



NORTH TAWTON TOWN COUNCIL

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Minutes of the North Tawton Town Council Estates Committee held via Zoom at 7.15 pm on Wednesday 20th May 2020 at 7.15pm.

Present:

Cllr Ms J Trehwitt (Chair); Cllr Dr P Brickley (Vice-Chair); Cllr S Whiteley;
Cllr K Hodge; Cllr C. Lee Cllr Mrs S Watson;
Cllr M Kennedy; Cllr Mrs C Burrow; Cllr Ms R Testa;
Cllr Miss K Drake, Cllr J. Gray

Mrs S Say – Town Clerk, Mr S. Webb Assistant Town Clerk

There was one member of the public on-line.

1. **Apologies for Absence** – Cllr. Mrs R Davies, apology unanimously accepted.

2. **Declarations of Interest** – None.

3. ROSPA inspection report of Memorial Park Play equipment

The annual inspection of the play equipment has been undertaken by RoSPA. Members considered its recommendations and the actions required. An action plan was formulated whereby Cllr Ms J. Trehwitt would contact TK Play on matters relating to the MUGA and Pump Track and the Town Clerk would liaise with a member of the Estates Committee and the Council's contractors to look to ascertain requirements for the other items. Cllr C. Lee identified the need to start with the higher risk items scoring 9 or 10 and work down from there.

The above plan was proposed by Cllr Miss R. Testa. This was seconded by Cllr Mrs S. Watson and the proposal was unanimously agreed.

4. Memorial Park Kick about/Football pitch - additional turf planting (106 application).

The Town Clerk confirmed that WDBC Officer Alexis Huggins had been approached re NTTC applying for a small amount of the relevant S106 funding to make necessary improvements to the kick-about area in the park. The Council's existing grass cutting/landscaping contractor had been approached to provide a quotation for these improvements which was necessary prior to the council applying formally for this funding. The quotation had been received for later discussion in Part 2 of the meeting.

5. Wild Flower Planting – Trial areas and impact on Goldenleaf contract

Members had previously agreed to trial wild flower planting on the area around the monkey puzzle tree in the Memorial Park and also around the SUDS pond. Cllr Ms J. Trehwitt and Cllr Miss R. Testa confirmed that informal discussions had been held with the Council's contractor with regard to any likely impact on the current grass cutting contract. Cllr Miss R. Testa agreed to examine the two sites to review the result of planting the yellow rattle and also draft a sign for display in the two areas which identified

the Council's planting plan. It was noted that had the Town meeting gone ahead, the views of local residents with regard to this initiative would have been sought. It was agreed that a further review will be undertaken later in the year together with the need to formalise the position with the Council Contractor.

6. Use of Pesticides in the town

This matter had been discussed at a meeting of the Council's Nature Group on 10th January and requires wider discussion within the Council. The meeting had identified a three-point action plan – a) a temporary reduction in use of spraying, b) consider potential alternatives and c) consultation with residents. However, events had overtaken progress on the plan. Meanwhile a resident had complained that a contractor had used pesticides in the town.

Members debated at length how best to take this plan forward including consideration of alternative methods and costs of weed control including use of hot steam and foam spray systems, hoeing and debated how best to take this forward. WDBC Cllr B. Ratcliffe noted that West Devon were also investigating this issue. Cllr. Mrs C. Burrow noted the importance of keeping the Square clear of weeds and its resulting implications. The Town Clerk noted that a member of the public had volunteered to help clear weeds, but there were implications arising from this including the need to conform to requirement within the Council's insurance policies

It was agreed that the Nature Group be requested to identify information on potential alternatives to inform options for the Committee to consider and that WDBC Cllr B. Ratcliffe would request a progress report on the findings from the Borough Council.

7. Flower planters in the square

Members were advised that two replacement planters, one outside the office and the other alongside the Clock Tower, had been ordered for the Square and that an order had also been placed for the plants. Cllr Miss R. Testa raised a query with regard to the location of planters and the permissions relating to their location.

8. Impact of current situation on Estates responsibilities – Park, Toilets, Cemetery etc.

It was noted that following relaxation of guidelines, the park and MUGA areas had been re-opened, but use of the play equipment was prohibited. The Toilets remained closed but the Cemetery was open. It was also noted that Okehampton Youth Club had publicized information to signpost where help was available for young people.

9. The Chair and/or the Clerk will update members on any relevant information items.

There were no items for information.

10. 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.

With regard to Item 6 above, Mrs S. Knott queried whether the Council had any views with regard to a hypothetical situation were a member of the public to purchase and apply their own pesticides to pavements and highways. It was noted that pavements and highways are the property of County Highways and therefore this activity would be unlikely to be permitted and could result in raising queries from their neighbours.

The meeting was re-opened

11. Date of Next Meeting

The next Ordinary Meeting of the Town Council shall be Tuesday 2 June 2020 at 7.15 pm, via Zoom – any change to this will be notified when the relevant agenda is published.

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.

Cllr Miss R. Testa proposed that the Council convene a Part 2 meeting. This was seconded by Cllr J. Gray and the proposal was unanimously agreed.

1. Contractor for Toilets

The Town Clerk confirmed that following the placement of advertisements, the Council had received one application. The contractor would enter a six month trial period following the issue of a draft contract. More formal arrangements would be made after the trial period had been successfully completed. Matters relating to the previous contractor were still in hand.

2. Quotation for Kick-About Area – Memorial Park.

Members reviewed a quotation received from the Council's Contractor to refurbish the kick-about area. Cllr Mrs S. Watson proposed that the Council obtain a second quotation. This was seconded by Cllr J. Gray. There were 9 votes in favour and two abstentions and the proposal was agreed. Cllr S. Whiteley abstained as he believed that the proposal was contrary to Financial regulations and protocols.

3. Climate Questionnaire.

Cllr Miss R. Testa updated Members on additional costs involved on making the questionnaire available on line. Members also debated regarding how the results should be analysed.

Peter Brickley proposed that the increased costs be accepted and that Cllrs Ms J. Trehitt, Cllr Miss R. Testa and Cllr Mrs R. Davies review and recommend a system of analyzing the results. This was seconded by Cllr J. Gray and the proposal was unanimously agreed.

The meeting closed at 8.40pm