

Sawbridgeworth Town Council

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MAYOR
Cllr Dr John Stefan Burmicz
TOWN CLERK
Richard Bowran BSc.(Hons) PSLCC

To: Cllrs Burmicz, Coysten, Berendt Furnace, Gray, Jones and Royle

AMENITIES COMMITTEE

You are invited to attend a meeting of this committee which will take place on **Monday 14 October 2019** at 8.00pm after the meeting of the Planning Committee at Sayesbury Manor, Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth for the transaction of the following business.

Town Clerk
08 October 2019

AGENDA

- A19/13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
To receive any apologies for absence
- A19/14 PUBLIC FORUM**
To receive representations from members of the public on matters within the remit of the Amenities Committee.
- A19/15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
To receive any Declarations of Pecuniary Interest by Members
- A19/16 MINUTES**
To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 17 June 2019 (A01) [Appendix A]
[📄] [🗑️]
To attend to any matters arising from these Minutes and not dealt with elsewhere on this Agenda.
- A19/17 ALLOTMENTS**
To receive, note and discuss matters relating to Allotments
[📄] • Officer's report [Appendix B]
[📄] • Clerk's report [Appendix C]
- A19/18 CEMETERY**
To receive, note and discuss matters relating to the Town Cemetery
[📄] • Officer's report [Appendix D]

A19/19 FOOTPATHS & OPEN SPACES

To receive, note and discuss matters relating to Footpaths and Open Spaces

[📄]

[📄]

- Champion's report *[Appendix E]*
- Clerk's report *[Appendix F]*

A19/20 OPERATIONS

To receive, note and discuss matters relating to Operations

[📄]

- Clerk's report *[Appendix G]*

A19/21 CIVIC AMENITIES

To receive, note and discuss matters relating to Civic Amenities

[📄]

- Clerk's report *[Appendix H]*

A19/22 ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

To note items for future agendas

SAWBRIDGEWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

AMENITIES COMMITTEE Minutes

of the meeting of the Amenities Committee held at the Council Offices, Sayesbury Manor, Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth at 19.30 hrs on **Monday 17 June 2019.**

Those present

Cllr John Burmicz	Cllr Peter Gray
Cllr Pat Coysten	Cllr Steve Jones
Cllr Annelise Furnace	

In attendance:	One member of the public
R Bowran - Town Clerk	Joanne Sargant – Town Projects Manager

A19/01 ELECTION OF COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Resolved: That Cllr John Burmicz be Chairman of the committee for the civic year 2019/20 [prop Cllr Gray; secd Cllr Jones]

A19/02 ELECTION OF COMMITTEE VICE CHAIRMAN

Resolved: That Cllr Steve Jones be Vice Chairman of the committee for the civic year 2019/20 [prop Cllr Gray; secd Cllr Burmicz]

A19/03 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr David Royle – on holiday.

A19/04 PUBLIC FORUM

To receive representations from members of the public on matters within the remit of the Amenities Committee.

Mrs Hazel Mead asked about the Elmwood footpath.

Clerk said that the change to a Right of Way was being pursued; that the nettles to the sides would be cleared by a contractor and that the fallen tree had been cleared and chippings removed.

Mrs Hazel Mead asked about the state of a damaged bench on the canal path.

Cllr Gray said he would walk the tow path and check on the condition of the bench.

Mrs Hazel Mead asked about Footpath 27 still obstructed

Cllr Furnace had a view that this might be caused by an overflow from drainage in Church Crescent. She would investigate further with Thames Water.

Mrs Hazel Mead asked about overgrown allotments on the Southbrook site.

Clerk said that if he was given the plot numbers this would be investigated and rectified.

- A19/05 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
To receive any Declarations of Pecuniary Interest by Members.
There were none.
- A19/06 MINUTES**
To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 11 February 2019 (A03) [*prop Cllr Coysten; secd Cllr Furnace*]

To attend to any matters arising from these Minutes and not dealt with elsewhere on this Agenda.
- A19/07 TERMS OF REFERENCE**
Resolved: To recommend Terms of Reference for the committee and for adoption by the council. [*prop Cllr Gray; secd Cllr Jones*]
- A19/07 ALLOTMENTS**
To report on matters relating to Allotments
- Members were updated on allotment matters including the keeping of bees and chickens and the reducing waiting list.
 - Agreed to take Members on visits to the allotments as and when they wanted.
- A19/07 CEMETERY**
To report on matters relating to the Town Cemetery
- Reports received praising the condition of the cemetery
 - Agreed to take members on visits to the cemetery as and when they wanted.
 - Explained to members the philosophy regarding trees as memorials and as burial sites.
 - Explained to members provision that has to be made for unstable headstones
 - Explained to Members the legal implications relating to the transfer of ERB's.
 - Reported on progress relating to the road way extension
 - Gave an estimate of how many years of space remained and the change in profile of interments
 - Reported on the potential clearance of the Spinney as a possible future burial space.
- A19/08 FOOTPATHS & OPEN SPACES**
To report on matters relating to Footpaths and Open Spaces
- West Road being maintained as best as we can with limited resources
 - London Road flower beds are being maintained by a contractor. Rodect have been engaged to deal with the rat infestation problem.
 - Fair Green is now being grass cut by the town council. Concerns about lack of maintenance on lime trees has been referred to EHDC and HCC.
 - Footpaths. Issues have been addressed elsewhere on this agenda.
 - Parish Hall path. Contractor has been contacted but laying a tarmac surface would cost in excess of £2,000. Lobbyist advised that the town council can take no further action.

A19/09 OPERATIONS

To report on matters relating to Operations

- Community Transport
 - Sawbobus is still scheduled for return to manufacturers for repair. Further breakdown has necessitated being taken out of service and a reserve vehicle used.
 - Hire minibuses are being used on a regular basis
 - Suggestion that any future buses should be low emission or electric powered. Clerk to research.
- Events
 - Fun on the Field – now set for 31 August and planning is well advanced
 - Christmas Lights – planning is under way
- Ranger activities
 - Report on current working arrangements
 - Sub-contracting works for Gilston and Eastwick PC

A19/10 CIVIC AMENITIES

To report on matters relating to Civic Amenities

- Public Conveniences
 - Currently waiting for EHDC to grant themselves planning consent so that work can commence.
- War Memorial Repairs
 - No recent activity, meeting to be arranged with monumental mason for next stages.

A19/11 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved: That pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item because of the confidential nature of the business to be discussed which relates to a contractual dispute. [*prop Cllr Gray; secd Cllr Burmicz*]

Part 2

A19/12 GRIEVANCE RESOLUTION

Resolved: To make an offer, without prejudice, of restitution to resolve a grievance made against the council. [*prop Cllr Gray; secd Cllr Furnace*]

Meeting ended at 22.04

Sawbridgeworth Town Council

Paper from the Allotments Officer

To: Amenities Committee
From: Laura Carter
Subject: **Allotment Report October 2019**
Date: 07 October 2019

Tenancy renewals for 2019-20

Tenancy renewals were sent out at the beginning of September and the majority of rents have now been collected. Outstanding payments will be chased over the next week. The current charge for a full allotment plot (10 rods) is £50 with an additional water charge of £5

Notice of Price Increase for 2020-21

One year's written notice was given that allotment rents will increase to £60 per full plot (10 rods) with the water charge of £5 remaining the same from October 2020.

Waiting List

The waiting list is the lowest it has been in the last 10 years. I am confident that the waiting list will be satisfied in the next month after all the renewals have been received.

Maintenance

Essential tree work completed at Bullfields and scheduled for Bellmead.

A major boundary reclaim was carried out at Bullfields Allotments in September.

Before



After



Sawbridgeworth Town Council

Paper by the Town Clerk

Subject: Allotment Dispute Update

Date: 07 October 2019

Background

The council are in dispute with a tenant in our Vantorts Allotment Garden. As part of our on-going maintenance programme we contracted with Richard Newman to clear out the pathway between allotment plots and the boundary hedge.

Letter of complaint from tenant included an invoice for £150 with a threat to take to small claims court if it was not paid.

Actions Taken

Matter brought to the attention of Amenities Committee in June 2019. Outcome was to offer restitution in the form of paying up to £150 against an invoice for replacement trees from Langthorns Plantery.

Response from complainant alleging obfuscation by council and incompetence of council contractor.

Current Situation

Letter received on 27 September threatening County Court Action and complaint to Local Government Ombudsman.

Response made on 30 September saying matter had been dealt with correctly and offer for restitution had been made twice.

Sawbridgeworth Town Council

Cemetery Paper by J Sargent

Subject: Cemetery Report

Date: 07 October 2019

Statistics - January 2019 – October 2019

Total Burials / Interments = 40

Summary of Burial / Interment type:

New graves sold with ERB = 24 (4 of which were double cremated remains interments)

Re-Open Graves = 12 (6 x Full Burial and 6 x Cremated Remains)

Ground Maintenance:

Grass cutting has almost now ceased, but with autumn on the way the falling leaves will now be the most time consuming activity to keep the cemetery in good order and safe for visitors.

Memorials:

'Topple Testing' of memorial has taken place in the older section of the cemetery. A majority of the ERB holders for these graves are not traceable because the ERB's were not transferred when the owner of the ERB was buried into the grave space. This is a historical problem with our cemetery and one that takes considerable time to resolve when a family approach to re-open the grave. Following training from the ICCM I have ascertained that the next steps are as follows:

If no owner can be found to whom such notice can be given, then at the expiration of three months after advertisement in a local or County newspaper, the right to such gravestone, monument, tomb, tablet, memorial, palisades, or curb shall belong to the Council to be dealt with as they deem fit.'

Boundary Work – Northern Side of Cemetery

Following incidents of falling trees at this location, major groundworks have been carried out in conjunction with the landowner of the adjoining field to remove all dangerous trees and vegetation to avoid further damage to the boundary fence and general disturbance to grave spaces.

Appendix E

1 FOOTPATHS, OPEN SPACES

Footpath 27 (Sheering Mill Lane to the Church) As reported at Council on 30 September is about to be partially resurfaced from Church Crescent to the churchyard, although the historical drainage issue further down has yet to be addressed (next year's budget according to Cllr Eric Buckmaster). Personally, I think this is the wrong order of priority.

I have reported the poor surface of Footpath 32 (Bell Street 'Surgery' Car Park to London Road) to HCC and await a response from Highways via HCC under the Sealed/Unsealed Paths Agreement (if a path has a sealed surface, e.g. tarmac, it will be covered by the agreement with Highways).

The Town Clerk reported on 30 September that there was no update on the Elmwood to the river path Modification Order and that the FandB footpath to the Nursery and Parish Rooms would cost £2500 to put right, money not currently in our budget.

Rowan Perrin has kindly sent me a series of maps to help clarify EC maintenance areas. HCC has published a new rights of way map, available on Google Maps.

I have suggested to the Town Clerk we might do an annual footpath monitoring exercise and RAG our paths. This used to be done by Brian Rochester as part of the Stort Valley Project (last recorded AGM 2005):

<http://www.permanentleisureltd.co.uk/stortvalleyproject/default.htm> What are this committee's views?

Open Spaces

Members may have heard the rumour about the Bishop's Stortford Golf Club building a new course on Pishiobury if and when they (have to) move. This seems largely unfounded but highlights the need to appreciate and preserve this asset we have. Bob Reed has been pursuing the idea of declaring Pishiobury a Local Nature Reserve since about 2013 but progress via EHC has been painfully slow. A letter was sent to Natural England in July. I understand that Cllr. Eric Buckmaster reported on 30 September that the delay is with Natural England and that he has asked EHC to resubmit the documents. Bob will make a short presentation to STC on the value of the Park before the Full Council meeting on 25 November.

I made a report to the Environment Agency about the brook which runs from the river along Springhall Lane, behind Brook Road under London Road to West Road, which has largely run dry and is becoming overgrown. They (the Herts River Stort Catchment Officer) inspected but have no concerns as there's obviously no flood risk...

2 Dog fouling

Claire Sterne and helpers continue to spray away and report fouling incidents to EHC via Fix My Street. Our EHC contact (only one now, down from two) works on live complaints and

acts on them as they arise but hasn't been alerted to any fouling issues in Sawbridgeworth recently (the Facebook page continues to report and photograph issues). EHC can't dual label litter bins for dog waster because of the issue of separating waste after collection, but this is something that may well be considered in the near future once a solution has been found. Plenty of other towns do this and other countries in Europe, as well as providing dog waste bag machines.

We were supposed to get a dog waste bin nearer to the Mandeville school entrance; EHC is following up. More issues may well be reported during Walk to School week.

3 REPORTING

- <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/report> East Herts has online reporting forms for a range of 'nuisances'. <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/article/35176/Dog-Fouling--Dog-Control> for some reason dog fouling is not listed but elsewhere.
- <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/Highways-roads-and-pavements/Report-a-problem/Report-a-highway-fault/What-type-of-fault-are-you-reporting.aspx> HCC has an online map and form for reporting a whole range of highway faults and issues (lights, pavements, trees, verges, drainage, floods, potholes, road blockages etc.)
- The Environment Agency has a hotline especially for flood risk issues (blocked streams etc.); there is a River Stort catchment officer called Jasper; the Incident Hotline is 0800 807060; you will need to provide a postcode or grid reference for the location; they will allocate an officer within 30 minutes who will investigate the matter and provide an incident reference number that you will be able to use to follow up on the report.
- I also use Fix My Street charity app for litter, highways, fly tipping etc. Issues but this doesn't distinguish between HCC and EHC; they follow-up filed reports. It offers a statistics dashboard and a Pro version for councils https://www.fixmystreet.com/?gclid=Cj0KCCQjw8svsBRDqARIsAHKVYqELWO398LHcqMu4Usf2Taxkpu9jll9A0Ob8_zLCCO11WjFHT9UTS4aAsbvEALw_wcB It also offers 'goodies' activity packs for schools and community groups plus posters and adverts: <https://www.fixmystreet.com/about/posters> . I've let schools and guides and scouts know about these.
- I use Operations.Admin@eastherts.gov.uk to report, for example, overflowing litter bins in Pishiobury.
- I use Nicholas Maddex at HCC for footpath resurfacing issues and blocked twitchells (e.g. fallen branches, though he says this is strictly the householder's responsibility...), in conjunction with Cllr. Eric Buckmaster.
- I hopefully remember to copy in STC officers when I make reports myself or on behalf of residents.

4 CLIMATE CHANGE/PLASTIC FREE SAWBRIDGEWORTH

Given this committee's terms of reference and commitment to 'environmental maintenance', two recent developments are relevant: the climate change motion passed at Council on 30 September and the formation of the Plastic Free Sawbridgeworth Group on Facebook. The page has 186 members and has developed an action plan to support (greater awareness of)

recycling opportunities within the town. STC also has a role to play here, both in minimising its own environmental impact and in supporting/facilitating community efforts to maximise recycling opportunities. Could it be a recycling point (see HCC's recent initiative to collect and recycle crisp etc. packets)?

5 TIDY UP SAWBRIDGEWORTH

Community litter picks organised by Corinne Lewis are planned for 2 November and a joint one with TUBS on Saturday 9 May 2020 (VE Day theme??); Corinne is hoping to get funding for a 'Wombling' sessions with local schools.

David Royle 011019

Sawbridgeworth Town Council

Paper by the Town Clerk

Subject: **Open Spaces**

Date: 07 October 2019

West Road Playground

- Child's swing reported as damaged by a member of the public, removed and quote being sought for replacement.
- Litter bin vandalised and pulled out of ground, made good and alternative anchor solutions being sought
- Call by a member of the public to fence off play equipment to avoid dogs from fouling the area.

Bell Street Flower Beds

- Being maintained by us

London Road Flower Bed

- Replanted and surviving - just
- Rat infestation problem – this will continue until the underlying sewer problem is resolved

Town Green

- No further progress until EHDC agree to re-engage with us

Fair Green

- Now maintained by STC
- Trees by Vantorts Road are accepted as a Highways responsibility

Rivers Site

- Grass cut in the Orchard area at a cost of £1,020
- Grass will be cut in Meadow Area in the next few weeks
- Fence damaged by Crest boundary and will need replacing
- Beech hedge scheduled for final cut in December / January

Sawbridgeworth Town Council

Paper by the Town Clerk

Subject: **Operations**
Date: 07 October 2019

Community Transport

- Sawbobus operational with some continuing minor problems.
- Celebrations for 10 years of operation 29 October
- Future funding from EHDC in some doubt
- Funding from Essex CC for expanding into Sheering has been refused
- Both self-drive minibuses operational

Events

- Fun-on-the-Field very successful
- Town Selfie Walk also very successful
- Airfield Memorial Day coming up 09 November
- Remembrance Day coming up 10 November
- Christmas Lights coming up 30 November

Ranger Activities

- Steve Parrish due to return to work at end of October – return to work programme being established
- Gordon Howell still on one year contract until end of May 2020 – possibly return to limited hours contract thereafter

Sawbridgeworth Town Council

Paper by the Town Clerk

Subject: Civic Amenities

Date: 07 October 2019

Floral Displays

- At town approach signs have fared well this year and will be taken down in the next few weeks.
- Displays will be replaced by Poppy Wreaths by the end of October.

Public Conveniences

- Refurbishment in Bell Street scheduled to commence on 17 October
- EHDC reversed decision to cease maintenance on 01 October
- Arrangements in place to provide temporary facilities
- New installation of dry facility in cemetery scheduled for November

Electric Vehicle Power Points

- EHDC have now committed to providing 3 EV charging points in the Bell Street car park by the end of the year.
- EHDC are considering installing an addition high-power charging point for use by a prospective electric community mini-bus
- Local taxi firms to be encouraged to embrace this initiative.

War Memorial

- Discussions on the next phase of panel refurbishment are taking place