

Minutes of the Meeting of the OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE held in Doggetts Barn at 7.30pm on Monday 16 July 2018

Present: Cllrs J Barnett, T Bryant (Chairman), A Layland, M McArthur, S McGregor, G Middleton, and B Todd (vice chairman)

In attendance: Cllr C Pearman
K Staff - Deputy Clerk
C Open – Head Groundsman

There were two members of the public present, and no press.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received, noted, and accepted from Cllr R Bell (business). Cllr M Robson was absent.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, OR PREDETERMINATIONS

None

The Chairman adjourned the meeting

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Members were updated by a member of the public, concerning investigations into the terms under which the hospital site on Mill Hill was gifted to the local community.

The Chairman thanked the members of the public for the information, and they left. The meeting was re-opened.

4. TO RECEIVE AND SIGN MINUTES OF THE OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE 4 June 2018

Resolved: that the minutes be signed by the committee chairman as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

5. TO RECEIVE ANALYSIS OF THE OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE'S RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS TO 30 June 2018

Members noted the position one quarter into the financial year, and that in consultation with the committee chairman, and Marsh Green residents, the option for continuation of wooden posts around the Green was commissioned urgently from the contractor, based on costings provided to June Open Spaces meeting. This was endorsed last week at July Council, with an additional 75m on the rear edge of the Green, for a total of £4,724.66 plus VAT. The work began on 10th July.

Ahead of the removal of unauthorised vehicles from Stangrove Park on 6 July, in consultation with the committee chairman, temporary defences of large tree trunks were provided at short notice at the lowest points along the Green edge main road side, supplied and installed by two contractors, at a cost of £760 plus VAT.

6. CORRESPONDENCE

6.1 Request to operate car-cleaning in Market Yard

Members considered a request to carry out car cleaning, and agreed there were many unanswered questions concerning the nature of the operation. While wishing to encourage the spirit of the enterprise, it was

Resolved: to respond that the Market Yard car park was not an appropriate location, and the applicant should be advised to take up Cllr Pearman's offer to discuss the business proposal with him.

7. HEAD GROUNDSMAN'S REPORT

7.1 Routine and seasonal work

Members noted the team's routine and seasonal work during May and June.

7.2 Groundstaff activity

Members noted successful training courses undertaken, including 2-day trailer towing, and 3-day IOSH Managing Safely during June. All members of the grounds team attended a Machinery Maintenance and Vibration Awareness course on 11 July held at the Depot.

The summer memorials stability check noted a handful of memorials as potentially causing an issue in future, and these were being followed up for owners to reinstate. The annual playground inspection was due to be carried out this month

Preparations had been carried out ready for resurfacing of the Recreation Ground car park and paths surrounding the Pavilion due the next week. Sports pitch repair ahead of next season was under way, the very hot weather causing extra watering for re-seeded areas. The scheduled selective weed spraying at the Recreation Ground and Mowshurst was postponed due to the weather and liaison continued with the contractor. As agreed, a local contractor had cut the Water Meadows pathways and also some surrounds at Mowshurst.

The Bipper van had passed its yearly MoT, the Land Rover had undergone some electrical repairs, and the water bowser had also required some electrical repairs.

The grounds team formally thanked the councillors for the approval of new works T-shirts, which were much appreciated in the hot conditions, and the head groundsman commended his team for their support during activities related to the recent traveller incursions. Members

Resolved: to record their thanks to the grounds team for their much appreciated contribution.

8. OPEN SPACES BUSINESS FOR DECISION

8.1 To receive the Burial Report

Members noted the burial report updating the record of cemetery activity as follows:

June 2018

One burial

One interment of ashes

One Grant of Right

8.2 To consider Year 3 works within the 10 Year Maintenance Plan

Members noted the Recreation Ground east car park and paths resurfacing was scheduled for w/c 23rd July. Liaison with Rugby Club continued, advance signage was being posted to inform users of the Rec, and notification was being delivered to adjacent houses.

Market Yard/Churchyard Wall

Cllr Middleton had contacted the surveyor as agreed at last meeting, and a letter had been received confirming the view that to provide long term assurance of stability, a section of the wall did need to be rebuilt. He would need to attend site again to verify the precise scope of works, the status in relation to the Party Wall Act, and notification of adjacent property. The fee for this would be a further £250 plus disbursements and VAT.

The cost for the proposed works already agreed stands at £16,000, with further sums required as advised last meeting for Diocesan Faculty application (£300), Party Wall agreement fees (c. £2000), materials removal (£300), and Listed Building Consent application. It was

Resolved: to pursue in parallel the application for a Faculty, for Listed Building Consent, and to arrange the proposed meeting with the owner of Church Cottage as soon as possible, and to request additional funding from Council.

Decompaction for sports pitches

Members considered costings for decompaction works and

Resolved: to accept the price of £2,200 plus VAT from SJK Sports Turf to treat two pitches at Mowshurst, and six of the pitches at the Recreation Ground, the remainder to be given priority next year.

Doggetts Courtyard

The 10-year Plan includes repointing a section of the courtyard paving slabs in alternate years of the Plan, and members considered costing for Year 3 works. It was

Resolved: to accept the quote from TrueBuild at £1,150 plus VAT for action over the summer holiday

The costing received for Autumn hedge cutting at Mowshurst, Forge Croft allotments, the Recreation Ground, and Blossoms Park, was considered at £1,386 plus VAT, £60 more than last year but inside the budget for this activity. It was

Resolved: to accept this price from Hever Countryside services.

Quotes were considered for the annual pumps maintenance service, to be carried out on the same day at the Sports Pavilion sewage pump, and the Mill Leat water feature in the High Street, and it was

Resolved: to accept the price from Denton Pumps at £195 plus VAT

Members noted an opportunity had arisen to purchase three additional hanging basket brackets for £60, second hand but in good condition, and in consultation with the committee chairman, this purchase was made at less than the cost for one new bracket. It was

Resolved: to endorse this expenditure.

8.3 To update the Action Plan after quarterly sites monitoring visit

Members noted the Action Plan updated following the monitoring visits to sites on 29th June. The ever popular skate ramps were in need of some worn riding surface sheets replacing, the equivalent of around 12 sheets. Members considered the maintenance company costing for this work, and

Resolved: to accept the price at £2,040 plus VAT to be taken from Depreciation

8.4 To review the Open Spaces risk assessment

Members considered the current Open Spaces risk assessment and had no additions to make, but requested the Head Groundsman review it alongside his review of the task-specific risk assessment.

8.5 To review the Open Spaces asset register to identify items due for replacement 2019

Members noted that at May Annual Council meeting, Cllrs Bryant and Roberts Smith were agreed as the two members to carry out the annual check of the equipment asset register. This had still to take place. Items with nominal replacement dates for next year were considered, though some were lasting beyond their date but in good condition. The Head Groundsman advised the following replacements:

Ifor Williams trailer (2012) for re-boarding
Stihl KM90 Hedge cutter and pruner (2011)
Billy Goat trolley (2016)
Stihl chainsaw (2017)
Rover mower Regal (2017)
Rotary mower (2017)

The Bipper van 10-year expected life-span also ends in 2019

Members considered whether any Council representatives should visit SALTEX and

Resolved: attendance in alternate years was sufficient, so would consider this for 2019

Members noted the claim for damage to the flail had initially been rejected by the Council's insurers, due to lack of evidence of maintenance of the machine. The new Head Groundsman had located entries in the operational diaries for 2016 and 2017 which had been sent to the insurance brokers who were prepared to challenge the decision if evidence was produced. The

outcome was awaited. Meanwhile in line with members' previous decision, a local contractor was engaged, in consultation with the committee chairman, at £400 per day to cut the paths in the Watermeadows, and as much of the front field at Mowshurst as possible in the remaining time. The grass at the latter location is very long, so was slower work, but it has been suggested that the mow could possibly be completed at no additional cost if the contractor could take the arisings as hay. This option was being explored.

8.6 To approve expenditure on vandalised items

Repair of playground damage in Stangrove Park over the weekend after the eviction of travellers had been approved at July Council to facilitate swift repair three items of play equipment were damaged in the playground at the park. As it was discovered the cradle seats also needed replacement, the cost was £659.50 plus VAT. Members

Resolved: to endorse this expenditure from the Open Spaces vandalism budget.

8.7 To consider War Memorial matters and WW1 commemoration

Members noted the Town Clerk's column in July Edenbridge Chronicle included an item about the search for surviving family of the two names without awards letters on the War Memorial. To date there had been no contact. Cllr McGregor had researched the matter of award precedence, and it appears the DCM was the highest gallantry award available for non-commissioned ranks in the Army apart from the VC. The MM was awarded to non-commissioned ranks in the Army for bravery. There are already MM awards recorded on the War Memorial. It was

Resolved: in principle to add the Awards to the two names, and to contact the Museum for help with family history research.

The local British Legion branch and the Town Council jointly applied to Highways for a licence to install a Silent Soldier silhouette at the rear of the "welcome" planted bed on the bank below the scout hut. Highways has duly granted a licence for the temporary placing of a Silent Soldier for three months (from beginning of September to the end of November).

The WW1 commemoration seat had arrived, and the Hospital property section had been approached for permission to locate it near the War Memorial. A response was still awaited.

8.8 To consider further measures to prevent unauthorised vehicle access to open spaces

Members at July Council had considered further measures to prevent unauthorised access to open spaces, in addition to the works already agreed for Marsh Green. It was resolved that a minimum of £15,000 should be allocated from CIL receipts to improve the infrastructure at various locations.

Options included knee-high fencing for Blossoms Park entrance, and gates instead of drop-down posts at the Recreation Ground. For Stangrove Park to replace the temporary concrete blocks, additional bow-top fencing and lockable gates at the frontage, also posts to decrease the access to the path across from the traffic lights; similar fencing and lockable gates would also be necessary for the rear of the Park. For Mowshurst a pair of lockable large gates, and also a "chicane" entry layout to restrict turning. Costings were being sought for fencing and gates at these various locations, and it was

Resolved: to adopt a site-by-site approach, and a small group of members would meet on Friday morning at Stangrove Park to consider options there to recommend to Council.

A further suggestion was made for CCTV coverage, which could be considered after the control-room visit for councillors agreed at Council has taken place.

8.9 To confirm the sports pitches layout on the Recreation Ground for next season

The Rugby Club had advised that they wished the sports pitches layout on the Recreation Ground to continue as it was last season. It was

Resolved: that the existing pitch layout be continued for the next season.

8.10 To receive an update on street lights maintenance

Members noted the column replacement work agreed for this year would be starting during the next couple of months.

8.11 To consider re-location of the MSA sundial

Developers had begun work at the former Abbeyfield site, where the sun-dial presented to the town by Mont St Aignan in 1991 was located, and now needed removal to a new location within the next couple of weeks. It was

Resolved: to ask the Great Stone Bridge Trust if the sun dial could go on their land by the river, adjacent to the Town Sign.

9. TO NOTE THE GENERAL REPORT OF OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

The volunteer carrying out Mowshurst pest control continued to visit the site and report on his activities, and was approaching a total of 500 rabbits over the years he has been helping.

Work on the oversize oak tree in the Churchyard has been approved by SDC tree officer, and the contractor notified.

Members noted that the potential donor of the bus shelter for Swan Lane was speaking to his preferred supplier regarding costs and drawings, and once they had established a cost, the donor would write to confirm his offer to the Council. An application for Lawful Development Certificate would then need to be submitted for planning permission.

10. PRESS RELEASE

Members considered items for the subject of a Press Release, and

Resolved: the relocation of the Mont St Aignan sundial be publicised when installed.

Meeting closed at 9.12pm