

MINUTES
of the Devolved Services and Assets Committee
held on Monday 5th August 2019 at 7.00pm
at the Civic Centre, Sambourne Road, Warminster, BA12 8LB

Membership:

Cllr Brett (East)	*	Cllr Macfarlane (West)	*
Cllr Doyle (East)	AB	Cllr Nicklin (West)	*
Cllr Fraser (West) Chairman	*	Cllr Robbins (East)	*
Cllr Fryer (Broadway) Vice Chairman	*		

Key: * Present A Apologies AB Absent

In attendance: Cllr George Jolley

Officers: Tom Dommett, Assistant Town Clerk, Stuart Legg, Parks and Open Spaces Manager, Judith Halls, Office Manager

Public and press: 13 members of the public 1 press

DS/19/016 Apologies for Absence
Apologies were received and accepted from volunteer, Mr Peter Hewitt.

DS/19/017 Declarations of Interest
None.

DS/19/018 Minutes
DS/19/018.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 28th May 2019 were approved as a true record and signed by the chairman.

DS/19/018.2 No matter arising.

DS/19/019 Chairman's Announcements
Cllr Fraser advised members of the public they could speak at the meeting, and she asked them to remember that what was said must be relevant to items on the agenda. Each member of the public can speak for a maximum of 3 minutes during the public participation section of the meeting. Whilst speaking comments should be directed to the chair and only one person should speak at a time. Some issues are quite emotional but please stay polite and do not shout out. Council meetings are for Councillors to make decisions and members will not be able to respond to any questions or comments.

Signed.....Date.....

Standing Orders were suspended at 7.03pm to allow for public participation

DS/19/020 Public Participation

Mr John Kitley, Warminster Model Boat Club spoke regarding concerns over possible changes to the park lake, his notes are attached.

Mr Richard Windell, Warminster Model Boat Club spoke regarding concerns over possible changes to the park lake, his notes are attached.

Pat Hayes, spoke regarding the wildlife in the park and explained that she had written in many times about the welfare of the swans. She felt that there was no place of safety for them and that the lake was too small to cordon off any area. Boats on the lake did not help the situation and wished more was done to encourage the wildlife.

John Thomas, Warminster Model Boat Club spoke regarding concerns over possible changes to the park lake, he agreed with all that his colleagues had previously stated and thought there was no point in spoiling the lake.

Cllr George Jolley spoke on several items on the agenda regarding the town park. He wanted to congratulate Sustainable Warminster on what a great job they were doing. He however had never seen a dead animal floating on the lake. He agreed that the Tree Trail had been very popular, and it should be reprinted and possibly upgraded to include memorial park benches. Finally, he felt that the skatepark was progressing well and the proposed fencing should be erected.

Mr Andrew Hill, Warminster Model Boat Club spoke regarding concerns over possible changes to the park lake saying that if lilies were planted it could damage other wildlife in the lake including muscles. The park is a great wildlife area.

Mr Tim Martin from Upton Scudamore spoke about the park, he thought it was a great space with recreation for everyone. He loved seeing the boats on the lake and felt that it had no impact on the swans. Whilst it is distressing about the swans it is usually gulls that take them. Please do not change it and err on the side of caution spending unnecessary money on Lilly planting, fencing and signage.

Standing Orders were reinstated at 7.19pm

DS/19/021 Reports from Unitary Authority Members

None.

DS/19/022 Working Group Reporting Back

DS/19/022.1 Play areas: working on the transfer of play areas from Wiltshire Council to WTC. It is expected that lease agreements will be signed in the autumn.

DS/19/022.2 Paddling pool regeneration: The working group recommendations were approved by Full Council on 24th June. Steve Matthews has taken on the role of project Manager.

Signed.....Date.....

DS/19/022.3 Asset and service transfer from Wiltshire: A meeting was held on 8th July to discuss information from Wiltshire Council and Idverde. Visits to other Town Councils are being arranged and further research being undertaken.

The Assistant Clerk added that a visit to Devizes had been arranged for Thursday 5th September 2019.

Noted.

DS/19/023 Clerk's Report: Town Park and Associated Land

- 1 Lake Pleasure Grounds:** tarmacking the path running parallel to the River Were and the three areas which were agreed in April has been completed.
- 2 Lake:** See agenda
- 3 Pavilion Café:** Continues to do well. Sales, particularly of ice-cream and cold drinks are very weather dependant.
- 4 Skatepark:** Work on the haul road was completed. Work on the skate park commenced on 1st July. Members are given regular weekly updates. It has been necessary to strengthen a small section of the haul road at a cost of £650 + VAT.
- 5 Putting green:** the additional picnic tables and benches have been installed in the putting green area. The number of players has been considerably higher. We believe due to the larger flags being more visible and the greens being maintained to a higher specification. From May 30th to July 11th 2019. 173 putters were hired at £1.50 each.

In the past few days, there have been a few incidents of antisocial behaviour in the putting green area in the early evening. Officers are working with the community policing team to tackle this issue.

- 6 Central Car Park public conveniences**
Nothing to note.
Lake Pleasure Grounds public conveniences: The insurance claim for the damaged door was accepted and a new door has been installed on 11-12th July.
- 7 Tennis courts:** The number playing has been higher this month partly due to the good weather and Wimbledon. From May 30th to July 11th 2019 there have been 80 hires of rackets and balls although far more people bring their own equipment.
- 8 Boats on the lake:** Nothing to report
- 9 MUGA area:** Nothing to report.

Signed.....Date.....

- 10 **The Boat House:** Nothing to report.
- 11 **Tree works:** nothing to report
- 12 **Green Flag:** The Lake Pleasure Grounds was presented with The Green Flag Award for the third in a row. A celebration event and flag hoisting was held on Thursday 18th July with much favourable publicity generated including BBC Radio Wiltshire broadcasting 4 live interviews from the Lake Pleasure Grounds. The judge's feedback is available to members on request.
- 13 **Paddling Pool:** The pool is scheduled to close for repairs on 5th, 6th and 7th of August.
- 14 **Elizabeth Collyns Garden:** Nothing to report.
- 15 **Play Areas:** It was previously reported that some gardens backing onto the Dene play area had installed gates directly into the play area. This could potentially cause issues in the future. Wiltshire Council wrote to those with the gates requesting that they are removed without delay. However, it transpired that the gates were originally been installed decades ago and the letter was withdrawn.

The report was Noted.

DS/19/024 Protecting Wildlife on the Lake

The members had a lengthy debate about the options available for protecting the wildlife on the lake. The Park and Open Spaces Manager told the committee that the Japanese knotweed on the island was well established and can take up to 5 years to clear. The clearance can only be undertaken when there are no nesting birds, so this is usually annually in the autumn. Member all agreed that the park was a place for all, and that the wildlife would not be so prolific if the habitat and vegetation was not suitable.

Cllr Nicklin proposed for the Council to accept Option 1, fencing around the island at a cost of £6189.76 plus VAT. No seconder came forward.

Cllr Fryer proposed for two signs on each island to be posted advising lake users to respect the wildfowl and keep their distance from the island, seconded Cllr Robbins, voting in favour 4, against 2, abstention Nil. Motion carried.

DS/19/025 Suggestions from Sustainable Warminster

Members felt that the Lake Pleasure Grounds was looking good with the improvements that had been made since it had been taken over by Warminster Town Council. Some of the ideas suggested by Sustainable Warminster were quite expensive and not necessary. However, the extension of the flower meadow would be an option.

Cllr Nicklin proposed to accept the extension of the flower meadow in the Lake Pleasure Grounds by approximately 400m², seconded Cllr Robbins, voting unanimous in favour.

Signed.....Date.....

DS/19/026 Dogs on lead signs

Members agreed that dog owners should be responsible for their dogs whilst using the Lake Pleasure Grounds to ensure safety of wildfowl and visitors to the park. The inclusion of signs should raise people's awareness.

Cllr Nicklin proposed that Warminster Town Council purchase 10 signs advising owners to keep their dogs on a lead, the wording to be approved. Seconded Cllr Robbins, voting unanimous in favour.

DS/19/027 Tree Trail

The Tree Trail was a very successful handout and encouraged people to walk around the park.

Cllr Nicklin proposed a revised version of the Tree Trail be printed, seconded Cllr Brett, voting unanimous in favour.

DS/19/028 Skatepark

Members felt that it was important to install new fencing and replace the dilapidated broken existing fence around the skatepark.

Cllr Robbins proposed upgrading of the fencing around the new skatepark in the Lake Pleasure Grounds, seconded Cllr Fryer, voting unanimous in favour.

DS/19/029 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Funding

No new projects were proposed.

DS/19/030 Communications

DS/19/030.1 The members wished for a press release to be issued regarding the new proposed signage in the park.

DS/19/030.2 None.

Meeting ended: 8.12pm

Signed.....Date.....

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WARMINSTER MODEL BOAT CLUB

From John Kitley . [REDACTED]
johngkitley@gmail.com. warminstermbc@gmail.co.uk

Madam Chair .
Concerns to changes on the Park lake.

My name is John Kitley, I am Secretary of the Warminster Model Boat Club and live at 76 St Johns Road Warminster.

I am recently retired but some three years ago I joined a dwindling number of 5 remaining members of the WMBC.

Back when the lake was run by Wiltshire C.C. the banks were falling in and the water level was so low it was not really fit for sailing only for small models.

Since the TC has taken over the facility has improved so much with deep clear water it has become one of the best venues for sailing in the County.

That is one reason why our membership has rocketed to 45 and we now have a waiting list to join.

The reason for the waiting list is that we now have problems with access to the waters edge and congestion of models on the water so much so that we are now in the process of separating the lake to sail Yachts at the far end of the lake and between the islands.

Last year we were to host a sailing competition where people from other clubs came but due to high winds and rain it had to be cancelled.

This same event will go ahead again this year hopefully bringing in some thirty plus competitors and followers. We are also in talks with Yeovil and Weymouth Sailing Associations to host a round robin event here every 12 weeks , for all these events we will need to use the whole of the lake with no obstacles in the way. Who knows we may even be able to host a National Event one day.

Warminster park is a boating lake and to sustain our club and give a quality of life to its elderly and Junior members it needs to be a vegetation and weed free.

We now have members from as far away as Lynham, Chippenham Melksham Frome Trowbridge, Westbury, Shepton Mallet where they have no stretch of clear water to compare with Warminster.

We find any intrusion of vegetation in the lake will compromise the future of our Club.

On our allotted sailing days we regularly pull debris and obstacles from the water that have been thrown in by reckless people and more work should go into protecting what we ~~have~~ already have , rather than clutter the water with vegetation that has closed many lakes to sailing clubs as it does not stay restricted to just one area and in time the need to use expensive machines or even draining of the lake could be required to clear it.

The problem is, the wildlife have had their habitat taken away from them on the islands because they are totally over grown. My personal thoughts and least expensive is to clear the first island to the ground so removing the Japanese Knotweed , then add as many ladders, slopes , and solid logs for mammals , wildfowl , lost hedgehogs to access, congregate and roost .

The same actions with part of the second Island ,leaving cover for the swans to nest. This will keep the wildfowl away from the edges of the lake so they will not be attacked by loose dogs and that will keep the grass round the lake free of animal faeces and vermin which is starting to spoil sitting or just walking round the park.

Hopefully my thought's will help to keep all the wildlife at a safe watching ^{distance} not an endangered Distance

Thank you Madam Chair.

Prepared by John Kitley (Secretary , Warminster Model Boat Club)

Andy Martin –Club Chairman

Richard Windell- Club Treasurer

Robin Silman - Co-opted Member.



WARMINSTER MODEL BOAT CLUB

(From: Richard Windell, [REDACTED], Tel: 01353 925657.

E-mail: [REDACTED])

5th August 2019.

RE: Warminster Town Council Meeting on Monday 5th August'19 on measures to increase the protection of wildfowl on the Pleasure Park Lake.

Views of the Warminster Model Boat Club

1. There has been a model boat club on the Warminster Park Lake for over 30 years and in all that time we have shown interest and consideration for the wildlife of the park. Over the past three years, due to the significant improvements made by the Council, the club has rapidly grown from about 6 members to 45 members today and we now have a waiting list to join. It is now one of the best model boating waters in the region due mainly to the clear, weed free water it offers. Indeed we now attract membership from as far away as Lynham, Chippenham, Melksham, Frome, Trowbridge, Westbury and Shepton Mallet. It should also be noted that the club uses the whole lake from time to time, many members enjoying circumnavigating the lake and some of our events separate the types of boats used to other areas of the lake. We are also hoping to host all day sailing events in the future, encouraging people into the park and town from other regions in the South West.
2. The park is a significant town asset and amenity for the public and park users. It provides a means for the public to be relaxed and entertained and brought closer to wildfowl, trees and plants generating an interest and ownership of nature which improves their quality of life and support to sustainability. The model boats significantly contribute to public interest and draws people into the park and the model boat club are strong supporters of the wildfowl and are keen to support measures to increase their protection. Indeed, it is often our presence that has reduced the impact of uncontrolled dog attacks on the wildfowl which in our view is currently the major threat to them. The presence of the rowing boats and our models has insignificant effect on the wildfowl; they take little notice. We believe that our regular presence has also served to reduce the undesirable behavior in the park by a small minority.
3. The park was not designed, nor is suitable to be a wildlife reserve and we should not attempt to make it so. There are other venues that are much more suitable as a reserve, for example Smallbrook Meadow very close to the park. The park needs to balance the needs of the wildlife with the needs and interests of the public in general. As such, the boat club in the park provides significant interest to the public and club members, many of whom are now retired providing them with a rewarding hobby and a reason to explore the park and enjoy the wildlife and other facilities. This is the original purpose of the park.
4. The model boat club supports many of the Council events in the park such as "Spring in the Park" and the "Carnival Fund Raising" and the "Green Flag Award" which provides a considerable draw for the public increasing the success of the events and the money raised. We also support invitations to local shows and events in the area – the Sutton Veny House Garden Party being one very recently.
5. We have read and studied the Town Clerk's report on potential measures to improve the protection of wildfowl and found it both informative and comprehensive. The only issue for us is the type of measures selected. We strongly support greater protection on the islands by planting shrubs and trees on the island itself but do not support marginal planting because of the potential for spreading which will require annual control which will incur a cost. However, we consider that currently the islands do not offer a suitable habitat to wildfowl because they are totally overgrown. The islands need first to be cleared back, removing

the invasive Japanese Knotweed and carefully replanted. Then any number of ladders, slopes, hazel hurdles and logs can be installed to assist wildfowl access. In addition, we also strongly support the extension of the wildflower meadow and measures for greater control of dogs which, as I have said, we consider the greatest threat.

6. As for the issue of helping small mammals out of the lake, whilst we are very supportive, we do not believe the suggested planted area at the eastern corner of the lake will work. How will the mammals know it is there and how will they use it? Furthermore we are not convinced there is a real problem here. Over the last few years at the lake we have never seen any dead mammals floating in the lake so where is the evidence of a problem? However, we have seen one example of a dead seagull in the water which indicates we should see them if they exist. If however, there is a problem we would support the introduction of "hazel hurdles" at points along the edge of the lake but not marginal planting. Such planting, apart from the potential spreading problem, we consider may pose a safety risk to children in the park. Currently the lake edge is well defined but marginal planting when mature will obscure the edge leading children to believe there is solid land where there is not. If somebody does fall in then the planting may also hinder getting them out. Planting of lilies at the top of the lake is, from experience of many other lakes, a bad idea since they won't be contained and will spread quickly unless controlled. Such control cannot be by chemical means because of the pollution and therefore must be mechanical which will require time and effort and incur costs. Furthermore, has the Council investigated the effect of such plant roots on the existing freshwater mussels in the lake? Again we have no objection to the use of "hazel hurdles" here.
7. Finally, we would like to assure the Council of the model boat club's continued support and are keen to engage more to understand the longer term plans for the park.

Prepared by Richard Windell (Treasurer, Warminster Model Boat Club) on behalf of:

Andy Martin – Club Chairman,

John Kitley – Club Secretary,

Robin Silman – Co-opted Member.