

**PLAYING FIELDS COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY 20th January 2015 at 7.30p.m.
AT THE STEYNING CENTRE**

Present: Councillors Ness-Collins, Rogers, Bowell, Lloyd, Marshall and Staines.

Members of the public: Seven

Clerk: Rebecca Luckin

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR:

1 Q – Two questions relating to item 6.1 regarding a request for a bouncy castle:

1) Fletchers Croft would seem to be a very good location for young children and a bouncy castle, it already has a children's play area, excellent parking and nearby toilets. It has reasonable drainage. Could the Committee propose to the applicant that it might be a good alternative venue? 2) The bouncy castle decision tonight rests upon Village Green legal advice from Hedley's, that cost Steyning and other taxpayers £5,300. There is no reason why the Council cannot make that legal advice public. It is disrespectful for the Council to propose to the Tennis, Cricket and Bowls Club that they should obtain their own legal advice, knowing that they do not have the resources to do so. If the Hedley's legal advice is sound, all well and good. If it is flawed then the sooner the advice is corrected the better for all concerned. Will the Council make the recent Hedley's Village Green legal advice public without delay?

A – Please leave your written questions with us and we will give an answer in writing.

2 Q – Regarding confidential items, which play area will be discussed?

A – Chandlers Way.

3 Q – Throughout the land playing fields are held in the same way as Village Greens and allow bouncy castles to be used, why do Steyning Parish Council feel they need to refuse a bouncy castle, does the Parish Council have insurance arrangements in place?

In a previous meeting a bouncy castle was refused based on legal advice, it is now allowed, does that mean that the advice was flawed?

A – The Clerk advised that it was standard practice for the bouncy castle supplier to provide insurance for the hirer. A – Parish Council legal advice is not flawed, we should not allow bouncy castles as they do not allow access according to Village Green regulation. If access is allowed to all users of the MPF, the bouncy castle will be permitted.

4 Q – Regarding item 5.3, Byelaws for the Regulation of Dogs, what will be discussed?

A – We will discuss whether to accept them or to recommend revision.

5 Q – A dog bin has disappeared from the MPF?

A – The Parish Council did not remove it, investigations are taking place.

6 Q – The car park spaces are for users of the field only, not all users understand that, could there be some better notices to advise that it was for users only, CCTV in operation perhaps? A more prominent notice would have an effect.

A – Not sure if notices would help and it is difficult to enforce. Can only be locked at night, but that is not desirable. The car park is for all users of the MPF. We cannot specify who should use it, it is for anyone who lives in the parish. The Parish Council could consider temporary larger notices. 16

7 Q – Benches on the MPF, some are in a sorry state, is there any way the Parish Council could replace those?
A – We currently have far more than we normally have, and there are no spare funds, we will keep an eye on the benches and on the budget.

The Chairman convened the meeting at 7.45pm

MINUTES

1. APOLOGIES – were received and accepted from Cllr Trundle.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS – there were none.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Cllr Ness collins **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Bowell that the minutes of the meeting held on 18th November 2014 be accepted as a true record and duly signed. **Agreed.**

4. MATTERS ARISING AND ACTIONS – the Clerk reported that:

4.1 Following a question raised by Councillors regarding expenditure under code 4320 (Play Equipment inspections), the Clerk confirmed that although the full budget had been spent, there would be no further payments under that code in this financial year.

4.2 The second gate on the play area will be painted, when time and weather allow.

4.3 Following the meeting of 18th November, quotes had been obtained for the replacement of existing allotments gates with fully meshed gates and new posts:

Supply and fit new gates - £860.00

Adaption of existing gates – supply wire mesh and fit and supply stone and make good ground level under gate - £540.00

The Clerk will obtain further quotes for next meeting and a Councillor will accompany the contractor to explain requirements.

5. BYELAWS – Councillors considered byelaws applicable in Steyning:

5.1 HDC Recreation Ground Byelaws (relating to St Cuthman’s Field).

5.2 Steyning Parish Council Recreation Ground Byelaws (relating to MPF and Rublees Field).

5.3 HDC Byelaws for the Regulation of Dogs (St Cuthman’s Field – Dog prohibited area and canine faeces removal area).

Councillors were of the opinion that current byelaws were not fit for purpose and should be reviewed and re-drafted. HDC byelaws are generic and applicable to many areas in the Horsham District and also cannot be enforced without a notice being displayed. Cllr Lloyd **proposed** that the Clerk and Chair be **delegated** to contact HDC regarding legal advice on byelaws and Village Green status and what laws are enforceable, **seconded** by Cllr Staines. **Agreed.**

6. MEMORIAL PLAYING FIELD

6.1 Councillors considered a request regarding a bouncy castle (the applicant had stated that any child on the Memorial Playing Field would be allowed access). Hedley’s legal advice stated that the Cricket club were only to use the area for cricket related activities. Councillors had previously decided not to allow a bouncy castle when it was ancillary to cricket club use. Councillors agreed in principle but were bound by the advice given. If a complaint was made, Steyning Parish Council would be liable if they had allowed the activity. Councillors agreed to adhere to legal advice provided by Hedley’s Solicitors. Any request for ‘stand alone’ use of a bouncy castle would be permitted, under Village Green laws, provided there was unfettered access. Steyning Parish Council has no wish to face litigation. The requester could be offered the Steyning Centre as an alternative venue.

6.2 Councillors considered a proposal regarding barriers, at the Newham Lane entrance to the MPF, made by a member of the public. Cllr Bowell **proposed** that the Parish Council do not have funds available, however, if the replacement of gates was part of a project improving all-weather access (including wheelchairs) and could be grant funded (with provision for maintenance), Councillors would have no objection. **Seconded** by Cllr Lloyd. **Agreed.** 17

6.3 Cllr Ness-Collins advised that the Parish Council had placed chippings at entrances to the MPF in order to maintain safe access for pedestrians. Permanent improvements could be part of a wider project that could be put out to the community.

6.4 With regard to the War Memorial, Councillors discussed ownership, since at some time, the memorial had been removed from the Parish Council asset register and was no longer insured by Steyning Parish Council. The Royal British Legion had provided copies of documents indicating that the owner was Steyning Parish Council. A breakdown of costs for refurbishment had been provided by the Royal British Legion, totalling £27,750, which did not allow for volunteers' time. Cllr Lloyd **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Ness-Collins that the War Memorial be placed on the Parish Council insurance schedule and asset register.

7. ALLOTMENT REPORT 7.1 Councillors had undertaken a visit to the allotments and provided a report.

8. FINANCIAL REPORT

8.1 Income & Expenditure reports for September, October, November and December 2014. The Clerk noted that an item of expenditure had been incorrectly entered under code 4312 (waste removal), the amount would be journalled to 4310 (grounds maintenance), bringing all expenditure within budget. Cllr Bowell **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Staines that Income & Expenditure Reports be approved. **Agreed.**

9. OPEN SPACE MONITORING

9.1 NORMAN WAY – Cllr Staines reported that access was limited due to muddy conditions. A project plan will be drafted, with a view to setting up a user group to apply for grant funding.

9.2 ABBEY ROAD – Cllr Marshall reported that the area was in good order. The Clerk reported that broken equipment had been removed, since the supplier was no longer trading. Algae had been removed from the tarmac surface. Painting of the equipment would take place as soon as weather permitted.

9.3 SOUTH ASH – Cllr Ness Collins reported that all was in order.

9.4 FLETCHERS CROFT – the Clerk reported that tarmac repairs had been undertaken. Cllr Bowell stream has been cleared, but not the culvert.

9.5 MEMORIAL PLAYING FIELD – Cllr Ness-Collins reported that all was in order. The dog bin by the main entrance had been removed and will need to be re-instated. In spite of the wet weather the Memorial Field looks good. The Autumn cutting back of overgrowth and the efforts of the Orchard group have meant that the top of the field looks very tidy. The Bark chippings spread inside the entrances have done a good job in keeping the ground reasonably dry. The annual maintenance on the children's play equipment in all the play areas has been carried out and the equipment is well used on fine days. A timely reminder – please pick up after your dog, I noticed several abandoned piles on the field this week. The dog bin which disappeared has now I am glad to say "reappeared"! The committee continues to meet regularly and among their other duties each member monitors one of the open spaces.

9.6 CHANDLERS WAY – Cllr Toms reported that play area had moss and a hedge belonging to neighbours required trimming. Some metal had been dumped.

9.7 The Clerk reported that new, compliant signage was in the process of being installed at play areas as highlighted in play equipment inspection reports.

10. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

10.1 Improved facilities at Norman's Way will be added to the list.

11. Information

11.1 Cllr Lloyd advised that Steyning Grammar School Year 7 students had given presentations on making Steyning a better place, the winner was a community garden project. Cllr Lloyd requested that the presentation be offered at the next Playing Fields meeting of 24th February, for Steyning Parish Council to consider taking it on as a community project.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 7.30pm, 24th February 2015.

13. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

Under Standing Orders 1d) the Cllr Lloyd **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Bowell that the remainder of the meeting was held in confidence. **Agreed.**

Members of the public left the meeting at 21.00pm

The meeting closed at 9.20pm

Signed: Date: 24th February 2015
Chairman

Action list 20.01.15

Q1 – provide written answer.

Q6 – MPF temporary larger notices reminding that car park is for users of MPF and to keep emergency access clear at all times. Emergency Access sign / parking sign?

4.3 Replacement of existing allotments gates with fully meshed gates and new posts:

Supply and fit new gates - £860.00

Adaption of existing gates – supply wire mesh and fit and supply stone and make good ground level under gate - £540.00

The Clerk will obtain further quotes for next meeting and a Councillor will accompany the contractor to explain requirements.

5. BYELAWS

Clerk and Chair be **delegated** to contact HDC regarding legal advice on byelaws and Village Green status and what laws are enforceable.

6.1 The **Clerk** will check with requester to ask if it in conjunction with hire of the cricket club.

6.2 Cllr **Bowell** proposed that the Parish Council do not have funds available, however, if the replacement of gates was part of a project improving all-weather access (including wheelchairs) and could be grant funded (with provision for maintenance), Councillors would have no objection. **Advise FoMPF.**

9.6 CHANDLERS WAY –

play area had moss

hedge belonging to neighbours requires trimming

metal had been dumped

11.1 Steyning Grammar School Year 7 presentations - community garden - presentation at next Playing Fields meeting of 24th February, for Steyning Parish Council to consider taking it on as a community project. **Clerk** has contacted organiser, Michelle Stokes.