

Report of the Meeting of the
Environment Committee held on 18 February 2020

Present: Cllr Matt Stringer (Chairman)
Cllr Clare Fardell
Cllr Guy Rawlinson
Cllr Angela Symonds
Cllr Pam Shipp
Cllr Jayne Stansfield
Cllr Eva Fielding

Brett Harrison (Composting Site, Filnore Woods)
Felicity Harrison (Sustainable Thornbury)
Jeff Pead (Thornbury Ramblers)
Cilla Farquhar (Filnore Allotments)

Wendy Sydenham (Deputy Clerk)
Hannah Cornford (Minutes)

Absent: Cllr Martin Trueman

1. TO RECEIVE ANY APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Judith Hurford – Tree Warden

2. TO RECEIVE ANY REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were none present.

3. TO RECEIVE ANY MEMBERS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no members declaration of interest.

4. TO DISCUSS MATTERS ARISING FROM THE REPORT OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 JANUARY 2020 NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

There were no matters arising and the report was noted.

5. TO CONSIDER NEW ITEMS OF BUSINESS

(a) Spring Clean – Saturday 4th April 2020, 9:30, meet at Rock Street Car Park

The date was noted. Councillors were invited to attend.

6. TO CONSIDER MATTERS IN PROGRESS AND RECEIVE UPDATES WHERE APPROPRIATE

(a) Perennial planting in Pullins Green raised beds

The Deputy Clerk reported that South Gloucestershire Council had been asked to provide plans and costs for perennial planting in the raised beds in Pullins Green. However, they had

informed us that due to staffing issues, it was unlikely that they would be able to do this in the short term. It was therefore likely that it would be towards the end of the year before this could be progressed. In the meantime, Thornbury in Bloom would be informed of the situation and it was hoped that they may be able to keep the beds tidy, although it was acknowledged that they were having difficulty with getting volunteers.

(b) Installation of drinking water fountain in the Mundy Playing Fields

The Deputy Clerk had obtained one quote for a fountain and would be seeking two more. There were various kinds of fountains and once further information was available the Committee would need to make decisions on the kind of fountain that would be most suitable. There were also vandal proof machines which were more expensive but would be more hard wearing. The Deputy Clerk would aim to bring further information and further quotes to the next meeting.

(c) Update on seating in the town – moving of seat at junction of Oakleaze and Gillingstool

Staffing issues continued to hinder progress with the installation of this seat but it was hoped that this would be in place by the next meeting.

(d) Schedule of tree works

The table was noted and thanks were given to the staff involved.

(e) South Gloucestershire's Tree Planting Project

The Deputy Clerk reported that she had invited the South Gloucestershire Council Biodiversity Officer to this meeting. It was noted that South Gloucestershire Council had confirmed that they would supply much more detailed plans for any future tree planting in Thornbury, including exact locations and numbers of trees. It was agreed that the Deputy Clerk should contact the Biodiversity Officer to ask what response had been made to the various complaints that had been made about the location of the recent tree planting and also what remedial action was being taken with regard to trees that had been planted in areas used by children for playing ball games, etc. It was also agreed that the Deputy Clerk should specifically highlight issues with planting at the top of Streamleaze Green.

(f) Schedule of minor matters

The schedule was noted, including progress made on previously reported issues. A number of other minor matters were raised and the Deputy Clerk was asked to report these to South Gloucestershire Council and enter them on the next schedule. These included - Streamside Walk between St David's Road and Gloucester Road had become very slippery after recent bad weather and needed attention, defects in the pavement on Park Road had been marked and we needed to ensure these were repaired and not just marked, concrete bollards had been knocked down in Siblands and needed repairing.

(g) Fairtrade

Cllr Clare Fardell provided an update on the upcoming Fairtrade Fortnight, including a visit from a Fairtrade grower. There would also be a stand in St Mary's Centre on 7 March 2020 which would provide details of the availability of Fairtrade items in the town, as well as providing free samples of Fairtrade chocolate. Cllr Fardell asked for support from Councillors for manning the stand.

7. TO RECEIVE UPDATES ON OPERATIONAL MATTERS

(a) Operational Matters – Volunteer Evening and Hanging Baskets

The arrangements for the Volunteer Evening were discussed. It was agreed to change the date to either 16 or 30 March 2020. Possible suggestions for speakers were discussed and it was agreed that the Deputy Clerk should contact one possible speaker who could provide information on Fairtrade. A date would then be set for the evening, dependent on that person's availability. The Deputy Clerk would then email confirmation of the arrangements to all Councillors and Committee members, as well as sending out invitations to volunteer groups.

The Deputy Clerk reported that hanging baskets would need to be ordered shortly. It was agreed that she should order the same number as last year. The cost of the baskets had increased by 51p and it was agreed that we should increase how much we charge for participation in the scheme. It was proposed by Cllr Jayne Stansfield that we increase the charge for the scheme by £1 for each basket. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Eva Fielding and unanimously agreed, with one abstention.

(b) Councillor Surgeries – consideration of any issues raised

There were no issues raised at recent Councillor surgeries to be considered by this Committee.

(c) Community Composting Site Report

Brett Harrison was very pleased to report that he had secured £6000 of funding from South Gloucestershire Council, who had agreed to continue supporting them and help look at ways to reduce abuse of the service by commercial enterprises. The Town Council had also agreed to release £1000 of grant money that had been withheld whilst the site's future was uncertain. The site would be able to reopen on a Monday and Wednesday afternoon and Saturday mornings.

(d) Filnore Allotments Report

Cilla Farquhar reported that there were 28 plots currently available. They had managed to replace all of the recently stolen equipment. They were getting a number of people joining who lived in the new housing estates. It was queried whether the allotments planned specifically for these estates were available yet, as it seemed illogical that residents should wish to travel to a site further away.

(e) Filnore Woods Report

Jerry Dicker was absent. Cilla Farquhar asked for information regarding the padlock on the gate. It was suggested that the Deputy Clerk write to Circadian Trust, as it was thought that they were responsible for that gate.

(f) Tree Wardens Report

The Tree Warden had sent her apologies along with a report that was tabled and noted.

(g) Sustainable Thornbury Report

Felicity Harrison reported that various activities were organised for Saturdays.

(h) Footpath Warden's Report

Cllr Rawlinson noted that after recent bad weather, everywhere was waterlogged.

(i) Thornbury Ramblers Report/Walks Booklet

Jeff Pead reported that work was ongoing and supported Cllr Rawlinson's observation that everywhere was wet! Cllr Fielding offered her time to pilot her drone in order to help compile the booklet with aerial views. It was felt this was an excellent idea.

(j) Thornbury Litter Busters

The group was preparing for the Spring Clean event and had recently had their AGM.

8. TO CONSIDER ANY URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

The Open Doors event dates were provided and it was decided that Committee's preferred date to participate was 12 September 2020 but that the Deputy Clerk should investigate when St Mary's Church was opening to ensure it was on the same date.

9. TO RESOLVE UNDER THE PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 THAT THE PUBLIC AND PRESS BE EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING DURING CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS OF BUSINESS AS PUBLICITY WOULD BE PREJUDICIAL TO THE PUBLIC INTEREST BECAUSE OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED

Resolved. Cilla Farqhar, Brett Harrison, Felicity Harrison and Jeff Pead left the meeting.

10. TO CONSIDER A DRAFT LICENCE RELATING TO AN AREA OF LAND IN THORNBURY

The Deputy Clerk had circulated a copy of a draft licence relating to an area of land in Thornbury. An amendment to the licence was agreed and Cllr Guy Rawlinson proposed that with this amendment, the licence could be submitted to the other party for consideration. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Jayne Stansfield and unanimously agreed.

(Cllr Eva Fielding left the meeting.)

11. TO CONSIDER QUOTES RELATING TO THE POULTERBROOK ENVIRONMENTAL AREA

The Deputy Clerk presented quotes for picnic benches, recycling bins and wildflower seeds for the Poulterbrook Environmental area. The following was agreed that the Deputy Clerk should proceed with the cheapest quote for each item. It was further agreed that as the quotes were well under budget, a second picnic bench could be purchased to further enhance the picnic area. It was also agreed that the cost of hiring a power harrow for planting the wildflower seeds was acceptable. It was highlighted that the wildflower areas would need careful management and the Deputy Clerk confirmed that staff were aware of what was involved with this and could also obtain advice from South Gloucestershire Council as necessary.