

AT A MEETING OF THE DIRECT RESPONSIBILITIES AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE OF BRACKLEY TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN THE UPPER HALL, TOWN HALL, BRACKLEY ON MONDAY 14th DECEMBER 2009 at 7 pm

Present: Councillors C J Blunden, K D Bonner-Dunham, K Dixon,
P Joyce (Chairman), G Rhys, L D Ross, W B Stimpson, P H Stocker and
P M Titchener

Apologies: The Worshipful the Town Mayor and Councillor P J Broomfield

In attendance: Councillors C O Cartmell, D Dunham, T D Hayward and D Shaw

363. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

364. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

365. CHRISTMAS OFFICE CLOSURE

Members were advised that the office would close at 12.30 pm on 24th December 2009 and reopen on 30th December 2009. It would also be closed on 1st January 2010. Members noted.

366. LAND REGISTRATION

Members were informed that some of the Town Council's areas of land and also the Town Hall are not registered with the Land Registry and advice has been sought from Mr Lane at South Northamptonshire Council and the Town Council's solicitors. Because there is a discount available with the Land Registry at the moment, a meeting had been arranged with representatives from that body on 13th January 2010 at 10.30 am and any Members wishing to attend were invited to join that meeting.

Councillor Bonner-Dunham thanked the Town Clerk for bringing the matter to Members attention and said that everything should be done to register all the pieces of land and the Town Hall. Councillors Joyce and Ross agreed to attend.

It was

RESOLVED:

That Councillors Joyce and Ross attend the meeting with the Land Registry to facilitate the registering of the pieces of land and the Town Hall.

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367. RAILWAY LINE SITE MANAGEMENT SURVEY

Following a meeting with Mr Matt Johnson of the Wildlife Trust and the BTCV (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers) a survey on the Pocket Park was attached to the Agenda. As a result of this meeting Members approval was sought to allow a budget up to a limit of £1,500 for BTCV to undertake the necessary work to maintain the length of the railway line and pocket park area.

Councillor Cartmell asked if County Council had any grants available and whether the Town Council had a budget set aside for this work. He was advised that there was a budget available from the precept. Councillor Bonner-Dunham said the work would be classed as an OTS (Office of the Third Sector) and there were numerous grants available. The grant would, however, need to be applied for through an OTS organisation.

After discussion it was

RESOLVED:

That the Town Clerk liaise with the Chairman and the matter be progressed.

368. PARISH GRASS MOWING 2010

Notification had been received from the County Council that an annual payment of £1,965.11 towards the cost of mowing the highway verges for 2009 would be made. Members were asked if this the Town Council would undertake this for 2010 for a similar fee plus a possible small increase for inflation. Members said that County Council needed to be made aware that the cost to the Town Council was considerably higher than the inflation increase paid by County Council but agreed to undertake the work again in order to maintain the high standard in the Town. It was

RESOLVED:

To undertake the mowing of the highway verges on behalf of County Council for 2010/2011 but that they be made aware of the increase in cost to the Town Council.

369. VERMIN CONTROL

Emails had been received about problems with rats in the Johnson Avenue area. Checks had been carried out by the Town Council's staff and no trace of nests or other evidence had been found on the Town Council's land. Contact had also been made with the Pest Control Officer at South Northamptonshire Council, but due to workload, sickness and holiday a visit has not been possible as yet but this was scheduled for early January. Councillor Stimpson undertook to speak to Pest Control again.

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369. VERMIN CONTROL Cont'd.....

Councillor Ross said he had encountered similar problems and several Members agreed that there had been a significant increase in the rat population and mention was made that this could be related to the two weekly refuse collections. Councillor Cartmell said he had visited the area around Johnson Avenue and although he had spotted a rat further round, there had also been squirrels and foxes and this was wildlife. Councillor Joyce agreed with the comment about wildlife and said that he had had a rat problem for many years and wherever there was food about there would be rats. Councillor Bonner-Dunham did not feel this was a matter for the Town Council.

After much discussion it was

RESOLVED:

To await a report from the Pest Control officers at South Northamptonshire Council.

370. HEDGELAYING

Members views were requested on hedge laying work that was required in the Humphries Drive area, details of which were outlined in the report attached to the Agenda. £1,000 was available from this year's budget and the contractor had agreed to undertake the laying of some of the hedges between Swift Way opposite Prices Way for a sum of £850. The Town Council's ground staff can undertake some of the minor works. It was

RESOLVED:

That authorisation be given to the contractor to undertake some hedge laying work.

371. LAND RENTED FROM SOUTH NORTHANTS COUNCIL

A query had been raised by Councillor Joyce about the cost effectiveness of subleasing the land known as OP2 and also concern about whether the tenant was actually not using the land for one month as laid down in the tenancy agreement. Enquiries had been made to Duncan Wigley at South Northamptonshire to ascertain background information and this was awaited. It was

RESOLVED:

To bring this information to the next Meeting of this Committee

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372. REPLACEMENT OF TABLES AND CHAIRS IN THE PARK

Costings for replacing/repairing the damaged table in the Park were outlined in the report. Members were appalled at the labour charges quoted and suggested a table top could be purchased and fixed by Town Council staff.

Councillor Blunden asked if this was covered by insurance and was advised that it was. It was therefore suggested that a claim be made and that the damaged table be retained for spares. Councillor Ross suggested sending a letter to the suppliers stating that the labour charges were excessive.

After discussion it was

RESOLVED:

That an insurance claim be made and that the table be fixed by Town Hall staff.

If the claim was not successful delegated powers were given to the Chairman and Town Clerk to ensure this item is repaired.

373. WORKS TO HUMPHRIES DRIVE

A list of works which were required to the Humphries Drive area were outlined in the report. This consisted of the area near Hayman Road, Banbury Road and Pavillons Way. It was

RESOLVED:

That this work be undertaken as soon as possible

374. MEMBERS REPORT – ST JAMES LAKE WORKING PARTY COUNCILLOR P JOYCE

A copy of the latest report had been circulated to Members by email. The next meeting would be held in January.

Councillor Stimpson thanked everyone who had been involved and said the report was very interesting.

A health and safety report had been received from the Angling Club together with a letter from Mr Mike Fenning which was read to Members. Mr Fenning asked if the Town Council could provide any storage space for fishing tackle but Members agreed there was nowhere suitable at the present time. Councillor Bonner-Dunham suggested putting an article in Town Talk for suitable premises.

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375. INFORMATION REPORT

Campaign to Protect Rural England

Councillor Stimpson expressed his disdain at the introduction of litter wardens and Councillor Cartmell wholeheartedly agreed. He commented that it might be practical for a small village but for somewhere like Brackley it was ludicrous. Councillor Ross advised that Magdalen College School was promoting an awareness campaign and the letter might be better directed to the School. Councillor Bonner-Dunham agreed.

376. MUSIC AND ARTS

Councillor Stimpson expressed extreme concern about the possibility of County Council making 100% cutbacks to Arts and Music. He said he has been involved with the Music School since 1974/5 and the one thing the County could be proud of was the children from this County. Councillor Hayward said she had brought this matter up with County Councillor Sawbridge at the Council meeting and he advised that the matter was still under discussion. It was agreed that County Councillor Grant be made aware of the Town Council's views and that the matter be brought to the next meeting of this Committee.

377. CHRISTMAS TREES

Councillor Ross sought Members support for the collection and chipping of Christmas trees on 11th January 2010 between 9 am and 11 am. He said he would do his best to advertise this facility and suggested this could take place at the Council's tipping area. After discussion it was suggested that the tractor could be parked on the piazza for people to drop their trees into. These would then be taken to the tipping area where they could be chipped. Members were advised that South Northamptonshire Council was offering to collect Christmas trees and Councillor Stocker questioned why the Town Council needed to get involved. Councillor Ross felt it would be putting something back into the Town.

378. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded from this Meeting during the discussion on matters relating to contracts and Town Council land as publicity would be prejudicial to the public by nature of the business to be transacted.

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379. GRASS MOWING CONTRACT

Discussion ensued on an increase to a quotation for grass cutting. Details of costings were outlined in the report. Members were totally against a 10% increase and suggested that contact be made with the contractor to negotiate around a 1% increase and tell him that the Council would be prepared to go out for tender again. After much discussion it was

RESOLVED:

To try and negotiate a 1% increase initially.

380. UNAUTHORISED ACCESS TO OPEN SPACE LAND

Members were advised that unauthorised access has been regularly taken across a piece of Town Council. It was

RESOLVED:

That post and rail fencing be erected together with a notice stating 'Private Land'

Meeting closed at 8.04 pm

Chairman

