

GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Meeting of the General Services Committee held at 6.30pm on Tuesday, 18 January 2022 in the Town Hall, Banbury.

Present: Councillor Powell (Vice-Chairman in the Chair)
Councillors: Bunce, Cherry and Phillips.

Alternate
Members: Councillor Beere (for Councillor Kilsby)

Officers: Mark Recchia (Town Clerk)
Mark Hassall (Deputy Town Clerk & RFO)
Paul Almond (Operations Manager)

GS.28/21 Apologies for Absence

Councillors Colegrave, Dalton, Donaldson, Kilsby, Mears and Richards.

GS.29/21 Declarations of Interest

None.

GS.30/21 Minutes of the Last Meeting

IT WAS RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 December 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

GS.31/21 Income & Expenditure Report

The Committee considered a report prepared by the Deputy Town Clerk/RFO comparing year-to-date income and expenditure with the projected annual budget for the financial year. The report showed all expenditure incurred up to 10 January 2022.

Officers responded to a range of questions from Members relating to various budget codes and financial procedures. Members' attention was drawn to the fact that overall the Committee's expenditure was within forecast versus the phased YTD budget. The main variances were:

- Salaries and grounds maintenance costs impacted by vacancies and the remaining costs for the year across Cemeteries, Parks and Football pitches. Purchase of BBQ units and wood chipper were expected to be completed in the final quarter of the year (Q4). Lower spend against Park Ranger vehicles to be earmarked to build provision for electric vehicle replacement.
- Cleansing contract costs for Litter Control which would fall payable in March 2022.
- Increased expenditure on cleaning across the estate offset by grant income from the Controlling Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) received into the Resources Committee within other income (£110k).
- Horton View bowling green costs to repair sprinkler heads will be incurred in Q4.
- Timing of capital expenditure invoices for Hillview play area refurbishment to be completed in 2022 (£120k). Works have commenced on the café build in People's Park, projected to last 33 weeks.
- Advertising on Bus Shelters funded by a grant received from COMF.

IT WAS RESOLVED to receive and note the Income and Expenditure report.

GS.32/21 Parks and Cemeteries Monitoring Report

The Committee considered a report on the condition of the parks, recreation grounds, cemeteries and open spaces in Banbury. The report covered the following areas:

- Parks & Cemeteries Team.
- 4th Corner Landscape Contract.
- Park Ranger Service.
- Aviary Maintenance Operative.
- Christmas Lights Contract update.

Parks & Cemeteries Team Service Update

The contract schedule of operations is being delivered, winter maintenance is being undertaken, as well as sports pitch aeration operations. Officers had no issues or concerns with the Contractor's performance, service delivery remained generally very good and the work programme was being delivered as per the schedules.

4th Corner Landscape Contract

The contract schedule of operations was being delivered, winter maintenance was being undertaken, as well as sports pitch aeration operations. Officers had no issues or concerns with the Contractor's performance, service delivery was generally very good and the work programme was being delivered as per the schedules.

Park Ranger Service

The team continued to keep up to date with Health & Safety inspections and the resulting repairs to children's play areas. The Snow Wardens had been contacted in December and the data base had been updated with their details and replacement provisions, where requested, had been delivered.

Aviary Maintenance Operative

Following the retirement of Jeannie O'Brien at Christmas, an internal advert was placed for the opportunity to take on the Aviary Maintenance Operative role. Pete Holly would now be taking on the role outside of his duties as a Park Ranger. He started the role on the 25th December 2021 following shadow training and handover from Jeannie.

Christmas Light Contract – Update

Following the problems with the switch-on event, all lights were installed and working within 48hrs following the event. A meeting with the Company Director and Managers at Blachere Illuminations Ltd was held, the outcomes of that meeting were:

- A written apology from Blachere Illuminations Ltd for the poor performance.
- The Town Council's event costs re-credited via a deduction from the installation costs due as identified in the contract payments.
- Furthermore an enhanced scheme was to be proposed for the rest of the contract term at no additional cost to the Town Council.

Officers responded to a number of questions raised by Members.

It was then **RESOLVED** to:

- (1) To note the Parks and Cemeteries Service Update.
- (2) To note the 4th Corner Landscape Contract Update.
- (3) To note the Park Ranger Service Update.
- (4) To note the new arrangement regarding the Aviary maintenance operative.
- (5) To note the Christmas Light Contract update.

The meeting ended at 6.55pm