

NAILSWORTH TOWN COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
Minutes of a meeting held on 10 January 2012

Present	Cllr Mrs SM Reed (chairman) Cllr Mrs A Elliott Cllr MJ Kelly Cllr S Robinson
Apologies	Cllr P Carter Cllr Mrs SE Thorpe
present for part of the meeting	Mr Clive Webb, Shortwood resident
non attendance	Cllr MM Rahman

MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Snow warden & winter preparations

Peter Starkiss had emailed his December report and was in touch with Norman Mansell about using the spreader, which was to be stored with the salt at Chamberlain's Estate. The Mayor would contact Mr Starkiss to ask if he had obtained the second spreader promised by Chris Riley GCC. The last Mayor's report in NN had drawn attention to the fact that residents/traders could safely clear pavements in front of their premises without liability.

Energy neighbourhood competition

The initiative was ongoing, but incorrect percentage calculations on the website were causing problems and making the exercise rather hard work.

Christmas lights

The Mayor reported that residents were pleased with the new motifs. He had had a request for a permanent display on the silver birch at Market Street Corner, but the Clerk pointed out that there were now floodlights there, and no spare funding available to realise this suggestion with the cost of tree lights at some £2500. It was hoped that costs of erection/dismantling and electricity usage for the new motifs would be lower than previously, although the cost of hiring a cherry picker would remain. The electrician had suggested extending the swag in the bus station, but logistics for the end supporting poles would need to be investigated.

Training evening for creation of new Action Plan.

The Mayor suggested 28 February for the training evening. The previous 2007 Plan was available on the website as a pdf, and Cllr Duckworth would be asked to convert it into a suitable format for Cllr Kelly to read.

Cllr Mrs Reed would research the SDC community planning grant scheme and meet with the Mayor and Cllr Mrs Thorpe after the visit to the former police station on 17 January.

STATE OF PLUMMERS LANE FOOTPATH/PROBLEMS AT SHORTWOOD

Mr Clive Webb reported damage at the bottom of Plummers Lane caused by lorries mistakenly trying to gain access. Some of the resulting holes and others had been filled in, but the area was a mess. Rubbish was regularly removed from the cattle grid, but as it was merely dumped alongside, it washed straight back in with the next rains. Horses continued to chew up the Green despite signs prohibiting this activity.

Across the valley in Newmarket Mr Webb reported that landowner Mr Robinson had created several new ponds and interfered with the Miry Brook, and rubbish also flowed downstream off his land. Cllr Mrs Reed, with Cllrs Kelly, Carter or the Mayor would meet with Mr Webb at 10am on Saturday 28

January to review all the areas in question and Cllr Mrs Reed would take photographs, so that informed representation could thereafter be made to the relevant authorities.

Dog fouling at Bottle Green, Terretts Mill

It was reported that walkers were throwing their bags of dog waste into the Bottle Green skip, whose employees then threw them back out again, so these were left littering the area. Cllr Carter had raised the issue with Paul Helbrow SDC community safety manager who had asked the neighbourhood warden to patrol the area, and Alex Davis SDC dog warden to contact Bottle Green about the problem. Cllr Kelly wondered if there were sufficient bins, but the Clerk pointed out these needed to be close to roads in order for SDC's special collectors to empty them. The same report had implied that a similar problem existed in the area around the access to the extension field to KGV playing field. The Clerk undertook to investigate with the groundsman. In view of the above problems, Cllr Mrs Reed suggested doing an article in NN about "caring for our public spaces".

NORTON WOOD - FUTURE PLANNING

Further to discussion at the last meeting, Cllr Carter had looked up names of companies to invite to prepare a new Norton Wood development & management plan, over 10 years this time, rather than 5 years as previously. The brief should refer to the five objectives (see minutes of last meeting) plus costings, possible income from sale of wood, maintaining the natural habitat and/or restoring this as applicable, continuation of bird boxes, wildlife management.

A lot of the maintenance issues resulted from squirrel damage, which NTC had attempted to tackle in past years, but the various methods of eradication were neither satisfactory, effective nor good value for money, and any diminishing squirrel population was merely replaced by others from Woodchester Park. This was also a very contentious issue with the public.

Cllr Kelly mentioned that the Woodland Trust adopted woods to help with management, but it was agreed that NTC did not want the Wood actually taken over, but to remain managed under its own direction and control.

Norton Wood Orchard Project

The Clerk had received a complaint from a neighbouring resident that too much clearance had been done, destroying the natural habitat and causing birds to disappear. The Clerk had tried to explain the process of renovation, removal of dead trees and planting new ones, all with council approval, and with the close involvement of local bird expert Terry Grant. Marilyn Miles had sent in a report that the work was progressing well and that there was now room to plant new trees, which she invited Cllrs to come and approve. The Clerk would check that the next working party session was on 12 February, so that Cllrs could attend and have a word with the team. She would mention the complaint to Mrs Miles and suggest the resident attended with Cllrs at the next work session.

Report on Minchinhampton & Rodborough Commons Advisory Committee & continuing clearance on the W

Mrs Joy Way's report of 30 November had been circulated; the Clerk was asked to thank her and advise that Cllrs had no comments other than to commend the good work. 5 residents had joined the W Scrubbers today; the group met every Tuesday and was making good progress in opening up the view over the town.

BUNTING HILL INCLUDING AREA BEHIND GETHSEMENE

Further to Mrs Way's request for another two days help from BTCV, the Clerk was trying to arrange a visit during February or first week in March. Cllr Mrs Reed would ask to whom the cheque should be made out, for the £185 grant from the Co-op being held for providing bird boxes in that area.

Trees above Gethsemene

The owner of Gethsemene had applied for help in controlling trees above the house, the problem being a large beech tree which NTC regularly inspected and tended as required. The last inspection was in July 2010 with recommendation that the tree next be inspected in 2014. The Clerk had

responded accordingly to the resident, who had in turn responded that he was in fact asking for help with other trees in the vicinity, and offered to deal with them himself if NTC was unable to do so. It was agreed that Tree Maintenance should inspect the site in the first instance before deciding on any appropriate action, and the Clerk suggested this could be done at the same time as a second phase of work behind Fairview, another property close by, which work was ongoing over several years.

PARKING ISSUES AT COSSACK SQUARE

Mrs Pam Browne, residing at the top of Chestnut Hill, had emailed to complain about parking on the pavement at the lower end of Chestnut Hill/Cossack Square, creating visibility issues for cars driving in and out of Chestnut Hill and obstruction for pedestrians. The complaint had already been passed on to the police and Ashley Nicholson, SDC Parking Officer would be asked if wardens could be deployed to issue tickets to offenders. There was reluctance to pursue the installation of bollards to prevent vehicular access to the area at this time.

Bench at Watledge

The bench below Watledge Bank had originally been installed in commemoration of the Queen’s last Jubilee, although since replaced (at NTC’s cost) following demolition by a reversing vehicle. Cllr Mrs Reed reported that a slat was now broken and the Clerk was asked to arrange repair.

Possible badger cull in Stroud

An email had been circulated advising that DEFRA was considering a badger cull in the Stroud area and inviting NTC to join the support group opposing this course of action. Members felt it was not appropriate for the council to take a stand, given the different views in the community and there also did not appear to be any badger sets on council land which might be affected. The Clerk would circulate the email to the rest of the council so that individuals could participate in a personal capacity if they so wished.

TOWN INFORMATION CENTRE AND TOURISM ISSUES

All copies of the last Town Guide had now been given out and Mrs de Lacroix was asked to contact the firm who produced the last ones regarding production of a new edition. The timescale would be notified in NN so that any traders wishing to advertise could get in touch with the editor.

It was noted that the 10th anniversary of the opening of the TIC was coming up in April, and notification of the lease renewal terms were awaited.

MAINTENANCE OF CLOSED CHURCHYARD AT SHORTWOOD

The contractor (commissioned to redirect the errant spring around the walls of the churchyard) had finally been in touch and had advised he would start the job this month.

Triangle of council land, top of Pike Lane / Rockness Hill

The Clerk outlined previous problems over a strip of council land running along the back of three houses. It had been agreed to give a formal agreement for parking on the verge and use of the strip. However one of the residents was erroneously claiming ownership. The process of formal agreements had been started, but then neglected with 2 subsequent changes of solicitor. Members would need to revisit the site and consider fencing off the council property which would be formally included in the registration of council land – another long term project that was ongoing.

Jubilee Woods

A leaflet was circulating encouraging creation of new woods to commemorate the Queen’s Jubilee this year, which Cllr Mrs Reed had passed on to Ruskin Mill. The initiative would be advertised but members felt there were a sufficient number of woods in the area already.

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Date

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Chairman