

3) **Range and scope of General Operations Committee's responsibilities**

Further to Minute 2 of the Policy and Resources Meeting held on 21st May 2007, consideration was given to issues that could be added to the Committee's range of responsibilities. It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Councillor Poultney and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

To RECOMMEND:

That the emptying of car parking machines, and the operational aspects of environmental policy be added to the list of the General Operations Committee's responsibilities, as agreed under Minute 2 of the Policy and Resources Meeting held on 21st May 2007.

Further to Minute 5)a) of the Extraordinary Meeting held on 29th June 2007, the attention of the Committee was drawn to the poor condition of the grazing fields and boundary walls to the south of Swanage Bay View Holiday Park. It was noted that a site visit had been arranged for later that afternoon. After further discussion it was proposed by Councillor Poultney, seconded by Councillor Audley and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

To RECOMMEND:

That the grazing fields and other Town Council-owned open spaces be added to the list of the General Operations Committee's responsibilities, as agreed under Minute 2 of the Policy and Resources Meeting held on 21st May 2007.

4) **Organisation of future meetings and order of business**

It was AGREED:

That allotment and cemetery matters be the first two items on the agenda of future meetings of the General Operations Committee.

It was FURTHER AGREED:

That the outside representatives of the former Allotment and Cemetery Committees/Working Groups be invited to attend future meetings of the General Operations Committee.

The Operations Manager provided a report of those outstanding projects that he considered to be a priority for the Town Council. These included: repairs to the Town Hall; fire regulation compliance; completion of buildings and grounds surveys; public toilet refurbishment; seafront stabilisation; Tourist Information Centre refurbishment; Beach Gardens pavilion refurbishment; CCTV transfer to police; Holiday Park site survey and implementation of traffic scheme; public seating provision; vehicle fleet improvements; provision of children's play equipment; Sandpit Field improvements; Godlingston Cemetery extension and replacement gates.

Following this detailed report it was AGREED:

That, in future, the Operations Manager's report be circulated to Members prior to Committee meetings.

It was further AGREED:

That the performance indicators relevant to the General Operations Committee be monitored and circulated prior to future meetings.

Particular attention was drawn to the importance of improved toilet provision and the need to tackle the ongoing problem of vandalism. It was agreed that future budget reports to the Committee should differentiate between spending due to vandalism and other routine maintenance costs. The possibility of attaining grant funding for increased police overtime to reduce vandalism to Town Council property from the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership was discussed. It was AGREED:

That Councillors Audley and Mrs Gainsborough, as the Town Council's representatives on the South Purbeck Community Safety Task Group, make enquiries as to the possibility of attaining grant funding for increased police overtime.

The importance of progressing the upgrade of the CCTV system as a means of combating vandalism was also highlighted. It was reported that funding had now been agreed to overcome technical issues and that progress had only stalled due to the lack of staff resources at the Town Hall. It was noted that the transfer of the CCTV system to police control was now an urgent priority. The need for an urgent meeting of the Personnel Committee was also noted.

Particular attention was drawn to the poor condition of Herston public conveniences and the anti-social behaviour reported in the vicinity. After discussion it was proposed by Councillor Poultney, seconded by Councillor Pratt and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

**To RECOMMEND:
That, until the future provision of replacement toilets is determined, Herston public conveniences be closed due to police advice regarding ongoing vandalism and inappropriate use.**

Consideration was also given to the improvement of Sydenham Road Play Area. It was AGREED:

That Councillor Pratt make enquiries of Purbeck District Council and Purbeck Housing Trust regarding possible sources of funding for the improvement of the Sydenham Road Play Area.

Some concern was expressed that issues will not be discussed between quarterly Committee Meetings. However, it was noted that urgent matters could

be reported to Policy and Planning meetings, and that un-scheduled Committee meetings could also be called by the Chairman.

Mr L. Taylor, the Town Council's horticulturist, entered the meeting at 11.00 a.m.

5) Tree management policy

Further to minute 11 of the Policy and Resources meeting held on the 21st May 2007, consideration was given to the Town Council's existing Tree Survey reports. It was recognised that the management of the trees on Town Council property had been neglected over many years leading to the accumulation of a large backlog of work now requiring attention. It was reported that the works set out in the Council's reports would be undertaken over a ten year period, with priority being given to areas where attention had been drawn to the existence of a potential danger to the public.

Specific consideration was given to the action recommended in relation to trees along the western boundary of Forres field, which had been challenged by a neighbour of the site. It was acknowledged that an independent report had been commissioned in response to the concerns raised and that this largely confirmed the actions taken by the Town Council. Concern was expressed at the cost that the Town Council had been put to by the commissioning of this report and the interruption to the work at Forres Field. After lengthy consideration it was noted that a lack of action would endanger the trees further and it was AGREED:

To RECOMMEND

That the trees along the western boundary of Forres Field be reduced to a height of 5 metres over the next two years.

The utmost importance of communicating the Town Council's policy of taking action to protect the tree-related heritage of the town was highlighted. Suggestions included that an article should be placed in the next edition of the Town Council's newsletter, information uploaded onto the Council's website, a public display be organised and illustrated notices be placed on-site.

After further discussion it was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Councillor Audley and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

To RECOMMEND:

That Swanage Town Council endorses its existing Tree Survey reports and the professionalism of its staff, and continues its work to preserve the heritage of trees in the town.

6) Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that a meeting was required before that scheduled for 10th October and that an interim date be fixed by the Committee Chairman and Town Clerk.

The Meeting closed at 12.10 p.m.