

NAILSWORTH TOWN COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
 Minutes of a meeting held on 2 July 2013

Present	Cllr SM Reed (chair) Cllr P Carter Cllr A Elliott Cllr MJ Kelly Cllr MP Robinson
Apologies	Cllr MM Rahman
In attendance	Mr Martin Hutchings and Ms Juliet Tigwell GRCC (Housing Needs Survey item)

MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING OF 14 MAY 2013

Tree at Forest Green Green

The Clerk reported that an email had been received from a local resident expressing concern over a lime tree on Forest Green green which she believed was a potential danger to his property. The Clerk confirmed that the tree had previously been checked by NTC’s contractors and the council had decided that no action was necessary at that time. It was agreed that meeting be arranged on site with the resident, the Clerk, Cllr Reed and the contractor, hopefully within the following two weeks.

HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

The Chair welcomed Mr Martin Hutchings GRCC to the meeting. Mr Hutchings introduced Ms Juliet Tigwell, Rural Housing Enabler for GRCC who had recently taken up a post funded by SDC and would be focusing on the Stroud District. Mr Hutchings presented the Nailsworth Housing Needs Survey Report, previously circulated to all councillors, which he had amended in the light of the Council’s comments. He had produced a summary of the report which had also been circulated. It was agreed that this summary be placed on the NTC website and sent to Nailsworth News, with hard copies being made available in the Library and the TIC.

The response rate to the survey had been 26% (787) which Mr Hutchings considered to be satisfactory given the size of the parish. 52 respondents had indicated that they required affordable housing in the parish. Mr Hutchings reported that, as requested, he had asked SDC for details of the number of people on the Homeseekers’ housing waiting list with local connections, but had been told that SDC would be unable to provide this information owing to lack of staff resources. Councillors were disappointed with this response, as they felt that this information was important in order to assess the level of need for affordable housing in the parish. Cllr Carter agreed to follow up this matter with SDC and the Clerk was asked to write to Ms Pippa Stroud SDC to formally request the information required.

Mr Hutchings reported that he had discussed with Pippa Stroud the matter of exceptions sites for affordable homes. She had stated that SDC would support in principle an application for an exceptions site in Nailsworth if there was an established need. Whilst the national exceptions site policy was restricted to villages with populations of less than 3000, paragraph 54 of the government’s National Planning Policy Framework appeared to suggest that the policy could also be

extended to larger parishes if a significant need for affordable housing could be demonstrated. Mr Hutchings felt that there was considerable potential for town and parish councils to influence local planning policies in this respect, and Ms Stroud had confirmed that SDC officers would be willing to meet with NTC representatives to discuss the potential for the development of affordable housing in Nailsworth if appropriate sites could be found. This could possibly be linked to the proposed Nailsworth Community Land Trust. In response to a question from Cllr Carter, Mr Hutchings confirmed that it was his understanding that, though it was usual practice for tenancies to be allocated district wide on the basis of need rather than local connections, this did not automatically apply to houses built on exceptions sites. Additionally, SDC could institute a local lettings policy in certain circumstances.

The Chair thanked Mr Hutchings for his hard work and enthusiasm in producing the report. She felt that the data gathered could be usefully incorporated into the revised Nailsworth Action Plan.

NORTON WOOD

The revised 5 year Management Plan for Norton Wood produced by Charlton Abbots Forestry and previously circulated to all councillors was discussed. In response to a question from Cllr Kelly, the Clerk confirmed that issues of accessibility for people with disabilities, whilst not specifically covered in the Plan, could be considered in the future as the plan was put into operation. Councillors were uncertain of the extent to which the wood could be made accessible, given the nature of the terrain. Cllr Kelly agreed to research the extent of the NTC's responsibilities under the Equality Act and report back.

After discussion, it was agreed to **recommend that the Management Plan be adopted**, with costings being obtained on an annual basis.

Cllr Carter reported that, responding to comments from local residents about areas which had become overgrown, he had cleared the pedestrian steps into the wood and assisted with clearance of the privately owned footpath bordering the wood along the back of Norton Ridge. Residents had also complained to him that the path through the old orchard was overgrown, causing access problems, particularly in wet weather. The Clerk was asked to write to Ms Marilyn Miles of the Orchard Group, which maintained that area, informing her of the problem.

The Clerk reported that Will Wilkinson of Charlton Abbots Forestry had recommended that an elm and two beech trees on the boundary between Star Hill residences and Norton Wood be felled as they had suffered considerable damage and were potentially in danger of shedding limbs. It was agreed that Mr Wilkinson be asked to seek quotations for the work.

The Clerk had received some information from Mr Wilkinson on squirrel control, which she would circulate to all councillors.

PROGRESS REPORT ON NEW TIC BUILDING

Cllr M Robinson reported that additional work to the building had been authorised to deal with the roof, which had proved to be sagging, and to lower and re-grade the flagstones by the entrance to improve accessibility. A letterbox would also be installed. The costs of this work were within the agreed budget. This would probably put back the proposed completion date by approximately one week. New windows

and a door had been installed. A site meeting had been arranged for the following day, which Cllr Reed would attend.

In response to a question, Cllr M Robinson confirmed that the old TIC building would need to be vacated by 9 September and that the transfer of equipment would take place during August. The Chair confirmed that it was her understanding that the TIC Manager had already planned the logistics of the transfer. The Clerk explained that the store on the edge of the garage was currently housing grit bins which had formerly been stored in the KGV pavilion, but that the garage itself was not being used for storage purposes.

Discussion ensued regarding the proposed parking arrangements for the new TIC car park which had been referred back to the Committee for further consideration. Members felt that the Committee's original proposal for a 30-minute restriction was appropriate as it was consistent with the restriction for the lay-by in front of the Library. After further discussion, the Committee agreed unanimously to **repeat its former recommendation** that one space be reserved for Library staff, one for TIC staff and two spaces for TIC visitors, the latter being subject to a 30-minute restriction. Cllr M Robinson agreed to research signage for the car park and, if possible, to produce mock-ups for the Council to consider.

NAILSWORTH ACTION PLAN

The Chair reported that she would be meeting with Mr Ian Crawley and Mr Chris Harmer on 12 July to produce a first draft of the Action Plan Report, to be presented for discussion at the September Council Meeting (Environment). She explained that the aim was to produce a 'user-friendly' document which would be accessible to all age groups. The Clerk agreed to email the revised Housing Needs Report to Mr Crawley and Mr Harmer.

BUS SHELTER MURAL

The Chair reported that the new mural in the bus shelter at the bus station had now been completed by the Ruskin Mill students. Councillors felt it was an eye-catching and original design. The students had been asked to work on a reciprocal project in Nailsworth's twin town, Leves. The Mayor reported that he would shortly be attending a photocall for the local press with the students, their art tutor and the principal of Ruskin Mill College.

ADOPTION OF LIST OF ENVIRONMENT PROJECTS

A draft list of environment projects for the new full council, which had been produced by the Chair and previously circulated to all councillors, was **approved** with the addition of the following items: snow warden and winter maintenance; transport issues; accessibility issues.

RESPONSE TO GCC LOCAL FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Cllr M Robinson agreed to study the local flood risk management strategy consultation document and recommend an appropriate NTC response. It was noted that the deadline for responses was 12 August.

TOWN CENTRE PARKING POLICY

The Clerk reported that she had been contacted separately by Nailsworth Probus and Nailsworth Bridge Club, both regular daytime users of the Mortimer Room, complaining that the 2-hour parking restrictions in the SDC car parks in the Town

Centre had been inconveniencing their members. The long stay car park behind the Library was usually full, forcing those attending to use the short stay spaces. Since the duration of both groups' meetings was two hours, this made it difficult for members to avoid over-staying. Older members with restricted mobility were particularly affected as they were obliged to park in the town centre rather than using the long-stay car park in Newmarket Road.

Whilst recognising the problem, councillors felt that the 2-hour restriction, which NTC had previously supported, had proved its worth as a means of improving traffic circulation in the town. They were therefore not inclined to recommend to SDC that this restriction should be altered. The Clerk was asked to write to the organisations concerned suggesting that they take up the issue directly with SDC.

GCC WINTER MAINTENANCE AND ADVERSE WEATHER CONSULTATION

The Clerk had received a letter from Mr John Kay, GCC Highways Manager, outlining arrangements for winter maintenance. This had previously been circulated to all councillors.

The Clerk reported that Mr Nigel Cook had agreed to take on the role of Snow Warden and snowplough operator for the parish. Mr Peter Starkiss, the previous post holder, had confirmed that he was still willing to assist. The Clerk confirmed that NTC had access to two salt spreaders, and that substantial stocks of salt were held in various strategic locations in the parish. She agreed to liaise with Mr Roland Blackwell to check if more were needed, and to respond to GCC accordingly.

The Clerk was asked to write a letter of thanks to Mr Starkiss for his excellent work as Snow Warden, to be signed by the Mayor, and also to Mr Cook to confirm his role as replacement.

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Chair

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Date