

**Minutes of the Property and Amenities Committee Meeting held at
Corsham Town Hall on Wednesday 24 May 2023**

Present Councillor T Ellis (Chair)
Councillors S Abbott, J Brook, G Ward and R Williams.

In Attendance J Whittleton (Head of Technical Services).

In Attendance Online Councillors N Farmer and J Roberton.

P&A 01/23 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors H Belcher OBE and G McCaffrey.

P&A 02/23 Public Question Time and Petitions

There were none.

P&A 03/23 Declarations of Interest

Councillor S Abbott declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 9 – Update on Local Highway Improvement Group Issues. He had a family connection to the proposed Field House crossing issue. He remained in the room during the discussion and decision on the item.

P&A 04/23 Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Property & Amenities Committee meeting held on 12 April 2023

Minute P&A 44/22 – Water Refill Point in the Town Centre - The Committee noted that the owner of the Martingate Centre had agreed to look at installing a water refill point as part of the refurbishment of the Centre.

P&A 05/23 Public Realm RIBA Stage 2 (*Minute P&A 32/22 and others*)

The Head of Technical Services gave an update on RIBA Stage 2 of the public realm project centred on Newlands Road. The Stage 2 work was about to conclude with the production of a Concept Design Report. The Property and Amenities Committee would be asked to consider this report at its meeting on 19 July 2023 and would be invited to consider how best to proceed with the project.

Issues discussed included:

- That there had been an increase in the projected project cost due to a change in scope and inflation;

- That the Town Council could consider pushing ahead with the implementation of the project (after securing outside funding), implementing the project in stages, or using the Concept Design Plan as a guide to inform public realm work over the next ten years or so;
- That the design falls slightly below the indicative threshold using Active Travel England's local authority toolkit (due to not separating motorists and cyclists and/or not re-routing motorists away from the area). The scheme is unlikely to qualify for funding from Active Travel England or other schemes which use this toolkit to assess applications; and
- That Members would need to know what sources of funding might be available for the project before making a decision on next steps.

Resolved:

- 1) To contact Wiltshire Council's Head of Economy and Regeneration to enquire about potential sources of funding for the scheme.
- 2) To consider the Concept Design Report at the next meeting.

P&A 06/23 Consultation on 20mph limits/zones in Corsham (*Minute P&A 7/22 and others*)

Consideration was given to the appointment of Councillors to help finalise the consultation material and assist with any event.

Resolved:

That Councillors S Abbott, T Ellis and G Ward be invited to assist with the consultation on 20mph limits/zones in the town centre.

P&A 07/23 Biodiversity Action Plan

The Head of Technical Services gave an update on the Biodiversity Action Plan: a final version of which, was due to be received shortly. The purpose of the document was to provide the Town Council with a guide on the management of open spaces with biodiversity/nature recovery in mind, whilst not detracting from the amenity value of spaces. As well as advice on how the Town Council should manage its sites (which would inform the grounds maintenance contract) there were also a number of suggested wildlife enhancements including wildflower strips, reptile hibernacula, bat boxes, bird boxes, bug hotels, dormice boxes, butterfly glades, drought resistant rockeries, tree & shrub planting, pond creation, hedgerow planting, a community orchard and possibly community beehives.

Issues discussed included:

- That delivering the enhancements set out in the plan would have staffing implications for the grounds team; and
- That there would be lots of interesting work arising from the plan which could be carried out by staff and volunteers.

Resolved:

To note the update.

P&A 08/23 Use of Glyphosate on the Public Highway

The Council's Biodiversity Action Plan recommended that the Council suspends the use of glyphosate in its open spaces unless approved (for a particular reason) by an ecologist. The general trend amongst local authorities with concerns about the natural environment was to reduce or even to stop all use of the weedkiller. The Committee was asked to consider whether the Town Council should continue to use the chemical on roads, pavements and in other parts of the public realm.

Issues discussed included:

- The effectiveness of other methods of weed removal;
- That reducing the amount of glyphosate was to be encouraged; and
- The possibility of trialling alternative methods and of leaving some areas unattended to see what the public reaction is.

Resolved:

- 1) To leave part of the Town Council's spraying route untreated this year in order to gauge the public reaction.
- 2) To trial the use of a weed burner.

P&A 09/23 Update on Local Highway Improvement Group Issues (*Minute P&A 40/22 and others*)

The Committee received an update on selected issues arising from the LHFIG meeting on 26 April 2023.

Issues discussed included:

- That the LHFIG would be proceeding with the implementation of a 40mph speed limit on the Bradford Road;
- That the LHFIG had decided not to go ahead with a speed limit assessment along Lypiatt Road at this stage: the issue had been put on a watching brief;
- That the LHFIG budget for all projects next year was around £9,000 and that would mean that only priority projects could be taken forward; and
- That the Town Council had some earmarked reserves for road safety.

Resolved:

To note the update.

P&A 10/23 Requests for Highways Improvements and Traffic Surveys (*Minute P&A 41/22 and others*)

- i. High Street, Corsham – Request to level-off/cap the central gullies in the pedestrian part of the High Street.

Issues discussed included:

- That cost involved in carrying out the proposed works and the difficulty matching the existing stone;
- That the gullies were part of the character of the town centre and although not old themselves, they nonetheless added to the historic fabric of the High Street; and
- Accessibility issues.

Resolved:

Not to support the request.

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

Issues discussed included:

- Whether it was possible to ask the developer of the proposed data centre to install dropped kerbs as part of the planning application.

Resolved:

To ask Wiltshire Council's planning department to make the installation of dropped kerbs either a condition of planning permission or part of a Section 106 agreement.

- iii. High Street, Corsham – Request for measure to prevent commercial refuse lorries using the area outside Imperial Garden as a rest stop.

Issues discussed included:

- That the frequent use of this area by refuse lorries had an adverse impact on the visual appearance of the High Street;
- That it would be hard to bring in any physical measures that didn't also impact on business deliveries at this end of the High Street; and
- That the area already had double yellow lines and enforcement could take place.

Resolved:

- 1) To write to the refuse companies asking them to stop parking at this location.
- 2) If there is not a positive response to the Town Council's letter: to ask Wiltshire Council to write to the companies, pointing out that enforcement action can be taken.

- iv. Hare and Hounds Roundabout, Corsham – Request for topographical survey in order to investigate potential safety measures for pedestrians.

Resolved:

To support the request.

P&A 11/23 Update on Speed Indicator Devices (*Minute P&A 42/22 and others*)

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

Issues discussed included:

- That the LHFIG had the issue of speeding at Gastard on its issues list and that it might be prioritised if the LHFIG were aware of the data collected at this location.

Resolved:

- 1) To send the data collected at Velley Hill and Valley Road to the Police.
- 2) To send the data collected at Velley Hill to the LHFIG.

P&A 12/23 Air Quality Monitoring (*Minute P&A 29/20*)

Consideration was given to the air quality monitoring data. It was noted that all three monitored locations were significantly below the annual objective of 40ug/m3 for nitrogen dioxide.

Resolved:

To note the report.

The meeting began at 7.30pm and ended at 8.47pm. There were no members of the public present.

CHAIRMAN

DATE