**Uppingham Town Council**

 **Minutes** **of the Amenities Committee – Wednesday 12th April 2023 at 6.45pm**

Present. Pete Rees (Chairman), Dick Reeve, Dave Casewell, Mike Fish, Tom Johnson, Charlie Pallett, Liz Clarke.

 Sharon W Coe – Town Clerk, and Cynthia Ondeng Admin Assistant were also in attendance.

1. **Chairman’s Remarks**

Cllr Rees welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed that this meeting was in way of update to the current position at the end of the election term.

1. **Apologies for Absence, Declaration of Members’ Interests and Requests for Dispensation:**

There were no apologies. Cllr Johnson declared an interest in item 6 as he was an employee of the Dorman’s Funeral Directors.

1. **Minutes of the Amenities Committee held 17th August 2022**Proposed Cllr Reeve, seconded Cllr Johnson, and **resolved unanimously** that these be approved. (Previous minute) The minutes of 14th December were also proposed by Cllr Casewell, seconded by Cllr Fish and **resolved unanimously.**

 **4. An opportunity for the public to speak.**

None present at the time of the item.

1. **To receive an update on the following**

**a ) Outdoor Gym at Tod’s Piece.**

The Clerk reported that this had now been installed and was very well received by the residents. It was a good use of CIL funding to provide a new addition to the town. It was being used and enjoyed by different sections of the community which was encouraging to see. The committee felt that an extra rubbish bin should be placed near to the equipment to reduce the possible litter build up in the surrounding area. The Clerk would investigate the prices on this and other litter bins on Tod’s Piece.

**b) Public Toilets at Tod’s Piece.**

The administration assistant gave an update on the ASB that had again been taking place. The latest events included pulling the sink from the wall, trying to start a fire and breaking the toilet. A gas leak was also reported, which was investigated immediately and declared safe. Repairs were underway on the other issues with a view to reopening. Members discussed these issues and wished the Town Clerk’s office to investigate the following:

1. Consider the options for charging entry to the toilets.
2. Extra CCTV cameras in the vicinity. A proposal was made that we invite RCC’s Community Safety Manager (Hugh Crouch) to a meeting to discuss RCC’s vision for Tod’s Piece to include budgetary requirements and future CCTV provision.

 Any costs would be reported back to a future meeting, together with a breakdown of costs,

 associated with the repairs and upkeep of the same.

 Proposed by Cllr Casewell, seconded Cllr Rees and **resolved unanimously.**

 **c) Update on the Shrub Removal at Tod’s Piece.**

The administration assistant gave an update on the issue. Biffa had confirmed that they could trim the bush, but members felt that removal was a better option. The administration assistant would obtain quotes for removal from several local firms.

Proposed by Cllr Clarke, seconded Cllr Johnson. **Resolved unanimously.**

  **d**) **Update on the Sun Dial relocation at Tod’s Piece.**

The administration assistant gave an update on the difficulty in obtaining a quote for this work which had been ongoing. Although we had approached a local company it was felt that we should approach a known stonemason in Rockingham to quote as this situation needed to be settled.

Proposed Cllr Johnson, seconded Cllr Clarke, **resolved unanimously.**

**e) Allotments – Tod’s Piece and Leicester Road**

The Clerk confirmed that 3 allotments had been allocated at Tod’s Piece and a further 6 allotments at Leicester Road. All the historic waiting list had been contacted to ascertain whether an allotment was still required, which had been taken into account. The waiting list now has 1 person wishing for a half allotment at Tod’s Piece. There were still a couple of unresolved issues at the Leicester Road which the Clerk was working proactively upon under allotment rules.

Proposed: As the soil was not considered to be good quality at Leicester Road a contractor could be engaged to plough the top sod of the recently cleared allotments to allow access to the better soil below.

Proposed Cllr Reeve, seconded Cllr Rees. **Resolved unanimously.**

The Clerk explained that this had been a time-consuming activity that had been inherited from previous administration but was now in a good place with systems and procedures in place to ensure good governance going forwards. A system for allotment inspections would be implemented by the office and the administration assistant who would now be in charge of the allotments would formalize this and invite members to join this vitally important inspection working party going forwards. This will ensure that we deal with problems as they arise. It was noted that there are two allotment associations that would give valuable insight and they also would be asked to join this working party.

**f) London Road – Hedge and Fence / Leicester Road Cemetery Cremation spaces and maintenance of the same.**

The Clerk reminded members that this had been discussed last year and she had obtained a quotation for replacement of the London Road fence which was in dire need of repair. At that time there had been a discussion about whose responsibility this was, UTC (Uppingham Town Council) or RCC (Rutland County Council), as some members felt this was a closed cemetery. The Clerk had investigated this on various levels including RCC and Dorman’s who felt that there were still spaces. RCC had confirmed that they were not the owner of the cemetery, maintenance was the responsibility of UTC. The Clerk confirmed that she could instigate the “Transfer of a disused burial ground to a local authority” which was covered by statute (Open Spaces Act 1906, chapter 5, 6 edw 7). A verbal conversation had been had confirming that RCC don’t have to statutorily take on maintenance of a closed cemetery should it be designated as such.

It was proposed that.

1. Eddie Dornan be invited to the London Road Cemetery to ascertain the “available” plots that he had referred to.
2. The Clerk’s office to reobtain up to date quotations for the removal and installation of a fence fronting the main road that was fit for purpose.
3. Repairs to the hedging around the cemetery which was used as a short cut by school children.

Proposed by Cllr Casewell, seconded Cllr Rees. **Resolved unanimously.**

**g ) Station Road replacement seat.**

It was proposed that the Clerk’s office obtain quotes for a seat to replace the broken wooden seat that has been removed regarding safety concerns.

Proposed Cllr Rees. Seconded Cllr Fish. **Resolved unanimously.**

**h ) Responsibility for pavement cleaning in Uppingham**

This item had been placed on the agenda as various complaints had been received both at the office and to individual councillors regarding what was deemed to be “the worst the pavements had ever been “. The Clerk confirmed that unfortunately this was not within the remit of UTC and was the responsibility of RCC.

The Clerk was asked to write to RCC regarding the situation and what RCC were intending to do to rectify the situation. A copy of the letter would also be sent to our local ward councillors (after they were known following the elections) to request them to strongly lobby RCC on behalf of the town.

1. **To consider the cemetery paper put forward by Cllr Johnson.**

Cllr Johnson declared an interest as shown earlier. He overviewed the paper and explained the rationale behind the paper. Several meetings had taken place at the Leicester Road Cemetery with both Councillors and the Clerk, who had suggested that a plinthed cemetery be considered.

Cllr Johnson overviewed the idea that a properly “zoned cremation area” be plinthed to the left of the current burial area (behind the current notice board) to allow space for cremations for many years to come. A plinthed row could be added to the burial section in future years to ensure conformity and make the cemetery a more welcoming place to visit and pay respects to loved ones. This would alleviate the current problem that had been allowed to happen whereby stones were not aligned. This would also make the cemetery easier to maintain.

Members also discussed cemetery charges as it was felt by the Clerk and members that these were not reflective of the situation locally. This would be done sympathetically, and the Clerk would research both areas and these would be referred to F & G P for consideration.

Proposed Cllr Rees, seconded Cllr Clarke. **Resolved unanimously.**

The Chairman thanked everyone for their input and closed the meeting at 7.45pm.