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**Minutes of meeting**

**MEETING:** Services Committee

**DATE & TIME**: Wednesday 27 January 2021 at 7.00pm

**PLACE:** Zoom

**Councillors**

**Present:**

Cllr David Northam (C) Cllr Kevin Brookes (VC) Cllr Alex Fuhrmann

Cllr David Harris Cllr Gill Taylor Cllr Mark Tewkesbury

Cllr Graham Lambert Cllr Ryan Hope Cllr Tia Roos

Cllr Ken Whatley Cllr Christine James Cllr Jan Bergman

**Officers**

Matt Ryan (Deputy Town Clerk)

Tara Williams (Parks and Open Spaces Manager)

Tony Hurley (Operations Manager)

Ben Heath (Project Officer)

Rosie Osborne (Corporate Project Officer)

Niki Ayles (Democratic & Administration Officer)

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| S0113 | **Welcome by the Chair**  Cllr Northam welcomed attendees to the meeting. |
| S0114 | **Apologies for Absence**  There were no apologies for absence. |
| S0115 | **Declarations of Interest**  There were no declarations of interest. |
| S0116 | **Minutes of the last meeting**  **Resolved:**  Councillors agreed unanimously that the minutes of the last meeting held on Wednesday 2 December 2020 were a correct record. The minutes will be signed at the first opportunity the Committee has to meet face to face. |
| S0117 | **Councillors Questions**  Cllr Hope reminded Members that at a previous meeting of the Services Committee, the possibility of the transfer of assets from DC with regards to street furniture was discussed, and Members had requested further information. Cllr Hope asked whether there was any further information as there have been several instances of benches and bins not being maintained by DC. These are a great asset, especially at the moment when people are using the outdoors more.  Tony Hurley responded that it has been agreed with Dorset Council that WTC will take on all the benches and bike stands in the public realm owned by Dorset Council across the town council area, even though there is no definitive schedule of their location or condition. However, Officers believe they have a reasonable understanding of the numbers in the town centre, which is where the majority are. Dorset Council are in the process are drafting a legal agreement for WTC to consider.  This will also include the Westham Bridge bike shelter.  With regard to the bike shelter, Officers are reviewing its condition and getting an estimate for the cost of repairs. DC will then be expected to cover these costs. DC has also provided WTC with information on who has paid for an access fob and those that are on the waiting list. There is a need, therefore, to ensure that Dorset Council informs all those on both lists as to the changes in management and then WTC will establish its own management system.  When the Council’s new Maintenance Officer starts in post on 1st March they will be able to begin a programme of inspections and maintenance of the benches, with the support of the Town Centre Manager.  Tony Hurley explained that DC have a programme of asking town and parish councils to take on responsibility for street furniture as they do not have a policy to replace them if they are damaged or become out of use.  Cllr Hope felt that a lot of work will need to be done and that WTC should have a policy in place ready for when WTC takes on the responsibility of the benches and bike stands.  Cllr Brookes reminded Members that there are benches in outlying wards, and he is unsure whether the outer wards are included in the Town Centre Manager’s remit.  Cllr Fuhrmann requested that Members be notified of the number of benches and bike shelters/stands WTC will be taking on. |
| S0118 | **Public Comments and Questions**  There were no public questions and no members of the public were present. |
| S0119  S0120 | **Tumbledown Business Plan 2021 - 2026**  Clive Tuck, Weymouth Area Development Trust (WADT), along with Cllr Jon Orrell and Cllr David Gray, presented the Business Plan which was circulated to Members prior to the meeting.  It was acknowledged that, due to Covid-19, it has not been possible to have volunteers working on the land as much as had been hoped.  The Tumbledown Project Team hope to take the Business Plan to other funding bodies but are seeking the views and approval of Members.  Cllr Gray highlighted that being in a partnership with WADT, which is a Community Interest Company (CIC), enables the project to apply for grants that WTC may not otherwise be able to apply for. The project has been successful in obtaining a couple of small grants but will be applying for larger ones.  Members spoke in favour of supporting the Tumbledown Business Plan. In response to questions Clive Tuck reported that the project team were working closely with Dorset Council; an Away Day had been held involving Dorset Council Adult Services bringing on site vulnerable adults to assist in the ground preparation. In addition, a volunteer day had been held to prepare planting beds and formal works had been carried out on renovating a building to provide shelter, warmth and hot drink to support future groups coming on site, hopefully from March/April depending on COVID-19 constraints.  Members had no comments to make regarding the Business Plan and fully supported the project.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Tewkesbury Seconder: Cllr Hope  Members voted unanimously in favour to:  a) Agree any comments on the plan.  b) Recommend the plan to Full Council for adoption, subject to any comments from Finance and Governance.  **Carbon Footprint – decarbonisation briefing and draft action plan**  Cllr Harris and Cllr Lambert introduced the item as detailed in the agenda documentation.  Cllr Harris reminded Members that WTC had committed to signing up for the Climate and Ecological Emergency and an immediate action was to allocate £15k to the Carbon Trust for them to present a report on WTC’s contribution to carbon production. The Carbon Trust’s final conclusions are summed up in the appendices circulated with the agenda, and WTC has a major task ahead to reduce its carbon footprint.  Cllr Harris highlighted that the report is asking Committee members to re-confirm the Council’s determination to tackle the climate and ecological emergency, and support development of the action plan. Once completed, the action plan will be taken to Full Council for approval in order that they can determine the priorities in that plan. The Committee is also being asked to recommend a future increase of £50k to the Green and Clean operational budget in order that when the action plan is agreed, the Green and Clean Group can get on with delivering what has been approved by Full Council.  Cllr Hope asked whether the requested £50k to the Green and Clean operational budget would be a one-off or whether an additional £50k per year was being requested. He added that he would like to see an action plan about where funds are going and how quickly it will reduce the Council’s carbon footprint before additional funding is allocated. If the Council’s carbon footprint could be reduced quickly then he would not mind allocating more funds in that time.  Cllr Harris explained that when money is put in to reserves it is then more difficult to bring it out of reserves at the right time. The money will not be spent until the Green and Clean has a full plan, which it hopes to have shortly. The recommendation is to take it to Full Council and inform them that they will be presented with an action plan on which they have to prioritise and make decisions. The additional funding being requested is to ensure that the Green and Clean Group has some money to get started.  Cllr Taylor highlighted that WTC’s pension funds are invested by DC but, at some point, there will be a legal obligation to reduce the carbon footprint of pension funds. Cllr Taylor asked whether any thought has been given to these requirements.  Cllr Lambert responded that pension fund issues are not currently being considered.  *Cllr James left the meeting briefly during this item.*  Cllr Brookes thought that DC must be going through a similar process and asked whether WTC has been speaking to them in order that WTC’s plan complements DC’s plan. Cllr Harris responded that conversations have been started with senior officers at DC in order that when they are working on their ideas, they are aware of WTC’s needs and the size of the issue.  Cllr Hope requested that recommendations A and B be taken together, followed by recommendation C.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr James Seconder: Cllr Harris  Members voted unanimously in favour to:   1. Agree to support the developing Decarbonisation Action Plan and the mitigation actions within it required to reduce the Councils Carbon Footprint. 2. recommend the adoption of the Decarbonisation Action Plan to Full Council.   Cllr Hope proposed an amendment to recommendation C as follows:  “The operational budget of the Green and Clean Group is amended to reflect the requirements to achieve quick wins within the carbon emissions reduction plan once received.”  This was seconded by Cllr Bergman.  Cllr Hope later withdrew this amendment once Matt Ryan had explained that any quick wins and officer capacity has been reviewed, and the quick wins for the Council are around Solar PV and LED lighting. The £50k would go towards those quick wins in 2021-22.  Members then voted on the original recommendation C.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr James Seconder: Cllr Lambert  Members voted unanimously in favour to:   1. recommends a future increase of £50,000 of the Clean and Green operational budget to Finance & Governance Committee to progress decarbonisation mitigation actions set out in the action plan and subject to future PID’s. |
| S0121 | **Mural Trail Project Plan**  Tony Hurley and Ben Heath introduced the item as detailed in the agenda documentation.  Ben Heath confirmed that the work would not be started unless WTC was confident that all funding was in place.  Cllr Northam requested that Officers continue to apply for grants in order to offset the Council budget. In addition, the successful awarding of grants will endorse the project.  Ben Heath confirmed that a funding application has been made to Dorset Council, with a panel meeting being held on 24th February. However, no other funding applications have been made as yet as it was unknown whether the project was to be taken forward. If the project is felt to be a good idea by Members then other applications will be made and Officers will work with the Arts Council in order to submit a strong bid.  Cllr Taylor was concerned about WTC paying private building owners to put murals on their walls, in case the owner does not like the mural and decides to paint over it, and she has reservations about spending public money in that way. Cllr Taylor felt that there would need to be a lease agreement with the building owner, effectively leasing a wall from them.  Ben Heath responded that WTC’s priority would be to have murals on its own buildings, followed by other public buildings where an agreement would be easy. As a last resort, the Council would have an agreement in place with private building owners.  Cllr Northam requested that the project plan include seeking potential sponsorship from local businesses to sponsor a work of art.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Hope Seconder: Cllr Whatley  Members voted unanimously in favour to:   1. agree to support the Weymouth Mural Trail project as set out in Appendices E & F and recommend to Full Council that it is included in the Council’s development action plan; 2. request that funding of up to £30,000 be considered for allocation to the project by both the Finance & Governance Committee and Full Council when considering the council’s 2020-21 end of year financial position and allocations to earmarked reserves; 3. that, subject to the Full Council agreeing to include the project in the Council’s development action plan, officers are instructed to pursue opportunities for external funding and thereby help to reduce the council’s financial contribution to the project. |
| S0122 | **Cleansing and Waste Contract Review**  Matt Ryan introduced the item as detailed in the agenda documentation.  Cllr James nominated herself to be part of a member led review of the Town Council’s Cleansing and Waste contracts. This was seconded by Cllr Fuhrmann.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr James Seconder: Cllr Fuhrmann  Members voted unanimously in favour of nominating Cllr James to be part of the review of the Council’s waste and cleansing contract requirements. |
| S0123 | **Project Initiation Document – Tourist Information**  Cllr Hope introduced the item as detailed in the agenda documentation.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Fuhrmann Seconder: Cllr Whatley  Members voted unanimously in favour to agree to the production of a Project Plan to explore options for the delivery of a Weymouth Tourist Information Centre. |
| S0124 | **Information Items**  **Radipole Park Project Update:**  Rosie Osborne provided a verbal update.  The project board continues to hold monthly meetings via Zoom and has been coming up with creative ways to keep people involved. A video of the project has been produced to send out to groups who may be shielding and a local school is taking part in an art project to hang wooden hearts in the park for visitors to spot. Bird boxes are to be put up along with cameras to pick up any wildlife in the park. The website upgrade will be brought forward. The website will be easier to navigate and people will be able to see the project being carried out. The website launch is due to take place in the next couple of months. Quotes have been received for a Project Manager and an offer has been made. Provided there are no delays, construction should start in the latter part of 2021, with completion expected in Spring 2022.  **Services Updates:**  Tony Hurley provided the following verbal update:  During the current Covid-19 restrictions, the Operations team is working to provide as many services as possible whilst ensuring customer and staff safety.  All the public toilets are open as normal and being maintained by the Cleansing team.  The Beach Management team is currently operating in ‘winter mode’ and mainly working from home – although essential maintenance work is being undertaken in preparation for the forthcoming holiday season.  The Contracts & Facilities Officer is working both to mobilise the new catering service and supervise a contract for a comprehensive survey of council property assets.  All other Operations team staff members are mainly working from home but developing projects for future implementation.   For example, the Events team are working on contracts for firework displays, and will be consulting with TEAF on this, and will have an input into arts projects along with the implementation of the events programme for 2021.  The Town Centre Manager is working on new pedestrian signage in the Swannery area and urban realm improvements.  Matt Ryan shared the following update regarding Parks and Open Spaces:  It is business as usual for the parks team in the main, although staffing levels are reduced as a result of shielding or testing for Covid 19. There are a couple of staff bubbles but, generally, the Parks staff are working in isolation of one another and there is no vehicle or mess facility sharing.  All play areas remain open and are inspected weekly, the equipment is being cleaned as part of the inspection process. There are clear signs on entrances to the play areas reminding people to keep their distance, wash their hands, etc. Outdoor gym equipment and all ball courts have been closed. People continue to disregard the rules and remove the tape to use the equipment. The equipment is being re-taped once a week.  There are still restrictions in place regarding numbers of mourners who can attend burials, currently 30 people at Melcombe and Weymouth Cemeteries and 20 at Wyke Cemetery.  Since April 2019, the Crematorium has provided an administrative Bereavement Service function on behalf of Weymouth Town Council in relation to burials. It is anticipated that by the end of February, if the IT data transfer has been successful, the Parks team will provide a full Bereavement Service dealing directly with the Funeral Directors and the bereaved.  A boundary wall at Rodwell allotments had to be removed urgently at the beginning of the new year as it was out of plumb and showed large cracks and was a potential danger to the public. The wall has been replaced with closed board fencing so that the trees could be retained.  Sandsfoot Castle has been closed off to the public. Yesterday, Dorset Council officers met with Historic England’s structural engineer to assess the situation. It is thought that movement in the seaward wall may have caused cracks to appear, making the structure unsafe. A drone survey is likely to be carried out to get a closer view of the seaward elevation. There will be emergency works to repair the cracks, however, the castle will remain closed for some time.  The Parks team will be planting 411 trees by the end of February. 320 trees will create a woodland copse at Links Road and the remainder are replacement trees to be planted across various open spaces. A majority of the trees are native species.  13 Raywood Ash trees have been felled in Weymouth Cemetery and the roots will be stump ground out later this week. Hornbeams have been planted as replacements.  Some yellow rattle has been sown in the wildflower area at Lodmoor and 60 wildflower plugs have been planted at Newton’s cove. In addition, 4000 crocus and 500 daffodils have also been planted at the Nothe Gardens.  In Radipole Park and Gardens, the gardener and Horticultural Apprentice have been looking at opportunities to improve the gardens using existing resources by taking cuttings, dividing plants or using surplus stock. Dogwood saplings grown at the nursery from cuttings have been planted, along with transplanted cyclamen and campions from other gardens. 3 plants were also donated by members of the public.  Winter annual bedding has been planted at Sandsfoot and Greenhill Gardens. Previously Primulas were purchased annually but, for the first time last year, our Nursery Propagator purchased a different species of Primula, which were returned to the nursery after being bedded out. The 250 plants were split producing 800 Primulas that have been planted at Greenhill and a further 150 went to Radipole. The plants will be returned to the nursery after bedding out this winter and will be split to produce yet more plants for next year.  The Parks team has put up signage at the entrances of its sites in relation to the Dorset Council Dog Related Public Spaces Protection Order 2020. Unfortunately, the foamex signs provided by Dorset Council are being ripped down so the Parks team is looking at a variety of signage options that will be more permanent and help raise awareness of where dogs should be on or off leads in the town council’s open spaces.  A Parks Newsletter has been produced and displayed in the parks and gardens noticeboards and on the website. The newsletter is keeping people updated on some of the winter work that is taking place across open spaces and provides information relating to the new dog PSPOs.  In line with the newsletter, a Parks Consultation Survey is now active and residents will be able to follow the link on the newsletter or the website to complete the survey.  Hedges are being cut, fences are being repaired, litter bins are being cleaned and some seat maintenance is underway but, due to reduced staffing levels, it will not be possible to carry out as much of this work as in normal years.  Cllr Fuhrmann noted that there was no update regarding the Events Team and asked what work they are currently undertaking as Covid has prevented events from taking place. Cllr Fuhrmann also asked whether options such as furlough or taking on different job roles had been considered.  Tony Hurley responded that the Events Team are planning for events for this year, as per the Events Programme, which will be kept under scrutiny. In addition, the Events Manager has been asked to take on some of the art project work as it progresses. The team are also looking at community events which is a strong aspect of the Events Policy, and will be meeting with Julie Hursthouse to talk about how preparations can be made for community events.  Cllr Northam requested that Tony Hurley provide an update regarding the current work of the Events Team at the next Services Committee meeting.  **Scrutiny Function:**  Cllr Northam reported that Officers are going to put together a Scrutiny procedure where Members can explore areas to scrutinise, and requested that Members think about any areas they may wish to explore.  Members noted the information items.  The meeting closed at 8.53 pm. |