



**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE PROPERTY SUB-COMMITTEE  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 24 MARCH 2021 AT 2.00PM**

PRESENT: Councillor Scicluna (Chairman), the Mayor (Councillor Plowman), the Deputy Mayor (Councillor J Hughes) and Councillors Apel and Dignum

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Joy, The Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk and Property Manager

**MINUTES**

19. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

20. MINUTES OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 3 FEBRUARY 2021

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Property Sub-Committee meeting held on Wednesday 3 February 2021, having been printed and circulated, be approved and signed by the Chairman at a later date.

The Property Manager's Report had been circulated to all Members with the Agenda in connection with the Agenda items 2 to 7.

21. COUNCIL HOUSE

(a) Exterior building repairs

The Property Manager reported that work was moving swiftly to conclusion and a final valuation meeting with the contractor would be held on 1<sup>st</sup> April.

It was likely that the project would be delivered under budget and that a final update would be given to the next meeting.

It was hoped that the scaffolding would be removed in the week commencing 29<sup>th</sup> March.

(b) Portico

Planning permission and Listed Building Consent had been submitted and the Property Manager had met on site with the District Council's Historic Buildings Officer when a favourable discussion had taken place about the proposals.

The Property Manager answered specific issues raised by Councillor Joy about the glazing proposals.

(c) Salix grant funded energy improvements

The Committee were reminded of the areas of expenditure of the £8884 grant received. The Property Manager had met with the District Council's Historic

Buildings Advisor, who had commented favourably on the solar panel aspect of the proposals. A Listed Building Consent application had been submitted.

22. ALLOTMENTS

(a) Update

Invoices had been issued and the majority had now been paid. The Property Manager advised the Committee that 98 people on the allotments waiting list.

(b) Durnford Close

It was frustrating to report that some six months after giving formal Notice of Termination of the allotment agreement to Hyde Housing that no substantive reply had been received.

Councillor Apel had chased this matter up through District Council sources and CDC officers were meeting with Hyde Housing in April to discuss a wide range of matters of concern and this item would be included on the agenda for that meeting.

23. LITTEN GARDENS PAVING

The Property Manager advised that the final section of the Breedon compacted gravel had now been laid around the War Memorial and that several favourable comments had been received.

24. BUS STOPS/SHELTERS – RTPi BUS SHELTERS

Three new shelters had now been installed at Broyle Road and Lavant Road; contractors would shortly be connecting the electricity supply to enable the RTPi and lighting to work. Sadly, the shelter at Lavant Road had been vandalised and a glass panel broken; a replacement panel had been ordered.

Councillor Dignum suggested that City Councillors would again be approached to see if there were any nominations for bus shelters in other locations.

The Deputy Mayor repeated his frustration in the matter of the Swanfield Drive shelter, and it appeared that A2 Dominion were not responding to correspondence from the District Council.

25. PUBLIC REALM PROJECTS

(a) Wayfinding (finger posts)

This project was progressing to conclusion and it was hoped that the new finger posts would be in place by mid-June.

(b) Precinct paving

Councillor Scicluna was able to join the meeting at this point, but the Mayor continued to chair the meeting due to the intermittent broadband connection Councillor Scicluna was still experiencing.

There was an extensive discussion on this matter and the Property Manager reiterated past proposals he had put to WSCC; further updates were still awaited from WSCC, but Councillors considered that this should be the 'top priority'

project and it was noted that the number of accidents in the precinct due to faulty paving seemed to be increasing. The Mayor suggested that the £173,000 now allocated by the Government to the District Council towards High Street recovery should be released for use towards the proposals put forward by the City Council and that this matter should proceed to conclusion with expedition.

Although the suggestion made by the Property Manager about tarmac being the surface dressing had not been well received by WSCC, there were clauses that could be included in agreements with the public utilities to ensure that a high standard of finish to reinstatements of the highway was achieved.

The Property Manager would continue to press WSCC to enable progress to be made with urgency.

(c) Murray sculpture

The Mayor and Councillor Scicluna declared a personal interest as members of the Murray Club.

The statue was now installed, ready for unveiling on 3 April 2021. The Mayor thanked the Property Manager and the contractors for their hard work in achieving this.

The interpretation board would be installed the following week.

(d) Banks of the River Lavant and Walls Walk

The Property Manager's report explained why the District Council had adopted the 'wild' approach to grass cutting and the associated nature conservation aspects. There was scope for some improved teamworking between City and District maintenance teams, but this could only be limited due to impact on other areas of City Council work.

Councillor Dignum suggested that a worthwhile project for be for more interpretation boards to be erected explaining both the grass cutting policy and the details of the natural environment on these sites. The Property Manager would pursue this with CDC.

The Mayor suggested that another worthwhile initiative would be daffodil planting on the banks of the River Lavant as this type of initiative readily leant itself to the involvement of local volunteers.

(e) East Street temporary footpath widening

It was generally agreed that the barriers currently in place were unsightly and should be removed – it was noted that under current arrangements, the parking suspension order of the adjacent highway expired on 30<sup>th</sup> June.

The City Council had been approached about a temporary solution in providing and maintaining planters, but the Sub Committee supported the view of the Property Manager that this was uneconomic and should not be pursued. The Property Manager referred to past work done about solutions about the pavements in East Street that could be revisited in the wider context.

Councillor Dignum advised that the CDC High Street Recovery and Transformation Group favoured the longer-term aspiration of a one-way system in East Street.

26. MAINTENANCE TEAM REVIEW

(a) Staffing

The possible impact of future workloads on the Property team, as identified by the Property Manager was noted and the Town Clerk confirmed that he had initiated informal discussions with the Chief Executive of the District Council about the possible offering up to the City Council of areas of discretionary services currently carried out by the District Council.

The point was made that, at present, unlike WSCC and CDC, Parishes were not capped so a comparatively small rise in the City Precept could realise much needed funds for the City Council to deliver services direct, especially those benefitting the public realm.

(b) Equipment

Following on from the above item, the Property Manager flagged up costs of the lease of a compact lawn tractor. This information was noted for future reference as part of wider debate referred to in the preceding item that would undoubtedly happen as the year progressed.

27. ROUND TABLE REGALIA – REQUEST TO DISPLAY IN THE COUNCIL HOUSE

The Mayor showed the Sub Committee a photograph of the regalia in question, namely two badges and ribbons. On the ribbons were the names of several local key personalities associated with the City Council.

It was agreed that the City Council would accept these historic artefacts for deposit, but no commitment could be given about their public display.

28. ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED ON THE NEXT AGENDA

- Public Sector decarbonisation – next stage with reference to the boiler system at the Council House.

Date of next meeting – Monday 10 May 2021 at 2pm

The meeting closed at 3.20pm