

# Swaffham Town Council

## Minutes of the Assets & Open Spaces Committee meeting held on Wednesday 1 June 2022 in the Town Hall

Councillors: Mrs J Anscombe (Chair), Mr P Darby, Mr G Edwards, Mr K Oliver,  
Mr L Scott

Non-Cllr Representative - None

Town Clerk: Mr R Bishop

Deputy Clerk: H Carrier

Admin Assistant: Mrs J Williams

### 1. **Apologies for absence**

Cllr W Bensley – family commitments

Cllr J Skinner – family commitments

### 2. **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Darby declared an interest in Item 12 due to being a member of the Town Estates Group. There were no other declarations of interest.

### 3. **Minutes**

The minutes of the Assets and Open Spaces Committee held on 30 March 2022 were agreed and signed by the mayor as an accurate record.

### 4. **Outstanding actions agreed at previous meetings**

4.1 **Orford Road Embankment** – the Town Clerk gave a verbal update which councillors noted.

#### 4.2 **Tree projects update:**

The Town Clerk informed the meeting that the Woodland Trust is offering free tree planting packs and suggested the two following area:

**Cemetery** – Council agreed that a new hedge is required, and this should be explored further.

**Orford Road** – Councillors agreed that an avenue of trees would be a good idea and suggested planting walnut, beech or oak. The Town Clerk will check which trees are available.

#### 4.3 **Public Toilets**

All the work has now been completed and the Town Clerk is currently awaiting confirmation of the insurance claim. Some electrical works have had to be completed and the total cost will be approximately £2,000. The total cost to the Council which includes the insurance excess and the cost of improvements will be under £1,000.

### 5. **Assets and Open spaces related issues from Non-Member Councillors**

None received.

### 6. **Allotments**

#### 6.1 **Management of the allotments by the Deputy Town Clerk**

Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

The Deputy Clerk reported that she had made her first site inspection and, following this inspection and complaints from other allotments holders, one tenant had been served notice at Tumbler Hill. Other issues have been noted and will be followed up at the next site inspection. Cllr Edwards said that a stand firm is needed when dealing with discrepancies at the allotments and once a decision had been made to serve notice this must be followed through.

#### **6.2 Report on installation of Scribe software**

The Deputy Clerk reported that the installation had gone well and that the office staff are working with Scribe to make minor adjustments and suggestions to this new package.

#### **6.3 Report from SCALGA representative**

Cllr Edwards that there were no issues to report and allotments that are being worked well should be encouraged.

#### **6.4 Report from Escape Project representative**

No report received.

### **7. Orford Road Play area – update on the project and timeline**

#### **7.1 Installation of play equipment**

The Deputy Clerk reported that the installation will be finished next week and had gone well. The fence will be removed once the site inspection has been completed.

#### **7.2 Litter bins at Orford Road**

This was discussed as part of Item 12.

#### **7.3 Planning for 'Funday' official opening**

The Town Clerk recommended Thursday 14 July for an official opening event, which is a requirement from the grant funders and the contractor EIBE, in the form of a 'Funday'. There is £1,000 allocated for this event and it is planned to advertise through the normal channels and, to do a leaflet drop in the vicinity of Orford Road as regular users. There is some work to do by the outside staff to tidy up the area and this date will give them time. It is hoped that the Escape Project will work with the Town Council in the coming weeks as the orchard area is adjacent to the Orford Road Playing Field. The Communications Officer will now take this event forward.

### **8. Town Centre update**

#### **8.1 New benches and memorial plaques**

Paul Quinn has confirmed that he has got the contract for the installation of 14 replacement benches in the Town. The actual date has not been confirmed as there is a 12–14-week lead into this project due to the delay in delivery of the seating. The installation is expected to take approximately four weeks from mid-July to mid-August. There will be a compound for the contractor located in Pedlars Car Park, taking up no more than three car parking spaces.

It is planned to reuse the existing seats, either as spares for other seats or, if possible, to relocate to other locations around the town. It is recommended to wait until the Works Manager has assessed the condition, after their removal from the Town Centre, to see what can be used in part or complete, then the Committee can decide on a way forward.

Councillors agreed that, as a courtesy, members of the public should be notified that the plaque on the existing benches will be relocated to the new seats. A newspaper article, along with other lines of communication, would ensure this reaches a wide audience.

## **8.2 Removal of trees at War Memorial**

Councillors all agreed that the two trees should not be removed and to ask Breckland Council to remove the paving and set shrubs instead. All agreed to write back to Breckland Council to ask them to revisit this whole area. Cllr Darby reminded the meeting that removing trees would go against the Local Plan delivered by Breckland District Council.

## **8.3 Telephone Box**

The final form has been signed and returned and as soon as the equipment has been removed the box will be confirmed as a town asset.

All agreed that the box should be adopted as a Town Information Point.

## **8.4 Bollards at War Memorial**

The two damaged bollards at the War Memorial site have been reported and Breckland Council have confirmed these will be repaired shortly.

## **9. Issues at Public Open Spaces and Play Areas**

### **9.1 Play Inspection Report from 2021**

A copy of the 2021 Play Inspection report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Council confirmed that the report was received, items had been considered and the recommended action to be carried out as appropriate.

### **9.2 Arrangement for Play Inspections**

The Deputy Clerk has arranged for this year's inspection to be carried out by RoSPA in June/July.

### **9.3 Internal monitoring arrangements**

The Deputy Clerk has organised 'Routine Play Equipment training' for all four members of outside staff. The Works Manager and the Deputy Clerk attended a demonstration from Cloudy IT on a 'Reporting of Assets and Play Equipment' app. Both agreed that this was a very good system which would help the outside staff and the Works Manager report and manage the equipment and safety checks. Councillors agreed that anything that could monitor and manage the inspections should be taken forward.

### **9.4 Request to use Recreation Ground**

All agreed that this request be granted.

## **10. Cemetery Issues**

### **10.1 Cemetery Award**

### **10.2 Signage improvements**

The Communications Officer is preparing the entry for this competition which must be submitted by the deadline of 31 July.

All agreed that a new sign is needed to improve the entrance. Councillor asked the Town Clerk to investigate a sign for the entrance and to ask the Works Manager to cost a brick base to incorporate a sign similar to Mintlyn Cemetery. It was agreed that a sign was needed for both sides of the gate.

### **10.3 Request for memorial outside of normal criteria**

After a discussion it was proposed by Cllr Anscombe, seconded by Cllr Darby that council needed to stick to the rules and not sway from outside of normal criteria. After a vote of three for and two against it was resolved to reject the request for a memorial outside of the normal criteria.

### **10.4 Report of damage to memorial**

Council noted this report and accepted the cost of £400 to repair this memorial.

#### 10.5 **Report of Scribe software**

The Deputy Clerk reported that the data was being added to the Scribe system and that training had been booked with Scribe for all staff who will be using the software.

#### 10.6 **Bench request**

It was decided to defer this item until the Town Clerk had more information on where the bench was to be positioned.

#### 11. **Churchyard issues**

A tree report has been received from the Norfolk Arborist in respect of the trees in question, identified previously at a Town Council meeting. The report recommended that dead wood needed removing and recommended the work be carried out within the next six-months.

Further to a second opinion offered by the Norfolk Arborist, advice was sought from the tree officer at Breckland Council, Hugh Coggles, who advised that he would not visit the site unless there is a formal request for removal. A formal request has therefore been made for removal in order to access a report. It is understood that Breckland Council contractors Serco have visited the site and reported back to the tree officer, but we still await a report from Hugh Coggles.

Further to the above, enquiries were made with the Fabric Officer of the PCC Jan Hayes-Griffin in respect of a faculty being required for the removal of the deadwood, she has confirmed that a faculty is required, and an application would need to be made – the application fee is £268.

Councillors agreed that the simple question of “it is safe?” had not been answered and that further clarification was needed. The Town Clerk will contact the Norfolk Arborist and Breckland Council for more information.

#### 12. **Town Estate Funds for Town improvements**

There has been a previous request for an additional streetlight in the vicinity of the car park in the Churchyard, an approximate cost for the light and installation would be approximately £2,500.

There has been a previous review of the Town Centre litter bins and funding was achieved for two additional larger litter bins. The review showed that a number of other bins could do with being replaced with larger bins to accommodate the volume of litter collected from the Town Centre. Cllr Oliver commented on the solar-panelled recycling bins that Hunstanton Town have installed and asked if Swaffham could install something similar. The Deputy Clerk will contact Hunstanton Town Council to get more information on these bins.

All agreed to submit a £10,000 grant to the Town Estate Funds to replace the bins in the market.

#### 13. **Redlands Park with Avant House site visit**

Council received and considered the report from the Town Clerk following his recent site visit with the S106 Officer, Breckland Council, a Highways Officer from Norfolk County Council, a representative from Avant Homes and the Works Manager.

Cllr Oliver would like to see the full tree report that was prepared by Breckland Council.

#### 14. **Late or urgent matters at the Chairman's discretion, not included elsewhere on the agenda**

None received.

#### 15. **Date of next meeting**

Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

The next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 27 July 2022.

**16. ADMISSION TO MEETINGS ACT (PUBLIC BODIES) 1960:**

CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS following the exclusion of the public and press

**17. Pre-contract Report from Redlands**

Cllr Oliver proposed to report to full council for not adopting the pre-contact report.

After a vote of three for and two against it was resolved to recommend that full council not adopt the report.

**18. Updates:**

18.1 **Shambles** – awaiting confirmation from Land Registry

18.2 **Town Pound** – transfer should be confirmed by July

18.3 **Church Wall** – awaiting finalised agreements from all four residents

18.4 **Buttercross** – land registry updated

Meeting Closed at 8.30pm      Chairman.....