



whitchurch town council

MINUTES: PARK & PUBLIC REALM COMMITTEE MEETING, 5TH MARCH 2025

MINUTES - PARKS & PUBLIC REALM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 5TH MARCH 2025

PRESENT

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

Proper Officer: Mike McDonald

IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors: J. Morris

Public: 2 x Members of the Public

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

1. Apologies

No Apologies were received from Councillors 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. It was the view of the PO/RFO that agenda item 7 sat under delegated powers, to be discussed in the meeting as scheduled.

3. Minutes

After a proposal by Cllr Sullivan, seconded by Cllr De-Wyrall, the minutes of the Parks & Public Realm Committee Meeting held on 8th January 2025 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 Jackson, 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.

MoP1 - Wished to compliment WTC and its staff team for the upkeep of public spaces, primarily Jubilee Park.

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

5. Action Point Update

The Committee discussed tabled and verbal updates from the Proper Officer on actions from previous meetings:

- a. Town Signage Review and Actions **WTC/PPR/16/2223** – it was noted that Working Group meetings will recommence as appropriate, followed by Committee / Full Council reports and proposals where necessary (based on provisions in the WTC Scheme of Delegation, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations). This would likely be at the start of the new Civic Year.
- b. Britain in Bloom – it was noted that the item was in progress; the Proper Officer applied on 2nd February 2025 (acknowledgement awaited). The PO had engaged externally regarding upcoming processes and, following the Full Council meeting of 19th February 2025 (item 8 – WTC/FC/33/24215), Cllrs De-Wyrall and Hotchkiss would be assisting with the preparations required for any assessor visit (including Portfolio, Presentation, Tour etc).
- c. Shropshire Council PSPO Signage Installation – it was noted that delivery of Shropshire Council signage was still awaited, to be installed by the Facilities Team, when received, to expedite matters. Last chased by PO on 19th February 2025 – no response.
- d. Anti-social Driving (ASD) – it was noted that external action continues. The Committee further noted that a ‘Policing Panel’ update meeting has been requested, which includes ASD as a “top 3” policing priority (alongside “drugs” and “anti-social behaviour”); following the Full Council Meeting of 19th February 2025, the PO will ask for “Anti-Social Parking” to be considered (acknowledging current limited powers of enforcement, but noting comments in Shropshire Council’s Council Meeting [Cllr Dan Morris – 27th February 2025] and anticipated legislative changes).

6. Advisory Group Updates

Cllr Lea (Cemetery Advisory Group representative) noted positive public comments regarding the upkeep of the Cemetery. The Proper Officer will continue appropriate engagement with Marbury & District Parish Council to update on any Cemetery matters (last update 15th January 2025). The Proper Officer undertook to review previous actions in relation to breaches of Cemetery Regulations and pursue as appropriate with grave owners (previously minuted). Suitable ‘public messaging’ relating to the enforcement of Cemetery Regulations to be progressed concurrently.

7. Jubilee Park – Support of “We Are Whitchurch” / WTC Composting Initiative

Following consideration, it was **unanimously resolved** that the Proper Officer exercises delegated powers to approve the works to install composting solutions within the Jubilee Park Compound Area (indicative cost c. £410 net, which could be found ‘in budget’). Following a recommendation by the Proper Officer/RFO, it was agreed that the purpose of the agenda item was to review the rationale for the scheme, with alignment to WTC Climate Change and Biodiversity obligations (WTC/FC/33/2324 – 20/12/23 and WTC/FC/20/2425 – 17/7/24), which was positively considered. Proposed Cllr Hotchkiss, seconded Cllr Sullivan. **WTC/PPR/06/2425**

8. CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

*Following a proposal from Cllr Jackson, seconded by Cllr Sullivan, 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. At the Chair’s discretion, non-WTC PPR Committee Members were allowed to remain for the Confidential Business session of the meeting.*

9. Confidential Action Point Update

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

- a. Shropshire Council – Capital Asset Transfer (**CONTRACTUAL / LEGAL**) – **IN PROGRESS**
Completion of Shropshire Council undertakings were still awaited, having been chased via Shropshire Council officers responsible for progressing the matter.

10. Criminal Damage (LEGAL)

The Proper Officer appraised the Committee regarding ongoing police investigations into recent incidents and pro-active steps to hold individuals to account for the damage/s incurred. Further updates will be given as appropriate.

11. Jubilee Park Drainage Solution (Lower Park) (CONTRACTUAL)

With quotations awaited, the Committee favourably considered a proposed scheme, previously circulated (with some minor amendments, separately noted and to be addressed with potential contractors). The matter will be referred to the next Full Council for decision, subject to receipt of quotations and any amendments.

12. Periodic Reminder of Governance Arrangements (LEGAL/GOVERNANCE)

The Committee noted, as a periodic reminder:

Standing Orders 2024/25 (WTC/FC/ACM/09/2425), 15/5/24, Section 25 (aligned to Councillor Code of Conduct 2024/25 (WTC/FC/ACM/09/2425), 15/5/24:

- “a. Unless duly authorised no councillor shall:*
- i. inspect any land and/or premises which the Council has a right or duty to inspect; or*
- ii. issue orders, instructions or directions.*
- iii. issue or make statements to the press or media (including social media) unless authorised to do so by the council or the relevant committee or sub-committee.”*

Full Council Resolution, WTC/FC/35/2223 (20/10/22), extract:

“After consideration it was unanimously resolved that, in principle, work by Voluntary Groups was acceptable [sic. In Harry Richard’s Memorial Garden] under the operational control of the Proper Officer and Facilities Manager, with reference to the Parks & Public Realm Committee for specific undertakings, particularly large scale/structural matters.”

Members were further reminded about the obligations in respect of the “Pre-Election Period of Sensitivity” (formerly ‘purdah’) commencing on 10th March 2025 (Full Council, 19th February 2025 refers)

Additional actions (outside the scope of this meeting) were separately noted by the Proper Officer, to be referred to in-house teams / contractors, appropriately.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.45pm

Signed as a true record of the meeting:

Chair: _____

Date: _____