

RECREATION & WORKS COMMITTEE

REPORT OF MEETING HELD ON 28TH SEPTEMBER 2005

PRESENT Councillor Mrs Cruse – in the Chair

Councillors Mrs Bickley, Fowles, Johnston, Lord, Mrs Mason, J
McMurray, Miers, Walters

Mrs P Rendle – Clerk of the Council

APOLOGIES Councillors A McMurray, Pasley, Rigby

RW635 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs Cruse

- Personal interest in RW640 North Weston Allotments
Reason – Husband allotment holder

Councillor Johnston

- Personal interest in RW640 North Weston Allotments
Reason – Occasional member of allotment committee

Councillor Walters

- Personal interest in RW640 North Weston Allotments
Reason – Allotment holder

Declaration by members who serve on both the Town and District Council

Councillors Johnston and Walters stated that any views they expressed on matters to also be considered at North Somerset Council would be provisional and based on the facts currently known. They would be exercising their rights to reconsider the matter afresh when the matter went before North Somerset Council.

RW636 NORTH WESTON VILLAGE HALL

(A) Building Project Update

Councillor Mrs Cruse informed the Committee that the building was almost complete with final snagging due to take place on Friday 30th September and handover during the week commencing 3rd October 2005.

(B) Provision of Pedestrian Crossing and Car Park

North Somerset Council Highway Engineers had suggested that the pedestrian crossing be located slightly to the north of the village hall (approximate location between the cemetery extension and the gated entrance to the

unadopted section of Honeylands). Plans were being drawn up for display at the Village Hall Open Days and a public consultation exercise would be undertaken shortly.

A problem had arisen with the progress of the car park as North Somerset Council had indicated that they had no budget available to draw up the plans in the current financial year. As the Town Council were keen to have the car park available for use by the village hall as soon as possible it was

RECOMMENDED that

The Chairman of the Recreation and Works Committee and Clerk be authorised to arrange for the plans for the car park to be drawn up.

The Clerk confirmed that the cost of this could be met from the earmarked budget.

Councillors also commented that the positioning of the car park would need to be considered very carefully so as not to cause a nuisance to residents in Mead Road. It was further suggested that the car park could have a “grasscrete” surface.

(C) Notes of Working Party meeting held 16.9.2005

Councillor Mrs Cruse reported on the various matters discussed by the working party at their meeting on 16th September 2005. Arising from the report it was

RECOMMENDED that the report and recommendations thereon be accepted by the Council.

The report of the meeting held on 16th September 2005 is attached to and forms part of these minutes.

RW637

STRATEGY WORKING PARTY

Further to Minute No. 1246, the Committee now received a report from the Strategy Working Party following their review of the administration of the Council.

Arising from the report it was noted that the Strategy Working Party recommended that in order to obtain an unbiased view, independent consultants from the University of Gloucester be invited to undertake a thorough review of the Council's work.

The Committee generally supported this view and after considering the Terms of Reference for the consultation –

RECOMMENDED that

The Town Council engage the University of Gloucester to review the staffing levels at a cost not exceeding £1,500. The Terms of Reference to be-

1. In view of the comments of the auditor, to review the current staffing levels in relation to the present workload.
2. To review the current workload and in particular to examine:
 - (a) The type of work done by the Proper Officer and others
 - (b) The hall booking system including a possible future expansion
 - (c) A possible role for out-sourcing
 - (d) A review of which records need to be kept in relation to the Freedom of Information Act and other statutory requirements
3. To review the handling of Planning Applications in the light of their on-line availability. In particular, whether receipt and storage of hard copies are necessary if extra terminals were provided.
4. If changes in staffing are recommended, to quantify those in hours and grade of employee. Also to examine the accommodation and equipment issues and provide outline costings to any recommendations.
5. To suggest areas (outline only) where the Council could choose to extend or reduce its administrative services to match the recent and future growth in population.

RW638 LOCAL BUS CONTRACT SERVICE REVIEW

The Committee were informed that North Somerset Council were currently carrying out a review of supported bus services whose contracts were due to expire in March 2006. The review included Service No. 660 Portishead to Congresbury, Service No. 692 Portishead Town Service (Syd's Bus), Service No. 695 Portishead to Bristol (limited stop) and Service No. X24 Portishead to Cribbs Causeway (early morning journeys Mon-Fri).

The Committee expressed their disappointment at the level of information that had been supplied by North Somerset Council and

RESOLVED to defer consideration of this matter until the 26th October 2005 meeting of the Committee to enable additional information in respect of costs and passenger numbers to be obtained.

RW639 PORTISHEAD CHRISTMAS LIGHTS COMMITTEE – SAVE OUR LIGHTS APPEAL

The Committee received an update from the Portishead Christmas Lights Committee following the Save our Lights Appeal which had been set up at the end of 2004 to raise the funding necessary to replace the lights with a lower

voltage system. Members were delighted to note that the Appeal had been extremely well supported by the residents of Portishead and that approximately £12,000 had been raised since January 2004. It was understood that the cost of the replacement lighting system was £18,000.

RECOMMENDED that the Town Council support the Save Our Lights Appeal and meet the shortfall in funding up to a maximum of £6,000.

RW640 NORTH WESTON ALLOTMENTS

The Committee received a letter from the Chairman of the North Weston Allotment Association requesting that consideration be given to providing toilet facilities at the North Weston Allotment Site.

Whilst the Committee viewed the request sympathetically they considered that providing a permanent wc facility could be problematical for a number of reasons, but particularly running and maintenance costs and the increased possibility of vandalism. It was also pointed out that as the site is in green belt planning permission would probably be required. Some members suggested that the provision of a “port-a-loo” or other non-permanent facility could be investigated. Other members commented that it was not usual for toilet facilities to be provided at allotment sites and any costs associated with such a provision would need to be borne by the Allotment holders.

RECOMMENDED that the North Weston Allotment Committee be asked to explore the provision of a “port-a-loo” or other environmentally friendly solution, to seek advice from other allotment associations and to report back to the Town Council in due course.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.25pm