

DARTMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PARKS AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER OF DARTMOUTH GUILDHALL ON WEDNESDAY 19TH JUNE 2019

PRESENT: Cllrs: N Bodinnar, T de Galleani, A Edsall, R Lyon, M Webber, D Wells
Cllrs: G Webb (The Mayor); S Hibbert (Deputy Mayor)

IN ATTENDANCE: Cllr Rendle; Williams; case Town Clerk: C Pritchard-Williams; Properties Administrator; Hannah Williams; Receptionist: Katie Brown
Town Groundsman: Rob Harkness; two representatives from Dartmouth Green Partnerships (DGP): Stevie Rogers & Kathy Stansfield; a representative from Friends of the Orchard: Peter Shaw; and 4 members of the public. three reps from the Gig Club

A G E N D A

The meeting started at 18.05

PART I - Open to the Public

The meeting started with a presentation from the Gig Club who were asking for permission to build a shelter to protect their boats.

They wanted to propose a shelter on Coronation Park.

The three wooden boats are worth £30,000 and they really need undercover storage.

Cllr Webb arrived at 18.15

Cllr Edsall clarified that it was permission to build a shed and not the funding for this.

The sizing of what was proposed was clarified as 12 x 12m proposed size, (office to clarify the sizing in relation to what space they currently have)

She added that they could accommodate a whaler boat as well for Regatta.

The Mayor Cllr G Webb then opened the meeting

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were none

2. TO ELECT A CHAIR FOR THE PARKS AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

The Mayor asked for nominations for Chair

Proposed: Cllr G Webb

Seconded: Cllr de Galleani

Resolution: That Cllr D Wells be elected Chair of the Parks and Open Spaces Committee for the ensuing year.

Cllr D Wells took the chair.

3. TO ELECT A VICE CHAIR FOR THE PARKS AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

Proposed: Cllr G Webb

Seconded: Cllr Hibbert

Resolution: That Cllr M Webber be elected Vice Chair of the Parks and Open Spaces Committee for the ensuing year.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr de Galleani declared a financial interest in the Market Square as a Market Trader

Cllr Wells declared a personal interest in the Old Dartmothians

5. CORRESPONDENCE (for noting only)

There was none

6. UPDATE FROM GROUNDSMAN

- **Groundsman's regular report**

The Groundsman gave a verbal report.

- RAG cutting grass every week, few weed problems – red clover
- One bed was destroyed over the music festival
- Planted new beds and planted camellias
- RAG replaced roses
- Rodent problem had abated but will continue to monitor.
- Major tree collapsed on Coronation Park next to the tennis courts
- Reseeding of grass at Coronation Park will cost around £4-5,000
- Work to be done on the tennis courts for moss
- Castle Estate, the grass is cut regular, spraying is taking place especially for Shakespeare week
- Lifting of the trees around the Boatfloat
- Planning for winter out at the castle
- BRNC cadets will be helping
- Ecological consultant to come in to assess Longcross Cemetery
- Replace the beds next to the Newcomen Engine House in RAG.
- Watering hanging baskets takes 16 hours a week

Questions – Cllr Edsall asked if it was possible to use volunteers to help with watering the plants during hot periods, and the groundsman said that the team could cope at the moment with one person doing this and added that volunteers were helpful but required training.

- **To discuss and approve the Tree Policy**

The tree policy had been circulated but not all Cllrs had looked at it, it was agreed to circulate again and to adopt this at Full Council.

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

- **To note that memorial benches will be discussed in the confidential section.**
- **To discuss the bins that were removed from Royal Avenue Gardens and approve a way forward**

The Groundsman said that he had removed them due to the amount of litter left by full bins which was attracting seagulls and rats. There was a discussion about this issue, and it was agreed to monitor it on a monthly basis through the summer and report back.

- **To discuss the provision of rubbish collection in the Market Square and approve a way forward.**

The Properties Administrator spoke about how the cafes have a trade waste collection and other peoples rubbish ends up being left by these bins. Councillors discussed the fact that holiday homes leave their commercial waste next to these bins and the Properties Administrator was asked if the holiday homes could be contacted to ensure they arrange their own commercial waste collection.

Cllr Lyon said that there used to be two bins in the market, and SHDC used to empty them but this stopped a couple of years ago.

The Properties Administrator was asked to contact SHDC and ask if the two bins from Royal Avenue Gardens could be placed in the Market Square instead and for SHDC to collect this rubbish.

Nathan left the meeting

- **To discuss the provision of drinking fountains in Coronation Park & Royal Avenue Gardens & Market Square**

Cllr de Galleani spoke about the idea for putting water fountains into our properties which would encourage people to bring their own drinking bottles. Cllr de Galleani said she would research costs, water supply & drainage.

Cllr Lyon said that Anchorstone had proposed to put one on the end of their building in Coronation Park.

8. ROYAL AVENUE GARDENS

- **To discuss the offer from the Old Dartmothians to renovate the archway and to approve a way forward**

Proposed: Cllr Lyon

Seconded: Cllr de Galleani

Resolved: To agree that the Old Dartmothians go ahead and renovate the archway in Royal Avenue Gardens.

Cllr Rendle said that this would take place after the South West Rowing Championships and before Food Festival in October.

- **To discuss the relocation of the Royal Naval Association Stone to approve a way forward**

Cllr Lyon spoke about a new area that had been identified to place the stone, which is still near to the greenhouse site but in a better location in the flower beds and opposite the embankment.

Proposed: Cllr Edsall

Seconded: Cllr Lyon

Resolved: To agree to move the Royal Naval Association Stone to the agreed identified site.

9. CORONATION PARK

- **To update on the new public slipway**

Cllr Edsall said he'd had a conversation with Harbour Master about this, they were not looking for funding, but that they were looking for more facilities such as trailer parking.

It was agreed to invite the Harbour Master to come and give a presentation to the next Parks and Open Spaces Committee meeting.

Cllr Lyon spoke about how a number of the clubs were backing this plan for a bigger slipway.

The Receptionist showed a plan she had been working on for trailers in the old Pitch and Putt site on Coronation Park.

Cllr Lyon also spoke about the area that the Town Council had at Jawbones that could possibly be used for a trailer park.

Cllrs said that if trailers were to be placed on the old Pitch and Putt site, it should be for short term boat storage only.

The Chairman said this would be moved to the next meeting because further research needed to be done.

Stevie Rogers from Dartmouth Green Partnerships asked the office to check the legal side of the use of Coronation Park, and the office will investigate.

- **To discuss the letter received about temporary boat / trailer storage and approve a way forward**

The Receptionist spoke about a complaint the Council had received about taking away the temporary dingy space in Coronation Park. It was generally thought that a temporary space was not a good idea due to the Council being unable to police it or check the user had insurance.

It was agreed to write back to the gentleman and say that we are looking into other temporary storage space for trailers.

- **To discuss the creation of a Town Council kayak rack and approve a way forward**

The Receptionist said about that there was currently a long waiting list of people wanting to keep their kayaks on the Dingy

Park in Coronation Park and that the Town Council could create a kayak rack which would allow more people to get out on the river.

A diagram was circulated and there was a discussion about placing this into a suitable space.

It was also mentioned that the office should ask SHDC if there are any restrictions on Coronation Park investigate the Act of Parliament

Proposed: Cllr Edsall

Seconded: Cllr Webber

Resolved: To move forward with this but to check if there were any restrictions on Coronation Park.

Seven Cllrs were in favour

One Cllr abstained

- **To discuss the idea of laying scalpings down in the Dingy Park to assist movement of boats and trailers (especially in wet weather)**

The Receptionist spoke about laying scalpings down and how this would make it easier to get boats in and out of the park in the winter without the need for cars to come into the Dinghy Park. Cllrs discussed how cars were being brought into the park in order to get the boats out during the winter months when the ground was boggy despite cars not being allowed access to the Dinghy Park.

Cllr Edsall had concerns about the visible aspect to the park.

Cllr Webb said there may be issues with health and safety if people slip.

It was agreed to investigate pricing and bring it back to the next Committee meeting

- **To discuss the possible planting of a tree for the Queen**

A tree had been planted for the Queen a number of years ago, but the tree had died, and the plaque had been removed. There was a conversation about the soil in Coronation Park, as some spots were reclaimed land from the river and were not suitable for trees

It was agreed to ask the Groundsman to identify a suitable spot for a tree for the Queen and to ask SHDC if we could have the plaque sent to DTC.

- **To discuss the possibility of an outside company/charity running a car boot**

Cllr Hibbert said rather than a car boot sale, this would be more like a fete or a town day.

Cllr de Galleani said that this would simply be an event hire and that anyone interested should go via the proper channels.

There was a conversation about the damage to the park if cars were allowed to park on it.

Cllr Williams asked about access to the park from the embankment for unloading and Cllr Edsall said that they would need a TTRO from SHDC.

- **To discuss a way forward for insuring courts are booked and paid for**

Cllr Edsall said that he wanted to bring up an issue that large numbers of people in the summer were using the tennis courts without paying and wanted to ask about ideas of a way to police this without a massive financial outlay.

It was agreed to investigate options and bring it back to another Committee meeting.

10. DEPOT

- **To discuss and agree the additional provision of storage at the depot (quote received from the previous supplier)**

Proposed: Cllr Edsall

Seconded: Cllr de Galleani

Resolved: To allow the Clerk, the Chair of Finance Committee and the Mayor to approve this as per Financial Regulations.

Cllr Hibbert left the meeting at 7.48

11. THE ORCHARD

- **Friends of the Orchard report**

The Friends of the Orchard report was circulated to Cllrs and will be Appendix A

- **To discuss the Commemorative Tree Policy and approve a way forward**

The Properties Administrator spoke about the tree memorial policy and it was agreed to circulate this and approve at the Full Council meeting on the 1st July.

Appendix B

12. THE CEMETERY

- To note that a viewing will be taking place of West Lodge

This item will be moved to Corporate Property

13. VERGES / STREET SPRAYING

- To clarify the position with street spraying in Dartmouth (DCC)

The Groundsman said that Devon County Council no longer spray in town to save costs and he explained that the responsibility for removing live weeds is DCC and the responsibility for removing dead weeds is SHDC.

He said that it would take 60 hours in total to do this, so the Council needed to think about this before agreeing to do it.

He said that the cost was around £500 each time for supplies and didn't include the time it took the team to carry out the work.

This would need to be done three times a year and the annual cost including labour would be around £5,000.

He said that the Grounds team use Roundup on weeds at the moment.

The Properties Administrator said that Honey Foskett from SHDC had said that we could write a joint letter to DCC to ask them to re-instate spraying in Dartmouth.

It was re-iterated that all complaints should be directed to DCC and people can report this themselves via our 'report it' button on our website.

<http://www.dartmouthtowncouncil.gov.uk/report-it/>

Recommend that we write a letter to DCC

Proposed: Rob Lyon

Seconded: G Wells

Resolved: To write a letter to Devon County Council in conjunction with SHDC and ask them to re-instate spraying the streets in Dartmouth as this cost is within the Council Tax.

14. BUDGET

- Update on budget

Cllrs were happy that there was sufficient budget available.

15. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

- Items for the Neighbourhood Plan from the Parks and Gardens.

16. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Proposed: Cllr Webb

Seconded: Cllr Lyon

Resolved: That in view of the confidential nature of business about to be transacted, it was in the public interest that the press and public be excluded and that they be instructed to withdraw.

PART 2 – Confidential

APPENDIX A

Friends of Dartmouth Community Orchard

Short Report to Dartmouth Town Council:

Mid February 2019 — Mid June 2019

1. The Orchard is a dynamic environment, constantly changing with the seasons, but it is in good health. From March, work was suspended (apart from the strimming described below) to minimise interference with breeding creatures. During May, it looked at its best with primrose, bluebell and ransom giving carpets of colour under the blossoming apple trees.
2. Rob Harkness (Town Groundsman) and his team have continued their programme of strimming the path edges and keeping the Ridge Hill entrance area cut as an open space. As a result, accessibility to the Orchard is good and it is used daily by dog walkers, others walking between Townstal and the town, and by those just wanting to sit and have quiet moments of reflection.
It is becoming increasingly clear just how important green spaces are for mental health. At the Dartmouth Together fair, various groups concerned with this approached the Friends' stall to discuss how the Orchard might be used more with their groups in this connection.
3. Going into the AGM on 19th March, it seemed uncertain whether the Friends would continue due to lack of nominations for the Committee. However, sufficient people did come forward and the group will continue. The uncertainties about the continuing existence of the group left too little lead-in time to organise a May Fun Day. It is hoped to reinstate this successful family event next year.
4. The Royal Horticultural Society provided the results of 10 tree samples we sent for identification, and as a result we have been able to give name labels to more trees. There are now 129 trees of 55 known varieties in the Orchard. It is vital that a rolling programme of planting new trees is maintained; planting memorial trees will help this. Approaches have been received already this year and will be followed up in line with the Council's policy (copy available on request). The optimal time for planting is December — February.
5. We have the offer of help from BRNC Officer Cadets during July and August as part of their outreach programme. It is hoped to use them for work keeping newly planted apple trees clear of weeds and surfacing the path and steps around the Eastern Paddock. This has been made possible by a generous donation from RGC of surfacing materials. Together with the voluntary labour of the cadets, this will enable the project to go forward with minimum cost to the Council.
6. Rob Harkness and Peter Shaw have revisited the Orchard Management Plan the Friends initiated some four years ago and will shortly be submitting a revised plan for the approval of the Council. It is hoped that this will be a useful template for management plans for other green spaces that the Council now has in its care. There is an interesting opportunity to carry the plan forward with the help of the Devon Wildlife Trust with a proposed joint scrub control working party in October / November.

Peter Shaw on behalf of the Committee
Friends of Dartmouth Community Orchard
17th June 2019

FOR APPROVAL AT FULL COUNCIL ON 1ST JULY 2019

Dartmouth Town Council
Draft
Tree Management Policy



Dartmouth Town Council Tree Management Policy

Introduction

Dartmouth's trees are of immense environmental and aesthetic value to the Town and its residents. They brighten up streets, provide a habitat for wildlife, act as the lungs and even help to reduce the rising temperatures caused by climate change.

Dartmouth Town Council recognises these benefits, seeking to preserve healthy trees and encourage the planting of new trees where possible and practical.

Whilst the majority live and grow without incident, a number of trees located in densely populated areas pose challenges and risks that need to be managed. This policy outlines how we intend to increase the number of trees in Dartmouth, how we will manage the tree stock effectively and reduce the risk that certain trees pose to the public.

The Town Council is responsible for over 1000 trees of varying ages, sizes and importance. These are principally positioned on land owned by the Town Council.

The Town Council intends to work closely with Town Tree Warden to help in implementing this policy

This tree policy does not cover trees in private ownership which are outside Dartmouth Town Council's control. Trees in private ownership are the responsibility of the private landowner. The policy also does not cover Tree Preservation Orders, Conservation Areas or high hedge legislation which is administered by South Hams District Council's Planning Department.

Aim of the Tree Management Plan (Tree Policy)

The overall aim of the tree policy is to ensure that Dartmouth's tree stock is retained, enhanced and increased in the most proactive manner whilst ensuring the health, safety and well being of the public and property.

Management of the Council's Trees

Dartmouth Town Council will undertake a rolling 3 year inspection programme of its trees. This information will be held on a database of trees and plotted on a mapping system. This inspection programme is designed to assess the trees condition and health. Whilst highlighting any work that may be required to ensure the tree is retained in the best possible condition.

If a tree is highlighted to be dead, dying, diseased or dangerous and is posing an unacceptable risk to public safety, it will be identified for felling. However dead trees that pose low risk will be left as habitat. The decision to prescribe work to a tree is calculated on a risk basis. Risk is calculated through the process of a visual tree assessment. An evaluation of the tree takes into account many factors including:

- Size
- Species
- Presence of structural decay or defects
- Relationship of any fungal infection relative to species
- Proximity to buildings, roads and footpaths

All these factors are considered in relation to the potential target, the damage that could be caused if the tree were to fail and the likelihood of it doing so. If defects are observed, further detailed examination may be carried out using an arboriculture consultant.

In conjunction with the inspection program, the Council will maintain a rolling maintenance program carrying out cyclical works and works highlighted by the inspection. This rolling program will reduce avoidable risks and issues, for example:

- Vehicle and pedestrian collision
- The removal of identifiable risks
- The removal or pruning of trees where its relationship to a property causes excessive problems.
- Obstructing of footpaths epicormic growth

Work will not be undertaken for the following reasons:

- Blocking light
- Television or satellite signals
- Residents do not 'like' the tree
- Leaf or fruit drop
- Unproven allegations of subsidence or direct damage
- Construction of dropped kerbs or new driveways
- Perceived threat
- The tree's size; 'its got too big'
- The tree 'moves in the wind'
- Bird droppings
- Aphids
- Individuals medical conditions

The above is not an exhaustive list but is representative of a large number of customer enquiries. Further to an inspection we may agree to undertake a variety of pruning operations to remedy complaints provided that the long-term health, appearance, potential development of the tree is not affected.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Town Groundsman is generally responsible for town council trees including general inspection and defect identification. Small or simple defects will be remedied by the Groundsman through the use of the in-house council team.

A consultant will be used when defects are identified in large or veteran trees the role of the consultant could be to carry out climbing inspections, prepare insurance reports etc.

Contractors will be used when works are of a technical nature or involve climbing.

Doing The Work Yourselfs

In common law, a property owner can cut back overhanging branches to the boundary of their property. DTC will usually have no objection to property owners carrying out this type of tree works or engaging a contractor at their own expense, providing:

- Access is not gained via Council land without written permission of the Town Council
- The tree is not situated within a Conservation Area or subject to a Tree Preservation Order

- That any work to the tree is not detrimental to its health or stability and is carried out in accordance with British Standard 3998: 2010 – Tree Works
- That the cut branches are disposed of in a responsible manner and not left on Town Council land and that no unauthorised damage to Council property occurs whilst the work is carried out.
- A description of the works to be carried out including a site-specific risk assessment is supplied to the council before any work is carried out.

Good arboricultural practice

As part of good arboricultural management, the removal of trees will be carried out if the removal will benefit the long-term development of adjacent better quality trees i.e. woodland and copse management. Furthermore, formative pruning may be carried out following inspection, for example:

- Removal of crossing, weak or competitive branches
- Crown balancing
- Dead wooding
- Crown lifting
- Crown thinning
- Pollarding

All waste from tree surgery will be recycled, being used in a variety of situations, including: mulches for shrub beds, firewood, habitat piles or dead standing timber where suitable, thereby avoiding the use of landfill sites.

The authority recognises the different levels of risk represented by a hazardous tree when it is located in different sites and will manage them in accordance with Department of Environment Research for Amenity Trees No. 7 'Principals of Tree Hazard Assessment and Management'

Higher levels of risk will be acceptable in locations where there is a lower footfall e.g. middle of a woodland area as apposed to a highway situation. This will allow the retention of veteran trees without undue risk whilst encouraging bio-diversity and habitat retention. When any works are recommended for trees within the Conservation area the Town Groundsman will liaise with South Hams Planning Department.

All works shall be carried out ensuring adherence to all wildlife and conservation laws including:

- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (amended 1996)
- Wildlife and Countryside (Amendment) Act 1999
- Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000
- Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1994 (amended 2010)
- European Habitats Directive 1992 (amended 2007)
- Biodiversity Act 2005 (amended 2008)

Veteran Trees

Across a number of sites managed by the town council we have a number of veteran trees these are defined as trees with an age depending upon their species and location, that may be several hundred years old. Smaller and shorter-lived tree species (such as orchard trees) may begin to develop some veteran features when only a few decades old. Size is usually used to define veteran trees.

Veteran trees often have features of particularly high nature conservation value, such as dead limbs, hollows, rot-holes, water pools, splits, loose bark, limbs reaching the ground, and epiphytic plants and lichens. Few of these features are found on younger trees, and they provide habitats for very many species of animals and fungi, some of which are rare. Such features are sometimes removed or damaged by pruning or other arboricultural practices.

The Town Council commits itself to undertaking annual surveying of trees falling within this definition and will undertake to preserve these trees for the future of the town.

Communicating with the public and members

The Council will inform Ward Councillors, Town Tree Warden and appropriate 'Friends Groups' of any major tree works such as pollarding or felling before any works are carried out in their ward/park. If there is a large number of trees to fell in one location the Council will also erect notices to inform the public of the proposed works.

In the event of emergency health and safety work that must be carried out immediately (e.g. storm conditions), the Town Groundsman will notify Ward Councillors and tree warden retrospectively.

Felling is the last resort and will only be carried out when deemed necessary by the Town Groundsman. However, public safety is paramount and for this reason the public will be informed of tree works, via Ward Councillors and notices, but will not be consulted for approval.

Subsidence

Subsidence is a complex interaction between the soil, building, climate and vegetation. All claims regarding subsidence will be referred to the Council's Insurer along with a brief report from the Council's appointed consultant. The report will highlight if the tree is the responsibility of the Council, the age, type, and condition of the trees and any other factors that may be of importance to the claim.

The insurers for the claimant or their consultants must provide evidence of ALL the following items before any works are carried out to Council owned trees.

- Physical damage
- Presence of live roots of a suitable species
- Seasonal movement or variation of the damage during different seasons. If the above evidence is provided, the Council will adhere to the advice supplied by insurers with regard to what, if any, works are required to the trees. If evidence is insufficient any claim will be dismissed.

Replacement Trees

Replanting

It is the Council's policy that every tree felled should be replaced to ensure that over the years the Town retains its tree stock for future generations, although it is recognised that it is not always practical or prudent to replace a tree in the same location or with the same

species that was previously planted. The Council will work proactively to manage or facilitate replacement tree planting, which may include but not be limited to, working with the community and friends groups, considering new planting schemes, including memorial trees, community woodlands and by encouraging funding from new developments for tree planting through the Neighbourhood Plan.

Consideration will be given to the choice of species in all planting schemes to ensure that we select the right plant right place approach, this will help reduce future maintenance costs.

All planting will be carried in accordance with BS8545:2014

All material will, where possible be locally sourced as this can affect the chances of the tree successfully establishing

Memorial Trees

The Town council receive a number of requests each year to allow the planting of memorial trees. The most popular site in the town for this request is Royal Avenue Gardens, over the years to many trees have been planted on this site which is now affecting how it can be managed as a formal gardens, for the near future the Town Council will not allow memorial trees to be planted on this site.

The town council will allow proposals for planting memorial trees on the following sites:-

- Castle Estate
- Community Orchard

A poor selection of tree species can cause serious problems and expense in the future. It is vitally important that the right species of tree is selected for each site, to this end we will have a list of appropriate trees

Castle Estate

Betulus (Birch)

Fagus Sylvatica (Beech)

Quercus Rubor

Community Orchard

Malus (spp) to be agreed (Apple)

This policy will be reviewed on a 5 yearly basis.