NAILSWORTH TOWN COUNCIL ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held on 14 May 2013

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

MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING OF 12 MARCH 2013

In response to a request from Cllr M Robinson, it was agreed that the date of the minutes of the previous Committee meeting should be included in the relevant item heading.

Emergent spring

In response to a question, Cllr M Robinson confirmed that work to resolve the problems caused by an emergent spring on his property was ongoing. He had been liaising with the relevant authorities.

Tree at Forest Green

Cllr Elliott reported that low branches on a copper beech tree on private land adjacent to Nympsfield Road were overhanging the road and striking the roofs of double-decker buses. The Clerk explained that such matters were generally resolved by liaison between GCC and the relevant landowner.

Shortwood Church

The Clerk confirmed that low branches on the boundary trees in the old churchyard, which had been obstructing access to some of the graves, had now been removed.

Shortwood Green

Cllr Reed reported that it appeared that the water company's contractors had completed their work on Shortwood Green.

COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO CHALLENGE OF WASTE

Cllr Reed reported that the Council had purchased two DVD copies of the 'Trashed' documentary on waste with money raised at NTC's recent showing of the film at the Arkell Centre. These were available at the TIC for local individuals and groups to borrow free of charge, subject to a booking procedure. Cllr Thorpe had drafted an article for Nailsworth News recommending the film and inviting residents to submit their comments on how the problems of waste could be addressed locally. Mr Chris Harmer had agreed to organise and chair a small group to explore possible ways of reducing waste in the town. It was suggested that this group might like to develop ideas for activities relating to next year's Climate Week, 3-9 March 2014.

NORTON WOOD – DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN

Cllr Reed presented the draft 5 year Management Plan produced by Mr Will Wilkinson of Charlton Abbotts Forestry, previously circulated to all committee members. The plan, which divided the woodland into 4 compartments and made specific recommendations for each, was discussed in detail.

The following was agreed:

- 1. Mr Wilkinson to be asked to add a statement summarising the Council's wish to develop Norton Wood, as appropriate, for walking, leisure and community use. As part of this, reference should be made to the long-term maintenance of the various paths through the wood.
- 2. Coppicing of hazel trees on the boundary between local residences and the old orchard should be undertaken on a rotational basis.
- 3. Mr Wilkinson to be requested to supply further details of how his proposed high level spring trap method for squirrel control would operate, including an estimate of the costs of the operation.
- 4. Mr Wilkinson to be asked to produce annual progress reports on the Management Plan, to be delivered at the September meetings of the Committee in years 1-3, together with an overall review of the 5-year plan in year 4.
- 5. Mr Wilkinson to be asked to add a statement explaining that the current 5 year Management Plan would constitute one block of a 15 year plan aimed at delivering long term continuity and security in the management of the woodland as a community resource.

In response to a question, the Clerk confirmed that Mr Wilkinson would supply costings for the work specified in the Management Plan once the draft plan had been agreed.

NORTON WOOD - PROGRESS IN ORCHARD AREA

Cllr Reed reported that the Orchard Group had undertaken weeding between the fruit trees in the old orchard area. Building waste from operations in the adjoining car park had been removed and the overall look of the area was much improved.

NORTON WOOD - WORK TO LOWER BOUNDARY TREES

The Clerk reported that a climbing inspection of a group of beech and sycamore trees on the lower boundary had revealed a higher level of squirrel damage than had been apparent from the ground. Mr Wilkinson had recommended remedial work including high level pollarding to two trees should be prioritised and had provided an estimate of £1,300. Cllr Carter felt that pollarding would only be a short-term solution to the problem, as new growth would later emerge that would itself be susceptible to squirrel damage. After discussion, it was **agreed** that Mr Wilkinson be asked for advice on the merits of pollarding against felling and provide an amended quote as appropriate.

PROGRESS REPORT ON NEW TIC BUILDING

Cllr M Robinson reported that work had commenced on the building, with an estimated completion date of 20 July. He indicated that various decisions would need to be made regarding matters such as parking, signage and fittings. The Clerk agreed to circulate all Committee members and Mrs Delacroix TIC Manager with dates and times of site meetings, as appropriate, for such purposes.

Discussion ensued on parking arrangements for the new TIC building. Councillors were uncertain of the exact number of spaces that could be created in the TIC car park. It was

agreed to recommend that one space be reserved for Library staff, one for TIC staff, and the rest should be allocated for users of the TIC, subject to a 30-minute restriction.

HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY REPORT

Cllr Reed welcomed Mr Martin Hutchings GRCC to the meeting and invited him to present his report, which had previously been circulated to Committee members. Mr Hutchings summarised the findings of the survey and answered questions from members. The response rate was 26%, which Mr Hutchings felt was satisfactory for a town of Nailsworth's size. In his experience, response rates tended to be higher in smaller parishes. Key findings included evidence that 82% of survey respondents were in favour of a small development of affordable homes in Nailsworth if there was a proven need, and that 52 of the households that responded were seeking affordable housing in the town. In response to a question, he confirmed that it was not possible to identify from the survey how many of this 52 would be likely to access affordable housing which already existed in the parish. The most recent data (July 2011) suggested that Nailsworth had a total of 466 affordable dwellings, 59 of which had been re-let between Jan 2011 and March 2013. Mr Hutchings agreed to check with SDC as to how many of these re-lets had been to local people, as this could give a more meaningful indication of local need, and also to ask SDC to comment on whether Nailsworth would be likely to qualify as an exception site for the development of affordable housing. He explained that it would be inadvisable to use multipliers to attempt to measure the demand for affordable housing among households who had not responded to the survey, as SDC was unlikely to recognise such statistics as valid.

After further discussion, Mr Hutchings agreed to delete references to individuals' ages in the report's analysis of type and tenure of houses required by those seeking affordable accommodation and replace these with age ranges, in order to maximise anonymity of respondents. He agreed to write an executive summary of the report to be placed on the NTC website and submitted to Nailsworth News.

STATUS OF WALKLEY LANE

The Clerk reported that Richard Gray GCC had asked whether NTC had any records relating back to the NUDC which could assist the GCC investigation into the status of Walkley Lane. NTC had no records relating to its status, as all NUDC records had been passed to the Gloucestershire Records Office. The Clerk was asked to inform Mr Gray and confirm that NTC as an owner of land adjacent to Cherry Trees and Yew Tree Cottage also used Walkley Lane for access, adding that NTC understood that it was a public highway maintained by GCC.

ACTION PLAN

Cllr Reed reported that she had met with various groups to seek their input into the draft plan. Responses to the questionnaire would be analysed by Mr Chris Harmer, and she and Mr Ian Crawley would be meeting with him on 28 May to begin work on the final document. In order to boost the number of responses, ten blank questionnaires were passed to each Committee member for distribution. The completed questionnaires were to be returned by 15 June.

Cllr Reed commended the notes of the meeting of Access Nailsworth held on 26 April and it was agreed to circulate these to all councillors.

SUGGESTED RE-ROUTING OF BUS SERVICE

A local resident, Mr John Armitage, had attended the previous Council meeting and suggested some alterations to the bus service between Wotton, Tetbury, Nailsworth and Stroud. This had been passed to the Environment Committee for consideration. It was agreed that the Clerk should contact Mr Armitage suggesting he put his ideas in writing to GCC, sending a copy of his letter to NTC with a request for NTC support, which could then be considered by the Committee.

SNOW WARDEN

Mr Peter Starkiss, the local Snow Warden, had reported that snow clearance arrangements had worked well over the winter months. Three snowploughs had been available, the salt bins had been effective and the number of volunteers had increased since the previous year. Whilst Mr Starkiss remained enthusiastic about the role of Snow Warden, he now felt it was time to hand over to a successor and he suggested that Mr Nigel Cook would be an appropriate choice. Cllr Reed undertook to check whether Mr Starkiss had already approached Mr Cook. Subsequent to this, the Clerk would write to Mr Cook to ask if he would be willing and able to take on the role of Snow Warden for the coming winter. She would also write to Mr Starkiss to thank him for his invaluable work.

BUS SHELTER REDECORATION

Cllr Reed circulated a photograph of the proposed design for the decoration of the bus shelter in Nailsworth Bus Station which had been produced by Ruskin Mill students. This was approved. The proposed date for the painting was 24 June and work to prepare the wall for the design, which would be stencilled on, would be undertaken prior to this. It was **agreed** that the cost of the materials for preparation and decoration, amounting to £198.00, would be met from NTC's Environmental Enhancement budget. The Clerk agreed to inform SDC of the date and nature of the work to be undertaken.

MINCHINHAMPTON AND RODBOROUGH COMMONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Clerk had received an email from Mrs Joy Way, NTC's representative on the Advisory Committee, stating that she was willing to continue in this role during 2013/14, and detailing planned events in celebration of the National Trust's centenary. Mrs Way had offered to attend a Committee meeting to talk about her role. Members welcomed this opportunity and it was agreed that Mrs Way be invited to attend the July meeting of the Environment Committee.

Chair	Date