

## **GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a Meeting of the General Services Committee held at 6.30pm on Tuesday, 27 March 2018 in the Town Hall, Banbury.

Present: Councillor Clarke (Chairman)  
Councillors: Dhesi, Harrison, Kilsby, & Richards.

Alternate Members: Councillor Milne Home for Councillor Donaldson.

Officers: Mark Recchia (Town Clerk)  
Mark Hassall (Deputy Town Clerk/RFO)  
Mike Hall (Recreation & Amenities Manager)  
Audrey O'Mahony (Planning & Administration Officer)

### **GS.36.17 Apologies for Absence**

Councillors Donaldson, Ross, Banfield, Morris, Turner and Colegrave.

### **GS.37.17 Declarations of Interest**

None.

### **GS.38.17 Minutes of the Last Meeting**

**IT WAS RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 30 January 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **GS.39.17 Income & Expenditure Report**

The Committee considered a report prepared by the Deputy Town Clerk/RFO demonstrating current income and expenditure compared with a Year to Date Budget for the financial year. The report outlined a summary income and expenditure against each cost centre.

Members' attention was drawn to the fact that overall the Committee's expenditure was within forecast. Underspends versus the phased budget were £454k across all services. This was made up in part of General Services underspends of £249k. This was mainly caused by expected YTD underspends of timing of grounds maintenance charges, salaries and capital works.

Other variances that were addressed included:

Underspends in the cemeteries were timing related. The timing of the purchase of DTE Trees and the repairs to the wall of St Mary's Church accounted for savings. £50k and £18k savings associated with GM costs in Parks & Open Spaces were timing related. The savings against the relocation of the Park Ranger to the Southam Rd Depot were timing related as it is not yet ready for them to move into.

In order to complete projects where funds were identified in the current financial year, the underspends (as listed below) are requested as ear marked reserves to facilitated their completion beyond the current financial year

- Town Centre Retail Initiative - £100k
- Spital Farm drainage works - £25k
- Vehicle Replacement Provision - £27k
- Spiceball benches and bins - £8k
- PDP fire damage replacements - £18k

- St Mary's Wall - £17k

The Deputy Town Clerk and RFO responded to a number of questions from Members relating to various budget codes.

#### **IT WAS RESOLVED**

- 1) to receive and note the Income and Expenditure report.
- 2) to authorise the creation and release of Earmarked Reserves as outlined in GS. 39.17.

#### **GS.40.17 Parks and Open Spaces Report**

The Committee considered a report on the condition of the parks, recreation grounds and open spaces in Banbury, including comments and complaints received, and on the work of the Park Ranger Service.

##### **Queries, Comments and Complaints (QCC) 19 January – 16 March 2018**

Over the period that this report referred to, Banbury Town Council had received 32 (compared to 14 received over the similar period in 2017) queries, comments and complaints from members of the public. The largest number of complaints were received concerning Dog Bins. This was largely due to new staff at the District Council who were not yet familiar with the area.

##### **Park Ranger Service**

The Rangers Service was now operating at full strength. The PRS was able to undertake more salting and snow clearance work that the Town Council was responsible for in the Town Centre as a result of this. The poor weather had resulted in delays to some of the more routine jobs that are undertaken by the PRS but had been busy with installation of new play equipment, preparing for the move to the new Southam Road Depot offices and tree work. Three new interpretation boards were installed in Browning Road Park highlighting points of interest around the site.

##### **Wild Banbury**

The final report on the improvement to the water habitats was received. BBOWT had started planting around the ponds with marginal and aquatic plants around the ponds to increase the diversity of species. Two interpretation boards were installed in Spiceball Park.

##### **St Mary's Church**

The work was ongoing on the boundary wall, there was a number of delays due to the bad weather. The footpath repairs were expected to be completed over the weekend of the 17<sup>th</sup> of March. Badly damaged limbs on a single Plane Tree had works carried out on them to make them safe.

##### **Banbury Power Limited**

The proposal was being progressed with an agreement for the inclusion of the ducting for power cables to the industrial estate rather than the route (previously chosen) along Hennef Way. That was to allow for utilities to be installed in the park.

##### **Southam Road Cemetery Depot Offices and Garages**

Work was ongoing to make the buildings habitable for the Park Rangers, asbestos was removed from the buildings. The grounds maintenance contractor and the Town Council had come to an agreement for the sharing of

office space in the depot. The site was to operate under the Goods Vehicle Operators Licence.

**Banbury Football Partnership**

It was confirmed that the partnership wished to work with the Town Council in developing football in the town. The partnership was to work with the Town Council to improve the quality of grass pitches in the town. It was identified that there were severe shortfalls in training facilities in the area and the Partnership was seeking:

- The use of green spaces for training
- The installation of steel containers on some sites to store football training equipment
- The use of demountable goals
- Funding for the purchasing of demountable flood lighting
- Improvement of grass area for training purposes
- To work with the Town Council in allocating pitches around the town

It was stressed that the provision of more grassed areas for training car parking was not available and the clubs would have to find a way of overcoming this potential issue before the additional area were to be used.

**Land Adoptions**

Commuted Sums had been identified for the Cattle Market and for the adoption of Ashmead Road play areas, which was approved for transfer to Banbury Town Council. There was a request from the developer for the transfer of Hart Close play area to the Town Council, however after inspections from CDC and BTC a number of items needing rectification were identified before this was to be approved.

**Grounds Maintenance Contract Update**

Following from a productive meeting with id Verde Ltd an agreement was reached on a way forward. A deed of variation was created. They were to give up the use of their portocabin at the Southam Road Cemetery depot and remove it.

**IT WAS RESOLVED:**

- (1) to note the condition of the parks, recreation grounds and open spaces in Banbury, the various capital and other projects that are underway, action taken to fill the Landscape Officer position and the work of the Park Ranger Service.
- (2) to note the update from BBOWT regarding their "Wild Banbury" project works.
- (3) to note the update regarding St Mary's Church yard, Banbury Power Limited and the new depot offices in Southam Road Cemetery.
- (4) to approve, in principal, the proposals of Banbury Football Partnership.
- (5) to formally approve the adoption of the areas on the Cattle Market estate and Ashmead Road from Cherwell District Council, and subject to rectification work being undertaken and approved Hart Close and Usher Drive play areas.
- (6) To note the update and await a further verbal update on the grounds maintenance contract/ contractor.

***General Services Committee  
27 March 2018***

The meeting ended at 7:00pm