

**MINUTES OF THE OF THE PLAYING FIELDS COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 20th AUGUST 2013 AT THE STEYNING CENTRE AT 7.30p.m**

PRESENT: Cllr Ness-Collins (Chairman)
Cllrs Bowell, Toms, Trundle, Staines & Marshall
Cllr Muncey – SO 3(c)
12 members of the public were present.
The Clerk was in attendance

1. APOLOGIES

There were apologies for absence from Cllr Lloyd and from Cllr Trundle who may be late due to difficulty with child care arrangements.

2. DECLARATIONS

2.1 There were declarations of personal interest from Cllr Toms on Allotments, and Cllr Muncey on item 6.1 Play Area fencing.

3. MINUTES

3.1 It was proposed by Cllr Ness-Collins and seconded by Cllr Tome that the minutes of the meeting of 28th May 2013 be agreed as a true record. This was Agreed.

4. MATTERS ARISING AND ACTIONS

4.1 Grass-crete under the benches – a price has now been obtained and a product called Grass Protecta Mesh is priced at £80.50 per roll which would cover approx. 10/12 benches.

The cost to install the mesh is quoted at £30 per bench. Cllr Ness-Collins has identified 17 benches in the MPF that would benefit from this installation. It was proposed by Cllr Ness-Collins and seconded by Cllr Bowell to buy a roll of mesh and install at least 10 benches at present. The contractor will reduce the cost of installation by 20% for 10 or more benches. The installation would be mid September for optimum time to install the mesh and grass seed.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Bowell and **seconded** by Cllr Staines to go to F & C to take the funding out of reserves if this cannot be found in the budget for at least 10 benches at a maximum cost of £400 . This was **Agreed**.

4.2 Meeting with clubs re: Village Green will be arranged once a protocol is agreed.

4.3 The hedge by the police station wall has been done.

4.4 Inspection of allotment fencing – ongoing, Cllr Ness-Collins and Toms have inspected and will inspect again in Autumn and report back to committee.

4.5 HDC was requested to empty bins at Chandlers Way – this has been done and grass cut.

5. **QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR** – the chairman suspended the meeting to allow questions from members of the public.

Written questions have been received for committee:

The questions are:

1. *Will the Council now withdraw its slur on the late Mr. Blackie's integrity and confirm that it accepts there was no basis for its earlier statement?*
2. *Can it explain who searched the minutes and how Cllr Barling's statement came to be made, given the number of occasions on which discussion about the registration is recorded in the minutes?*

The Parish Council is aware that a number of references to the registering of different tracts of COMMON LAND in Steyning exist in the minutes of both committees and Full Council in the late 1960's.

However, there is a significant difference between Village Green registration and that for common land and we have not been able to find, as yet, any reference, specific to a Village Green application for MPF, in any minutes in the years that the discussions were held on Common Land registrations and, WSCC have confirmed that the Memorial Playing Field was *never* registered as Common Land.

Furthermore, at this point in time, the Parish Council has been unable to find any reference to any resolution in either committee or, full council, relating to the application for Village Green status for the Memorial Playing Field.

The answers to the questions are therefore as follows:

1. There was never an intended slur on a past member of the Parish Council, the council merely stated known facts. No name of any person concerned was ever mentioned. The earlier statement is therefore correct as explained above.
It should also be noted that the following statement made in the email received with the questions: 'it was done without it going through and being approved by the committee and council meetings' was taken out of context from a statement made by Cllr. Barling at a full Council meeting on the 10th December 2012.
The part of the statement from which this was taken read as follows;
"For the record the Parish Council is a corporate body but it appears that at the time the registration was applied for, by the then Chairman and Clerk, it was done without it going through and being approved by the committee and council meetings".
Based on the facts above the statement made in the Council minutes of the 10th December 2012 is correct.
2. The minutes in the years around the common lands registration in the late 1960's were searched by the Clerk and Councillors.
We are still researching the minutes and the only reference to the Village Green that we can find at present is in 1983 when the following was minuted:
It appeared from conversations with both the Commons Commissioners and WSCC that in or about 1967 the Memorial Playing Field was registered as a Village Green, but ownership was not registered. It was therefore now essential that someone attend Chichester on 9th June at 2.00 p.m. with 1947 Conveyance and copy to prove ownership.
It would seem from these minutes that the then Council '**appeared**' to be unaware of the Village Green registration and, we have also confirmed from later minutes that Mr. Blackie did attend the meeting in Chichester and registered the land ownership.

- Allotment holder some problems recently, volume of fresh horse manure and chicken manure has been delivered onto the site and it is 3/4ft high and 4/5 ft deep.

This creates an awful smell. Can we regulate the amount of manure that can be kept uncovered at the allotment. Can Allotment Association arrange for this to be ripe, ready to use manure and for it to be moved very quickly (1 week).

The size and height of fruit trees on allotments, look more like orchards. Also with regard to the Rules and Regulations the amount of consideration to these has reduced over years and it would be a good idea to look at them and maybe to look at Brighton and Hove regulations as a model.

There is an enormous poly tunnel that has been erected and perhaps there should be some restriction on these.

We are going to be reviewing allotment rules this year and will take these comments on board. The poly tunnel we are aware of and this is an agenda item.

- Any complaints on dogs recently.

No, only during monitoring week.

- Fence as you asked FoMPF to assist in monitoring can the item be opened up at discussion time. Also the Parish demanded a report after the monitoring but has never given any thanks to FoMPF and if they want continued support need to treat them with respect.

We did ask for a report back, did not demand it. We do thank FoMPF for their help but this issue has not yet been concluded.

- At the F & C committee it was mentioned about the PCSO's and Wardens attending.

This has now been arranged.

- Also allowing the Mobile skateboard van to drive onto field and unload but did not allow Athletic club.

It was possible for the Athletic club to get their equipment across the field manually but it is not possible for mobile skateboard to do so.

- Allotments mentioned replacing some of the fence – at what height.

This is Canada Gardens not Rublees and will be like with like.

- With the Play Area fencing is the idea to prevent risk to children's health? This risk is toxicara canis. Is the council aware of any cases in Steyning? If there is a risk to health it should be documented somewhere but health centre have no records. Appreciate this is not nice to step in but it is the risk to health that is the issue and there are no records or evidence and this has to be looked at against the cost.

This is the main reason. We are not aware of any cases in Steyning but there have been recorded cases. Don't have to have a case to want to do something to prevent it. It does happen and we would wish to try and prevent and safeguard against this. There is evidence in the county and other places and it has been treated at Worthing hospital. There is also evidence of dogs urinating on the equipment which is unpleasant, unsafe and smells.

The Parish Council has a duty and responsibility to residents and when it comes to children we have a duty of care to make sure they are in a safe environment and free from health risks especially in a playing area. We have

to do all we can to mitigate this. This is our concern and this is the right thing to do. We have an area here that is fenced in (Fletchers Croft) and this works.

- Would you ban mothers and families from taking dogs in the area. How would you police this.

The idea would be to keep dogs out. If someone was seen with a dog inside the area they would obviously say something.

- Wondered about investigating an alternative of requiring all dogs to be on a lead in MPF and this would control the policing throughout the MPF rather than fence the area.

This is one point of view but think there would be an outcry from dog owners as there are relatively few places where you can let a dog run free.

- Play area in middle of field and have to cross rest of field to get to it. Could walk in dog mess getting to play area. Risk still there in gaining access.
- Parents with dogs also do not always pick up. I have approached people and you do not get a polite response. It is a problem for people to mention this.
- As a grandparent I do spend a lot of time in and around parks in Steyning and Fletchers Croft and on record I have seen parents with dogs in fenced area, and have approached them and mostly get an impolite response. Walking across field you are likely to walk or wheel buggy in dog pooh! I get far more upset with used condoms. We should be just as worried about this as dogs urinating on the equipment. Dogs will still urinate against a fence. You will still get foxes fouling inside the fence.
- Would need effective enforcement in the field and despite PCSO's, Wardens and CCTV cameras we still get problem. Need to manage to prosecute someone.

Did hope during the monitoring week we would find someone but unfortunately did not.

The meeting was re-convened.

6. MEMORIAL PLAYING FIELDS

6.1 Play Area Fencing: The monitoring of the Dog Fouling week commencing 1st July did find at least 3 incidents of dog fouling in the Play Area and one incidents of a dog urinating over the swing. A dog was seen fouling in the area but unfortunately the owner was not.

Committee discussed at length whether or not to proceed to fence the area but it was noted that we would need to contact DEFRA on the issue of Village Green status, although it was generally agreed that fencing of this kind was probably permissible, also need to look at budgets.

Still think fencing is a good idea. Although we cannot police all the time it would still prevent some of it. No system will be foolproof in prevention.

It is sad that we have not been able to catch anyone. If we do we will take appropriate action.

Is it worth putting an article in Your Steyning that if people do not pick up we will be looking at making it Dogs on Leads in the field.

It would be difficult to enforce this.

Would it be worth trying a big campaign. There were some good children's drawings put up on the path to the lower horseshoe about dog fouling and maybe we could

consider a campaign about fouling everywhere. Could we try a publicity campaign with wardens to have an anti fouling fortnight or something similar.

Unusual to have a play area not fenced off. Is there any legislation requiring it?

Was picked up on the Annual Play inspection that the area is not fenced.

Could put notices that if they do not clear up we would insist on dogs on leads.

It was felt that this issue may need to be part of a public consultation in the Town which will be carried out in due course.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Ness-Collins and **seconded** by Cllr Staines to write to DEFRA, to take the funding issue to F & C committee and the Clerk to investigate possible Section 106 money. Also to run a campaign with notices and a week of monitoring. To bring back to committee. This was **Agreed**.

- 6.2 Steyning Festival:** As in previous years the Steyning Festival wish to hold a Community Picnic and family Fun Day on the MPF on Saturday 31st May 2014. Attendees will bring their own picnic, and some entertainment will be organized, sports events, wheelbarrow race, tug-o-war. They have requested a bouncy castle – this was noted as not allowed on Village Green.

They would provide additional toilets and rubbish disposal.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Ness-Collins and **seconded** by Cllr Toms to give permission for this event providing no activities will contravene Village Green regulations. This was **Agreed**.

- 6.3 Request for skip, car park MPF:** A letter has been received from a resident backing onto the MPF at the Newham Lane side to have a skip in the car park for approximately one week from 9th September. The car park is located on the Village so by rights we cannot allow this. The skip would not be there for any work related to the Village Green and is not for the benefit of people in the locality or users. It seems harsh but we probably have to say no.

It was suggested that the resident ask if any neighbor could help by having the skip out the front of their house. It was suggested the resident approach the police station for permission to use their yard.

It was **proposed** by Cllr N-C and **seconded** by Cllr Toms to refuse permission for this skip. This was **Agreed**.

7. **PLAY EQUIPMENT INSPECTIONS**

A report has been circulated to councilors outlining the works and repairs that are required to play equipment following the recent annual inspection. A large portion of these works relate to play surfacing which in certain areas is now a trip hazard. The works total £5452.00 without the cost of new signs where required. An estimate of the costs of compliant signs from Wicksteed ranges between £447 for a 30cm x 30cm sign post mounted (including installation) to £745 for a 60cm x 60cm sign post mounted (including installation). It may be possible to get these signs cheaper.

A lot of our play equipment was supplied and installed by Wicksteed and therefore all replacement parts would need to be supplied by them.

We cannot allow children to play on equipment that needs attention.

Why do we need to replace the signs. There are signs but they are not compliant with current regulations.

Cllr Ness-Collins commented that there was insufficient money in the current budget and this cost would need to be funded from reserves of which Playing Fields has approx. £9k in total.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Ness-Collins, **seconded** by Cllr Marshall that this is taken to F & C committee for the use of reserves for these repairs. This was **Agreed**.

It was further **proposed** by Cllr Ness-Collins, **seconded** by Cllr Bowell that the Clerk investigate the cost of signs and bring back to committee. This was **Agreed**.

8. ALLOTMENTS

A retrospective request has been received regarding the erection of a poly tunnel in the Rublees allotments which measures approx. 6ft high x 10ft wide x 20ft long . The plot holder has said that neighbouring plots were consulted before the poly tunnel was erected and they did not have a problem with it.

This issue was referred to HDC Planning for their view and they have responded that they are still investigating but this structure will probably need planning permission. HDC have also confirmed that as part of this process the SDNP will be consulted as to whether the structure is acceptable.

What structures are allowed, there are some quite substantial structures already there.

Allotment rules state that a small shed or greenhouse can be placed on a plot.

It was proposed by Cllr Bowell, seconded by Cllr Toms to wait for final response from HDC Planning and if required the plot holder will be required to make a planning application for the structure to remain. This was Agreed.

Cllr Ness-Collin stated that the current regulations for structures on allotments do not specify a maximum size or type of structure or maintenance of them and it was felt that this needs reviewing.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Bowell, **seconded** by Cllr Toms, that Cllr Ness-Collins and the Clerk be delegated to review the regulations. It was suggested that we look at other councils as part of this review. This was **Agreed**.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Bowell and **seconded** by Cllr Staines we call a meeting to all allotment holders to come in to discuss and go through the new regulations. This was **Agreed**.

9. FINANCIAL REPORT

9.1 There were no petty cash payments for July 2013.

Receipts and payments for July were as previously circulated.

Cllr Bowell proposed and Cllr Toms seconded to agree this expenditure. This was Agreed.

9.2 The clerk reported that the electricity fixed rate terms for the changing rooms have been renewed. A one year fixed rate term at 25p daily charge, and 14.89 day rate, 8.24 night/off-peak rate and 13.36 evening/weekend rate. The above terms were agreed.

10. OPEN SPACE MONITORING

10.1 NORMAN WAY – Cllr Staines nothing to report.

ABBEY ROAD – Cllr Marshall reported looking good.

SOUTH ASH – Cllr Ness-Collins said it looks good.

FLETCHERS CROFT –Cllr Trundle looking quite good, grass cut but some items of play equipment need attention. Rubbish bin needs putting back near the gate but to remain outside area as HDC empty this bin. The gate has been damaged and post bent. The contractor is looking at a means of fixing this.

CHANDLERS WAY – Cllr Toms reported fence needs repairing again. Fence by house at top needs attention. Overgrowth and bramble belonging to house at end needs cutting back..

MEMORIAL PLAYING FIELD – Cllr Ness-Collins reported looking quite nice at present and the grass is looking good.

11. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

Committee was asked if there were any projects to add to the Community Infrastructure Levy and the improve fencing around allotments.

12. INFORMATION ITEMS

None for this meeting,

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 24th September 2013 at 7.30 pm.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.40 p.m.