



whitchurch town council

MINUTES: PARK & PUBLIC REALM COMMITTEE MEETING, 18TH SEPTEMBER 2024

MINUTES - PARKS & PUBLIC REALM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18TH SEPTEMBER 2024

PRESENT

Councillors: J. De-Wyrall A. Hotchkiss A. Jackson G. Sullivan

Proper Officer: Mike McDonald

IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors: A. Hall J. Morris M. Ridgway Public: 0 x Members of the Public

The meeting was opened at 7.00pm by Committee Chairman, Cllr Jackson

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Lea for this meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of Councillors' Disclosure of Ordinary or Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in relation to the agenda items in this meeting were received.

3. Minutes

After a proposal by Cllr Sullivan, seconded by Cllr Hotchkiss, the minutes of the Parks & Public Realm Committee Meeting held on 5th June 2024 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record of that meeting.

4. Public Participation

It was resolved that Standing Orders were suspended (Proposed Cllr Sullivan, seconded Cllr Hotchkiss – all in favour), whilst members of the public were invited to make representations, ask questions, and give evidence in respect of business being transacted at the meeting and about any other matter for which the Council has a responsibility.

Cllr Hall mentioned a suggestion regarding 'poo bag' dispensers in open areas maintained by WTC. The Proper Officer confirmed that these were under consideration and a 'trial' would be instigated soon, mindful of any financial / other risks. The Proper Officer also noted that this is aligned to Shropshire Council 'Public Space Protection Order' signage to be installed within identified open areas.

There being no further items, Standing Orders were reinstated. Proposed Cllr Jackson, seconded Cllr Sullivan – all in favour

5. Action Point Update

The Committee discussed a verbal update from the Proper Officer on actions from previous meetings:

a. Town Signage Review **WTC/PPR/16/2223 – IN PROGRESS**

The Proper Officer will arrange a meeting as soon as practicable to progress discussions, which will include Cllrs Jackson and Sullivan (as Committee representatives) and external parties previously involved in the Working Group, bearing in mind their legitimacy to represent any third party organisations / groups.

b. Japanese Knotweed (Jubilee Park) – **EXTERNAL ACTION IN PROGRESS**

The Committee noted that a treatment schedule was in progress (third party responsibility) and appropriate contact had been made / maintained by the Proper Officer with property owners responsible for any outbreak. Action now complete from a Committee perspective.

6. Advisory Group Updates

In the absence of Cllr Lea (Cemetery Advisory Group representative), it was agreed to carry the item over to the next Committee Meeting for appropriate update/s.

7. Biodiversity-aligned Activity – 2025/26 Season

Following consideration, it was **unanimously resolved** that several potential areas in Jubilee Park and Whitchurch Cemetery which could be planted with a bee/bird-friendly wildflower mix in the forthcoming season, in addition to those already contributing to the Council's biodiversity aims. The Proper Officer will work with the Parks & Public Realm team to progress, operationally, with some areas identified and noted separately by the Proper Officer. Proposed Cllr Sullivan, seconded Cllr De-Wyrall. **WTC/PPR/03/2425**

8. RoSPA Inspections 2024 / HSE Inspection

The Committee received and noted:

- a. The "Action Tracker" including identified areas for maintenance, following recent RoSPA Inspections and Reports. This tracker identifies areas by 'risk' and will be used as a future reporting tool, operationally. Replacement, rather than repair, of Jubilee Park outdoor gym equipment was particularly highlighted, when necessary.
- b. The Proper Officer updated the Committee on a recent Health & Safety Executive inspection of Jubilee Park storage area, with relevance to storage and use of pesticides and related products. Minor actions were identified and being progressed to ensure on-going compliance.

9. Britain in Bloom 2025

The Committee congratulated the "We Are Whitchurch" Voluntary Group for their recent success in the "It's Your Neighbourhood" category of the Britain in Bloom initiative. It was noted that the Proper Officer intends to progress a "Town in Bloom" application in 2025, working alongside a member of the voluntary group, who has kindly offered to assist. The Proper Officer will progress and report accordingly.

10. CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

*Following a proposal from Cllr Jackson, seconded by Cllr Hotchkiss, it was **RESOLVED** that under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded for the remainder of the meeting because of the likely disclosure of private and confidential information or staff matters.*

11. Confidential Action Point Update

The Committee discussed a verbal update from the Proper Officer on actions from previous meetings:

- a. Shropshire Council – Capital Asset Transfer – **IN PROGRESS**
A progress report was delivered by the Proper Officer, separately noted.

12. Unmetered Streetlight Electricity Supply (March 2025)

The Committee received an update from the Proper Officer and noted actions which may inform considerations during the preparation of the forthcoming Budget (2025/26).

13. “Back to Basics” Investment Programme (Full Council – WTC/FC/46(c)/2324)

A brief verbal update on final stages was given by the Proper Officer, alongside an overview of actions completed. It was noted that the programme had proved to be successful and will improve future service delivery. Final consultant actions were in progress and will be reported to Committee when complete.

14. Budget 2025/26 Pre-discussion

The Committee discussed preparatory actions to ensure efficient consideration of plans and budget preparation at its November meeting. This included any increase in operational budget lines necessary to deliver revised service aspirations in the Parks & Open Spaces during 2025/26, together with specific projects which would be considered for the use of WTC Reserves or other funds.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.10pm

Signed as a true record of the meeting:

Chair: _____

Date: _____