

Report of the meeting of the Environment Committee
held on 13 October 2020 at 8.00pm via video conference

Present: Cllr Matt Stringer (Chair)
Cllr Chris Davies
Cllr Benj Emmerson
Cllr Jayne Stansfield
Cllr Angela Symonds
Cllr Martin Trueman

Cilla Farquhar (Filnore Allotments)
Judith Hurford (Tree Warden)
Jeff Pead (Thornbury Ramblers/Walks Booklet/Litter Busters)

Wendy Sydenham (Deputy Clerk)

(Cllr Pam Shipp – absent)

1. TO RECEIVE ANY APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Guy Rawlinson (Vice Chair) – another commitment
Cllr Eva Fielding – another commitment

Jerry Dicker (Filnore Woods)
Brett Harrison (Community Composting Site)

2. TO RECEIVE ANY MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no members' declarations of interest.

3. TO RECEIVE ANY REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public present.

4. TO DISCUSS MATTERS ARISING FROM THE REPORT OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1 SEPTEMBER 2020 NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

The report was noted. The Deputy Clerk reported that the picnic area in the Poulterbrook Environmental Area should be installed shortly, and that the plan was for the wildflower seed to be sewn in October/early November. If this was not possible, it would be sewn in the Spring.

5. TO CONSIDER NEW ITEMS OF BUSINESS

(a) To consider a request for dog waste bins with dog bags attached

A request had been received from a member of the public for the Committee to consider attaching dog bags to the sides of dog waste bins. Details of the request had been circulated to the Committee. The request was discussed and a number of issues were identified that this would raise – increased plastic debris, the need to replenish, encouraging dog walkers to come out without their own bag and the fact that most of the dog bins were owned by South Gloucestershire Council. It was therefore agreed that the Committee could not support this

request and that the Deputy Clerk should respond to the member of the public to explain the reasons why.

(b) To consider issues relating to the Butterfly Area

An exchange of emails had been circulated to Committee members regarding the Butterfly Area. These were discussed and it was agreed that the Deputy Clerk should contact South Gloucestershire Council to ascertain what their mowing regime was around that area. It was also agreed that it would be useful to try to bring together a group of volunteers who would monitor the area and help to look after it. It was agreed that Cllr Chris Davies should contact Jerry Dicker to discuss this further.

(c) To consider Fairtrade representation

It was noted that the Committee needed to consider who would become its Fairtrade representative. It was also noted that there was uncertainty as to what Fairtrade events or activities could take place under the current COVID-19 restrictions, in particular the Fairtrade fortnight event in February. It was therefore agreed that this issue would be kept on the Committee's agenda and reviewed regularly. It was also agreed that the Deputy Clerk should check on when the Fairtrade leaflet was last updated.

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

(a) Update on South Gloucestershire Council's charges for bin emptying

The Deputy Clerk reported that South Gloucestershire Council had confirmed that they would not be reducing their charges for bin emptying during COVID-19 restrictions as they had stated that there had not been any reduction in service and the notes that were put on bins were a precautionary measure only when their staffing levels were intermittent.

(b) Request for a dog waste bin in Milbury Heath

The Deputy Clerk reported that South Gloucestershire Council were happy to reduce their quote for emptying a new dog waste bin in Milbury Heath from £4.67 to £2.87 per emptying (once per week), as this was the reduced rate we paid for all of our dog bin emptying. It was noted that there were sufficient funds in the budget to cover the cost of either a combined litter bin (£609) or a dog waste bin (£365), supplied and installed by South Gloucestershire Council. It was noted that we did not know whether there was currently a litter bin in that area of Milbury Heath and therefore it was agreed that the Deputy Clerk should check this first and then purchase the appropriate bin.

(c) Perennial planting in Pullins Green raised beds

An exchange of emails with a resident of Pullins Green had been circulated and were noted. Originally the Town Council had been asked to take over control of four of the beds (beds 1, 2, 3 and 7 on the diagram circulated), but that since then one of these beds had been "adopted" by residents which left only three beds needing to be taken back by Council. It was agreed that the Deputy Clerk should contact the resident who had got in touch to clarify the position, to thank him and other residents for their efforts in looking after the beds so well, and to confirm that we would take back control of the three remaining beds. The Deputy Clerk should then contact South Gloucestershire Council to ask for a quote for planting up and maintaining the three remaining beds.

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

The Deputy Clerk reported that no progress had been made on this.

(e) Update on seating in the town

The Deputy Clerk reported that the memorial bench for Allan Burberry had been installed in the field between the Mundy Playing Fields and the Golf Club. Some reinstating of the earth had been carried out around the bench which had left the area quite muddy and would take a little time to recover. Jerry Dicker would continue to liaise with the family with regard to a dedication ceremony taking place at some point in the future. This may possibly be next year to allow the ground to recover and, if restrictions were relaxed, allow for more people to attend.

(f) Schedule of Tree Works

The schedule of tree works had been circulated and was noted. The Deputy Clerk reported that some progress has been made but that we were now waiting for the less straightforward works to be carried out. The tree surgeon was querying some actions with the tree surveyor – these were identified on a separate sheet on the tree works schedule along with any additional works that were being investigated.

(g) Schedule of Minor Matters

The schedule of minor matters had been circulated and was noted. This included all recent updates received from South Gloucestershire Council. It was noted that completed actions would be removed from the next version of the schedule and it was agreed that any newly completed actions would be marked in green text on future versions to make them easier to spot.

(h) Effects of COVID-19 on the Committee's budget

It was noted that there was £4500 in the Committee's budget for Green Projects. The Deputy Clerk confirmed that £500 of this may be needed for some additional costs for the Poulterbrook Environmental Area e.g. hiring of equipment, purchase of concrete, etc. It was agreed that the Deputy Clerk should liaise with the Clerk to ensure that these remaining funds were available for a project in the next financial year, whether they were normal funds or CIL funds.

7. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON OPERATIONAL MATTERS AND REPORTS FROM COMMUNITY GROUP REPRESENTATIVES

(a) Operational Matters – Volunteer Evening/Hanging Basket Scheme

The Deputy Clerk reported that there weren't any operational matters to update the Committee on.

(b) Consideration of any issues raised at Councillor Surgeries

As the Councillor Surgeries were not currently taking place due to COVID-19 restrictions, there were no issues to consider.

(c) Community Composting Site

It was noted that there was some uncertainty as to who the representative was for the composting site at present. It was agreed that the Deputy Clerk would email Brett Harrison to clarify the situation.

(d) Filnore Allotments Report

Cilla Farquhar reported that the allotments continued to do well, despite an ongoing problem with rabbits. Wildflower seed had been sown recently and a community working party had

taken place, with another two organised. It was noted that Krunch had contacted someone from the allotments to discuss the possibility of an allotment being created near to the Hub.

(e) Filnore Woods Report

Jerry Dicker was unable to attend the meeting, but a report on Filnore Woods had been circulated and was noted.

(f) Tree Warden's Report

Judith Hurford reported that she was revisiting some trees that had been planted last year and had died. These would be replanted. She also reported that she was having difficulty getting in touch with the tree team at South Gloucestershire Council. It was agreed that if this continued, she could contact Cllr Jayne Stansfield who may be able to help her get in touch with them. She reported that she was due to meet soon with a member of the outdoor staff of the Town Council to discuss planting some trees in the Mundy Playing Fields, including three memorial trees, one of which would be in memory of Cllr Clare Fardell.

(g) Sustainable Thornbury Report

In Felicity Harrison's absence, there was no report. Cilla Farquhar reported that there was a CATS meeting planned for 02.11.20.

(h) Footpath Warden's Report

In Cllr Guy Rawlinson's absence, the Deputy Clerk highlighted an exchange of emails that had been circulated regarding problems with steps/handrail on Whitewall Lane. The issue was noted by the Committee. Cllr Rawlinson had also asked for the Committee's attention to be drawn to the page on the new Council website regarding the role of the Path Warden, and in particular that this would be amended slightly to confirm that this role did not include dealing with issues with pavements which should be reported to South Gloucestershire Council.

(i) Thornbury Ramblers Report/Walks Booklet

Jeff Pead reported that the Ramblers were continuing to meet up where possible and walk in groups of six or less to comply with current restrictions. He had completed some of the walks in the walk booklet and noted that they were out of date or vague in some sections and needed to be updated.

(j) Thornbury Litter Busters

Jeff Pead reported that Litter Busters had met three or four times recently, meeting up in small groups. They had noted that there was generally less litter around probably because of less people being out and about due to the ongoing restrictions.

9. TO CONSIDER ANY URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business.