

WIMBORNE MINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of an **EXTRAORDINARY INFORMAL MEETING** of the **TOWN COUNCIL** via video link held on **FRIDAY, 22 OCTOBER 2021** at **10.30 am**

MEMBERS PRESENT VIA VIDEO LINK

Cllr K F Webb –Town Mayor & Vice-Chairman of the Council
Cllr C L Butter – Deputy Town Mayor & Vice-Chairman of the Council

Cllr S K Bartlett
Cllr D Burt
Cllr C A Chedgy
Cllr J Hart
Cllr L C Hinks
Cllr M J Hopkins
Cllr D J March
Cllr W J Richmond
Cllr A E Roberts
Cllr F Shirley
Cllr S Wheeler

MEMBER NOT PRESENT

Cllr P Bache

OFFICERS PRESENT VIA VIDEO LINK

Town Clerk
Assistant Town Clerk
Committee Officer (for Minute 77)

75 **QUEEN ELIZABETH LEISURE CENTRE – CONSULTATION**
(Min 70 – 24.09.21)

The Chairman submitted a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as **Appendix A** to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Cllr Bartlett reported that the Ward councillor for the area in which the Centre was situated was Cllr Robin Cook and that Cllr Cook would therefore be the Dorset Councillor taking a lead on this issue. Cllr Bartlett also reported that there had been a recent cabinet reshuffle and that the Portfolio Holder was now Cllr Laura Miller.

Cllr Chedgy commented that the online survey which the Town Council had been invited to complete by Dorset Council as a response to the consultation was targeted at users of the Centre and did not seem particularly relevant to Town or Parish Councils

Members were minded to agree that the Town Clerk take the following action:

1. To write an appropriate letter to Dorset Council in the strongest possible terms requesting that the facility be retained. Councillors were asked to submit any matters they wished included in this letter to the Town Clerk by the end of October 2021.
2. To seek a meeting between representatives of the Town Council and the Dorset Council Cabinet, and to attempt to obtain the data from Dorset Council which had justified this proposal.

The Chairman encouraged all Members to respond to the consultation in a personal capacity.

DORSET COUNCIL – COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The Chairman reported that she had had a conversation with the Chairman of Pamphill & Shapwick Parish Council about potential changes to the boundary between that parish and Wimborne Minster parish.

The Chairman of Pamphill & Shapwick Parish Council had been receptive to the suggestion that Pamphill South was really part of Wimborne Minster town separate from the rest of mainly rural Pamphill. However, if possible, the Chairman of the Parish Council would wish to retain the area around St Margaret's Almshouses in view of its historical connection with Kingston Lacy. He had also suggested that the field on the south side of the River Stour on which travelling shows such as circuses and fairs were held in the summer months should be included in Wimborne Minster parish. These suggestions had not been approved by the Parish Council.

The Town Clerk presented a map showing these changes coloured red a copy of which appears as **Appendix B** to these Minutes. He pointed out that the area coloured blue on the map was the area which the Chairman of the Parish Council wished to retain.

Town Clerk reminded members that that they had asked at an earlier meeting that the Warding of the Town be removed so that all 14 councillors represented the whole Parish thereby ensuring that the ratio of electorate per councillor was fairer.

It was agreed that the Town Clerk make representations to Dorset Council as follows:

- a) **That the parish of Wimborne Minster be altered to include the polling district of Pamphill South with the caveat that the Town Council would have no objection to the Parish Council's wish to retain the area coloured blue on the map attached as Appendix B;**
- b) **That the parish of Wimborne Minster be altered to include the area south of the River Stour known as Wimborne Showground coloured red on the map attached as Appendix B;**
- c) **That the warding of Wimborne Minster for electoral purposes be removed.**

77 THE QUEEN'S GREEN CANOPY – TREE TRAIL (Min 51 – 23.07.21)

The Town Clerk submitted a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as **Appendix C** to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The Committee Officer reported that the initiative of a Tree Trail around the Town had been suggested at a Recreation and Leisure Committee meeting on 23 July 2021.

The Town Council supported the initiative with the Tree Trail comprising 'interesting' trees, not just native species.

78 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (Min 304 – 09.10.20)

The Town Clerk submitted a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as **Appendix D** to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The position of the Town Council remained largely unchanged from the previous year when the development of a Neighbourhood Plan had been deferred.

Cllr March, Chairman of the Planning & Environment Committee, expressed concern that the Town Council did not currently have sufficient resources to take this project further at the present time. It was noted that the Town Council was actively engaged in planning matters and had recently given a very detailed response to the draft Dorset Local Plan.

Extraordinary Town Council – 22 October 2021

Cllr Bartlett commented that there was no guarantee that a Neighbourhood Plan could provide the necessary protection from unwanted development.

It was suggested that at some time in the future a more targeted plan could be drawn up, perhaps concentrating on how to resolve traffic issues within the Town.

It was agreed that the Town Council would not pursue the development of a Neighbourhood Plan in the foreseeable future.

This part of the meeting closed at 11.45 am. The Council then reconvened at 11.50 am in private session.

The meeting closed at 12.15 pm.

SignedDate.....
Town Mayor and Chairman of the Council

WIMBORNE MINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING

DATE: 22 OCTOBER 2021

REFERENCE: APPENDIX A: QUEEN ELIZABETH LEISURE
CENTRE - CONSULTATION

AUTHOR: CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

As Members will be aware, the consultation by Dorset Council on the possibility of ending the dual use agreement with Queen Elizabeth's School regarding the Leisure Centre has caused considerable alarm amongst Wimborne Minster residents and the wider community.

As Members will also be aware, Dorset Council would not give the Town Council an extension of time in order to prepare a response to the consultation exercise. The Portfolio Holder had suggested that the Town Council completes the survey instead by 7 November 2021. There might be an opportunity for a meeting with the Portfolio Holder after the closing date.

Last Wednesday, I had a meeting with the Head Teacher of Queen Elizabeth's School and the Director of Resources for the Academy Trust in the hope of finding out more information in relation to this proposal.

I explained that WMTC were aware that WARD Members were taking actions in relation to their roles at DC but that WMTC Members felt strongly that we should also make representation on their behalf.

Background

I was advised that, the Land that the Leisure Centre (LC) is built on is owned by QE Charitable Trust (separate to Academy Trust). EDDC built the LC as a 'dual use' facility i.e. for the community and for the School. There is a 'dual use' agreement put in place up to 2080s to ensure the building could be used for both community and School moving forward.

This agreement has a withdrawal clause that both parties can invoke with two years' notice, this is the clause that DC are now looking to invoke.

A shared cost arrangement sees a split of 60% costs being met by EDDC (transferred to DC) and the remainder to the School.*

This facility is much more substantial than schools would ordinarily build were it to be building a non 'dual use' facility i.e. larger and has enhanced facilities more targeted to private members rather than school children. Therefore, the costs that will remain if DC withdraw will be extraordinary compared to that which a school would normally suffer.

Had they envisioned having to maintain and fund their own school facility, this would not have been the design or size that QE School would have chosen.

*The facility was awarded status of 'Exceptional Funding Factor' by the School Funding Agency (SFA). This award must be requested by and received by DC (to be redistributed to QE) and is worth the 40% of costs that QE are liable for – approx. £280kpa. The status reflects the exceptional nature of the facility i.e. that it is not what a school would normally have for their own use and that the running and maintaining of it would be significantly more on the basis of it being of 'dual use'.

DC have made it clear that their intention is to withdraw from the agreement, thereby no longer contributing the 60% of costs, but in addition, will no longer apply to the SFA on QE's behalf, for the additional 40%. So, by withdrawing from the agreement, QE will lose 100% of the costs to maintain the LC. QE are unable to apply directly to the SFA for that funding.

Building Maintenance

Prior to these discussions (possibly 2019), a buildings maintenance inspection was done by an independent person commissioned by DC and a Buildings Condition Report provided. A number of significant areas of works were identified. After the consultation was announced – a further inspection was done and far less work was identified. QE are sceptical about the reduced works recommended, now that DC are in negotiations to hand off the building.

There has been some discussion about DC giving a capital sum to reflect works needed.

Consultation

DC are hoping that QE will retain at least some of the existing facility for community use and would have liked that included in the consultation, but QE were not able to make any commitments without financial information relating to the running costs and revenue being provided to them.

Conclusion

Although the facility is located in the parish of Pamphill, as mentioned earlier it is of considerable importance to Wimborne Minster residents and their wellbeing.

I asked what WMTC could do to support QE with their position.

They asked that we make a point of the following;

- That we ask that DC take seriously the responses to the consultation and act accordingly;
- Consider the impact on the community and climate (excess travelling to alternative sites);
- Reconsider their proposals to withdraw;

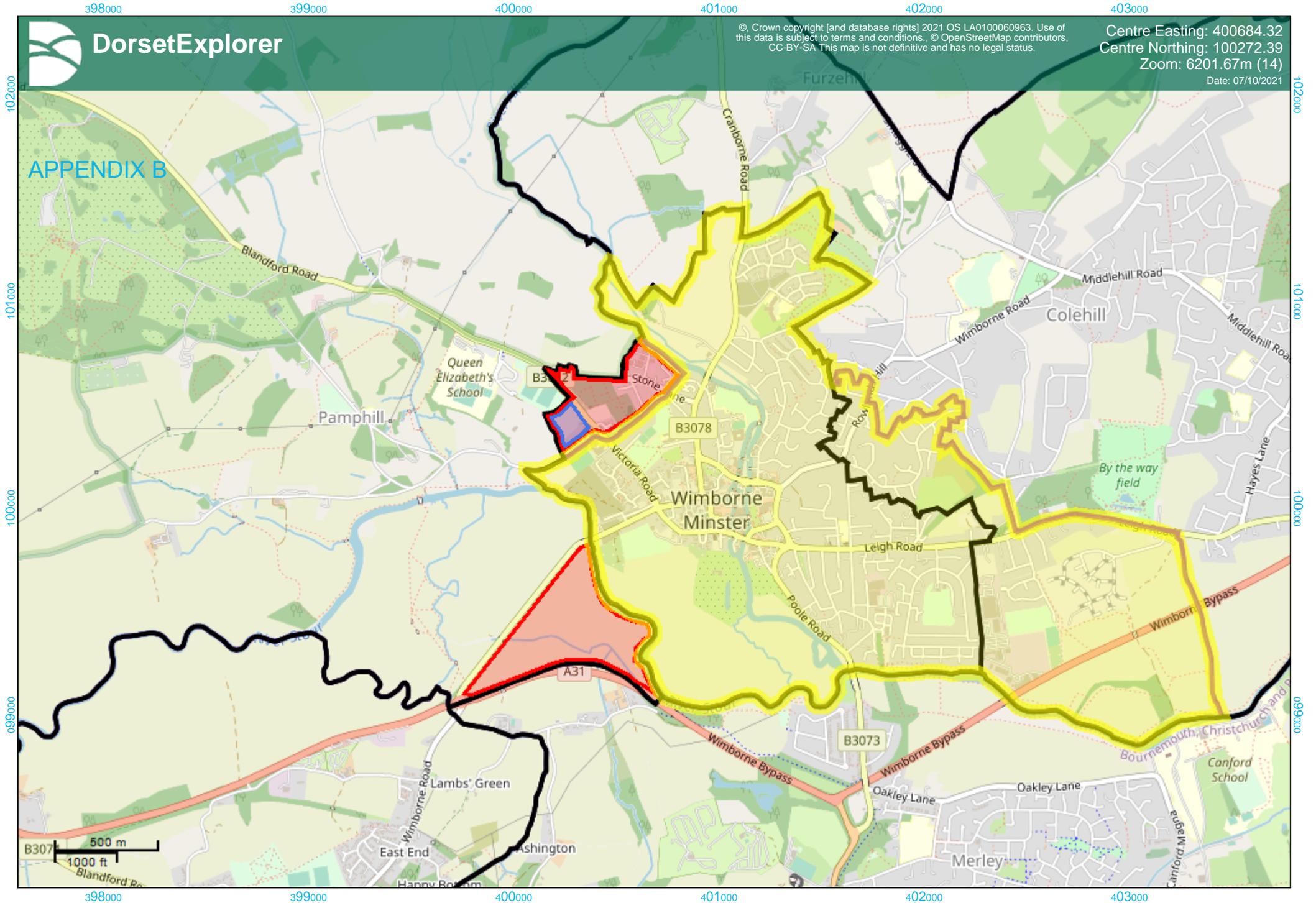
- If they are unable to review their decision, to consider a fair and reasonable revenue package to maximise community use going forward.

Therefore I suggest the following actions:

1. That the Town Council writes to Dorset Council in the strongest possible terms about the need to retain this facility, given the impact on the community and climate, with a view to withdrawing the proposal to terminate the dual use agreement.
2. I also recommend that meetings be sought between representatives of the Town Council and the Dorset Council Cabinet and that prior to that meeting every effort be made to obtain the data from Dorset Council which has justified this proposal even being considered as a possibility.



APPENDIX B



WIMBORNE MINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING

DATE: 22 OCTOBER 2021

REFERENCE: APPENDIX C: QUEEN'S GREEN CANOPY – TREE

AUTHOR: TRAIL TOWN CLERK

The Queen's Green Canopy (QGC) is a unique tree planting initiative created to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee in 2022 which invites people from across the United Kingdom to "**Plant a Tree for the Jubilee.**"

Individuals, groups, villages, cities, counties, schools and corporations will be encouraged to play their part to enhance the environment by planting trees from October 2021, when the tree planting season begins, through to the end of the Jubilee year in 2022.

The Recreation & Leisure Committee agreed to take part in this initiative at their meeting on 23 July 2021 and have identified a site to plant a Wintering Cherry Tree (*prunus x subhirtells autumnalus rosea*) near to the The Lodge at Redcotts Recreation Ground.

During that meeting it was suggested by the Chairman of the Council that a trail of newly planted trees could be created around the Town. If the Council is minded to develop this idea, other stakeholders/landowners would be approached to ask if they would be willing to allow a tree to be planted on their land. All trees planted as part of the tree trail would need to be on publicly accessible land.

It was anticipated that at least ten trees would be needed for the trail with the Wintering Cherry being tree number 1.

Suitable tree species have been identified by the Recreation & Leisure Committee and the likely cost would be approximately £200-£300 per tree. This would be taken from the General Fund.

The Council is asked whether it supports this project.

Wimborne Minster Town Council

Subject: NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW – APPENDIX D
Date: 22 October 2021
Authors: Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk

1. Background

Members will recall that in December 2020, the Town Council resolved to defer a decision on the development of a Neighbourhood Plan for Wimborne Minster until October 2021 and no work has been carried out on this project since that date.

2. Current Position

A copy of the Officer's report written in October 2020 is available to view as **Appendix 1** to this report. Members are advised that the current 4 year Neighbourhood Planning Funding Support Programme lead by Locality on behalf of MHCLG which has been running since April 2018 will end in March 2022. The continuity of funding from MHCLG to Locality for Neighbourhood Planning will be subject to the Government's Spending Review 2021. It is not yet known at this stage whether further Government funds will be allocated to the Support Programme.

3. Officer Recommendation

Whilst the Officer report written in October 2021 remains current and valid, there are now further considerations for the Council to review.

The first, is the anticipated changes to the staffing structure early next year which will have an impact on the timescales of starting the project.

The second, is that following the COVID-19 pandemic and rising living costs, the Town Council has intimated that it does not wish to see a significant increase in the precept for the Town for 2022/23. The project costs for the development of a Neighbourhood Plan are likely to have a substantial impact on the Town Council's budget.

Following the extensive new housing developments around the Town in recent years and the now limited land availability, the true benefit of the development of a Neighbourhood Plan is reduced. This is the shared view of the Chairman of the Planning and Environment Committee.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that the Town Council does not pursue the development of a Neighbourhood Plan in the foreseeable future.