

NORTH TAWTON TOWN COUNCIL

Temporary Town Clerk:
Mrs S Say

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Minutes of the Meeting of North Tawton Town Council Estates Committee held at the Council Offices on **Wednesday 12 October 2016**

Present: Cllr Mr I MacLeod, Cllr Mr K Hodge, Cllr Mrs C Burrow, Cllr Mr S Whiteley

Rev. N. Weldon, Rector of North Tawton, was present for items 3 & 4.

The meeting opened at 6.45 pm.

1 Apologies.
Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs G Hoggins (family circumstances), and Cllr Ms J Trewitt (on leave). The apologies were accepted.

2 **Declarations of interest.**
There were no declarations of interest.

3. **Overgrown Conifer in Churchyard (to rear of cottages in The Square)**
The Clerk briefly summarised the history of this issue to date. In response to a query as to who might have originally planted the tree in question, the Rector did not think this could have been the Church. The Rector confirmed that if the tree were to be removed completely, it would have to be subject to a faculty application, but not if it was only pruned. The Clerk confirmed that the relevant notification had been sent to West Devon Borough Council, in respect of the tree being either pruned or removed, so that the permissions would be in place whatever was decided by NTTC. Cllr I MacLeod suggested we proceed with the removal of the lower limbs of the tree, which would let light through to the cottages behind the tree, and allow for clearing of the area beneath the tree – a quote for this work has already been obtained. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Mrs C Burrow, and unanimously agreed. The Clerk will instruct the contractor accordingly.

4. **Consideration of request from St Peter's Church to incorporate a layer of gravel chippings on/amongst the cobbles on the pathways within the churchyard.**

The Rector outlined the issues behind his request to the Council to consider laying gravel/chippings over the cobbles. He is often approached by members of the public about the danger of the cobbles being slippery and uneven. The path from the Lych Gate in Market Street is used as a thoroughfare to the school and so on, and not just by those visiting/attending services at St Peter's. People have fallen over, and some people avoid using the path altogether. The Rector reiterated that gravel has been laid on areas of cobbles at Bondleigh, and this has been successful. The Church would be very keen to retain the character of the cobbles, it is felt that a thin layer of stones as proposed would not look unsightly. Cllr Mr S Whiteley stated his concerns as to the Council's insurance, in its capacity of being responsible for maintenance of the churchyard.

Cllr S Whiteley proposed that the Council, as an experiment, lay a small area of gravel/stone chippings over the cobbles on the path between Exeter Street and the Bell Tower. This was seconded by Cllr I MacLeod, and unanimously agreed. The Clerk was requested to check the Council's insurance and report back to the next Council Meeting. This was unanimously agreed. It was also agreed that some

Members of the Committee would visit Bondleigh to inspect the relevant works and try to see if it would be equally workable at North Tawton.

5. Overgrown Oak Trees on Council-owned land at Strawberry Fields.

Cllr Whiteley confirmed that he and Cllr MacLeod have inspected the land in question, and agree it is generally overgrown and unsightly. Cllr S Whiteley proposed that the Council ask their contractor for a price for pruning the holly and oak trees, and to tidy up and prune all the other plants and shrubs. If the price is acceptable to the Council, the contractor will be instructed to undertake the works accordingly. Cllr Whiteley and/or Cllr MacLeod will make an initial visit with the contractor to clarify the scope of the proposed works.

6. TAP Funding

It was noted that the Council still has money to claim for Parish Lengthsman works, and this must be claimed before any other applications can be submitted.

7. North Tawton Town Council Town Centre Car Park

Further to discussion as to possible redesign of the bays in the car park, there was considerable doubt as to whether it would result in enough extra spaces to justify the cost. It was considered that 3 more bays could be created within the existing layout, only needing to be marked out with white lines. Cllr MacLeod proposed that the yellow lines around the disabled bays be repainted, and also the three extra bays in the locations discussed be marked out. Cllr Mrs C Burrow seconded this proposal, which was unanimously agreed. The Clerk will instruct the Council's contractor accordingly.

8. North Tawton Memorial Park

8.1 – Future Plan for the Park – This issue has been the subject of ongoing discussions for some time. Some outline proposals had been submitted to Rob Sekula of West Devon Borough Council. NTTC had then approached Mr Geoff Cawse to produce a more formal plan. It was reported that the group formed at the time of the original discussions have not met formally to discuss proposals. It was agreed that any proposals should closely involve the community as a whole, and it was suggested that an appeal for suggestions could go onto the Memorial Park Facebook page, with the appeal being replicated perhaps in the Roundabout at the same time. After some further discussion, Cllr I MacLeod proposed a meeting of the Park Trustees, together with Mr G Cawse, in November if possible. Cllr S Whiteley seconded this proposal, which was unanimously agreed. The outcome of this meeting will determine the way forward.

8.2 - Picnic and Seating benches in the park – The Clerk reported that one of the wooden picnic benches had already been broken to the extent that it had been disposed of as beyond repair. A second bench had then been broken and was believed to be in storage at the Cemetery, but was also said to be beyond repair. The Clerk was requested to ask the Council's contractor to repair this bench if at all possible. After some discussion, Cllr S Whiteley proposed that consideration of purchase of replacement benches, in heavy duty plastic, should form part of the overall plan for the future of the park. Cllr I MacLeod seconded this proposal, which was unanimously agreed.

8.3 - Overgrown Shrubbery in areas of the Park – The Committee was advised that the contract for maintenance in the park requires the areas of shrubbery to be pruned and cut back in December. It appears that this work has been undertaken in previous years, but the shrubbery has perhaps not been cut back as hard as it has in the past. Cllr I MacLeod will make a joint visit to the park with the contractor to clarify the extent to which it now needs to be cleared when the annual cutting back takes place.

The meeting was closed at this point to allow questions from members of the public.

9. Questions/comments from members of the public.

A member of the public was present at the meeting, but no questions or comments were raised.

The meeting was reconvened.

10. Parish Matters

10.1 It was reported that the overgrown/overhanging shrubs on areas of land between Letherens and Yeo Lane need to be cut back again. The Clerk will contact DCC Highways Department accordingly.

10.2 Further to previous discussion and actions reference cars parked in a dangerous/inconsiderate manner, the Clerk reported that the latest advice from Devon County Council is that they cannot enforce on cars parked in a dangerous fashion. Similarly, it is difficult to enforce against parking on the pavement. Cars parked in a dangerous fashion, or inconsiderately close to a junction (for example) should be reported to the police. However, the police have advised that they need specific and timely information – it is not enough to say that such parking regularly takes place at various locations. The police require specific reports including the make and registration number of allegedly offending vehicles at the time in question, and they will then send an officer to investigate. It was suggested that this information be made public, with a request for people to report direct to the police as appropriate. With reference to certain specific vehicles in Fore Street, which have been the subject of discussion in relation to inconsiderate and dangerous parking, the Clerk was requested to put a notice or letter on the windscreen of alleged offending vehicles prior to being reported to the police.

Part II

Two items were discussed under Part II of the agenda.

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

The next Ordinary Meeting of North Tawton Town Council is due to take place in the Council Offices on Tuesday 1 November at 7.15 pm (there will be an item in the Public Forum part of the agenda).