

DARTMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARKS AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE HELD IN THE
COUNCIL CHAMBER OF DARTMOUTH GUILDHALL ON TUESDAY 30TH OCTOBER 2018

PRESENT: Cllrs: M Baillie; G Coles (Vice Chairman);
R Cooke (Chairman); A Fyson; T de Galleani;
R. Lyon (The Mayor); F Pritchard-Tagg (Deputy Mayor) R
Springett; S Thomson

IN ATTENDANCE: Cllr: F Hawke; Town Clerk: C Pritchard-Williams;
Town Groundsman: Rob Harkness; Properties Administrator;
Hannah Williams; two representatives from Dartmouth Green
Partnerships (DGP); one representative from the Dartmouth Gig
Club and one member of the public.

19. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr: Allen

20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none

21. GROUNDSMAN'S REPORT

The Groundsman gave a verbal report about what the gardening team have been doing:

- They have planted around 10,000 plants in the last week (5,000 bulbs and 5,000 plants)
- They are currently concentrating on trying to cut the hedges back
- They will then be spending some time out at the Castle
- They would like to spend some time out at Longcross cemetery and to concentrate on getting it up to standard before Remembrance Sunday
- They would also like to do some work in RAG similarly before Remembrance Sunday.

All of this will probably take them up to Christmas and then after Christmas they will start preparing for next spring and for Britain in Bloom

Cllr Thomson said she thought they were doing an excellent job.

Cllr Hawke entered the room

22. STREET FURNITURE (Benches / Memorial Trees / Bins)

- Plastic v refurb of wooden bench
Cllr Cooke said the office are in possession of a couple of spreadsheets, but we needed a map of where all the benches were in town as well as identifying each bench with a number, the location and the state it is in etc... The Groundsman suggested from an audit perspective, we could identify them with tags and the committee thought this was a good idea.

Cllr Fyson spoke about a bench that had been stolen from Smith Street and had appeared for sale in a junk shop. There was a discussion as to who it belongs to.

The office would action this.

23. SIGNAGE (across all open spaces)

The Chairman spoke about the current signage in the town and that we should replace them to identify DTC as the owners instead of SHDC.

The Chairman said that this needed to be surveyed and recorded as well.

This would be actioned shortly.

A question was raised about the signage on litter bins and the Chair said that SHDC currently empty the bins still in exchange for some GM work.

DGP representative spoke about how the Council needed a corporate look and then the education boards can be designed, there are also grants available for this.

24. THE ORCHARD

The Chairman of the Friends of the Orchard committee, Peter Shaw gave a verbal report.

He praised our Groundsman for the very good relationship between DTC and the Friends of the Orchard and the work he's done in the Orchard which has really made a difference.

He talked about:

- The trees that had been recently donated and planted.
- The recent events in the Orchard using produce, one was a youth day which attracted a lot of new members, and another was the apple pressing day which produced 150 litres of juice.
- Groundsman had been tackling a particular plant that was getting out of control

The Mayor said that the event was very good but it was a shame about the weather.

Peter Shaw said that they were unsuccessful with a recent grant for work on re-surfacing a path in the Orchard and that they would be looking to the Council to help with this work, this would be around £4,000 or with voluntary labour around £2,000.

The Chair asked him to bring a costed proposal to the Finance Committee.

Cllr Springett said there may be an opportunity to fundraise for this or they could open a just giving account or approach businesses in the town.

25. ROYAL AVENUE GARDEN

- Rules and regulations for the hire of gardens
DTC Receptionist has drawn up rules and regulations for the hire of Royal Avenue Gardens and these were circulated to all Cllrs, the Clerk said that these were to be taken home and read and that any comments and feedback should be brought back to the office.

26. CORONATION PARK

- Dinghy Park – These prices were agreed at the October Finance Committee meeting.
- Putting Green area (update)

The Groundsman reported that the grass has now been cut and it is looking a lot tidier now.

There was a general discussion about what the old putting green site would be used for and suggestions were either a trailer park for people to keep their trailers in whilst their boats were on the water, or a crazy golf.

There was no resolution to this and it would need to be discussed further.

A Member of the gig club was invited to speak and asked if the height of the bushes as you leave the park onto the slip by the higher ferry could be trimmed down, she felt it was making it dangerous to move your boat from the park to the slipway.

The Groundsman said he would look into this.

She also said that they would be willing to work with the Town Council to assist with a better solution for the dinghy park ground as it gets churned up when the gigs are moved in and out.

There was a general discussion about the dinghy park and it was suggested that the layout could do with tidying up. The Groundsman said he would add this to his itinerary.

The wooden posts were generally thought of as not very useful.

There was no resolution to this and it would need to be discussed further.
- Rules and regulations for hire of Park

DTC Receptionist has drawn up rules and regulations for the hire of Coronation Park and these were circulated to all Cllrs, the Clerk said that these were to be taken home and read and that any comments and feedback should be brought back to the office.

27. CASTLE ESTATE

- Warfleet dinghy park – These prices were agreed at the October Finance Committee meeting.
- The Groundsman reported that he had met with a concerned gentleman out at the Castle Estate to discuss several issues that need addressing, in particular a few walls need fixing and there is valerian and old man's beard which is growing in some of the walls, this was all in hand.

A management plan would be drawn up

28. DEPOT

Installation of electricity at the depot

The Groundsman explained that they needed electricity inside their depot as at times it's too dark to work, Western Power have been approached and they can find the electricity nearest and take it from there.

The Council's usual electrician can also help with this issue and the office will continue to investigate this with the Groundsman and costs will be brought back to the Finance Committee.

29. ST SAVIOUR'S CHURCH GRAVEYARD

The Chairman spoke about how this was a closed churchyard and that the responsibility passed to the Town Council years ago.

The Groundsman said he had met with representatives of St Saviours Church.

Cllr de Galleani spoke about the need for trees inside the churchyard which would soak up the water, otherwise the walls are in danger.

The Groundsman said he had agreed the location of the three Washington Thorns which would be going in shortly.

Cllr Springett said that this would potentially be eligible for money from the Dartmouth Trust.

30. LONGCROSS CEMETERY

Natural burial ground (update)

Groundsman spoke about the work they had done, cut footpaths in it and cut back the bracken.

Cllr Springett said that the natural burial ground was now closed, and once the exclusive rights of burial had come to an end this would be brought back in line with the rest of the cemetery.

Cllr Springett also mentioned a plot in the cemetery that Dartmouth Town Council gave to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission at the end of the second world war, and in it were people who died at sea of British, Norwegian and Dutch nationalities, as well as at one-point French nationalities but these were later removed and re-located to France.

This bit of land is nothing to do with the Town Council and they have a contractor who cuts this, however there are also another 13 commonwealth war graves and 3 MOD graves and the Town Council has to maintain these.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission pay the Town Council £90 to maintain these graves.

31. PROJECTS

Speed signage

The Clerk said that now that we have a depot at the bottom of College Way she was looking at ways to reduce the speed of cars coming down to more in line with the speed limit of 30mph.

The Clerk reported that a representative from DCC said that from previous data taken outside the fire station entrance this would indicate that a VAS (vehicle activated sign) purchased by the Town Council would be supported by SCARF (speed compliance action review forum), especially because the Naval College had raised concerns outside their main entrance.

The Chairman thought that this was a good idea as the Council have a responsibility for the Council staff working down there and that we should go ahead and source costs for a standalone VAS sign.

Cllr Springett asked if the Clerk/Properties Administrator could ask DCC to put a concealed entrance sign up on the approach to the depot.

32. VERGES / STREET SPRAYING

The Groundsman said the first round of street spraying they've done was around 200km and they are trying to work with the street cleaner.

Cllr Fyson questioned who was responsible for the weed spraying up at Chapel Steps which were in a terrible state and could something be done about this.

Cllr de Galleani said she thought these belonged to DCC Highway.

The Groundsman spoke about the difference between spraying the weeds and then collecting the weeds/rubbish and both issues would need to be addressed.

The Clerk/Properties Administrator was asked to write to Highways to ask them to clear Chapel steps.

Cllr Thomson spoke about young offenders who once came to clear Brownstone Steps and could this be something that could happen again? A representative from DGP's said that they had worked with young offenders before to do a particular job but it's not done regularly which can be a problem, she also mentioned that the cadets from the Naval College have helped before and this could be an option.

Cllr Fyson spoke again about getting these steps cleared and the Chairman suggested a conversation between the Groundsman, the Clerk and himself to look into this.

33. HEALTH & SAFETY

Health & Safety Rules & Regulations

The Clerk has circulated a Staff Safety Policy for the Councillors to comment on.

The Chairman spoke about how this was a sensible policy to have in place and that he recommended this be adopted.

Proposed: Cllr Lyon

Seconded: Cllr Thomson

Resolution: That Council adopt this Staff Safety Policy immediately.

All Cllrs present at the meeting agreed.

34. BUDGET

The Chairman spoke about the budget and how we don't hypothecate with Council funds, our Finance Officer is keeping a separate ledger so that we can keep an eye on the Parks and Gardens budget.

The Chairman spoke about how the Council put the precept up by 60% two years ago to cover taking over the Parks and Gardens.

Cllr Springett spoke about hypothecating but added that if we raised money for the parks and gardens it needs to stay in this budget for future spends. Money put in the budget for vehicles or machinery should stay in that budget for no matter what. Cllr Springett also said that this Council should be looking very careful at every asset that we own from a Financial point of view.

The Chairman spoke about how the office is looking into the hire charges for the new assets, which will be agreed at either the Corporate Property or Finance Committee.

Cllr Cooke spoke about the issue with hiring out the parks and that we may need a policy in place for how often a park can be hired out for events or a private function which then renders it closed to the public.

The Mayor said we should look carefully at the rates we charge for hiring events and festivals because the costs that SHDC was charging do not cover the administration fees.

35. AOB

A representative for DGP spoke about the flower beds up in Townstal and how DGP have been volunteering to maintain these beds for some time but they have no control over them as they belong to SHDC.

There was a suggestion for us to ask SHDC to pay for us to manage these beds.

Meeting closed at 7.23pm

ACTIONS

- Clerk / Properties Administrator to source costs for a standalone VAS sign.
- Clerk/Properties Administrator to request that DCC put a concealed entrance sign up on the approach to the depot.
- Clerk/Properties Administrator was asked to write to Highways to ask them to clear Chapel steps.
- Clerk/Properties Administrator to find out who owns the missing bench from Smith Street.