

STURMINSTER NEWTON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
held on Thursday 1st February 2024 at 7.15pm in The Council Chamber

Present:

Cllr L Cooper

Cllr N Dobson

Cllr A Donaldson – Vice Chairman

Cllr C Fraser

Cllr H Lacey - Chairman

Cllr D Mantock

Cllr P Marks

Cllr H Reed

Cllr J Rose

In Attendance: K Squire (Town Clerk), A Dodson (Grounds Manager), Dorset Councillor C Jones, and L Plumridge (Assistant Town Clerk by Zoom)

Members of the public: 3

Minute No.	Comments
23/24/248	PUBLIC SESSION There were no comments from members of the public.
23/24/249	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies were received from Cllr Jones and accepted. (Cllr Batstone later sent belated apologies as she had been delayed).
23/24/250	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS No interests were declared and no written requests for dispensation had been received
23/24/251	MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS TOWN COUNCIL MEETING The minutes of the previous Town Council meeting held on 11 th January 2024 having been circulated and publicised prior to the meeting, were taken as read and approved for signature by the Chairman as a true and correct record.
23/24/252	RECOMMENDATION FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS <u>Finance & Personnel – 25th January 2024</u> Cllr Dobson advised there were no recommendations to resolve.
23/24/253	PLANNING APPLICATION Application No: P/LBC/2023/05860 Location: 1 Bridge Street Sturminster Newton DT10 1AP Proposal: Repairs and recovering of the existing building roof Observations: Having seen the Conservation Officer's report, the Council had no objections. Application No: P/OUT/2023/05468 Location: The Retreat Hewletts Drove Rivers Corner Dorset DT10 2AE Proposal: Demolish garage and container and erect 1 No. dwelling (outline application with all matters reserved). Observations: No Objections.



23/24/254

CEMETERY SPOIL

The Town Clerk had circulated a report attached to these minutes.

The Council resolved as follows:

- **The existing spoil pile should be removed. The Grounds Manager will arrange and oversee this process, at the same time creating a 'discrete' area for grave diggers to leave future excess spoil.**
- **The Town Clerk to draw up a contract for funeral directors to meet the extra costs that future excess soil removal will incur.**

23/24/255

POLICING IN NORTH DORSET

The Mayor had received correspondence from Shaftesbury Town Council concerning the lack of policing in North Dorset which suggested a joined up approach from the North Dorset towns of Shaftesbury, Gillingham, Blandford and Sturminster Newton would be a pertinent. Shaftesbury Town Council will be considering this shortly and so it was agreed to wait for a formal request. The new Police Officer has now started and will attend the next meeting that falls within his rota.

23/24/256

CAR BOOT SALES AT RICKETTS LANE RECREATION GROUND

The Town Clerk had circulated a report attached to these minutes.

The Council resolved to agree to the monthly car boot sales going ahead providing all action points in the report are implemented.

23/24/257

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to consider.

23/24/258

TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

The Town Clerk reported as follows:

Works at The Bridge – there have been some delays but work should be finished by 12th February.

Colber Bridge – a meeting had been arranged between the Grounds Manager, Dorset Council and Hinton Estate. No-one could establish the ownership or whose responsibility it was to maintain Colber Bridge. It was agreed that the three organisations would obtain quotations for separate parts of the maintenance:

- Hinton Estates – will remove debris from the river and repair all the stonework/structure.
- Dorset Council – will obtain quotes for repair/repainting the metal work.
- Sturminster Newton Town Council – subject to Council's approval will obtain quotations for the repair/replacement of the gates.

Whilst on site the issue with young people accessing the railway bridge was investigated. It was agreed that some sort of barrier would be installed with signage by Hinton Estates.

Dorset Council confirmed footpath resurfacing works will take place this year.

Model Railway

The Clerk had attended a viewing of the model railway organised by SNHT in the old Barclays Bank building.

Staff Training – all staff are attending a fire safety training session at Vale Fire on 22nd February.

DAPTC – DAPTC had suggested Councils contribute to cost of election videos. Cllr Lacey suggested Councillors watch the videos and consider a contribution at the next meeting.

23/24/259

TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor had attended the Police event at The Exchange and also the Sturminster Newton Business Awards.



23/24/260

DORSET COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Cllr Carole Jones reported as follows:

- The Government has committed £4million to Adult Social Care in North Dorset.
- Dorset Council Market Town Strategy – while Sturminster Newton is too small to fit criteria Cllr Jones suggested the information could be considered as part of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Asset policy – local organisations, parish and town councils can now apply to take over Dorset Council assets and the process has been made easier.
- Cllr Jones is working on improving hospital discharge in Town.
- Drovers and The Gavel – there are still issues as the road hasn't been adopted. Bad parking causes problems for the bin lorries to collect refuse, this is particularly bad by Montebourg House.
- Sturminster Newton High School – making good progress with amazing new leadership.
- Cllr Jones asked the Grounds Manager to look at the riverbank by the mill.

23/24/261

INFORMATION FROM MEMBERS

Cllr Fraser – would like to investigate the purchase of a water testing kit particularly as many young people use the river in the summer but will discuss this at the planning meeting.

Cllr Marks – will be meeting the Chairman of the Allotment Association to discuss the application to the Section 106 monies.

Cllr Donaldson – the temporary problems Gigaclear are causing remain a topic for complaints.


Cllr Mantock – Goughs Close residents have also raised concerns about Gigaclear and the potential road closures. Dorset Councillor Jones will investigate.

She also noted the Sturminster Newton Heritage Trust have their AGM next week.

Cllr Fraser – noted the SNHT model railway project was very good and an admirable effort by all concerned.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.30pm

Approved on 7 March 2024 Chairman's Signature



Request to hold monthly car boot sales at Ricketts Lane recreation ground

Introduction

The organisers of last years car boot sales have requested permission to hold monthly events during the summer of 2024. Due to previous issues, I met with the organisers, the Grounds Manager and Cllrs Dobson and Donaldson to discuss ways to ensure that the event runs smoothly.

Details

The organisers intend to hold the events on the first Sunday of the month from April through to September with a start time of 10am and going on until approximately 2pm. This will avoid disturbing any of the residents too early in the morning.

I have advised that the changing rooms will not be available, and they have agreed they do not require an electrical supply. They will provide a copy of their insurance and a current risk assessment which will be check by our Grounds Manager.

The main issue last year related to traffic management on Ricketts Lane. It was stressed that adequate numbers of marshals would be essential to ensure the safety of road users and to prevent accidents. The organisers understand this and will take steps to provide 6 marshals with appropriate hi-vis jackets. If the Council grant permission for the events to go ahead they will appeal for volunteers within local community groups and on social media.

The organisers understand that the area is a recreational amenity space and is used regularly for football matches and by William Barnes primary school for sporting activities as part of a paid contract with us. Therefore, if the weather conditions are such that cars would damage the grounds, the event would be cancelled. It was agreed that the Grounds Managers decision would be final on this matter.

The organisers have agreed to inform residents of Ricketts Lane of the events with relevant dates to avoid any complaints.

Recommendation

I would recommend that the Council consider granting the request provided above steps are taken.

Kate Squire Town Clerk

26th January 2024

Spoil Disposal at Sturminster Newton Cemetery



Introduction

The Cemetery is owned and managed by the Town Council. Currently and for many years any spoilt created by grave digging has been left at the top of the Cemetery. This has become unsightly and is encroaching on the land assigned as plots and walkways. Action needs to be taken to tidy up the area and deal with the spoil in the future.

Options

1. Grave diggers to remove spoil themselves.
We notified the funeral directors of the problem and sent photographs. We advised them that they must organise removal of the spoil for each grave dug or we would charge for this to be done. The funeral directors did not respond favourably to this as it increases their costs.
2. Organise for existing and future spoil heaps to be removed.
 - Funded out of Council budget.
 - Funded by an increase in fee for plot purchase.
 - Funded by an admin fee at time of burial.

We checked with other local Town Councils and received the below responses:

Shaftesbury Town Council	Had the same problem, have spent £5k getting rid of spoil. They now ask grave diggers to take the spoil away.
Gillingham Town Council	The spoil heap is removed biennially and was last done in 2022 at a cost of £1500. In 2023 they had 23 interments, 12 of those were full burials
Sherborne Town Council	Use Sherborne Turf, the last time we were charged it cost £200 + VAT for up to 9 tonnes plus a delivery charge of £45.38 + VAT for 0-5 miles distance.
Blandford Town Council	Their grave diggers accumulate the spoil and then charge the Town Council to remove it



Next Steps

We need to get the existing spoil removed and will obtain quotes to find the best price to do this. We will use some of the spoil to top up sunken graves when needed and depending on Councils decision, move the spoil heap to an area near the car park to make it easier for removal, we would advise all funeral directors that the area must be used and that we will make a charge for any spoil dumped outside of this area.

Recommendations

- Action needs to be taken to remove the existing spoil heap and as it would be impossible to recoup this from the funeral directors I would recommend this be funded from reserves.
- The Council need to consider if it appropriate to use precept to pay for spoil removal in the future, if the responsibility lies with the funeral directors (this could be difficult to enforce in light of responses received), if the cost should be met by an increase in new plot charges or as an admin fee directly related to the plot creating the spoil.

Kate Squire Town Clerk

26th January 2024

