

**PLAYING FIELDS COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**TUESDAY 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014 at 7.30p.m. AT THE STEYNING CENTRE**

**Present:** Cllrs Ness-Collins, Bowell, Toms, Staines, Trundle, Lloyd. Mrs Sue Booth (Clerk to the Council)

**Members of the public:** Seven

**Minutes:** Rebecca Luckin

**QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR:**

1. Q – We know that the Cricket Club is legally permitted to build a sports pavilion on the VG and to satisfy any future requirements of bowls, tennis and cricket and other MPF Clubs, we know that if the MPF VG status is lost, as the Parish Council plans, that opens up the way for housing development in future, that threatens the exiting clubs, no matter what the current council promises. Will the Playing Fields Committee recommend to the full Parish Council that the proposal to deregister the VG for the MPF be withdrawn, and if not why not? Surely this is something for the Playing Fields Committee to discuss and recommend to Full Council?

A – We will take note of your question to be answered at Full Council. Village Green is an item for Full Council to discuss.

2. Q – Why is the additional works and cost of grass cutting a confidential item when under Class 2 Section of the 106 Publication Scheme for Parish Councils it requires details of contracts to be published?

A – There is a Section 43 exemption under the Publication Scheme which deals with commercial sensitivity.

Q – But the contract is available?

A – The contract price is not available and that is confidential.

3. Q – Benches - there is another bench in a poor state of repair outside changing rooms – it should be removed.

A – We knew about the first bench and it was removed as soon as we were told. We will see to it.

4. Q –Vegetation at the old fruit trees by car park by flint wall, can it be cleared? It reduces car park space. I did write earlier, due to birds nesting it was delayed.

A – We will look at it and address the problem.

5. Q – The annual play equipment inspection of 2013 was carried out in May. When was 2014 carried out? – When will it be uploaded, and why not uploaded in advance?

A – It has not yet been discussed, and any recommendations agreed by the Committee, as soon as it is discussed it will be uploaded to the website. The inspection was completed 27<sup>th</sup> August. The 2013 inspection was completed in July 2013.

6. Q – In the WSCT of 17<sup>th</sup> August 2014 the Parish Council stated that they were embracing the recording of public meetings and yet for the fourth time since the Act became law on 6<sup>th</sup> August, you have another secret meeting tonight, how can this be justified to have a secret meeting to discuss the action regarding the fencing at Chandler’s Way?

A – It is not a secret meeting, it is a committee meeting, we cannot put it into the public domain as it involves mentioning one of the resident’s names at this stage - due data protection.

7. Q – Entrances to the MPF - in the winter they become very muddy, can something be done?

A – The item is on the agenda.

8. Q – At the meeting of 23<sup>rd</sup> July, a question was raised regarding grass cutting arrangements at the play area on the MPF, we were told that no changes were necessary, it was already being trimmed weekly in accordance with the contract, you have on the agenda to discuss additional works, can you tell us what they are?

A – They concern the orchard area.

## MINUTES

1. **APOLOGIES** – apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Marshall.
2. **DECLARATIONS** - there were no declarations of interest.
3. **MINUTES** – Cllr Lloyd **proposed** and Cllr Toms **seconded** that the minutes of the Playing Field Committee meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2014 were a correct record and should be signed by the Chairman. **Agreed.**
4. **MATTERS ARISING AND ACTIONS – Rebecca Luckin reported that:**
  - 4.1 Hills Road path debris had been removed.
  - 4.2 Overgrowth from householder’s gardens at bottom of Middle Mead – letters will be sent to householders.
  - 4.3 A ‘No Ball Games’ sign has been ordered.
  - 4.4 Bowling Club defibrillator – subsequent to the last meeting, there has been some discussion regarding the proposed location of the unit. The matter continues to be considered by the Wilson Memorial Trust.
  - 4.5 Changing room charges. At the last meeting Councillors discussed raising the charge from £33.19 to £34 (inc VAT). Other Parish Councils charge higher amounts. Councillors will discuss the proposal to increase charges with the cricket and football clubs.
  - 4.6 Theft from allotments and sheds – the Clerk has checked with other Parish Councils, who confirm that they do not accept liability for thefts from allotments and sheds. Plot holders must insure they own property.
  - 4.7 Water meters at the allotments. Cllr Marshall will investigate options and costs of providing each Allotment plot with an individual water meter. Cllr Bowell was of the opinion that the current arrangement was sufficient.
  - 4.8 An overgrown culvert, broken fence and brambles on the bridge by Fletcher’s Croft continue to be reported to HDC who confirm that it is on a list of works shortly to be completed. Delays have been caused by restructuring at HDC.
5. **PLAY EQUIPMENT INSPECTIONS –**
  - 5.1 Councillors discussed the Annual Play Equipment Inspection Report provided by Wickstead Leisure Ltd. Councillors were provided with:
    - a) An introduction to the inspection report, with high, medium and low risk explained.
    - b) A copy of the inspection report.
    - c) A summary of works suggested by Wickstead, with total cost highlighted.The Clerk confirmed that the budget had been reviewed and that sufficient funds could be found from revenue and reserves to complete all works suggested by Wickstead – at a cost of £5,894.68 and to provide addition signs at a cost of £1,180.

Cllr Lloyd **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Bowell that works to the value of £7075 were undertaken. **Agreed.** Cllr Lloyd **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Staines that the Clerk and Chair be delegated to investigate additional protection for the rope bridge (amount within Clerk's remit) – a quotation will be circulated when available. The Clerk will obtain a quote for other works highlighted on the report that cannot be undertaken by Wickstead.

- 5.2 Consideration of staff to training to undertake routine monthly play equipment inspections. Currently, monthly inspections are undertaken by HDC at a cost of £200 per annum, but inspection reports are brief and lacking in feedback and useful information. Rebecca Luckin investigated courses provided by Rospa (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) who offer a one day training course for Inspection and Maintenance at a cost of £250+VAT. A member of the caretaking staff has expressed an interest in attending a course in order that he can undertake the regular inspections of play equipment that are a legal requirement and complete any maintenance tasks. This could ensure that any issues are quickly identified and resolved, play equipment is safe and that its lifespan is prolonged. Councillors asked the Clerk to investigate the length of validity of the initial course, to obtain costs of refresher courses and check with the insurer that monthly inspections by trained staff were acceptable. Councillors will consider at the next meeting.

## 6. **ABBAY ROAD FENCE**

- 6.1 Discussion regarding repairs to post and rail fence. Councillors considered quotes provided by two contractors:

D Flynn – 17 bay, 3 rails - £1137.50+VAT

M Streeter – 18/19 bay, 3 rails - £1690

Cllr Bowell **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Toms that Councillors visit the site to assess the situation and report back to Finance & Community on 7<sup>th</sup> October. **Agreed**

- 6.2 Quote received to repair the fence at the Chandlers Way play area:

M Streeter – supply and replace 1 panel and repair others - £200

Cllr Toms **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Ness-Collins that works were undertaken. **Agreed.**

## 7. **MEMORIAL PLAYING FIELD**

- 7.1 Concern has been expressed that entrances at Mill Road track, Hills Road and Newham Lane become muddy and difficult to access during the winter. A suggestion was made that wood chips be placed in the entrance in advance of wet weather. Councillors agreed that they should visit the site to assess potential problems. It was noted that the Parish Council does not have ownership of the strip of land inside the gate at Mill Road track. The Clerk will establish what the insurance responsibility is on the access strip on Mill Road path to see if the Parish Council is liable and if so are they covered on the Public Liability insurance.

- 7.2 Discussion of condition of benches. The Clerk checked previous minutes and found that Councillors agreed that if there were sufficient funds at the end of the last financial year, volunteers would be sought to help with bench maintenance. Cllr Bowell has provided a plan of benches on the MPF and suggested that some need attention and that paving slabs could replace plastic matting. Bench 14 will be assessed and a decision made, if beyond repair it will be removed. Cllr Ness-Collins **proposed, seconded** Cllr Bowell that the bench should be repaired if possible. **Agreed.** Councillors will report back to the next meeting on how many benches need repairing and draft a budget.

- 7.3 Since the agenda was published, D Flynn had advised that grass continues to grow and that a further cut may be required. The Clerk advised that sufficient funds were allocated and agreed in the budget to allow for a further cut. Councillors **Agreed** that it was within budget.

**8. ALLOTMENT REPORT**

**8.1** Revised Allotment Regulations were discussed. Cllr Lloyd confirmed that that they had been reviewed by the Parish Council solicitors. The existence of a poly tunnel exceeding the recommended dimensions was discussed. Councillors agreed that the regulations could not be applied retrospectively. Cllr Ness Collins **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Lloyd that the Allotment Regulations be accepted. **Agreed.**  
Copies will be e-mailed and posted to plot holders.

**9. FINANCIAL REPORT** – The Income & Expenditure Report and list of payments for August was circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr Lloyd **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Staines that the report be accepted. **Agreed.**

**10. OPEN SPACE MONITORING** - updates on maintenance and other matters.

**10.1** Norman Way – Cllr Staines expressed concern that work was required. The Clerk confirmed that HDC have been reminded again. The area is unused and overgrown, with a narrow entrance that limits options for use. Councillors will visit the site. Cllr Lloyd proposed a working party to be led by Cllr Staines to consider options and costs.

**10.2** Abbey Road – has been inspected and is due for second cut shortly.

**10.3** South Ash – Cllr Ness-Collins reported that the area was satisfactory.

**10.4** Fletcher’s Croft – Wickstead had recently undertaken an inspection.

**10.5** Chandler’s Way – Cllr Toms reported that – hedge is overgrown at back of houses.

**10.6** MPF – Cllr Ness- Collins reported that the area is in good order. The Clerk reported that the Cricket Club had repaired some grass areas and asked the contractor not to cut on the cricket outfield in places.

**11. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY**

None for this meeting.

**12. INFORMATION ITEMS**

None for this meeting.

**13. CONFIDENTIAL ITEM** – The Chairman **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Lloyd that due to the nature of the business this item be taken under Standing Order 1 (d) and that the press and public be excluded. **Agreed.**

**Members of the public left the meeting at 20.56pm**

**13.1 Discussion regarding fencing at Chandler’s Way**

The Clerk reported that there had been some correspondence between a resident of Chandler’s Way regarding responsibility for fence repairs along the boundary with residents’ properties. A covenant of 1984 states that the Parish Council are responsible for the maintenance of a post and rail fence. The householder is asking for an existing close board fence to be replaced. Councillors discussed their obligations and agreed to obtain a quote for post and rail fence replacement. Councillors expressed concern that only the householder’s panel was bowed, due to vegetation on the property owners’ side of the fence. Councillors noted that the rails were on the property owners’ side, which would indicate that the fence was not erected by the Parish Council and therefore should not be replaced by the Parish Council. Cllr Ness Collins **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Lloyd that the Clerk check with a solicitor regarding the covenant, to ask if a close board fence was erected by the Parish Council, would they subsequently be responsible for replacing it in future. Depending on what is said, the owner will be provided with a response from Steyning Parish Council. **Agreed.**

**13.2 To discuss additional works and costs to be added to grass cutting contract.**

The grounds contractor had requested an alteration in the grass cutting contract to allow for additional works that will be required to ensure that the additional orchard

area is strimmed. A quote was provided for extra works. The committee discussed the current agreement and strimming requirements. The committee agreed that weekly strimming on all areas was not always necessary. Cllr Staines **proposed** that the contract be reviewed and amended to add additional works. The contractor will be asked to do the extra works within the existing contract to be determined by and to the satisfaction of Councillors. **Seconded** by Cllr Lloyd. **Agreed.**

**14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 7.30pm, 18<sup>th</sup> November 2014**

The meeting closed at 21.25pm

Signed: ..... Date: 18<sup>th</sup> November 2014  
Chairman