

Highworth



Town Council

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www.highworthtowncouncil.gov.uk

E&L1.

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE MEETING 4 AUGUST 2020

PRESENT

Councillor: (Mrs) L Vardy (In the Chair) commencing the Meeting

K Saunders (In the Chair) for the remainder of the Meeting

Councillors:

(Mrs) K Barber
A Bishop
(Mrs) J Bishop
G Evans
N Gardiner
(Miss) J Murphy
P Newton-Smith
G Olley
(Mrs) M Penny
K Smith
R Williams
S Wolfensohn

IN ATTENDANCE

6 Members of the Public and Mr S Rolfe (CEO of Halo)



Highworth is a Fair Trade Town



Twinned with Wassenberg



Twinned with Pontorson

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TO ELECT A CHAIRMAN

1. a. Resolved by Councillor K Smith and Seconded by Councillor P Newton-Smith to elect Councillor K Saunders to be Chairman of the Full Council Environment & Leisure.

b. Resolved by Councillor (Mrs) J Bishop and Seconded by Councillor (Mrs) M Penny to elect Councillor (Mrs) L Vardy to be Chairman of the Full Council Environment & Leisure.

8 Councillors voted in favour of Councillor K Saunders and 6 voted against. Councillor K Saunders was duly elected and took the Chair.

APOLOGIES

2. Councillor S Weisinger

TO ELECT A VICE-CHAIRMAN

3. Resolved by Councillor (Mrs) L Vardy and seconded by Councillor K Saunders to elect Councillor N Gardiner as Vice-Chairman of the Full Council Environment and Leisure. Councillors were unanimously in favour and Councillor N Gardiner was duly elected.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

4. Councillor R Williams declared an interest as the Chairman of Highworth Recreation Centre Trustees along with Councillor N Gardiner also a Trustee of Highworth Recreation Centre Trust. Pecuniary interests are limited to £10 each.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

5. None.

MINUTES OF MEETING

6. **RESOLVED THAT THE MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE MEETING (E&L) HELD ON 3 MARCH 2020 BE ADOPTED AND SIGNED.** The Minutes are to be duly signed.

RECREATION CENTRE

7. The CEO of Halo Scott Rolfe was thanked for his presentation and attendance at the Meeting.

Halo has forecast a deficit of £211,000.00 over the next 2 years. Swindon Borough Council have pledged £30,000.00 payable to Highworth Town Council which leaves a shortfall of

E&L3.

£181,000.00. Highworth Town Council is to subsidise up to a maximum of £181,000.00 in monthly payments invoiced from Halo with detailed accounts along with an agreement if the actual figures drift significantly from the forecast figures a review will be held and the option to stop funding. This will be for a maximum of 2 years. Halo are continuing to seek outside funding which if approved will be offset against the amount required from Highworth Town Council. The subsidy is only to be used for subsidising Highworth Recreation Centre. The money pledged will be used from Highworth Town Council reserves and replenished through future precept requests.

- Resolved by Councillor (Mrs) M Penny, Seconded by Councillor (Mrs) L Vardy that Highworth Town Council is to subsidise HALO for Highworth Rec Leisure Centre up to £181,000 over a maximum of two years. This sum is to be adjusted downwards by any outside funding secured by HALO. The subsidy is to be used solely for the Highworth Recreation Centre and subject to a review depending on any significant changes to the forecast figures. Carried Unanimously.

REPORT ON WILDFLOWER GROUP MEETING

8. The project was slow, to get off the ground as the decision to go ahead with the pilot plots was not made until mid-November 2019. The wet winter and early spring create logistical issues in digging out the beds, which meant they were not ready for sowing until early March 2020.

Over the winter research was carried out on potential seed mixes and a kilogram of Plant life's Cornfield jewels mix was purchased. Sowing took place during the early weeks of March 2020. Whilst the rains had stopped the winds had increased and it was problematic to find calm enough days to sow the plots.

With lockdown and the long spell of dry weather seed germination was slow, but after a slow start the beds have forged ahead and having been providing and increasingly spectacular displays over recent months and are still going from strength to strength.

The turf & earth removed from the Fair View beds was piled along the side of the beds furthest from the bungalows, to provide habitat for burrowing insects such as solitary bees. This was also done to discourage some of the residents and their visitors who drive all over the grass at Fair View from driving over the flower beds.

The beds have been positively received by both residents of Fair View & Park Avenue and the general population of Highworth as a whole. No direct complaints have been received.

Understandably there were one or two on the social media pages whilst the seed was stabilising itself, but these comments received short shrift from other users of the sites.

Lessons have been learnt and if we are to proceed, we really need to sow in the autumn to give the seeds the best start.

Councillors unanimously agreed for the Wildflower Project to continue and to investigate additional sites around the Town with the Grounds Team, and to bring the suggestions back to the Council to be approved. Any areas belonging to Swindon Borough Council will need to have prior approval.

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

9. The date for the Christmas Lights is to be Friday 27 November 2020

CORRESPONDENCE

10. Email received from Danter Brothers Fun Fair requested approval for the Fun Fair to arrive on Monday 12 October 2020 and depart Saturday 17 October 2020 before the Market arrival. Councillors unanimously agreed on the premise that Risk Assessments relating to COVID-19 are submitted prior to the Fun Fairs arrival and that Government Guidelines are adhered to.

MEMBERS' BUSINESS

11. Councillor (Mrs) K Barber: Elderly resident in Islay Crescent has been having problems with her Green Waste collection. Councillor A Bishop confirmed it has now been collected. The waste team are short staffed due to COVID-19.

Councillor G Evans: It is unlikely the Remembrance Service will take place. An open-air Service has been discussed and Councillor G Evans will advise when he has more information.

Councillor N Gardiner:

- Sustainable Highworth Working Group held a successful Meeting in March and has scheduled a further Meeting for 25 August 2020 at 7:00pm via the virtual platform zoom.
- The monthly litter pick has been on hold due to COVID-19. The next litter pick is scheduled for Saturday 29 August 2020. A list of future dates is to be confirmed.

Councillor (Mrs) M Penny: A reminder that the Councillors' Surgery is scheduled for 5 August 2020.

Councillor R Williams: As the Mayor of Highworth his chosen charity is SN6 Wheeled Skate Park.

Meeting closed at 9.15pm

Action Points

- Wildflower Project to continue and to investigate additional sites around the Town with the Grounds Team, and to bring the suggestions back to the Council to be approved.
- Liaise with Danter Brothers Fun Fair ensuring COVID-19 Risk Assessments are submitted.