

AGENDA

9th April 2024

Dear Councillor

You are summoned to the:

Extra Ordinary Meeting of Warminster Town Council
on Monday 15th April 2024 at 7pm
to be held at
Civic Centre, Sambourne Road, Warminster, BA12 8LB

Membership:

Cllr Allensby (West) Vice Chairman of the Council and Deputy Mayor	Cllr Jones (East)
Cllr Brett (East)	Cllr Keeble (West) Chairman of the Council and Mayor
Cllr Cooper (Broadway)	Cllr Kirkwood (Broadway)
Cllr Davis (East)	Cllr Macfarlane (West)
Cllr Fraser (West)	Cllr Parks (North)
Cllr Hawker (Broadway)	Cllr Robbins (East)
Cllr Jeffries (North)	

Members of the public are welcome to attend meetings of the Council and Committees, unless excluded due to the confidential nature of the business.

Yours sincerely



Tom Dommett CiLCA

Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

1. **Apologies for Absence**

To receive and accept apologies, including reason for absence, from those unable to attend.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

To receive any declarations of interest under Warminster Town Council's Code of Conduct issued in accordance with the Localism Act 2011.

3. **Chairman's Announcements**

Any announcements by the Chairman

Members to note.

4. **Questions**

To receive questions from members of the council submitted in advance to the Clerk.

***Standing Orders will be suspended
to allow for public participation.***

5. **Public Participation**

To enable members of the public to address the Council with an allowance of three minutes per person regarding any item on the agenda and **to receive** any petitions and deputations. The Mayor may read out statements submitted in advance.

***Standing Orders will be reinstated
following public participation.***

6. **Commemoration of the Lives of Past Councillors**

At the meeting of the Parks and Estate Committee on 11th March 2024, members had received several requests for commemoration of former Councillors, now all deceased. Members unanimously agreed that this should be discussed by Full Council, with all commemorative ideas for past councillors going forward. Minute number [PE/23/061](#) refers. **(See attached).**

Members to resolve whether to install a bench in the Lake Pleasure Grounds to commemorate Cllr Rob Fryer's life, at a cost of circa £750.

Members to resolve whether to award a grant towards the cost of a bench in the Lake Pleasure Grounds to commemorate the life of Mr Peter Coventry, a former Mayor of Warminster, as requested by his family, and, if so, the amount of the grant to be given. The cost of a memorial bench would be circa £750.

7. **100th Anniversary of the Lake Pleasure Grounds**

At the meeting of the Parks and Estate Committee on 11th March 2024, members requested that the decision for the Centenary Event in the Lake Pleasure Grounds to be ticketed should be made by Full Council. Minute number [PE/23/062](#) refers. **(See attached).**

Members to resolve whether the Centenary Event in the Lake Pleasure Grounds be ticketed or not to proceed with the event.

8. Rights Of Way Responsibilities

At the meeting of the Town Development Committee on 26th February 2024 Nigel Linge of the Rights of Way Volunteers requested that the council engage with residents/ landowners encouraging them to maintain their hedges by sending a joint advisory letter (From both Wiltshire Council and the Town Council) in the first instance and by asking Wiltshire Council to adopt a more formal approach if no action was taken. Minute number [TD/23/065](#) refers. Subsequently Wiltshire Council have advised that their standard initial letter can be used by the Rights of Way Volunteers.

Members to ratify the proposed course of action.

9. Squash Courts at Warminster Leisure Centre

Members have been asked to oppose the decision by Wiltshire Council to close the squash court at the Warminster Leisure Centre and replace it with a gym. Wiltshire Council have issued a Councillors Briefing Note which sets out the reasons for their decision. **(See attached)**. Unitary Councillor Tony Jackson has opposed the decision. **(See attached)**. Cllr Keeble has put forward wording as suggested response. **(See attached)**

A request was made to Wiltshire Council for information regarding usage of the squash court. This information is not yet available but is being gathered by Wiltshire Council in response to a Freedom of Information Request and will be circulated when available.

Members to decide whether to support Councillor Jackson's request and write to Wiltshire Council opposing the closure.

10. Road Sweeper

The council has to make a decision on whether to renew the lease on the sweeper. It is a five-year lease, and renewal is due in June 2025, but the council would need to make a decision by the end of 2024. **(See attached)**.

The three options are:

- to continue with the current in house service
- to switch to employing a contractor to provide the service
- to end the service all together.

In preparation for this decision, members are asked to resolve to:

1. **Ask for tenders for a local site for sweeper waste dewatering and storage**
2. **Ask for quotes for a contractor provided road sweeper service.**

11. Communications

Members to decide on items requiring a press release and to nominate a speaker for any item on the agenda if required.

Minutes from this meeting will be available to all members of the public either from our website www.warminster.uk.com or by contacting us at Warminster Civic Centre.

Commemoration of past Councillors

Report for Information – Full Council 15th April 2024

Members of the Parks and Estate Committee have received several requests for commemoration of former councillors, now all deceased. Members unanimously agreed that this should be discussed at a meeting of Full Council, with all commemorative ideas for past councillors going forward to this meeting.

Background

Currently the Town Council commemorates former Mayors as follows:

- A photograph is commissioned and hung in the Civic Centre
- A past Mayor's Badge is presented to them when their term of office ends
- Some Mayors are mentioned on commemorative plaques or signs e.g. for the opening of the skatepark.

In addition:

- Roads might be put forward for naming after former councillors. These are usually new roads where developers ask for a choice of suggested names.

The Council does have a policy regarding commemorative benches, but it makes no distinction between councillors, past councillors, and other members of the public. There are a limited number of benches and bench locations under the control of the town council. Commemorative benches can be installed at a cost of circa £750.

If funding for a memorial is from family, friends, and public donations, then that is one route.

There is no specific policy in place for commemorating past councillors with council resources. Councillors are all individual and may serve very different terms of office from less than a year to several decades. Measuring the achievement of councillors is inherently subjective. It is difficult to imagine a commemorative scheme that would cover all councillors.

It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that commemoration of councillors would be the exception rather than the rule. Commemoration is therefore suitable only for exceptional cases. Who would decide what is exceptional? If it is council resources being allocated, that would have to be a decision for the current town councillors.

Therefore, each request should be judged on its merits.

Lake Pleasure Grounds Centenary Event

Report for decision – Full Council 15th April 2024

Background

Preparations for a centenary event in the park have been ongoing for a long while.

An update report was considered by the Town Development Committee in February 2024. The report said “It is planned to ticket the event; this is not for profit but will assist in controlling numbers for safety. Tickets will have a nominal charge/booking fee of £1.00.”

However, members resolved that “The Centenary event would be a free unticketed event with management of the site for crowd control.”

A further update went to the Parks and Estate Committee which resolved to refer the issue to Full Council.

At the heart of the matter is whether the event needs to be ticketed.

The key concerns

Safety – This is an unusual event in the park – it is a one-off event which is expected to appeal to a large number of people. The park has limited space. For part of the event, it will be getting dark, and alcohol is being served.

It is a large concert, much bigger than Inspire. There will be much a denser crowd than at Spring in the Park.

Something going wrong – Organisers of all big events have to consider numerous factors. In blunt terms – where does the council stand if something goes wrong? What if 6,000 people turn up? What if people are injured? What if the facilities – food, drink, toilets - are overwhelmed?

The first question the Health and Safety Executive will ask is what did the council do to control numbers?

Public order - An overcrowded event increases the chances of tempers frying and a strain being put on public order. Nobody wants to attend an overcrowded event.

If the council gains insurance cover for an event for 3,000 and 6,000 turn up – would the insurance company be inclined to pay out for problems caused by an excessive crowd?

With so many people in one place – it is obviously something for the police to consider the demands it will place on their resources.

Ticketing Advice from Wiltshire Council

Kevin Oliver – CMIOSH
Chartered Safety and Health Practitioner

“Crowd management is a critical part of an overall operational plan, the extent of which should reflect the complexity and risk associated with your event. Crowd management should be considered as an essential element from the start of the event planning process to ensure that the correct design, information, and management system is developed. This can only be done by adopting the risk assessment process.

*The Crowd Management risk assessment should identify, eliminate, and control hazards and risks related to crowd control. In my professional opinion, one way to control crowd risks is to introduce a robust ‘ticketed’ event. **Without knowing expected numbers how you can put in the appropriate safety measures such as first aid, SIA security, steward numbers, fire safety, occupant capacities, emergency procedures such as safe and efficient evacuation of the site.***

It is necessary to establish the exact number of people the venue can safely accommodate and deploy a reliable method for maintaining a continuous count of those in attendance. Once again ‘ticketing’ is the key. Ticketing can also help with the audience demographic/ profile. The Council will also need to be very specific in numbers when it applies to Licensing for your Premises Licence, again without ticketing, how could the council possibly know this?

*While most attendees will visit the event for entertainment and enjoyment, some minority influences can undermine the experience of the majority. Certain audiences and groups of spectators will engage in or be associated with recognised patterns of behaviour, such as seemingly unexplained aggression or anti-social behaviour. Such behaviour can be exhibited through individual or group activity, such as confrontation and may be affected by the consumption of drugs and alcohol. **Again, having foresight of numbers attending will help you decide on the correct security measures. The Police will demand this.”***

Other mitigations

Ticketing aside, other measures will be in place.

Facilities will be spread round the park to help spread people round the park.

Advance publicity will offer guidance to people.

Marshalls at the entrance will be welcoming attendees and offering advice and guidance.

It is accepted that the Park is not gated and that due to the rights of way, people can’t be told not to use the Park. However, most people will respect the idea that they should have a ticket to attend the event.

Some people might attend just part of the event – there is an hour change over slot between bands – but it is expected most people will use this time to visit the food and drink vendors.

Conclusion

Officers believe it is essential the event should be ticketed.

Options

The options before the council are therefore:

To proceed with the event with ticketing (there will be no charge for tickets)

or

To cancel the event.

Councillor Tony Jackson Comments to Council

Wiltshire Council Announcement of Warminster Squash Courts Closure

Wiltshire Council is planning to close Squash Courts and move the gym into the vacated space. No evidence has been cited to demonstrate a need for this change which has been announced without consultation.

I hope that Warminster Town Council will object to this plan and seek to protect an important health and leisure facility within Warminster. The projected cost far exceeds the cost of repairing the existing courts.

Reopening the Squash Centre with 2 courts has the following benefits to the town:

- Helps to make the Sports Centre viable
- Promotes community fitness and public health
- Attracts visitors and boosts Warminster hospitality industry

A thriving squash club:

- Promotes community development and cohesion.
- Encourages youth development

21 March 2024

Update on planned improvements to fitness facilities Warminster Sports Centre

Introduction

We wanted to send a written briefing following on from the Area Board where an update was provided on Warminster Sports Centre.

This is an update on our plans to improve and enhance the fitness facilities at Warminster Sports Centre.

Background

More than £10m in capital funding has been earmarked to make improvements to some of our fitness facilities in the county. It is anticipated this investment will help to increase leisure memberships, which will have long-term benefits for the health and wellbeing of residents and the council's finances. In addition, there is also a programme managed by our facilities management team to work on ongoing maintenance issues across all our leisure centres.

This funding is separate to what has already been allocated to develop the new leisure centre in Trowbridge and that project continues to gather pace.

Our focus is on:

- Financial sustainability
- Health and wellbeing
- Priority groups – more accessible to more of the community

What changes will there be at Warminster Sports Centre

Some of the earmarked funding will be spent on improving fitness facilities at Warminster Sports Centre. Our plans in Warminster include:

- Relocated, enlarged and improved fitness suite, making it much more accessible – (number of users of stair lift to current gym is one a month)
- Refurbished studios
- Consultation room
- Old fitness suite converted to flexible community space
- Relocation of squash to Leighton Recreation Centre

The potential for Warminster

There are currently 556 fitness members at Warminster Sports Centre, and our latent demand information informs that there is a potential for more than 1,000.

The current gym size is 107m² and the proposed changes will see it become 213 m². This extra space will mean increased opportunities to improve the health and wellbeing of more of the community.

It's particularly important to make the gym more accessible with the latest data from our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment showing that 26% of people aged 50 and over in Warminster are disabled under the Equality Act, compared to 25% in Wiltshire, Twenty-six percent of the Warminster Community is aged 65 and over, compared to the Wiltshire average of 21.9%, so we need to ensure there are facilities that meet their needs..

For there to be room for these improvements, we have made the decision to permanently remove the squash courts from the centre. We know this will be disappointing for those who use the squash facilities, but we're keen for as many people as possible to use the sports centre, so it is sustainable and meets the needs of a wide range of the community. There are squash facilities available to use just few miles away at Leighton Recreation Centre. Existing memberships related to squash will be useable there and we welcome people to pay the centre a visit when these changes are made.

How we have made the decisions

Throughout this project we have focused on our objectives to make improvements using the evidence we have. We have engaged with relevant expertise and advice, both internal and external, to look at local need, and the facilities and design that can meet that. We have a strong governance structure in place where final decisions are discussed and decided upon by the Leisure, Culture and Communities Board, made up of:

- Cabinet Member
- Deputy Chief Executive
- Corporate Director
- Directors: Leisure and Public Health

Next steps

- Construction underway summer/autumn 2024
- New facilities available early 2025
- Planning to minimise disruption to all centre users
- Implementation timelines and impacts to be discussed with stakeholders

Please note that as with any projects of this type, timelines could change but we'll keep you updated.

If you want further information

We are proud that while other authorities are closing leisure facilities we are closing none and investing.

As we have stated, we will ensure to keep you updated but, in the meantime, if you do have any initial enquiries, please don't hesitate to contact david.redfern@wiltshire.gov.uk.

Warminster Sports Centre and Squash Courts

Proposed Councillor Phil Keeble

Council resolves to write to Wiltshire Council opposing their proposals for the sports centre. In particular:

There has been no public consultation on the sports centre proposals.

Wiltshire Council has not provided any figures to back up squash court usage and in any event, usage will have been suppressed by Covid and the failure to reopen both courts.

Two squash courts are essential to the running of the Squash Club - allowing competitions, socialising, and playing in rotation.

Two squash courts are essential to the Squash Club's plans for a youth section – as they allow one coach to manage two courts.

The town council and area board are trying to promote youth activities e.g. support for the Football Club floodlighting, organising free canoe taster sessions and free tennis coaching. These proposals don't align with that.

While it is understood that Councils need to take costs into consideration – they also have to take a wider view. Public swimming pools, for example, rarely make a cash profit but the wider health, wellbeing and community benefits are enormous and save money in other budgets such as medical treatments, mental health. Locally provided facilities can be greener in reducing travel, especially longer journeys by car.

We believe that is it best value for the community to have a squash court which would not otherwise be provided rather than a larger gym area that would be competing with various commercial providers.

The town council calls on Wiltshire Council not to proceed on this matter until Wiltshire Council has undertaken a public consultation and reconsidered their decision in light of the outcome of the public consultation.

Report for Decision by Full Council 15th April 2024

Summary

The council has to make a decision on whether to renew the lease on the sweeper. It is a five-year lease, and renewal is due in June 2025, but the council would need to make a decision by the end of 2024.

The three options are: to continue with the current in-house service, switch to employing a contractor to provide the service or to end the service all together.

To complicate matters, the council has been seeking a local site for the disposal of sweeper waste without success. It is suggested that the council seeks a local site by inviting tenders. If the Council does find a local site it would significantly impact on the decision on whether to continue to provide an in-house service.

It is proposed, therefore, that in preparation for taking a decision about the future of the sweeper service, the council should:

- i) Ask for tenders for a local site for sweeper waste dewatering.**
- ii) Ask for quotes for a contractor provided road sweeper service.**

Purpose of the Report

To inform members of the options available for sweeper waste disposal and to enable them to make an informed decision on future sweeper waste disposal.

Background

The road sweeper was introduced in as part of improved service provision in Warminster. After an initial local sweeper waste disposal site proved problematic, sweeper waste has been taken to Compton Bassett, near Devizes.

Currently the sweeper collects debris off the roads and then drives to a Hills Waste site at Compton Bassett every day to tip at a compliant site. This is a 2.5 hour and 49.2-mile round trip. This is not an efficient use of the sweeper, as it reduces the amount of time the sweeper can be used for sweeping and for other roles. The problem is worse in the autumn when there is substantial leaf fall, which means the sweeper can quickly fill to capacity, mainly with leaves.

Additionally, during periods of wet weather the waste can contain a high-water content which is disposed with the waste at a current cost of £105/tonne.

Members asked officers to look for a local site that could be used instead. Finding a local site would enable the sweeper to spend more time sweeping and less traveling.

For around two years officers have been looking for a local site for sweeper waste dewatering in line with current legislation (Regulatory Position Statement 65 and NWFD 3). The site must have an impermeable surface, all run off water must be captured in a sealed drainage system and the site must have no public access. There are other requirements too.

Finding a site to fulfil these criteria has proved extremely difficult. Despite many discussions with landowners and agents, no suitable site has come forward. Consideration has been given to: purchase of land to build a facility on, and converting an industrial unit to a disposal site.

The difficulty in finding a suitable site is mainly due to the specialist nature of the requirements and the very limited supply of non-housing sites locally.

Options Considered

OPTION 1 – Continue to Dispose of Contaminated Waste at Hills Depot Compton Bassett

This option is the status-quo and means continuing with current arrangements of collecting waste from roads and a daily return trip to Hills depot at Compton Bassett for disposal.

It enables WTC to continue to be compliant with current legislation at no additional capital cost.

However, whilst this option has lower Whole Life Cost, it does not represent best value for money in terms of efficient use of the sweeper.

Only five hours per day will be spent on the core equipment and labour function of the resources of sweeping road within Warminster. The sweeper will continue to spend an average of 2.5 hours and 49.2 miles round trip per day for an average 220 days per year.

For the purposes of option analysis, running costs i.e. diesel, wear and tear, and maintenance, etc. of the sweeper are discounted as the total running time is assumed to be similar as the sweeper will still be operating 7.5 hours per day.

Compared to Option 2, this option will also include disposal of approx. 14 tonnes of water at £105/tonne - a total of £1,470. Contaminated water could be collected at a cost of £50/tonne or £700/year.

OPTION 2 – Create Local Contaminated Waste Disposal Site for WTC Use

The council will ask for tenders for a local site which the council would seek to rent and convert into the type of facility it needs.

This option, if successful and implemented, would provide a site, exclusive to WTC, which would enable WTC to be compliant with current legislation and increase sweeping hours by two hours per day – a 40% increase in core function utilisation.

The council may need to apply for planning permission for change of use from agricultural to industrial and would need to make alterations to the site to fulfil the obligations laid down in RPS65. (These could include installing an impermeable surface with separate drainage and a fence to secure the site and coverage to prevent rainwater accessing the site). The estimated cost of this will be circa £15,000 to £20,000. (Full quotes will be sought).

As part of the installation, an underground 8000Litre tank would also be installed to store contaminated water that drains from the waste. This reduces the weight of the waste to be loaded into skips later and therefore at a current rate of £105/t reduces the cost of disposal. The water tank will require pumping out an estimated three times per year at a cost of £50 per tonne/1000litre £400 x 3.

The rent for the site is estimated to be in the region of £8,000 to £10,000 per year. The lease would be for an initial period of at least five years with an option to extend beyond this.

ANALYSIS

Local disposal will result in the sweeper being able to undertake its core function of sweeping the roads of Warminster for an extra two hours a day, an increase of 40%.

It follows that the waste generated will increase by approx. 40% to 240 tonnes per year. This equates to an extra 69 tonnes of waste. However, with the underground tank, water will drain from the waste and be stored for separate disposal. It is impossible to estimate accurately the water content of the waste and even the contractors, Hills Waste, cannot provide data. It will also vary widely throughout the year. However, with the sweeper within WTC control, the sweeping can be controlled to minimise water content, i.e. do not sweep leaves during periods of rain. Therefore, for the purposes of this analysis, it has been assumed that an 8000litre tank will require emptying three times a year. This equates to 24,000 litres or 24 tonnes at a disposal cost of £50/tonne - less than half the cost of solid waste. Therefore, the extra 69 tonnes of waste are effectively reduced by 24 tonnes to 45 tonnes at a rate of £105/tonne or £4,725 per year.

Diesel and other running costs are assumed to be similar. The sweeper will be in use for a similar time each day but instead of driving daily to Compton Bassett and back it will be undertaking its core function of sweeping Warminster's roads.

From an environmental viewpoint, the carbon footprint of both options will be similar. However, the carbon generated from a return trip to Compton Bassett should be considered as superfluous. Therefore, Option 2 provides a more carbon efficient option.

Although this is an increase in real cost it perhaps more importantly represents an increase in efficiency and will further improve the cleanliness and aesthetics of Warminster. A local disposal site (Option 2) would resolve this and indeed have a more positive impact from increased cleaning of the roads.

The sweeper is also utilised for additional services such as watering the town centre hanging baskets. The labour and diesel costs for this have not been allowed for in this analysis.

The sweeper costs £24,674 per year to lease. This is likely to increase should the councillors decide to continue the current 'in-house' service and renew the lease for another five years which would also mean a replacement sweeper. Therefore, it is fair to assume that Option 1 represents 40% of that lease cost is wasted with the return trips to Compton Bassett.

The council needs to decide on whether to renew the lease on the sweeper. It is a five-year lease, and renewal is due in 2025, but the council would probably need to take a decision by the end of 2024.

Conclusion

Having a local site to store contaminated waste and dewater waste will come with an increased cost as there will be an annual lease and some 40% more waste will be collected due to increased efficient utilisation of the sweeper. Officers do not expect to see any tangible saving in fuel from not driving to Hills waste, because the sweeper would be out sweeping.

However, the local site will enable the sweeper to sweep for more hours a day (around 2.5 hours per day, 12 hours a week. This will be noticed around the town and particularly noticeable during peak times for example during the leaf fall period. The more effective use of the sweeper by eliminating the circa 10,800 miles per year travelling to Compton Bassett also represents a more effective use of the sweepers carbon footprint.

Option 2 would mean an initial capital outlay and an increased annual cost. However, the increased effectiveness, improved utilisation, environmental improvement and overall benefit to the town is considered to be of sufficient value to outweigh the additional cost. Option 2 to provide local disposal site is therefore the preferred option.

Contractors

The option of employing contractors to provide the road sweeping service should also be considered. Although a contractor provided service is not entirely directly comparable with an inhouse service, its value for money can be judged in a similar way. Like most industries – inflationary pressures have increased costs and prices in recent years. It is thought to be important to get a good idea now of what the upto date cost of a contractor service would be.

Recommendation

It is proposed, therefore, that in preparation for taking a decision about the future of the sweeper service, the council should:

- i) Ask for tenders for a local site for sweeper waste dewatering.**
- ii) Ask for quotes for a contractor provided road sweeper service.**

Financial and Resource Implications

If a local site is forthcoming, the capital expense of circa £20,000 can come from the capital projects budget. The increased revenue cost of circa £10,000 per year will need to be budgeted for annually. There would probably one-off legal fees to set up a contract – included in the £20,000 total estimate.

Legal Implications and Legislative Powers

The Council has the power to provide this service under the General Power of Competence.

Environmental Implications

The sweeper is compliant with all environmental legislation. Improved utilisation of the sweeper by eliminating the circa 10,800 miles (approx. 601 litres of fuel) per year travelling to Compton Bassett represents a more effective use of carbon footprint.

Risk Assessment

Risk assessments have been carried out.

Crime and Disorder

Officers are not aware of anything that would affect crime and disorder.