

Sawbridgeworth Town Council

Sayesbury Manor, Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth
Hertfordshire CM21 9AN
Tel: 01279 724537

e-mail: info@sawbridgeworth-tc.gov.uk
web: www.sawbridgeworth-tc.gov.uk



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

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

AMENITIES COMMITTEE

You are invited to attend a meeting of this committee which will take place on **Monday 10 February 2020** 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
04 February 2020

AGENDA

- A19/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
To receive any apologies for absence
- A19/24 PUBLIC FORUM**
To receive representations from members of the public on matters within the remit of the Amenities Committee.
- A19/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
To receive any Declarations of Pecuniary Interest by Members
- A19/26 MINUTES**
To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 14 October 2019 (A02) [Appendix A]
To attend to any matters arising from these Minutes and not dealt with elsewhere on this Agenda.
- A19/27 ALLOTMENTS**
To receive, note and discuss matters relating to Allotments
- Officer's report [Appendix B]
 - Clerk's report [Appendix C]
- A19/28 CEMETERY**
To receive, note and discuss matters relating to the Town Cemetery
- Officer's report [Appendix D]

A19/29 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]*

A19/30 OPERATIONS

To receive, note and discuss matters relating to Operations

[📄]

- Clerk's report *[Appendix G]*

A19/31 CIVIC AMENITIES

To receive, note and discuss matters relating to Civic Amenities

[📄]

- Clerk's report *[Appendix H]*

A19/32 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 20:10 hrs on **Monday 14 October 2019**.

Those present

Cllr Annelise Furnace
Cllr Peter Gray

Cllr David Royle

In attendance:

R Bowran - Town Clerk

Joanne Sargent – Town Projects Manager

A19/13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Received from Cllr Burmicz – business commitment; Cllr Coysten – personal commitment and Cllr Jones – unwell.

The chairman and vice-chairman both being absent, committee members agreed that Cllr Furnace would chair the meeting.

A19/14 PUBLIC FORUM

There were no representations from members of the public.

A19/15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Pecuniary Interest by Members

A19/16 MINUTES

Resolved: To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 17 June 2019 (A01)
[prop Cllr Gray; secd Cllr Furnace]

Minute A19/04.

Cllr Gray said he had investigated and resolved the issue relating to a damaged bench on the canal footpath.

Cllr Furnace said she had spoken with a neighbouring resident to FP27 and was investigating with Thames water.

A19/17 ALLOTMENTS

Received noted and discussed: Matters relating to Allotments

- Officer's report attached
- Clerk's report attached

A19/18 CEMETERY

Received noted and discussed: Matters relating to the Town Cemetery

- Officer's report attached

A19/19 FOOTPATHS & OPEN SPACES

Received noted and discussed: Matters relating to Footpaths and Open Spaces

- Champion's report attached
- Clerk's report attached

A19/20 OPERATIONS

Received noted and discussed: Matters relating to Operations

- Clerk's report attached

A19/21 CIVIC AMENITIES

Received noted and discussed: Matters relating to Civic Amenities

- Clerk's report attached

A19/22 ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

There were no items for future agendas

Meeting ended at 21:20

Sawbridgeworth Town Council

Paper from the Allotments Officer

To: Amenities Committee
From: Laura Carter
Subject: **Allotment Report February 2020**
Date: 03 February 2020

Waiting List

New tenants are being taken on at all sites, which will satisfy the current waiting list.

Maintenance

Essential tree work has now been completed at Bellmead Allotment Gardens.

A routine tree inspection has been scheduled for Southbrook Allotment Gardens.

In the absence of the Town Ranger, all winter boundary/path maintenance has been completed by a contractor (Gary Woods). Future maintenance will be carried out by the Town Ranger.

Sawbridgeworth Town Council

Paper by the Town Clerk

Subject: **Allotment Dispute Update**

Date: 03 February 2020

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.

Letter received on 20 November saying correspondence had been sent to the Local Government Ombudsman. Copies also sent to all committee members "to avoid further instance of redaction"

Mayor advised separately that the matter had been referred by a member of the Essex Police Federation to the EHDC Monitoring Officer. Police officer involved is known to the council as being a relative of the complainant.

Sawbridgeworth Town Council Cemetery Paper by J Sargant

Subject: Cemetery Report

Date: 03 February 2020

Statistics – 01 October 2019 – 31 January 2020

Total Burials / Interments = 11

Summary of Burial / Interment type:

New graves sold with ERB = 9 (2 of which were double cremated remains interments)

Re-Open Graves = 0

Ground Maintenance:

The remaining fence will be completed in the North area of the cemetery. Gary Woods will complete this work.

Richard Newman has been asked to evaluate and quote for work that needs to be carried out in the Spinney, urgent tree work will be given priority.

Grass cutting will start around end of February – beginning March.

All hedges recently cut.

Front gates treated and painted.

Leaf clearing.

Toilet:

Now fully installed, it is padlocked except for funerals and when the Town Rangers are in attendance.

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.'

Appendix E

FOOTPATHS

Work has started/is starting on Footpath 27 (Sheering Mill Lane to the Church) and I understand that Cllr Eric Buckmaster has budgeted for the more problematic lower part in his next year's locality budget. I have asked for an update on Footpath 32 (Bell Street 'Surgery' Car Park to London Road) but no response so far. I assume that the Modification Order on the Elmwood to the river path is still 'pending'. An amount is in the draft budget for resurfacing the FandB footpath to the Nursery and Parish Rooms. I have also reported on the poor state of Footpath 21 (Brook Road to Town Square) to both HCC and EHC (see below) following complaints on Facebook.

I suggested an annual footpath RAG review to the Amenities Committee last October but we didn't discuss it. This is something Brian Rochester used to do as part of the Stort Valley project. I have contacted a few volunteers. Cllr Eric Buckmaster is happy to discuss and possibly fund priorities arising. Meanwhile I have received further 'clarification' of the mysterious world of footnote maintenance: it appears EHC would welcome our help in surveying paths in the area, although they 'now have volunteers who try to do this'. I have suggested we/I coordinate! HCC confirms that responsibility for the surface of sealed (e.g. tarmac or paved) public rights of way rests with Highways, under a Sealed/Unsealed Routes Agreement with them. They prefer to receive reports via their online Fault Reporting System or via the Call Centre, rather than emails (or the Fix My Street app), as this automatically generates a priority. Responsibility for mud, leaves, litter, etc., is that of the district council, and problems should be reported direct to them. Cllr Eric Buckmaster advises that Customer.Services@eastherts.gov.uk is the best route and you receive acknowledgement, but not confirmation.

Can I clarify please the remit and management of our town centre road sweeper?

HCC had a Highways Together 'programme of projects developed to enable Parish and Town Councils to tackle local highway issues in their community with voluntary participation'. It aims to empower and enable Parish and Town Councils to address local priorities. It was launched in June 2015 but didn't really fully cover footpath maintenance. I recall that EHC at one time was considering transferring responsibility (and funding?) for footpaths to town and parish councils but nothing happened. The current confusing and overlapping situation is highly unsatisfactory.

Sawbridgeworth Town Council

Paper by the Town Clerk

Subject: Open Spaces

Date: 03 February 2020

West Road Playground

- Litter bin vandalised and pulled out of ground, alternative solutions being installed

Bell Street Flower Beds

- Offer from WI to take in maintenance of these planters.

London Road Flower Bed

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

Town Green

- Pocket Parks grant application made, awaiting outcome.

Fair Green

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

Rivers Site

- Grass will be cut in Meadow Area in the next few weeks
- Fence damaged by Crest boundary has been repaired
- Beech hedge scheduled for final cut in December / January

Sawbridgeworth Town Council

Paper by the Town Clerk

Subject: **Operations**
Date: 03 February 2020

Community Transport

- Sawbobus operational with some continuing minor problems.
- Future funding from EHDC in some doubt, budget provision made.
- £4,000 funding from Essex CC for serving Lower Sheering approved.
- Both self-drive minibuses operational, one up for sale.

Events

- Chamber made available for VE Day exhibition.

Workshop Facility

- Wooden shed built in council garden as a workshop for maintenance work.

Ranger Activities

- Steve Parrish returned to return to work at end of October – return to work programme established – Occupational Health review will take place on 12 February
- 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

- Displays on town approach signs were by installing Poppy Wreaths at the end of October. These were well received and will be repeated in 2020.
- Future town centre floral displays to be discussed by the committee.

Public Conveniences

- Refurbishment completed by 30 November in time for Lights switch-on.
- EHDC funding received in December
- Ten year cleaning contract agreed with Healthmatic.
- Awaiting a revised lease from EHDC legal department.
- Dry toilet facility in cemetery completed in December

Electric Vehicle Power Points

- EHDC committed to providing 3 EV charging points in the Bell Street car park by the end of the year.
- We understand that they are in possession of the equipment and are waiting for an installation date.

Town Housekeeping

- In response to observations from members of the public and some retailers that the town looks unkempt and uncared for, we will deploy grounds staff when available to carry out general "housekeeping" when this does not conflict with working on the highway safety regulations.
- Water pump on London Road has been repainted
- Town sign has been refurbished
- Seating by the post office has been refurbished

Eco-Audit

- Committee to decide whether to create a working party to consider the recommendations made and the actions to be taken.

War Memorial

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