

option, with the consultation exercise to commence as soon as possible.

3) Allotment Matters

Councillor Poultney declared a personal interest in this item under the Model Code of Conduct.

i) **Trees on boundary with Cauldron Barn Farm**

It was reported that a letter had now been sent to the owner of Cauldron Barn Farm in respect of the work required to the trees along the allotment boundary. It was noted that any future correspondence should be sent directly to the owner's groundsman.

ii) **Future amendments to the Town Council's Allotment Agreement**

Members were informed that the Town Council's officers were currently examining possible future amendments to the allotment agreement regarding the keeping of poultry and the use of biodegradable material. It was noted that a report would be made to a future Committee meeting.

iii) **Matters raised by Prospect Allotment Association**

It was noted that under item 2)i) of the Minutes of the General Operations Committee Meeting held on 6th February 2008 the start time for bonfires had been wrongly recorded as 8 a.m. It was acknowledged that although the minutes had since been approved as a correct record this was an error and that the bonfire regulations had been issued with the time of 10 a.m. as agreed at that meeting.

The Association representatives thanked the Town Council for the dog warning signs and the drainage work recently undertaken.

A request was made for the Town Council's grass cuttings to be deposited at the allotments but a number of preventative reasons were noted.

It was reported that the Town Council had the previous day received a petition in respect of its new bonfire regulations and that officers would consider its contents and report to a future meeting.

Mr Scott and Mr Aplin left the meeting at 10.30 a.m.

4) Cemetery Matters

i) **Charges for interments over the Christmas period**

Further to minute 3)ii) of the General Operations Committee Meeting held on 6th February 2008 and minute 5) of the Finance and Performance Management Committee held on 10th March 2008 consideration was again given to a letter dated 21st December 2007 from James Smith Funeral Directors objecting to the extra charges levied for burials between Christmas Eve and New Years Day. It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Patrick, seconded by Councillor Mrs Marsh and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

TO RECOMMEND:

That the additional fee of £300 be unapplied to the period between 27th and 31st December 2008 (inclusive), the situation to be reviewed in early 2009.

During discussion it was noted that the Town Council would have to be notified of any funerals to be held during this period before closedown on 24th December. This would not impact on the need for the local funeral director to

have some contact with Council officers during this period to arrange for funerals to be held early in the new year.

ii) Natural Burial Working Party

Further to minutes 3)ii) and 3)iii) of the General Operations Committee Meetings held on 14th November 2007 and 6th February 2008 it was agreed that a date for a meeting of the Natural Burial Working Party be agreed at the earliest possible opportunity.

iii) Memorial safety

Having made enquiries of a number of local cemetery providers in respect of minute 3)iv) of the General Operations Committee Meeting held on 6th February 2008 it was reported that the Town Council was not currently under any obligation to amend its regulations to stipulate that all memorials should be fixed according to the NAMM code of working practice.

iv) Matters raised by James Smith Funeral Directors

Mr Fletcher questioned the prohibition of footstones currently in place in the Town Council's cemetery regulations and it was agreed that this matter be brought forward at a future meeting of this Committee.

Mr Fletcher left the meeting at 10.55 a.m.

5) Matters arising from Minutes of the Meeting of the General Operations Committee held on 6th February 2008

The Chairman reported that all recommendations from the General Operations Committee meeting held on 6th February 2008 had been approved by the Town Council.

6) Operations Manager's Report

In the absence of the Operations Manager it was agreed that this item be deferred.

7) Memorial Seats – Requests for stone benches

Members considered three requests for stone memorial benches. Although the requests were viewed with sympathy and understanding it was noted that stone seats were not vandal proof and were unlikely to meet RoSPA standards. It was proposed by Councillor Poultney and seconded by Councillor Audley:

That the applicants be invited to select a seat from those designs approved by the General Operations Committee on 6th February 2008.

Upon being put to the Meeting there were FOUR votes IN FAVOUR and TWO ABSTENTIONS whereupon the Proposition was declared CARRIED.

8) Public Conveniences – consideration of Community Toilet Scheme

It was reported that Richmond upon Thames Borough Council had been contacted in respect of the Community Toilet Scheme but that information was as yet not forthcoming due to the unforeseen level of interest. Councillor Mrs Patrick again volunteered to raise the matter with the Pub Watch organisation.

9) Development of Asset Management Plan

The importance of developing an asset management plan was highlighted, in line with recent Annual Audit letters. Issues to be considered include the

utilisation, income potential, repair requirements and associated risks of each asset.

10) Best Value Performance Indicators – Continuous Improvement

In the absence of the Operations Manager it was agreed that this item be deferred.

11) Items of Information and Matters for Forthcoming Agendas

It was reported to Members that a breakdown in communication had meant that the Town Council had not been considered by the District Council during its tendering process for grass cutting in the town. The Town Clerk will report further on this issue to a future meeting.

12) Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the meeting dates for 2008/09 were yet to be determined.

The Meeting closed at 11.25 a.m.