

NORTH TAWTON TOWN COUNCIL

Town Clerk:
Mrs Sarah Say
Assistant Town Clerk:
Stephen Webb

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Minutes of the North Tawton Town Council Estates Committee held at the Council Offices on:
Thursday 7th January 2020 at 7.30 pm

Present: Cllr. Ms J Trewitt (Chair) Cllr. S Whiteley
Cllr. Miss R. Testa Cllr Dr. P. Brickley
Cllr. M. Kennedy Cllr C. Burrow
Cllr Mrs S. Watson
Mr. S. Webb (Assistant Town Clerk)
There was one member of the public in attendance.

Health & Safety Notice

- 1. Apologies for Absence** – Cllr K. Hodge (for Personal Reasons) Cllr Hodge's apologies were unanimously accepted.
- 2. Declarations of Interest** – None.
- 3. NTTC Tree Survey**

Since the previous meeting, the Assistant Clerk had met Mr T. Shiel who had agreed to help identify an appropriate contractor who would continue the work identified in the tree survey. It was noted that the survey identified work which needed to be done over the winter period.

It was agreed that an advertisement would be placed in the next edition of the Roundabout inviting expressions of interest from potential contractors with the appropriate qualifications and insurance cover for tree surgery to progress the schedule of work. (The advertisement would also include electricians and plumbers etc) The advertisement will also be placed on the new website and Cllr Miss R. Testa will liaise with the Clerk to place an entry on the Facebook hub page.

It was further agreed that all Committee members will pass any information they have regarding potential tree surgeons to the Clerk.

4. Oak Trees at Strawberry Fields.

At the previous meeting it had been agreed that Members would arrange to meet local residents, perhaps one Saturday morning in January to ascertain their views on the issue. It was accordingly agreed that available Committee Members would consult with residents on the morning of Saturday 25th January from 10.00am. The clerk would put a note through residents' doors in advance to facilitate the consultation.

This was seconded by Cllr S. Whiteley. There were six votes in favour and the proposal was carried.

5. Pesticides

At the Full Council meeting on 3rd December, the Estate Committee had been delegated the task of investigating the use of pesticides. It was noted that different approaches would be required in different locations. The following three actions were agreed.

1. Audit on the use of pesticides within the Town by the Council's contractors. Draw up a list of locations where pesticides are used. A key element of this exercise would involve liaison with current contractors, Goldenleaf and RJA Services, to ascertain their current practice – including logs of their use of pesticides and their views. A meeting would be held with Cllr Ms J. Trewitt, the Clerk and Goldenleaf in February.

2. Finding out what action other Parish Council's might be taking in relation to the use of pesticides. Northam Parish Council had recently circulated a query to parish clerks across Devon regarding this issue, so the Clerk could try to find out what responses they got.

3. Resident Consultation. The need to consult/communicate with residents was also noted and it was also agreed that the Council could consider liaising with the Bathway Management Committee in relation to the use of pesticides.

The findings from the above actions would be presented to the March meeting of the full Council.

6. Climate Change

The Full Council meeting on 3rd December agreed that –

- i) NTTC 'declare a Climate Emergency'
- ii) the Town Council make a commitment to seeking ways to facilitate and encourage our community in reducing direct and indirect CO2 emissions.
- iii) the Council researches and implements ways in which North Tawton can become more resilient to changes caused by the changing climate situation.
- iv) the Council considers how best to progress these aims – for example, perhaps joint working between the Estates Committee and the Nature Group in order to make viable and well researched proposals to the Council.

It was noted that the annual Town Meeting would be unlikely to allow enough time for a useful debate to be conducted on these issues, but public consultation must be a key element of any initiatives arising from the work. Cllr Miss R. Testa presented two papers which identified Climate Change issues where organisations had direct responsibility for activity, and “upstream” and “downstream” issues on which organisations could have in-direct influence. Cllr R. Testa agreed to circulate these documents. The following two proposals were agreed:

- Cllr Ms J. Trehitt proposed that, the Committee, together with the North Tawton Nature Group be tasked to co-ordinate consultation events in the town. This was seconded by Cllr Dr. P. Brickley and there were seven votes in favour and the proposal was carried.
- Cllr Miss R. Testa proposed that an external expert be appointed to undertake a Carbon Footprint of the Town Council. This was seconded by Cllr S. Whiteley and there were seven votes in favour and the proposal was carried.

7. North Tawton Nature Group

7.1 Wild Flower Planting

Cllr Miss R. Testa reported that Yellow Rattle had now been sown around the Monkey Puzzle tree in the park and that the Contractors had been informed to cease activity in the area until further notice.

A further sowing was planned around Suds Pond and other areas may yet be identified as suitable for Yellow rattle sowing and the autumn was the best time of year to sow.

7.2 Planters and Hanging Baskets – Planning for Spring.

Cllr Ms J. Trehitt agreed to review the condition of the Planters around the town and it was further agreed that Culverhayes be contacted to ascertain suitable alternatives for summer planting.

7.3 Bird and Bat Boxes.

The full council meeting on 3rd December 2019 had approved an allocation of up to £500. £310.00 has been spent to provide 50 bat and 50 bird boxes.

It was agreed that following the consultation meeting on 25th January, if weather permits to review sites for provision of boxes in the Memorial Park and the Cemetery. The stock of boxes would be kept at the Chapel of rest building and any excess stock could be made available to residents; details of this process to be considered at a later date.

The meeting was closed for comments from members of the public.

Re Agenda Item 3 - Mrs Hughes said that she would inform the clerk of detail of the tree surgeon she had employed at her property last year.

Re-Agenda item 4 – it had been ascertained that if the Oak Trees were taken up, it was unlikely that the roots would be suitable for re-planting.

Re Agenda item 7.3 – The Churchyard could be included for box siting as well.

The meeting was re-opened.

Cllr Ms J. Trehitt closed the meeting.

Cllr Mrs C. Burrow proposed that a Part II meeting be convened.

This was seconded by Cllr S. Whiteley. There were seven votes in favour and the proposal was carried.

1. Cllr S. Whiteley proposed that the Council write to the Lengthsman that (subject to his wishing to continue) the Council send a letter of confirmation to extend the current contractual arrangements until July 2021. Cllr S. Watson referred the Committee to earlier discussions on the use of pesticides and the proposal was amended to include a sentence which identified that the contract may be subject to change if the Council changed its policy on the use of pesticides. The amended proposal was seconded by Cllr M. Kennedy. There were seven votes in favour and the amended proposal was carried.

2. Further to item 5 above, it was noted that the proposed meeting with Goldenleaf, the Clerk, and Cllr J. Trehitt, to review the contract, would need to be held in February.

The meeting closed at 9.05pm