

NAILSWORTH TOWN COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
 Minutes of a meeting held on 13 November 2012

Present	Cllr SM Reed (chair) Cllr P Carter Cllr A Elliott Cllr MM Rahman Cllr MP Robinson Cllr S Robinson
Apologies	Cllr MJ Kelly
In attendance	3 local residents

MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Litter bins

Cllr Carter reported that he had noticed on the SDC website that the prices for litter bins available for purchase by town and parish councils appeared to be significantly lower than those which had been quoted to NTC. After a short discussion, it was agreed to recommend that a dog waste bin be purchased and sited near Terrett's Mill in Newmarket Road, and a litter bin at the triangle nearby, if SDC would agree to empty both bins.

Christmas lights

The Clerk reported that the new motifs had now arrived.

Shortwood Green – larch copse

The Clerk reported that, with the Mayor, she had visited a local resident who had offered to cut back a large sycamore close to the larch copse which was leaning over his land at his own expense. Councillors were pleased to give permission for this work to be carried out.

MAST AND MOBILE TELEPHONES ISSUES – EFFECT ON HEALTH

The Chair welcomed three local residents who had come to voice their concerns over the possible health effects of radiation from mobile phone and broadband masts in the town. The residents relayed the contents of various independent reports on the matter and gave personal examples of what they viewed as the harmful effects of the masts. They outlined three main requests:

1. the maximum power limit of masts in the UK should be restricted to the limit in other European countries, rather than being increased
2. before any broadband or mobile phone mast is erected, and before any power upgrading takes place on an existing mast, the public should be clearly notified of its proposed location
3. planning law should be changed so that the erection of additional broadband or mobile phone masts at existing locations should be subject to planning permission.

Whilst acknowledging that NTC had no direct powers over the siting of mobile phone and broadband masts, Cllr Reed thanked the residents for raising their concerns. It

was agreed that these would be reported to the next full council meeting, and that the notes provided by the residents would be made available to all councillors.

NORTON WOOD

The proposals for management and maintenance of Norton Wood which had been received from Gardiner's Tree Surgery and Charlton Abbots Forestry respectively, were considered. Cllr Reed advised that any proposal which was accepted should incorporate the contributions of the three community groups which were currently doing valuable work on particular sections of the woodland. She reported that there were a number of large ash trees which might need to be felled if they were unfortunate enough to contract ash dieback disease.

After a brief discussion, it was agreed to accept the proposal of Charlton Abbots and invite a representative to attend the next meeting of the Environment Committee for initial discussions, with a view to the developing a practical management plan, as outlined in the company's letter to NTC of 8 May 2012.

TOWN INFORMATION CENTRE

Councillors recorded their thanks to Carole de Lacroix for the excellent displays she had created in the TIC window for the Hilliers' medals and for Remembrance Day. Cllr M Robinson explained that it was quite feasible that the relocation of the TIC to the former police station would take place in July 2013. The Clerk advised that it would be necessary, in due course, for councillors to consider which committee would take responsibility for the TIC, given that the former police station was currently under the auspices of Property Management. In response to a request from Cllr Carter, Cllr Reed agreed to investigate whether any 'mission statement' had ever been produced for the TIC.

NAILSWORTH BUS STATION PROPOSALS

SDC's draft plans for the re-design of the bus station had been previously circulated to all councillors, but owing to technical difficulties the plans were too small to be intelligible. The Clerk had requested a larger hard copy of the plans from SDC some time ago, but as this had not yet arrived it was agreed to defer discussion of the proposals until the larger plans were available. A meeting of the Committee would be arranged for this purpose as soon as practicable in order for NTC to respond to the draft plans within the agreed timescale. Councillors were concerned that any redesign should not reduce the availability of free parking in the town, and should not preclude the future enhancement of the whole area, including the area around the stream and the Mortimer Gardens.

WINTER ARRANGEMENTS

Cllr Reed reported that Peter Starkiss, the Nailsworth Snow Warden, had emailed her comprehensive information about the provisions which had been made for bad weather, including grit bins, snow ploughs and pavement clearing. Councillors were pleased to hear that contingency plans were well in hand, and the Clerk was asked to write to Mr Starkiss to thank him warmly, on behalf of the Committee, for all his hard work, and to ask him to continue in this voluntary post for the following year.

MAINTENANCE OF CLOSED CHURCHYARD

The Clerk reported that, together with the Town Groundsman, she had carried out the annual 'push test' of the headstones in All Saints' Churchyard earlier in the month

an had informed the PCC of the results. John Davis of St George's PCC had written to express his concern and dismay that some of the headstones which had been laid flat had also been laid down in the three preceding years, and had subsequently each time been re-erected unsafely by persons unknown. He had drafted a notice outlining the results of this test to discourage this practice which he intended to display in the churchyard, and he wondered if this should be displayed more widely and publicised in 'Nailsworth News'. The Clerk confirmed that, whilst NTC had a duty to perform the annual test for health and safety reasons, responsibility for the condition of the headstones remained with the owners. Cllr M Robinson agreed to liaise with Mr Davis to look at the wording and distribution of the draft notice.

TOWN ACTION PLAN

Cllr Reed reported that Chris Harmer and Ian Crawley planned to meet to progress work on building a team to work on the new Town Action Plan. She suggested that it would be useful for GRCC to be asked to carry out a local Housing Needs Survey, which she understood was offered free of charge, prior to the commencement of work on the Action Plan.

BUDGET ESTIMATE FOR 2013/14

Members considered the revenue budget for the current year and next year and proposed the following:

Revenue budget for this year:

Litter bins	Reduce to £330
Highway improvements	Increase to £180
TIC	Increase to £17000

Revenue budget for 2013/14

Norton Wood	£6000
Highway improvements	£100
TIC	£17000
Action Plan	delete
Relocation of TIC	delete

All other headings to be carried forward as per original estimate for 2012/13.

Designated funds:

No additions were proposed for next year.

GCC HIGHWAYS SCHEME: A46 INCHBROOK TO TILTUPS

An email from Cllr Kelly in his capacity as Chair of Access Nailsworth was circulated, in which he expressed his extreme disappointment at GCC's refusal to include a safe crossing point between Dunkirk Mill and The Hayes. Councillors were in sympathy with his views. A summary of the results of a GCC Speed Survey at this point earlier in the month was also circulated. The survey concluded that the mean speed was well within the appropriate range for the posted speed limit. However, some councillors felt that the data from the survey was limited and somewhat vague. After some discussion, it was agreed to arrange a public meeting on the issue of road safety on the A46 with interested parties, and to invite Richard Gray of GCC Highways and County Cllr Stan Waddington. It was suggested that this could be held either in the Mortimer Room or at Dunkirk Mill. Cllrs Reed and S Robinson agreed to liaise to organise this meeting.

SHORTWOOD GREEN

Cllrs Carter and S Robinson had been contacted by a Shortwood resident who had complained that horse riders were continuing to ride across the grassed bank between the green and the lower Shortwood Road, despite the existence of signs forbidding horse riding on the green. This was creating an unsightly, muddy track. Councillors agreed that this practice should be discouraged and after some discussion, it was suggested that a possible solution could be to place hurdles at the top and the bottom of the 'track' with signs stating that this was a designated 'restoration' area. It was understood that the National Trust had used a similar strategy on the local commons. The resident had also drawn attention to the problem of mud collecting at the bottom of Plumbers' Lane and Sue Nicholson was asked to raise this matter once again with GCC Rights of Way officers.

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Chair

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Date