

NAILSWORTH TOWN COUNCIL  
**ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**  
 Minutes of a meeting held on 7 November 2011

Present	Cllr Mrs SM Reed (chairman) Cllr P Carter Cllr MJ Kelly Cllr MM Rahman Cllr S Robinson * Cllr Mrs SE Thorpe
also present for part of the meeting	Peter Starkiss, snow warden
Apologies	Cllr Mrs A Elliott
	* denotes absence from part of the meeting

**SNOW WARDEN AND WINTER ARRANGEMENTS**

Mr Starkiss reported that GCC had approved (and insured) three tractor owners to operate the snowplough attachment: **Nigel Cook at Barton End, Julian Cox at Horsley, Peter Brown at Woodchester**. However, despite GCC budgetary approval in July for the purchase of 15 ploughs, the lengthy tendering process meant that these had not yet been ordered and would therefore not be available for the forthcoming winter. Members were very disappointed and the Clerk was asked to write a suitable letter to remonstrate with County Cllr Waddington.

In the event of snow or ice, GCC would clear the main trunk roads, including Spring Hill/Nymphsfield Road, but not the W. Two tonnes of grit were stocked at Barton End and a smaller amount in the Chamberlains Estate for Messrs Starkiss and Mansell to use with the hand grit spreader for town centre pavements. Chris Riley had told the Mayor at a Highways meeting that a second grit spreader was being donated and Mr Starkiss would contact Mr Riley to chase this up. It was agreed that the spreaders should be kept with the grit at Chamberlains, where secure storage was available, and the Clerk would ask Mr Mansell to take down the one which was currently in his garden. Mr Starkiss mentioned a third unwanted spreader which he had discovered at Chamberlains.

Members asked how residents would cope without an 'in-house' snowplough service; Mr Starkiss responded that there was no formal plan. Some residents called him to come and dig them out. Otherwise, volunteers looked after vulnerable elderly neighbours. Neighbourhood wardens also helped and SDC was presumably responsible for its sheltered housing. It was noted that manual spreading of grit with bucket and shovel was inefficient and wasteful.

A summary of NTC's plans was written up by Joy Way in the April NN. The Mayor would remind residents in his next piece that it was legal to clear the pavement sensibly and safely in front of their premises without fear of prosecution.

GCC Highways gave notice in the case of an extreme weather warning, but it was agreed to take action only once the snow or ice was actually on the ground. Mr Starkiss would liaise with Mr Mansell over a gritting rota.

**MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

**Orchard Project** – Cllr Carter advised that the second apple juicing day would take place this coming Sunday between 12 and 3pm at the Jovial Foresters.

**Access for disabled** – Cllr Kelly was disappointed that only four residents had come to see him at the Farmers' Market. He would be attending the next Stroud & District Access Group next month.

**Energy neighbourhoods competition** – Cllr Mrs Thorpe had emailed all Cllrs to ask if they would be interested in forming a group, (deadline 20 November), and she had advertised the competition in the latest NN. Cllr and Mrs Kelly had organised one group of friends and neighbours, which included Cllr Carter. Cllrs Mrs Thorpe and Reed and the Mayor would set up further groups. The Neighbourhood Warden was putting out leaflets to encourage other residents to participate. Cllr Kelly advised that there would be a meeting soon at which he hoped to get some ideas and suggestions of what should be done, and Cllr Carter added that the scheme involved taking weekly meter readings over a three month period.

**Christmas lights** – the Clerk advised that the first eight new motifs were due for delivery tomorrow and showed a diagram of where these would go in Old Market.

**Signboards** – the one at Market Street garden would be erected shortly, and an operative was lined up to affix another to the wall of William's Kitchen and the third free standing against the newsagent's wall in the bus station.

#### **NORTON WOOD - FUTURE PLANNING**

The five year plan had expired in 2000, since which work had been done based on an annual safety inspection by Charlton Abbotts (costing approx £100/150), with quotes for the various work recommended, which was carried out in order of priority as funds allowed. The last safety inspection was in January and the one urgent item identified had been dealt with. There were now several medium and low risk remedial jobs on the list amounting to a total of £7000.

Prior to 1996, the Forestry Commission inspected the wood and made suggestions for work to be done for which some grants were available. The grants had been discontinued and Charlton Abbotts had opined that there was little income to be had from the sale of wood.

It was agreed that a new five year plan should be made, which could be put out to tender to several contractors. Cllr Carter had walked the wood and questioned the quality of some of the work done and disagreed that there was no value in the sale of wood. The Clerk felt any questions about the quality of the current contract should be addressed directly to Charlton Abbotts.

The objectives of the expired plan were

- To improve and maintain the recreational features of the woodland
- To upgrade the value of the woodland in terms of wildlife habitat and as a landscape feature
- To produce saleable timber in a sustainable manner; to upgrade the potential of the wood to produce quality timber

It was agreed that this continued to be valid, but in addition

- To ensure the safety of the wood for use by members of the public
- To maintain and improve the official footpaths (whilst recognising the informal use of other paths which should be left unmanaged)

Members recognised that prospective contractors would need to know NTC's outline intentions for the wood, to aid preparation of a suitable plan, and were invited to come up with two alternative specialist contractors who could be approached to tender for the new plan along with Charlton Abbotts.

Of the six items of work currently pending from Charlton Abbott's January inspection, it was agreed to carry out some clearance and coppicing work on the boundary adjoining Mrs Hope's property (at a cost of £1560 for three days work) – she had expressed concern about the height and safety of these trees, which Mr Wilkinson had agreed could do with some attention having not been touched for a number of years. Of the four trees needing attention on the Avening Road bank, the map identifying council land clearly showed that two of these were on vicarage property. Ivy would be cleared from the other two Avening Road trees at a cost of approx.£765 (half of the £1530 quoted for four?) plus £250 for two days of traffic lights. There was sufficient funding in the budget. The Clerk would write to the vicar to advise the work recommended for the two trees belonging to the vicarage.

Mr Wilkinson had suggested that it might sometimes be better value to arrange work on the basis of a day rate, with instruction to carry out as much as possible, rather than quote for individual jobs.

**BUNTING HILL**

It was suggested an amount be included in the next budget to support this ongoing project with equipment, and the volunteers had asked for two more days of BTCV help this winter (@ £200 a day). This was approved.

**AND "W" CLEARANCE**

This was not NTC land although the council had contributed some tools for the volunteers. Cllr Carter advised that the National Trust had planned a clearance programme and he would monitor progress.

**TRAINING EVENING FOR REVISING 2007 ACTION PLAN**

Cllr Mrs Reed reminded Cllrs that the original five year Action Plan of 2007 needed revising and suggested a meeting of committee chairmen in the first instance. Some of the original projects had been completed or had changed, and the revision needed to reflect the increasing responsibilities being passed back down to the community. A meeting would be arranged for early next year.

**TOWN INFORMATION CENTRE AND TOURISM ISSUES**

The computer originally donated by SDC in 2003 had died, and Simon Hicks of Quality Computers had offered a reconditioned replacement at a cost of £55. In the absence of a better suggestion, members agreed to approve this expenditure.

Members accepted Mrs de Lacroix's suggestion not to open the TIC this Christkindl Evening, following a very small number of visitors last year.

The Clerk advised that agents acting for the landlord Colburn Homes would be visiting to assess the unit with a view to renegotiating the lease which expired next August.

**MAINTENANCE OF CLOSED CHURCHYARD AT SHORTWOOD**

The Mayor offered to undertake this year's Push Test with Mr Mansell in place of the Clerk, who was delighted, whilst she continued to press for the spring redirection work to be done.

**BUDGET ITEMS FOR NEXT YEAR**

	revenue	designated
street furniture (benches, bins)	400	
upkeep of council land	7500	
Bunting Hill regeneration	500	
environmental enhancement	1000	
Norton Wood	4500	
tree planting	165	
highway improvements, street lights	100	
Christmas lights	5000	
Tourism promotion	2000	
Action plan revision; printing/consultation costs)	2000	
TIC	12000	
Re-location of TIC – <i>delete £10000 from this year and re-allocate to other committees</i>		
Shortwood churchyard (cutting grass & hedges) <i>Revise this year down to £4500</i>	4500	

**COTSWOLD WARDEN SERVICE**

A communication from Kings Stanley Parish Council was considered. All members were agreed that the Cotswold Wardens provided a vital service in maintaining and safeguarding walking routes. The Wardens had recently carried out some splendid repairs to the footpath at Bunting Hill. It was agreed that a letter of support for the continuation of the service in its present form and opposing any diminution to the service should be sent to County Cllr Stan Waddington.

**ENVIRONMENT POLICY**

The current policy was adopted in January 2010. As its remit crossed several committees it was agreed to consider amendment in concert with the revision of the Action Plan.

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Date

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Chair