



Dear Councillor

13 November 2020

You are summoned to join a virtual Extraordinary Meeting of the **TOWN COUNCIL** via video link on **FRIDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2020 at 11.00 am.**

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Laurence Hart'.

Town Clerk

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Members of the public are invited to submit questions to the Council in writing by **9.30 am on the day before this meeting** is due to be held (i.e. Thursday, 19 November 2020) using the following email address: office@wimborne.gov.uk or by delivering a hard copy of the question to the Town Hall, West Borough.

AGENDA

- 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 2 DORSET COUNCIL DOG RELATED PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER 2020**
To consider the report of the Town Clerk (report to follow).

Extraordinary Town Council – 20 November 2020

LOCALISM ACT 2011 and CODE of CONDUCT

Members are reminded to comply with those elements of the Localism Act and the Town Council's Code of Conduct in respect of disclosable pecuniary interests.

GENERAL CONDUCT

Members are reminded that the Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in the exercise of any of its functions: Equal Opportunities (race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status and any disability), Crime & Disorder, Health & Safety, Human Rights and Data Protection (General Data Protection Regulation).

PUBLIC ATTENDANCE AT VIRTUAL MEETINGS

Members of the public and press will be allowed to listen *and watch* the meeting in audio mode only using Zoom. To avoid disruption the public and press will not be displayed on video or be able to be heard by the meeting.

Please choose one of the following options to observe and / or listen to the meeting from 11.00 am:

To access online via Zoom website:

1. Access the Zoom Video and Teleconferencing website by the following link:

<https://zoom.us/>

2. Click to 'Join a Meeting'
3. When prompted, insert Meeting ID and Password as below:

Meeting ID: 935 5490 5018

Password: 267701

Please note, you may be asked to register and sign into your Zoom user account. This will require a personal email address and password

To access audio only by telephone:

1. Dial United Kingdom: +44 330 088 5830; or +44 131 460 1196; or +44 203 481 5237; or +44 203 481 5240; or +44 208 080 6591; or +44 208 080 6592.
2. When prompted, insert Meeting ID and Password as below:

Meeting ID: 935 5490 5018

Password: 267701

Any questions which members of the public wish to put to the Council or Committees must be in writing and received by 9.30 am on the preceding working day before the meeting using the following email address: office@wimborne.gov.uk. Alternatively, a written question can be delivered to the Town Hall by 9.30 am on the preceding working day before the meeting. Every effort will be made to answer the question at the meeting but there may be a need to obtain information from other sources and in those circumstances a written response will be provided at a subsequent time.

WIMBORNE MINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

Date: 20 November 2020

Extraordinary Meeting of the Town Council – Item 2

Report by: Town Clerk

The Dorset Council Dog Related Public Spaces Protection Order 2020

Members are aware that this Order was referred to the Recreation & Leisure Committee at its meeting on 6 November 2020 before we were aware that there were provisions in the Order which would allow land owners such as the Town Council to effectively disapply those provisions which it wished to. The decision as to whether to disapply any of the provisions in respect of the Town Council's recreation grounds was referred to the Town Council.

The Order comprises the following six sections:

1. General provisions
2. Removal and disposal of dog faeces
3. Dogs to be excluded from identified areas
4. Dogs to be kept on a lead when directed to do so by an authorised officer
5. Dogs to be kept on lead in identified areas
6. Penalty

These sections are to be read in relation to the schedules attached to the Order:

Schedule 1 - General land provision

Schedule 2 - Exclusion of dogs

Schedule 3 - Dogs to be kept on leads

Members were sent a copy of the Order on 6 November 2020 and a further copy is attached herewith (**Appendix 1**).

It is clear from the number of emails and letters received from users of the Town Council's recreation grounds that the stringent restrictions proposed in the Order will cause inconvenience and distress to many of them. A synopsis of the representations made by our residents was also sent to Members and is again attached herewith (**Appendix 2**).

Following a straw poll of Councillors it is clear that there is a majority in favour of disapplying those restrictions in the Order to maintain the status quo for those people in control of dogs. A formal vote will therefore be required in relation to the Order as follows:

Section 1 – General Provisions

These cannot be disappplied. **No vote is required.**

Section 2 – Removal and Disposal of Dog Faeces

The Town Council would wish to retain the requirement for those people in control of dogs to have to pick up and dispose of the faeces. Therefore, the Town Council would not disapply this provision.

No vote is required.

Section 3 – Dogs to be Excluded from Identified Areas

This section would apply to the marked football and rugby pitches at both Redcotts Recreation Ground and Leigh Park Playing Field and if not disapplied would ban dogs from entering and remaining on those pitches at any time.

A vote is required to maintain the status quo by disapplying this section.

General consent would then be given to allow dogs to enter and remain on any marked sports pitch on land within the ownership of the Town Council (see section 3.3.2).

[Note: This section would continue to apply to the play areas, tennis courts and bowling green which are fenced.]

Section 4 - Dogs to be kept on a lead when directed to do so by an authorised officer

The Town Council would wish to retain the requirement for those people in control of dogs to have to be put leads on their dogs in order to prevent an anti-social incident. **No vote is required.**

Section 5 - Dogs to be kept on lead in identified areas

A vote is required to maintain the status quo by disapplying this section.

General consent would then be given to allow dogs to be off a lead within 5 metres of any marked sports pitch at any time on land within the ownership of the Town Council (see section 5.2.2).

Extraordinary Town Council Meeting – 20 November 2020

Issues raised by public on dog PSPO

1. It will be necessary for people to drive somewhere to let their dog off the lead - not good for monetary or health reasons, or climate change due to increased traffic on roads.
2. Those with limited mobility may not have the option of driving to another area to walk their dog off the lead, especially if they do not have a car.
3. Additional parking would be needed at other places such as By The Way and Eye Bridge.
4. Dogs need off-lead time to exercise properly.
5. The order assumes that dog owners are not responsible and do not pick up after their dog. Not the case as dog warden reports evidence.
6. This is being done to benefit football clubs/footballers who use the park once a week and a large proportion of which will not be local or precept payers. A larger proportion of precept payers use the park each day for dog walking which exercises both themselves and the dog. Is the Town Council prioritising the footballers as they pay to hire the pitches?
7. Many dog owners live alone and walking their dog in the park is a social activity for them. Benefits for physical and mental health.
8. Having dog walkers using the park in the day helps to minimise anti-social behaviour.
9. This will cause division within the community of Wimborne. Parks are intended for use by all the public.
10. Dogs would be crowded into a much smaller area which could lead to socialisation problems between different dogs.
11. Littering and not dog excrement is the bigger problem. The dog warden should fine people for not clearing up after their dog. There is no evidence that there is a dog fouling problem. However, litter is frequently left behind after football matches including tape, water bottles and disposable coffee cups. Other antisocial behaviour by footballers includes spitting and not using the public toilets but urinating in hedges on the boundary to residences.
12. During COVID restrictions this is placing another curtailment on exercising.
13. During the winter the football pitches are often unusable, but dog walkers use the grounds every day, several times a day whatever the weather causing very little damage.
14. Impact on dogs due to less socialisation opportunities.
15. How will compliance with the Order be policed? Who will fund this? Why is drug taking, alcohol consumption and other anti-social behaviour not being tackled?
16. Will the ban only be during the football season?
17. Will the pitches be fenced off to prevent foxes, cats and other animals defecating on the pitches?
18. Will the council mark out the 5 metre exclusion zone? Some of this exclusion zone will encompass roads and pavements.
19. Will poo bins be moved so as not to be within the 5 metre zone?

20. There appears to be no exemption from the 5 metre exclusion zone. Does this mean that even playing fields with fences such as the tennis courts require a 5 metre zone?
21. Presumably basketball court and petanque court included in definition of sports pitches. It is not possible to walk from the south to the north field without passing within 5 metres of a sports pitch.
22. How many WMT Councillors actually live in Wimborne Minster Town Centre and pay the precept? How many have dogs? How many walk their dogs in Redcotts Park and depend on
23. this green space for exercise and recreation? How many voted for/against this DC recommendation?

Suggested compromises/solutions:

24. Consider giving half the park to dog walkers.
25. Could there be specified times when dogs could be walked off lead? The pitches are used for a short period of time each week.
26. Remove the football pitches completely.
27. Review the actual usage and income earned by the Town Council from the 2 marked pitches in the park and consider the financial implication of removing, as an example, the smaller 7/9 a side pitch, leaving the area behind the old First School as a 'lead off' area for dogs; Could local resident dog owners pay a small fee each year to cover the shortfall in income from this pitch?
28. Consider whether the 2 marked pitches could be fenced in, in a similar manner to the playground, leaving the balance of the park free for 'lead off' dog use.
29. If the decision is to keep both marked pitches 'unfenced', is there space in the park for a fenced in dog run area - for example, in the triangle of grass outside the groundsman's garage or on the grass court tennis courts (already fenced in), making use of the grass area that isn't used for tennis courts in the summer (there is space for more than the 3 courts that are usually marked up)?