

Swaffham Town Council

Minutes of the Assets & Open Spaces Committee meeting held on Wednesday 26 July 2023 in the Town Hall

Councillors: Cllr S Bell (Chairman), Cllr D Braithwaite, Cllr S Cooper,
Cllr P Darby, and Cllr G Edwards

Deputy Clerk: Leanne Jarrett
Facilities & Operations Manager: Graham West
Office Administrator: Nicola Forrest
Public: None present

AO16/23 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Ellerbeck.

Absent

Cllr Bensley

AO17/23 Declarations of Interest

None received.

AO18/23 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the Assets & Open Spaces meeting held on 24 May 2023 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as an accurate record WITH ALTERATIONS AT AO11/23

AO19/23 Outstanding actions agreed at previous meetings

None received

AO20/23 Public Open Forum

No members of public present.

AO21/23 Assets & Open Spaces issues from Non-Member Councillors

None received.

AO22/23 Allotments

Management report of the allotments by the Deputy Town Clerk

The Deputy Clerk provided an update. There are two allotment holders relinquishing their allotments end of September and one immediately. Letters have been sent since the inspections as there are many unattended.

Report from SCALGA representative

The SCALGA representative was present and there are no issues currently with most allotments being maintained well but some have taken on allotments and have not come back.

Report from Escape Project representative

The Escape representative Clare Peak was present. A report was received prior to the meeting (Appendix A). The tap at the top of Tumbler Hill is leaking and they have had vandalism at their allotment since December which includes moving the hose into the trees and cutting the hose at different points. They asked permission to install a temporary underground pipe to connect to the tap when they are at the allotment to reduce the vandalism.

It was unanimously agreed to allow the new temporary underground pipe and the outside maintenance team will arrange the repair of the tap.

AO23/23

Town Centre Update

Public Realm, Breckland Bus stops

The Deputy Clerk gave an update that the new bus stops are up and had received positive feedback.

Update on Assembly Rooms

A report was received at the last Full Council meeting, no other issues to report.

Painting of the Town Hall front

Quote received to paint the front of the Town Hall.

It was unanimously agreed to accept the quote.

Granting licences for War Memorial area

Previous licences received from Breckland Council for NatWest Bank Limited and Costa.

It was unanimously agreed to defer to the next Full Council meeting to update the licences and create an application for advertising signs at the War Memorial.

Ducks in Swaffham

Cllr Braithwaite brought to the attention of the Council the unlawful killing of ducks in Swaffham Town, it is suggested that some residents are driving dangerously to hit ducks. Cllr Braithwaite has disposed of many ducks found after these events. Cllr Braithwaite would like to see caution signs around Swaffham warning people of wildlife.

Acquisition and Deaccession Policy

Acquisition and Deaccession Policy from Swaffham Heritage 2023

It was unanimously agreed to adopt the policy.

AO24/23

To receive and consider issues at Public Open Spaces & Play Areas

Tendering process for Merryweather play area and Under 8's play area at recreation ground

It was unanimously agreed for the Deputy Clerk to contact Crocus Homes with a £200,000 077offer for the play areas.

Initials _____

Swaffham in Bloom

It was unanimously agreed for Cllr Braithwaite to run Swaffham in Bloom and investigate the parameters of entry.

Pest Control Northwell Pool

Two quotes were considered.

It was unanimously agreed to accept the third quote yet to be received, the quote must come in the range of the previous two quotes received. This decision was made as this is a reputable company.

AO25/23 CemeteryWildflower areas

The decision to cut the wildflower area was discussed and agreed within the last six months. It will be cut when the area is dry enough.

Commonwealth War Graves signage

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission requested to erect a sign by the War Graves.

It was unanimously agreed to have the signage.

AO26/23 Memorial Rules and RegulationsAshes internment correspondence

It was unanimously agreed to increase the side of flat stones from 12"x12" to 12"x18" in the Rules and Regulations.

ADMISSION TO MEETINGS ACT (PUBLIC BODIES) 1960: STAFFING following the exclusion of the public and press.

Cemetery Head Stone

It was unanimously agreed to install the Cemetery Head Stone

AO27/23 To agree the date of the next meeting for Wednesday 27 September 2023 at 12.30pm, to be held in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall.

Meeting closed 2.10pm

Chairman_____

Initials _____

Family Action ESCAPE Report to Assets and Open Spaces Committee

Wednesday 26 July 2023 at 1pm

I plan to try and attend the meeting in person, but I usually work from home on a Wednesday so may not be able to. Please accept my apologies if I am unable to attend the meeting.

To start with a positive, the ESCAPE and Discovery Garden Project were one of three local charities invited by the Sandringham Estate to design and build a garden for their inaugural event – ‘Sandringham in Bloom’ – in June of this year. The event ran for 10 days, and we saw it as an opportunity to promote the ESCAPE and Discovery Garden Project specifically but also horticulture generally as one of the ‘5 Ways to Wellbeing’. This was a really positive (but exhausting!) experience for everyone involved.

However, the not so positive news is that the Family Action ESCAPE Project is struggling financially. We do not have the funds to employ a Co-ordinator for the project so at the moment we just have one employee (Tess Cureton) working 3 days a week as a Teacher and Support Worker.

Tess’s primary role is to teach the City and Guilds Level 2 Award in Practical Horticulture Skills as this is the only funding we currently receive. This and the partnership with the college of West Anglia has been very positive and there were 12 students on our last course which has just finished. The next course starts at the beginning of October. Tess teaches on one day a week; another day is for teaching related admin and planning and the third day is to support a group of people with Learning Disabilities. The course is 14 weeks long and we deliver the course twice a year so for 23 weeks of the year Tess is not teaching and can take her annual leave and focus on maintaining the allotment. We are currently recruiting someone for 5hrs a week for 6 months to supervise a small group of volunteers on a Monday.

The shortage of staff means that we are unable to support a large number of more vulnerable participants and even recruiting and managing more able volunteers takes time. As you will appreciate, our site is very large so maintaining that is a challenge. **We would therefore like to talk to the Town Council about handing over the responsibility for the care of the orchard.**

You may or may not know that the Town Council approached Family Action several years ago and asked us to add maintenance of the orchard and the additional allotment with the polytunnels to our ESCAPE project, which at that time was just the one allotment (the one which now has the toilet on it). The project that had set up the orchard and polytunnels had unfortunately folded and there was a need for someone to maintain these sites. We submitted a successful application to the Heritage Lottery for 3 years funding, and when that ended, we successfully applied for another 3 years funding from the National Lottery. We were then fortunate enough to receive funding from one year (March 22 to March 23) from

the NHS Integrated Care Board. However, since March 2022 the only funding we have had has been from the College of West Anglia for the teaching and we have been limping along with underspend and small grants from a range of sources.

We no longer have the staffing capacity, or the volunteers (due to reduced staffing capacity) to maintain the orchard and would like to discuss with the Town Council how we manage a transfer back to the Town Council.

We are currently waiting to see whether our Stage 1 Application to the National Lottery has been successful, which will mean that we can then put in a Stage 2 Application and should hear the outcome within 6 months. However, if it is not successful, we do need to carefully consider how we can continue to run ESCAPE.

Clare Peak

Family Action Norfolk and Suffolk Projects Manager

Initials _____