

STURMINSTER NEWTON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AMENITIES COMMITTEE
held on Wednesday 26th March 2025 at 7.15pm in The Council Chamber

In attendance:

Cllr P Batstone
Cllr L Cooper
Cllr A Donaldson
Cllr C Fraser

Cllr P Marks (Chair)
Cllr J Matthews
Cllr H Lacey
Cllr J Rose

Also in attendance: K Squire (Clerk), A Dodson (Grounds Manager)

Members of the public: 3

Minute No	Comment
24/25/309	To receive comments and questions from members of the public. Members of the public are invited to raise any matter and speak for up to three minutes. The Chair of the Sturminster Newton Allotments Association (SNAA) gave an update report. He also requested if work could be done to the bottom manure heap. He thanked the Council for use of the Council Chamber for Committee meetings. There are currently 11 people on the waiting list for plots. Members thanked the Chair and Committee for their hard work.
24/25/310	Apologies for Absence. Apologies were received from Cllr Jones. These apologies were accepted by members present.
24/25/311	To receive declarations of interests and approve any written applications for dispensations. No declarations of interest were made or written applications for dispensation received.
24/25/312	To approve the minutes of the previous Amenities Committee meeting held on 26th September 2024. The minutes of the previous Amenities Committee meeting held on 26th September 2024, having been circulated and publicised prior to the meeting, were taken as read and approved for signature by the Committee Chair as a true and correct record.
24/25/313	To receive a report from Cllr Marks regarding a possible lease agreement with the Sturminster Newton Allotment Association (SNAA) and agree further actions. Cllr Marks gave an update on progress in supporting the SNAA with their work. He had attended the AGM with Cllr Mantock. He reported that it was well attended, well prepared and well lead by the chairman Michael Burt who was re-elected unanimously as chairman. The need for a lease was explained and supported by the SNAA. There is a need to decide on the request from the SNAA to extend the allotments at Filbridge Rise onto the green space at Coles Close. A consultation with residents would be useful. A lease agreement for both Filbridge Rise and Chinnocks would also be sensible. These matters need to be considered by Full Council, the Clerk will add an item to the next Full Council meeting agenda. The Clerk also suggested that a working group be set up to move forward with the project. She will also enquire if S106 developer contributions could be used to fund legal fees regarding the lease and set up of a Community Interest Company or similar.

- 24/25/314 To receive an update from Cllr Marks regarding youth provision in the Town and agree further actions.**
 A response to the change of use planning application is imminent and following this a lease agreement will be set up. The Clerk will meet with the Youth Club Committee to discuss the forward plan. Consultation with the Youth Town Council at the High School has been planned for April. The Clerk will update the Trustees from The Charity of William Williams. Cllr Marks thanked the Clerk for her persistence with the project and keeping it going. Longer Term the issues with costs and siting the permanent building remain a challenge. Cllr Marks thanked Cllr Lacey for her work in trying to engage with the Scout Lead Volunteers on various levels, though this has been frustrating and time consuming. Further reports on progress will be made either at the next Committee meeting or to Full Council as appropriate.
- 24/25/315 Update from Cllr Marks on Community Emergency Response Plan (CERP).**
 Cllr Marks gave an update on progress with the CERP. A core group of Councillors and Staff had been gathered and assigned roles. He thanked Jasmine Drew, the Office Administrator for her work in researching and producing templates to work from. And Adam Dodson, Grounds Manager for gathering information on equipment and resources available. Various emergency scenarios had been explored to identify actions, and further work was planned to expand on this. He would report on progress at the next Committee meeting.
- 24/25/316 To receive a Rights of Way group report from Cllr Cooper, Footpaths Officer.**
 Cllr Cooper, reported that the group had walked all the footpaths and had been working with the Dorset Council Rangers on clearance and repairs in various areas, with more work to be done. There were some anomalies in the official and current footpaths. He was working on a downloadable version of the Walkabout leaflets and still needed to meet with the Clerk and Cllr Jones to redesign these. He queried the resurfacing of the temporary footpath on the Fiddleford Ridge site. The Clerk confirmed this had been done.
- 24/25/317 To receive a report from the Grounds Manager, Adam Dodson.**
 The Grounds Manager's report is attached to these minutes.
- 24/25/318 To receive information from members and proposals for future business.**
Cllr Lacey – Reported that at the recent meeting of the Youth Town Council the pupils mentioned they would like an extension to the Skate Park. Following a successful meeting with the High School Council she had also enquired about working with the William Barnes School Council.
Cllr Cooper – Asked about the piece of disused land at the top of Old Market Hill. The Clerk advised this is privately owned.
Cllr Matthews – Asked about the overhanging brambles along the pavement at Old Market Hill. The Clerk advised that this was owned by the same company, and she had been in contact numerous times but had no response. She had referred to Dorset Council Highways as the company had been advised it was dangerous for pedestrians.
Cllr Batstone – Wanted to promote participation in the Great British Spring Clean litter pick.

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.40pm

Signed Approved on

**Grounds Report
Amenities Meeting
Wednesday 26th March 2025**

Cemetery – The grounds staff have spent several days at the Cemetery last week, carrying out the first cut.

We will be rotavating an area behind the main car park and planting wildflower seeds.

Recreation Ground Ricketts Lane – The new play facility has been completed.

Since its installation, it has been so well used. Every morning several children come down to play prior to school. The new equipment has been designed for all age groups.

Colber Bridge – The Countryside Rangers obtained a price for 2 new gates to be made for the bridge. £1050 +VAT per gate. We will be getting 2 more quotations imminently.

Riverbank stabilisation – We are working with DC regarding the tree planting scheme.

Tree Inspections – These took place in November. I am currently working through the inspections carried out on TC, Dorset Council and Hinton Estate land that are either owned, leased or under agreement.

The Tree inspector found several issues with Field Close play area. 2 Silver birch and 1 Cotoneaster. These trees were planted by the developer onto retained raised beds. The retaining wall/ fence is now failing due to the roots expanding out. This is a safety fear due to the proximity of the play area and footpath. Also, gardens, fences and buildings are within the fall zone.

The Tree inspector has recommended that all 3 trees are felled to ground level to prevent further damage.

SID – I had reported the SID had malfunctioned at the last meeting. This was repaired quickly, with the firmware being updated and is back working as it should.

Jubilee path – Grass matting has been installed.

Play Facilities – Drovers, Field Close and Chivrick close play areas are next on the list for replacement. We are currently working on plans for replacement equipment.