

In Attendance Online Councillors J Brook, J Roberton and G Ward.

P&A 28/22 Apologies

There were none.

P&A 29/22 Public Question Time and Petitions

None received.

P&A 30/22 Declarations of Interest

Councillor H Belcher declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 14 – Requests for Highways Improvements. She had submitted one of the requests herself. She remained in the room during the discussion and decision on the item.

P&A 31/22 Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Property & Amenities Committee meeting held on 18 January 2023

The Committee noted the following:

- That work to develop a transport plan for Corsham was now underway;
- That the Head of Technical Services would be considering the consultation for the Corsham 20mph scheme in the next month or so; and
- That the Town Council should be contacted by Bath & North East Somerset Council about the East of Bath Feasibility Study when they come to engage with stakeholders.

P&A 32/22 Public Realm RIBA Stage 2 (*Minute P&A 19/22 and others*)

RIBA Stage 2 of the public realm project centred on Newlands Road was now underway. After some discussion concerning the number and types of crossings as well as the layout of the Post Office Lane junction, an updated design had been agreed upon. Atkins had undertaken to use this design to undertake a cost estimate and carry out some design development. Atkins' draft report for RIBA

Stage 2 was expected at some point during the week commencing 21 April. The Town Council would have around two weeks to respond. Stage 2 of the project was due to conclude on 26 May 2023 with the production of a final report.

Issues discussed included:

- The need to carry out pedestrian surveys at all potential crossing points (including those identified in the Stage 1 plan but omitted from the Stage 2 design); and
- The absence of crossings on Newlands Road near the Post Office Lane junction.

Resolved:

To note the update.

P&A 33/22 Installation of New Play Equipment in the Little Play Area, Katherine Park (Minute P&A 20/22 and others)

Tenders to install new play equipment at the Little Play Area had been considered by Councillors (appointed by this Committee) and officers on 6 February 2023. Nine companies had submitted proposals. The successful tender was submitted by Kompan. Although Kompan's design was not the cheapest - £40,000 (tenders ranged from £35,000 - £49,000) it was felt that their proposal fulfilled all the requirements of the specification and offered the best value for money and play value. Kompan was scheduled to install the new equipment in May 2023.

Issues discussed included:

- That the Kompan design included a good amount of inclusive/accessible equipment which had been part of the specification; and
- That an image of the improved play area would be placed on the fence at the Little Play Area.

Resolved:

To note the update.

P&A 34/22 Springfield Skate Park (Minute P&A 6/22 and others)

After engaging with Skateboard GB about tender processes for commissioning new skate parks, the Head of Technical Services had a suggested way forward for the skate park project.

He proposed setting up a user-group, made up of 10-20 skaters, who would assist in the tender process, raise funds for the project, work with the chosen contractor to draw up a design and apply for outside funding. The Town Council would then run a two-stage tender exercise. In the first stage a notice would be placed on Contracts Finder and companies would be shortlisted by their

response to a selection questionnaire. Around three companies would then be asked to take part in Stage 2, which would require the shortlisted companies to submit more detailed documents including a method statement, examples of previous projects, details of their proposed project team and a project plan with timescales. The successful company would then enter into a contract with the Town Council. The contract would have a break-clause, stating clearly that it was contingent on the Council obtaining planning permission and funding. Skateboard GB advise seeking funding following the planning stage and have a useful document which lists dozens of organisations that provide funding for skate parks. The cost of a new skate park is likely to be in the region of £300,000. Although there were many sources of outside funding (especially as skateboarding and BMX were now Olympic sports) the Town Council was likely to have to contribute a substantial sum to the project.

Issues discussed included:

- The durability of the new sprayed-concrete designs; and
- That by agreeing to the way forward suggested by the Head of Technical Services, the Town Council was not committing itself to any expenditure at this stage.

Resolved:

To proceed with the project to install a new skate park along the lines suggested by the Head of Technical Services.

P&A 35/22 Emergency Plan (*Minute P&A 23/22*)

Consideration was given to an updated version of the Emergency Plan. The Plan was first approved in January 2021 and had been updated following the production of a 'lessons learned' document arising from the Covid-19 pandemic and an emergency planning exercise conducted in January 2023 which had highlighted some things which needed to be added. The Wiltshire and Swindon Local Resilience Forum had considered the plan and had stated that it was one of the better ones in the County.

Issues discussed included:

- Whether there was anything that could be sent to residents about emergency planning. It was pointed out that both the Environment Agency and the Wiltshire and Swindon Local Resilience Forum produce householder guides on property defence (for flooding) and preparing for emergencies. The Town Council could do more to ensure that these documents were available to residents.

Resolved:

To approve the updated Emergency Plan.

P&A 36/22 Asset Management Plan (Notes of the Informal P&A Committee held on 9 March 2022 – Agenda Item 9)

Consideration was given to a summary of a new Asset Management Plan which looked in detail at the Town Council's buildings – Arnold House, Corsham Town Hall and the Guide Hut. The plan had been produced in order to identify maintenance issues and to address them through a programme of planned preventative maintenance, rather than reacting to issues as they occurred. The plan would also prove useful to Councillors when setting budgets in future years and when they come to consider the future of council-owned property.

Issues discussed included:

- That there were a lot of defects identified at Arnold House. The cost of putting this right was (conservatively) estimated at £94,495, though there was scope for this to rise significantly. Of particular note was the state of the roof: the contractor undertaking some repairs had commented that it was generally in a tired state and would need to be completely re-roofed in 5-10 years. A recent quote for this work had come in at £82,665 plus VAT. If the Town Council chose to retain Arnold House, it would be reasonable to assume that a sum of £200,000 might be needed over a period of five years to bring it back into reasonable condition;
- Whether there was merit in conducting annual or bi-annual condition surveys of all the Town Council's buildings; and
- The future use of the Guide Hut once the new workshop is built at Park Lane.

Resolved:

To note the summary of the Asset Management Plan.

P&A 37/22 Wiltshire Council Guidance Note – Town and Parish Council Tree Planting on Wiltshire Council Land

Consideration was given to Wiltshire Council's process for transferring maintenance responsibility for open spaces deemed suitable for tree planting. The Committee also considered whether to agree in principle to take over a number of Wiltshire Council open spaces.

Issues discussed included:

- The cost and staffing implications of taking over areas from Wiltshire Council; and
- That the process for Town Councils involved entering into licences for the areas, with a view to finding a more permanent arrangement over the life of the licence.

Resolved:

- 1) To note the Wiltshire Council Guidance Note.
- 2) To agree in principle to take over the following Wiltshire Council open spaces: Bences Lane open space, Southerwicks amenity space, Valley Road/Hatton Way verges, Velly Hill, Monks Lane verge, Moor Park (open space and woodland) and Brook Drive verge.

P&A 38/22 Priory Cross Allotments

Consideration was given to a suggestion from the Community Services Officer (Health & Wellbeing) to rent out a plot at the Priory Cross Allotments to a community group. Allotment plots were normally allocated from a waiting list, though it was noted that there had been difficulties finding tenants for this site (perhaps due to the lack of a mains water supply).

Issues discussed included:

- The number of people on the waiting list; and
- Difficulties finding tenants for plots at Priory Cross.

Resolved:

To permit a plot to be rented out to a community group provided that no-one is waiting for that site.

P&A 39/22 Corsham Town Hall – Removal of Asbestos and Insulation in the Roof Space

Consideration was given to a proposal to remove asbestos containing material from the Town Hall roof space and installing 148m² of 300mm mineral wool insulation. The proposal had arisen from the report from CO2 Target which was commissioned in order to advise on a pathway to net-zero by 2030. The report also included recommendations relating to air-source/ground-source heat pumps, PV panels etc, but the first step was to improve the buildings' thermal envelope.

Issues discussed included:

- The processes involved in the removal of asbestos containing materials; and
- The cost of the proposed work.

Resolved:

- i) To approve work to remove asbestos containing material from the Town Hall roof space and to install 148m² of 300mm mineral wool insulation.
- ii) To ask the Finance and Administration Committee to increase the grant to the Methuen Hall and fund the work from the Town Council's General Reserves.

P&A 40/22 Update on Local Highway Improvement Group Issues (*Minute P&A 21/22 and others*)

Parish/town attendees at LHFIG meetings:

Wiltshire Council's Senior Traffic Engineer had written to all the parishes in the Corsham area to say that from now on they would prefer a maximum of two representatives from each town/parish council to attend LHFIG meetings. This

arose out of concerns that there were sometimes too many voices at the meetings and that meetings were taking too long. The Head of Technical Services suggested that in the new year one Councillor and one officer attends on behalf of the Town Council and that a Councillor reserve be appointed.

Resolved:

To note the request from Wiltshire Council and to consider appointments to the LHFIG at the Annual Council Meeting.

Results of traffic surveys at Lacock Road and Lypiatt Road:

Consideration was given to the results of traffic surveys at Lacock Road and Lypiatt Road. The survey at Lacock Road had found a combined average speed of 36.9mph. The survey at Lypiatt Road had found a combined average speed of 35.7mph.

Resolved:

To ask the LHFIG to consider speed limit assessments at both locations.

Bradford Road Speed Limit Assessment:

Wiltshire Council's Senior Traffic Engineer had been in contact to say that the speed limit issue had now been considered by both the Cabinet member and Director of Highways and that they had both agreed not to implement a 30mph limit at this location. The LHFIG would now be considering whether to implement the advised 40mph limit and wanted the Town Council to confirm that they were willing to make a contribution of £1,438.53 towards the project.

Resolved:

To contribute up to £1,438.53 towards the project to lower the speed limit on Bradford Road.

P&A 41/22 Requests for Highways Improvements and Traffic Surveys (*Minute P&A 22/22 and others*)

- i. Arnolds Mead, Corsham – Request for white H-bar across drive and double yellow lines on the street.

Issues discussed included:

- That the request for double yellows would prevent residents from parking.

Resolved:

To ask the LHFIG to consider painting a white H-bar across the drive.

- ii. Westwells, Neston – Request for dropped kerbs between Neston Gardens and Neston.

Issues discussed included:

- That the distance from Neston Gardens to Neston was considerable and there were many kerbs and entrances.

Resolved:

To ask the applicant to identify specific locations where dropped kerbs are needed.

- iii. Park Lane, Corsham – Request for double yellows to prevent cars parking in front of dropped kerbs.

Resolved:

To ask the LHFIG to consider the request.

P&A 42/22 Update on Speed Indicator Devices (*Minute P&A 23/22 and others*)

Consideration was given to the data collected from the SID's.

Issues discussed included:

- That at some locations one of the devices appears to run out of batteries after a few days. The Head of Technical Services undertook to check the batteries and replace if necessary; and
- That the data from Prospect showed a persistent speeding issue.

Resolved:

- 1) To send the data collected at Prospect to the Police.
- 2) To note the report.

P&A 43/22 Air Quality Monitoring (*Minute P&A 29/20*)

The air quality data could not be obtained from Wiltshire Council's website. The Head of Technical Services undertook to contact the officer responsible and ask for the data for Corsham.

Resolved:

To consider the data at the next meeting.

P&A 44/22 Water Refill Point in the Town Centre

Consideration was given to a proposal to install a water refill point in the town centre, either at the public toilets or at the lower end of the Martingate Centre.

Issues discussed included:

- The cost of maintaining, repairing, cleaning and inspecting the potential refill point;

- That people might not like the idea of filling a water bottle from the public toilets;
- Whether the installation of a refill point would be best looked at when Martingate refurbishes the Lloyds bank building.
- The experience of other towns who have installed water refill points; and
- That there is a refill scheme that encourages people to refill in shops around the town.

Resolved: To consider the issue at the next meeting after providing information on the design, liability and maintenance costs.

The meeting began at 7.30pm and ended at 9:08pm. There were no members of the public present.

CHAIRMAN

DATE