

## NORTH TAWTON TOWN COUNCIL

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### To Members of NTTC Estates Committee:

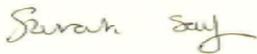
You are hereby summoned to a Meeting of the North Tawton Town Council Estates Committee to be held on Monday 26 April 2021 at 7.30 pm, please start logging on to Zoom from 7.15 pm to allow the meeting to start on time.

**Members not on the Estates Committee are not formally summoned to this meeting but may attend if they wish.**

**Please note:** To allow Local Authorities to function during the Covid-19 emergency, the Government has now issued legislation which, amongst other provisions, allows Councils to hold meetings remotely using appropriate technology. NTTC has decided that its meetings will be held remotely until further notice and has adopted the use of Zoom Conferencing software for this purpose.

Members of the Public are welcome to join the meeting if they have suitable equipment to log onto Zoom. Any personal data provided in this connection will be held securely and will be deleted.

Members of the public wishing to join the remote meeting can request to join – you need a Zoom account, and when you request to 'join a meeting' the reference number you need is **872 2833 7675**. For security you will be kept in a virtual 'waiting room' until you are admitted to the meeting. The rules for a virtual meeting are the same as for a live meeting in relation to any disruptive behaviour, ie the ability to remove users from the meeting. Background screens and uploading of documents will be disabled.



Town Clerk

### AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence** - To receive apologies from Councillors unable to attend.
2. **Declarations of Interest** - Councillors are invited to declare any personal or disclosable pecuniary interests, including the nature and extent of such interests they may have in any items to be considered at this meeting.  
If Councillors have any questions relating to predetermination, bias or interests in items on this Agenda, then please contact the Clerk in the first instance.
3. **Minutes of the Previous Meetings**
4. **Street Sweeper/Lengthsman Contract**
  - 4.1 – **Background** – This contract is due to be re-advertised in order to ensure that the Council is receiving best value for money. The current contract is on a rolling basis and has been in place for just over 3 years. The Assistant Clerk will progress everything in relation to the new contract.
  - 4.2 – **Specification and schedule** – In the past we have not had a detailed specification as such, we have a schedule of areas to be covered for street sweeping, and a general agreement as to various works that the contractor will undertake as and when required. It is considered that the contract should be formalised in more detail.
  - 4.3 – **Suggested action** – It is suggested that the Estates Committee consider delegating 2 members to work with the Assistant Clerk to agree a proposed specification and a review of the current schedule. This should then be put to the Full Council for approval in due course prior to advertising the contract. It should be noted that the contract value is not such that the formal tender process is required.

## 5. **Swing Seats in Memorial Park**

**5.1 - Background** – The recent RoSPA report stated that the chain links to the two junior swings were worn. Inspection by councillors and the Council's specialist contractor showed that the seats themselves were deteriorating, although this was apparently not severe enough to feature in the RoSPA report. However, there is the same amount of work involved in replacing the seats and chains as there would be in just replacing the links, and as there are concerns about the seats then serious consideration should be given to replacing seats and chains.

**5.2 - Suggestion** – The Clerk has obtained estimates for replacements from a recommended company, the cost of seats and chains (which meet the relevant industry standards) would be in the region of £150 for the two required. Final cost depends on the length of the chain and the top fixings – the company will advise on this. Members are requested to consider approval of replacing the seats and chains. The Clerk will advise as to the labour costs at the meeting.

*Power to incur expenditure Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, s.19 – power to provide and contribute to a wide range of recreational facilities – Budget Provision – Town Enhancements – maintenance and repairs £14,422.80 available*

## 6. **Pesticides/Herbicides**

**6.1 - Background** – The Council has for some time been considering alternatives to using a glyphosate-based herbicide to tackle the problem of pavement weeds. Non-herbicide weed control methods such as commercial weed burners and heat/steam weed killers have been considered, but they are dependant on gas or petrol so are not environmentally friendly, the equipment is expensive to purchase or is so heavy it has to be carried on a trailer towed by a vehicle. A nearby parish uses a non-glyphosate weedkiller which is said to be effective.

**6.2 - Suggestion** – Cllr Testa has volunteered to research this particular alternative and may have access to further information on other products. It is suggested that Cllr Testa be requested to look into the alternative used locally and advise as to whether it is considered more suitable than glyphosate in terms of being more environmentally friendly and safer. This information should then be passed to the Clerk for inclusion in a future full Council agenda so that the Council can decide as to whether to stop using glyphosate-based herbicides and use an alternative if it is considered suitable.

## 7. **Council owned land adjacent to Strawberry Fields entrance**

**7.1 – Background** – Members will be aware that the oak trees were recently removed from this area of land. Additionally, there has been discussion at various times as to the current planting of this area, and the overgrown ground cover shrubs which make it difficult to maintain. It may be considered that the planting here should have a more positive impact across all the seasons, such that it reflects its position bordering the main entranceway to the Town, and its situation opposite the Sculpture.

**7.2 – Suggestion** – Replanting of this area could provide an opportunity to demonstrate planting more suitable to withstanding climate change, ie Mediterranean type planting for example. It is suggested that the Estates Committee task some of its members to meet with the current landscape/grass contractor to discuss this issue and obtain advice, then report back to the Committee with some firm proposals. The best planting time is the Autumn; therefore, an appropriate deadline should be set for the various stages of this project if it is to be achieved for next year.

## 8. **Memorial Park – notices at entrances to the park**

The current signs at some of the park entrances, in relation to dogs on leads, are not correct. The Notices should say words to this effect: "Dogs may be walked on leads on the footpaths within the park. Any dog fouling that takes place must be cleared up immediately and can be placed in any of the litter bins within the park. **Dogs are strictly banned from all other areas of the park.** This is to ensure that all the areas where children and young people play are kept clean and safe." Members are requested to agree suitable wording, and the Town Clerk will arrange for printing of suitable new signs. These would be best printed on metal. It is suggested that if members agree wording the Clerk will obtain a quote which could be put to the full Council in May.

*Power to act – Public Health Act 1875, s164 – power to manage recreation grounds. Budget Provision – Town Enhancements – maintenance and repairs £14,422.80 available*

**9. Information item re planting of troughs and hanging baskets**

**9.1 – Background** – It had previously been suggested that the planting of troughs and baskets be modified to include some permanent plants, plants that do not need so much water or are pollinator friendly. However, it appears that the contractor orders in plug plants very early in the year to grow on, so although he was contacted some time ago the plants for this year had already been ordered.

**9.2 – Way forward** – It is suggested that members of the Council's nature group give consideration to appropriate and desirable planting, consult with the current contractor as to what is possible, determine how this will affect costs, and report to the Council in the Autumn with a view to advising the contractor in good time for the following year.

**10. Tree planting – Sponsorship of trees, and Memorial Trees**

**10.1 – Background** – Members will be aware of the Council's policy of replacing any trees we cut down with two new trees. Additionally, the Council is looking for areas where new trees can be planted, in the cemetery extension area for example.

**10.2 – Sponsorship** – It is suggested that residents may be interested in sponsoring planting of a tree or paying a sum towards planting. A scheme could be introduced whereby residents donate a sum of money towards a general tree planting fund, and there could be different levels of sponsorship. Sponsorship of the whole cost of an individual tree could also be included within this initiative, residents could choose from a selection of trees and be advised as to where their tree is located.

**10.3 – Memorial Trees** – There are parishes running schemes whereby residents can pay for a tree in remembrance of a loved one. Trees could be planted in the cemetery extension area for example. Typical schemes cover the cost of the tree, stake, planting cost, and caring for the tree until it is established. Some schemes allow for purchase of a memorial plaque at an extra cost.

**10.4 – Suggestion** – It is suggested that if members are in favour of pursuing these projects the Clerk should be requested to produce detailed draft schemes to be brought back to a future Estates Committee meeting for consideration.

**11. Flagpole**

**11.1 - Background** – Members will be aware of criticism of the fact that the vertical flagpole is not operational. The flagpole, as far as I know, belongs to the Town Hall. There is a cost involved in repairing it, but the main problem with flying a flag from it is that whoever undertakes the task (usually the Council's Handyman Contractor) has to climb a ladder in order to do this, and this is undoubtedly a serious health and safety risk taking into account the metal railings.

**11.2 – Implications** – In the very sad event of loss of another senior national figure, the Council would undoubtedly face considerable criticism, it is evident that there is strong feeling amongst residents on this issue.

**Suggested action** - Cllr Lee has agreed that use of a portable flagpole would be safe. A suitable pole, which comes in sections and includes a base weight, can be purchased for £125.00 including delivery. If agreement can be reached with the Town Hall, and confirmation received from Planning at WDBC that no permission is required, it is suggested that the Council purchase this item, and that the Estates Committee Resolve that the Council, in accordance with its powers under Sections 137 and 139 of the LGA 1972, should incur the expenditure which, in the opinion of the Council, is in the interests of the area or its inhabitants and will benefit them in a manner commensurate with the expenditure.

(The Clerk has not been able to obtain prices for a similar pole which includes a base weight, the suggested pole appears to be the most suitable).

*Power to incur expenditure LGA 1972 s.137 - Ceremonial purposes – Budget Provision – Town Enhancements – maintenance and repairs £14,422.80 available*

**12. Lighting of fires and barbecues in the Memorial Park**

Further to a complaint being received as to the use of portable barbecues in the park, it is suggested that the Estates Committee consider wording and placement of notices reminding park users that there should be no fires or barbecues, and that litter should be placed in the litter bins provided. The Clerk will then obtain a quote for the sign(s) which can be put to the full Council in May for approval.

**13. Cemetery Extension Area**

**13.1 – Background** – Commencement of development of the cemetery extension area is under consideration. Various suggestions have been put forward including a green or natural burial area, wild-flower areas, an area for a ‘tiny forest’ (please refer to supporting documents on the website for more information about this), an area for a community orchard, an area for general tree planting.

**13.2 – The way forward** – It is suggested that the Estates Committee confirm membership of the Cemetery Working Group, and task the group to work with the Assistant Clerk (who is the Cemetery Manager) to obtain further background information on green/natural burial sites. Sufficient information needs to be collated to enable the Council to decide whether to include a green/natural burial area within the cemetery extension area. Decisions also need to be made as to what other areas can realistically be included in the cemetery extension, and which are the most important. Subsequent to this, draft designs can then be produced, to include consideration of hard landscaping for access, and the best and most practical placement of the various areas around this.

**14. Making the cemetery ‘plastic free’**

Further to a suggestion that the cemetery be designated a plastic free area, the Assistant Clerk has investigated this issue and spoken to other councils responsible for cemeteries. It appears that imposing a plastic free regime is not actually that simple – wreaths and floral tributes have a plastic base for example, and we have no control over this. It is suggested that at this time the Council could actively encourage a plastic free environment in the cemetery, without making it mandatory – for example encourage people to consider hand tied floral tributes. Members are requested to consider this issue and make a relevant proposal.

**15. Questions/Comments from members of the public**

The meeting shall be suspended to allow members of the public to comment/ask a question on any **AGENDA ITEM ONLY – PLEASE QUOTE AGENDA ITEM NUMBER**. Time is limited to 2 minutes per person, up to a maximum of 3 persons, unless the Chairman rules otherwise. A brief record of any points made will be included in the minutes of that meeting.

**16. Dates of next meetings**

**16.1.** The next planned meeting of the Council will be the NTTC Annual Meeting on Tuesday 4 May 2021. This will take place after the Annual Town Meeting which is due to commence at 6.30 pm. The agenda for the ATM is short, and there will be a break between the two meetings, therefore the NTTC Annual Meeting will commence at 7.30 pm.

**16.2.** It is suggested that a date be set for a future Estates Committee meeting as there are still a number of items that could not be included within this agenda.

**PART II - EXEMPT REPORTS:**

That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by s.100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the public and accredited representatives of newspapers be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by virtue of the paragraph specified against the item.

*No exempt reports*