

Workington Town Council

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Minutes of the Environment Committee of Workington Town Council, 6.30pm on 11 June 2020 on the Zoom virtual meeting platform.

Cllr H Harrington (Chair)	Present
Cllr C Armstrong	Present
Cllr H Briggs	Present
Cllr R Briggs	Present
Cllr G Glaister	Absent
Cllr J Hunter	Apologies
Cllr P Scott	Present
Cllr S Stoddart	Absent
Cllr W Wilkinson (vice chair)	Present
Cllr L Williams	Present
Cllr J King (Mayor)	Present

In attendance: Town Clerk. Also present six members of the public, including three members of Vulcan Park Bowling Club.

E19.71. Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted as being for approved reasons under the terms of the Local Government Act 1972, s85, from Cllr J Hunter.

E19.72. Declarations of Interest

No further declarations were made.

E19.73. Exclusion of Press and Public

No issues.

E19.74. Minutes of the last meeting

The Minutes of the previous meeting on 21 January 2020 were accepted as a true record.

E19.75 Mowing the Vulcan Park Bowling Green

The Committee considered a report on the potential purchase of a specialist mower to facilitate the re-opening of the Vulcan Park Bowling Green, in line with the lifting of government restrictions in mid-May. The report stated that the Bowling Green in Vulcan Park could not currently be re-opened for general use, because the Town Council did not have the necessary mower to do the work properly. In previous years the work had been carried out by the Borough Council's grounds maintenance contractor, but in 2019, the first year the Town Council was responsible for the maintenance of the green, this had proved quite expensive. Officers had brought forward a proposal to replace the contractor with an in-house mowing regime, using a second-hand mower. They were seeking a budget authorisation of £2,500 to secure

a good quality mower, having reviewed the second-hand market and viewed a number of potential machines.

Councillors were concerned about the cost of supporting a relatively small club, which contributes barely a fifth of the required capital in rent to the Council. There was considerable debate about the likely return on an investment of this size, and whether the Bowling Club could re-introduce bowling at all, given the restrictions on social distancing. Members of the Bowling Club were invited to contribute to the debate with factual information and some indication of their likely plans for the safe reintroduction of their sport.

It was noted that the competitive bowling season for 2020 had been cancelled, and any bowling that did take place would be subject to social distancing rules. The Club had plans to mark out sufficient rinks (areas of play) for the limited re-introduction of play, though it was further noted that many bowlers kept their personal bowls in the Bower, and access to the Bower was currently prohibited through the Covid 19 regulations. The Club's membership was low, but they believed they could boost interest in the sport and gain more members, especially since the sport is very good for older people but also accessible to all ages. A query about the gender of the membership was answered – there are currently only two women members, which is insufficient for a ladies team, but if more people joined a women's team could be established. The Bower includes a women's toilet a men's toilet and a disabled toilet.

There was a discussion about the cost of the particular mower identified by officers as a recommendation. The Clerk explained that he and the Estate Team Leader had done some research in to the matter, and that he had asked the ETL to come back to him with a range of options. She did this, and also viewed some suitable machines. It was noted that a simple trawl on eBay revealed machines for less than £900 which may be suitable.

Following the discussion, a resolution was suggested that reduced the amount spent on a mower by at least £1,000. This was put to a vote of the Committee members present. Cllr Williams lost her connection at this point (around 19.45)

Resolved: That the Committee authorise a payment of no more than £1,500 (ex VAT) from the Parks Maintenance budget for the purchase of a suitable mower. The Clerk and the ETL to keep the Chair informed, but only return to the Committee if the task proved impossible.

The meeting closed at 19.50