

WARBOYS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Leisure Areas Committee** held on 26th October 2015 at the Parish Centre.

PRESENT

Councillors Mrs M P Bucknell, Mrs J M Cole, Ms L A Gifford, Mrs M H Harlock, J A Parker, G C M Willis and Dr S C Withams.

IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor T R Huggins.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors R A Payne, P S Potts, J C Price and Mrs A R Wyatt.

01/15 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Upon being moved by Councillor Parker and seconded by Councillor Mrs Cole, it was

RESOLVED

that Councillor Mrs M P Bucknell be elected Chairman of the Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

Councillor Mrs Bucknell in the Chair.

02/15 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Upon being moved by Councillor Ms Gifford and seconded by Councillor Dr Withams, it was

RESOLVED

that Councillor Mrs M H Harlock be appointed Vice Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

03/15 MINUTES

Upon being moved by Councillor Ms Gifford and seconded by Councillor Mrs Harlock, the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23rd March 2015 were signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

04/15 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No interests were declared by Members.

05/15 MATTERS ARISING

The Committee considered the following matters arising from its meeting held on 23rd March 2015:-

(a) Adams Lyons Playground

Further to Minute No. 11/14(a), the Committee discussed the condition of the verge adjoining the boundary with The Paddocks, part of which had been seeded with a wild flower mix. The Clerk pointed out the difficulty for the Handymen in preventing weed growth in a natural setting which had meant that nettles and other weeds had continued to grow where the wild flowers had been seeded. Under the circumstances, it was felt that the area should be strimmed in the autumn to try to encourage the growth of the flowering plants.

(b) Pathfinder Way Open Spaces

Arising from Minute No. 11/14(d), Members were informed that no progress had been made with Persimmon Homes with regard to the transfer to public ownership of the open space at the Pathfinder Way estate adjacent to Lea Brooks Close. Councillor Dr Withams reported that neighbours were not contributing towards its continuing maintenance, although the grass was being cut by a contractor.

(c) Notice Boards

Further to Minute No. 11/14(c), the Clerk reported that he had placed an order for the replacement of the notice boards at High Street and Humberdale Way and would be meeting a representative of the Community Primary School in November with a view to agreeing an alternative location for the notice board outside the school.

(d) Outdoor Table Tennis Tables

Further to Minute No. 12/14, it was reported that no further approaches had been received from the table tennis club about the possible provision of outdoor tables at Adams Lyons playground.

(e) Outdoor Fitness Equipment

Arising from Minute No. 13/14 and the installation of the outdoor fitness equipment at Adams Lyons playground, Members commented on the positive comments from the public that they had received about its popularity.

06/15 MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS

The Committee reviewed the maintenance requirements of the various areas within its remit as follows:-

(a) Adams Lyons Playground

The Clerk reported that a nest swing had been ordered from Caloo to replace the swing that had been vandalised and delivery was expected shortly. Following the snapping off of two of the upright posts on the circular trail installed by Image Playgrounds, the Clerk reported that he would be contacting the company to order replacements. Councillor Willis queried whether repairs to play equipment should be undertaken by the Handymen as opposed to the suppliers of the equipment as any accident as a result of the workmanship of the Handymen could potentially lead to a claim against the Council being rejected by the Council's insurers.

The Clerk pointed out that the Handymen were very capable of carrying out minor repairs and that judgement was exercised in each case as to whether work could be carried out by the Council or required a specialist contractor. In this case, the Clerk pointed out that the work involved the tightening of bolts and setting of posts in concrete which could not be regarded as requiring specialist workmanship. Following discussion, the Clerk was requested to check with the insurers that work of a non-specialist nature could be undertaken by the Handymen without invalidating the Council's policy.

Members were informed that a complaint had been received from the occupier of a mobile home in The Paddock about the problems caused by an overhanging tree near the boundary of the playground. Members were reminded that when similar complaints had been received in the past, a tree surgeon had been engaged to inspect the tree in question and offer advice as to whether work was required. The Clerk also reported that he had received a complaint about a tree overhanging the driveway of an adjoining property in Church Road.

The Chairman drew attention to the need to cut back the branches of a tree in the churchyard in Church Road which was obscuring the visibility of an advance warning sign of the playground and to the need to weed the raised flower bed in the playground.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the Clerk be requested to seek advice from the Council's insurers as to the extent of the work that could be carried out by the Handymen in terms of repairs to play equipment; and
- (ii) that a tree surgeon be engaged to inspect the trees the subject of complaints from neighbouring properties and to submit recommendations as to any work that was considered necessary.

(b) The Weir

Councillor Mrs Cole referred to a number of issues arising from the low water level in The Weir, including the ongoing necessity for plans to be in place if the fish were in distress, the need to liaise with Essential Ponds over the depth of the water, the need to have barley straw bags in place after Siltex had been applied by Essential Ponds and the danger of the pond becoming frozen if the water level had not risen before the cold weather arrived.

The Clerk reported on the number of times he had contacted the various agencies to discuss the filling of the pond with mains water and the difficulty in obtaining a response from them. Members also were aware that the Council had asked the Finance and General Purposes Committee to consider making provision in the budget for 2016/17 to enable the pond to be dredged.

(Councillor Mrs Cole left the meeting at this point in the proceedings.)

Councillor Willis reported that he would make enquiries about the dredging of ponds at the Great Fen project where he worked voluntarily and the Clerk indicated that he would enquire again as to whether Cambridge Water intended to charge for the use of mains water to fill the pond.

(c) Heath Pond and Sheepwash

Members noted that no action was required in respect of the Heath Pond and Sheepwash.

(d) Orchard Close

Members noted that no action was required in respect of the Orchard Close playground.

(e) Pathfinder Way Open Spaces

The Clerk reported that there were no issues in respect of the areas of public open space owned and maintained by the Council at Pathfinder Way.

(f) School Road and High Street/Woodlands footpath

It was reported that trees from the Baptist Church churchyard were overhanging the footpath and the Clerk indicated that he would raise the matter with the Minister.

(g) War Memorial

No issues were raised in respect of the maintenance of the War Memorial and garden.

(h) Jubilee Park

Arising from a question by Councillor Mrs Harlock with regard to the pruning of the fruit trees in the community orchard at Jubilee Park, the Clerk replied that the work was undertaken by the Greener Futures group.

(i) Miscellaneous

The Clerk reported that he had been advised by the Handymen that one of the trees in the High Street near George Lane appeared to have a number of dead branches and the matter had been referred to the County Council for their attention.

A Member drew attention to the amount of vegetation overhanging the lych gate at the cemetery in Church Road and the Clerk was requested to bring this to the attention of the PCC.

The Chairman referred to the unsightly appearance of the bus shelter outside the Methodist Church in the High Street which had been vandalised previously both by a side panel having been pushed out of its frame and the spraying of graffiti. As a result one of the side panels was buckled and the Perspex panels had become cloudy as graffiti remover had been applied. The Clerk reported that the shelter had been installed by the County Council but that it was unlikely that the authority would repair or replace the shelter in the face of the cuts in services that they were making.

Under the circumstances, it was suggested that the Parish Council consider the replacement of the shelter with one of a more attractive design and that a report be submitted to a future meeting with details of alternative designs and costings.

07/15 FEAST WEEK - BAND CONCERT

The Committee considered the arrangements for the Feast Week visit by the funfair and the band concert in 2016. Because of heavy rainfall, the concert provided by the Killer Shrimps at the White Hart in July had been poorly attended, even though every effort had been made by the public house to provide gazebos to provide some shelter for those present.

Reference was made to the more extensive celebrations for Feast Week in the past and it was suggested that the Community Association be approached to consider whether they could organise more events in future years.

RESOLVED

that the Feast Week band concert be held again at the White Hart public house, subject to the proprietor's agreement, that the Killer Shrimps be engaged to provide the concert and Councillor Potts requested to make the necessary arrangements.

08/15 BUDGET 2016/17

The Committee considered a financial statement, a copy of which had been circulated to Members, containing details of estimated expenditure on leisure areas in the current financial year and projected expenditure in 2016/17.

Although expenditure had exceeded the budget in 2014/15, the Clerk pointed out that the Council had authorised a number of additional schemes and acquisitions, including a replacement van, fencing at Orchard Close playground, repairs to the workshop roof and the balance of the cost of the Jubilee Plaque. However expenditure was likely to be only slightly higher than the budget in the current year, even allowing for the purchase of replacement notice boards and additional safety surfacing at Adams Lyons playground. The Clerk pointed out that the cost of the new play equipment at Orchard Close and outdoor fitness equipment at Adams Lyons would be shown separately in the budget as they would otherwise distort the figures because of the level of expenditure involved.

With regard to the budget for 2016/17, the Committee suggested that the Finance and General Purposes Committee be invited to consider the inclusion of sums of £20,000 for the dredging of The Weir and £10,000 for a replacement bus shelter in the High Street.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the budget for leisure areas for 2016/17 be approved as submitted and forwarded to the Finance and General Purposes Committee for consideration; and
- (b) that the Finance and General Purposes Committee be requested to consider the inclusion of £20,000 and £10,000 in the budget for the dredging of The Weir and a replacement bus shelter respectively..

There being no further business, the meeting was declared closed.

Chairman.