



CHIPPENHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Improving the quality of town life

CHIPPENHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Amenities, Culture and Leisure Committee held virtually on Zoom on 03 March 2021 at 7.00pm.

Councillors present: Desna Allen (Chairman) Pete Bishop
Teresa Hutton Ruth Lloyd
Andy Phillips Nina Phillips
David Powell Chris Ruck
Melody Thompson Sandie Webb

Officers present: Mark Smith (Chief Executive)
Matt Kirby (Director of Community Services)
Daryl Jones (Business Support Manager)
Heather Rae (Democratic Services Manager)
Lynsey Nichols (Marketing and Communications Manager)
Michael Weeks (Democratic and Civic Officer)
Will Tidmarsh (Head of Environmental Services)
Melissa Barnett (Head of Museum and Heritage Services)
Julie Hook (Head of Venues)
Paul Harvey (Head of Leisure Services)
Gillian Ballinger (Finance Manager)

Public Present: There were 8 members of the public present

PUBLIC QUESTIONS There was 1 verbal question and 3 written questions from members of the public which is appended to these minutes at **APPENDIX A**. The responses to this question were not part of the meeting but are appended to these minutes at **APPENDIX B**.

60. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received.

61. **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTION**

No notifications of substitution were received.

62. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

63. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 06 January 2021 were proposed by Councillor Ruth Lloyd seconded by Councillor Sandie Webb and approved as a correct record. They will be signed by the Chairman at a later date.

64. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

i) In relation to the report under agenda item 6, Councillors are reminded, the survey is being undertaken to provide evidence to the Councillors on public opinion, on the dogs on leads issue in John Coles Park. Officers will seek to ensure the methodology, is as robust as practically possible. However the result is not legally binding, it is not a vote, so it will not be the number of opinions that count. It will help provide assistance to Councillors, who will ultimately make the decision.

65. **DOGS ON LEADS, JOHN COLES PARK**

Prior to the report being present the Chairman read out a letter addressed to the Chairman from a member of the public, in support of Dogs remaining on leads in John Coles Park, in the interest of balance, that was received on the day of the meeting.

The Head of Environmental Services presented the report to Councillors regarding Dogs on leads at John Coles Park.

Councillors discussed the proposed survey presented in the report and the points raised during public question time.

It was proposed by Councillor Sandie Webb and seconded by Councillor Nina Phillips to defer the decision until the next meeting of the Amenities, Culture and Leisure Committee where Officers would present an updated survey option.

With 9 in favour and 1 Abstention.

RESOLVED that:

i) Councillors agreed defer the decision to the next meeting of the Amenities, Culture and Leisure Committee where an updated survey is to be presented by Officers.

66. **ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT UPDATE**

The Director of Community Services presented the report to Councillors regarding the Environmental Enforcement Update.

Councillors noted that continued education is important regarding litter and dog fouling.

With all in favour

RESOLVED that:

- i) Councillors noted the report
- ii) Councillors agreed to the option presented with section 3.2 - Option 1- to undertake a proactive awareness/education campaign(s) to tackle littering and dog fouling.
- iii) Councillors agreed to the option presented in section 3.3 - Option 3 - to continue to investigate the possibly of setting up a viable Wiltshire Hub with other Councils and EH Commercial Ltd or any future provider.

67. MONKTON PARK LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Head of Environmental Services presented the report to Councillors regarding the Monkton Park Land Management Plan.

Councillors commented how impressed they were with the overall management plan.

7.53pm Councillor Mary Norton dropped out of the meeting

With 9 Councillors in favour

RESOLVED that:

- i) Councillors agreed to adopting the 5-year Management Plan for Monkton Park.

7.57pm Councillor Mary Norton returned to the meeting

68. HANGING BASKETS PROVISION

The Head of Environmental Services presented the report to Councillors regarding Hanging Basket Provision.

Councillor Sandie Webb declared an interest due to business ownership in the Town.

Councillors Desna Allen and Nina Powell agreed that it was important to support local business due to the ongoing pandemic.

With 9 Councillors in favour.

RESOLVED that:

- i) Councillors agreed to the proposal of the free provision of Hanging Baskets for businesses who supported the sponsorship scheme in 2019.

69. UPGRADE OF FLOODLIGHTS TO LED LAMPS ON THE 3G STANLEY PARK SPORTS GROUND

The Head of Leisure Services presented the report to Councillors regarding the Upgrade of Floodlights at Stanley Park Sports Ground.

With all in favour

RESOLVED that:

- i) Councillors approved the upgrade of the floodlights on the 3G AWP (All Weather Pitch) from conventional fluorescent lamps to LED lamps at Stanley Park Sports Ground and seek the approval of Full Council for this expenditure.

70. WAR MEMORIAL PLAQUE FOR CIVILIAN DEATHS IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR

The Democratic and Civic Officer presented the report to Councillors regarding the addition of a war memorial plaque for civilian deaths in the Second World War.

With all in favour.

RESOLVED that:

- i) Councillors support the inclusion of a War Memorial plaque to those Civilians killed during the Second World War that were killed in Chippenham, or had a direct link to the Town.
- ii) Councillors agree to support the representative's application to the Heritage Lottery Fund to cover the costs of the project.
- iii) Councillors delegate authority to the Chief Executive to support this project with relevant stakeholders and in consultation with the Mayor of Chippenham.

71 JOHN COLES PARK SECURITY

The Head of Environmental Services presented the report regarding John Coles Park Security, highlighting the recent security incident.

RESOLVED that:

- i) Councillors noted the report

72. ITEMS FOR COMMUNICATION

Councillor Sandie Webb asked for a press release regarding the Monkton Park Management Plan

Councillors agreed to ask for the Youth Council to review the Dogs on Leads survey and the environmental enforcement options.

73. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Amenities, Culture and Leisure Committee meeting will take place on Wednesday 02 June 2021.

The meeting closed at 8.06pm.

These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

Signed on behalf of the Town Council as a true record of the meeting.

Signature

Date

DRAFT

APPENDIX A

At the invitation of the Chairman, a member of the public addressed the Committee.

- i) I wasn't aware of the plan to put trees along the grass area by Riverside Drive, this area is used for families teaching children to ride bikes, running, playing ball games and walking dogs, please can we keep our open space, I have included a photo of the children playing in the snow as it's the only one I have. I understand the need for trees but we also need open spaces and to protect the openness of the landscape and views across to Bremhill and the White Horse for walkers and runners.
- ii) Thank you for the chance to speak at this meeting.

As you are all aware, there are a group of dog owners who use John Coles Park who have been campaigning for a fair and balanced public consultation on changing the guidelines on the control of dogs in John Coles Park.

As a member of that group, I was very pleased when a public consultation was agreed to by the council and very much looked forward to a measurable, balanced and quantitative view of the park users as the outcome of the consultation.

I am sorry to say that the proposed consultation and questionnaire as tabled at this meeting cannot provide a quantitative view on the balance of opinion of park users and further more is open to abuse by a specific individual or group of individuals to sway the resulting outputs.

I will define two shortcoming and constructive solutions to them.

1. The questionnaire does not determine the responder's level of park usage. Accordingly, a person who only uses the park twice a year, or comes from a distant part of the UK or abroad will have the same weight as someone who brings their children to the playground three times a week or walks their dog daily.

Can I propose a second question that defines the pattern of usage of the responder:
e.g:

"How often do you visit John Coles Park: Rarely (less than 4 times a year), Monthly, Weekly, More than once a week, several times a week."

Also, specifically for those responses sought face to face in the park they should be conducted at all times of the day and week in a balanced way. The type of users varies during the day and week.

2. The proposed method of questionnaire response gathering does not define the safeguards required to limit the response to one response per individual.

This can be achieved with an online questionnaire system that limits the number of responses by incoming internet address to one, but is more difficult to undertake face to face and via paper. In these cases it is a trust matter, but I would argue that paper and face to face copies should seek assurance on this matter. The questioner

should ask up front, and any paper copy should have it in bold at the top that the responder agrees that this is the only response from that individual.

At the last meeting I offered to provide advice on other options and questionnaire layout, in which I have some training. I note with dismay that there are other options in the main question that have not been considered or consulted on from dog users perspective and that the option of banning dogs is now on the table with no consultation with the council whatever.

I would urge the councillors to adjust the questionnaire to

1. make it balanced and representative by adding the level of visits question
2. ensure that there are as many controls as possible to ensure one response per person
3. and remove the "ban dogs" option from the questionnaire as this goes further than any previously debated option.

We look forward to a balanced survey, when it occurs.

- iii) Hi and thanks for the opportunity to speak on the proposed survey regarding JCP dogs on/off lead.

My first impression is that this is a document that has been thrown together at the last minute with little real consideration for the issues and whole usage of the park.

For example, there is an option included - All dogs to be allowed off the lead at all times in all dog permitted areas (which I assume though the wording is not clear) means the whole park - this has never been raised as an option that anyone wants so feel this should not be included as will only dilute all the other responses.

The seasonal option is just a 6 month split which again gives no consideration to the actual usage of the park and seems someone just picked it out of thin air. Whilst a seasonal option would be highly sensible it should just cover the busy periods such as Easter & Summer school holidays and we believe a timed option should also be included, ie in high season off lead only before 0930hrs and after 1700hrs or something along these lines.

Carrying out the survey in July when the temperature would hopefully be high - most responsible dog owners would not be walking their dogs anywhere, let alone in the park during the main part of the day. So we would question what times the face to face surveys would be undertaken as to capture dog walkers as a fair representation of the park users some would have to be early or late to ensure the bias would not be towards non dog walkers.

Lastly we strongly believe that the survey should ask the respondents relevant questions as to what type of park visitor they are and how often they use the park to ensure that the multiple fair weather users that will most likely be present on a lovely sunny July day do not outweigh the dog walkers and other regular park users that use the park twice a day throughout the rest of the year and potentially avoid it at high season and peak times.

As you may well know we had a petition that received over 900 signatures last year on this subject and whilst we all definitely welcome a survey it needs to be reasonable, fair and transparent and believe that this current proposal does not seem to meet these criteria and welcome further discussion and suggestions before it is agreed and goes live.

iv) My questions and statements are about agenda item 6, Dogs on Leads.

I don't understand why my offer of help for the questionnaire has not been taken up. We did offer our help, we could improve we think the question has been asked, it would be useful to all of us, so I don't really understand why not been approached on that at all. We would also like some sort of Post Code capture on the form, we are not asking for personal details, bearing in mind the general data protection act, we would like Post Codes so we know that those people are answering the questionnaire are actually local people, because that is what John Coles Park is for.

I would like the assurances that is that is one person one vote, so that nobody gets to load the forms, also do you have a sample size that we are considering will be the sample that we're going to be looking for, so we could work out percentages and data from that.

My last is really a question to the Town Council, have we had any more reported incidents since January of this year, or since we were last involved and have we put any more consideration into an accident reporting control measures in for park staff so that we can record future incidents either involving or not involving dogs or indeed cats has happened during the week so really would like Town Council thoughts and views on the consideration of reporting other incidents and accidents.

Not part of the meeting

APPENDIX B

The following written response was issued in response to the public question asked at the Amenities, Culture and Leisure Committee on 03 March 2021:

i) Thank you for your comments and questions asked at the Amenities, Culture and Leisure Committee on 03 March January 2021. At the meeting the committee agreed to implement the Monkton Park Management plan, which was produced in consultation with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust following a number of public consultation dates. This will now form the plan for managing the land in Monkton Park.

ii) In relation to questions 2 and 3.

Thank you for your comments and questions asked at the Amenities, Culture and Leisure Committee on 03 March January 2021. The committee resolved to defer the survey until the next meeting of the committee on 02 June 2021, where officers will present an updated proposal to Councillors for consideration.

iii) In relation to question 4

Thank you for your comments and questions asked at the Amenities, Culture and Leisure Committee on 03 March 2021. The committee resolved to defer the survey until the next meeting of the committee on 02 June 2021, where officers will present an updated proposal to Councillors for consideration.

Since the meeting of the Amenities, Culture and Leisure Committee on 6 January 2021, we have one written complaint regarding dogs in John Coles Park.