

# WARBOYS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Leisure Areas Committee** held on 28th June 2021 at the Parish Centre.

## **PRESENT**

Councillors R J Dykstra, Ms L A Gifford, S J Green, Mrs M H Harlock, Mrs C L Sproats, Mrs S J Wilcox, G C M Willis, Dr S C Withams and Mrs A R Wyatt.

Mr M Croucher (Co-opted)

## **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Mrs J M Cole, Mrs C Evans, J A Parker, R A Payne and P S Potts.

## **01/21 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

Upon being moved by Councillor Dr Withams and seconded by Councillor Mrs Wyatt, it was

## **RESOLVED**

that Councillor G C M Willis be elected Chairman of the Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

**Councillor Willis in the Chair.**

## **02/21 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

Upon being moved by Councillor Mrs Wyatt and seconded by Councillor Dr Withams, it was

## **RESOLVED**

that Councillor S J Green be appointed Vice Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

## **03/21 MINUTES**

Upon being moved by Councillor Dr Withams and seconded by Councillor Mrs Wilcox, the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 2nd November 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## **04/21 MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

No interests were declared by Members in respect of items appearing on the agenda.

## **05/21 MATTERS ARISING**

The Committee noted the following matters arising from its meeting held on 2nd November 2020:-

### **(a) White Hart Bowls Club**

Arising from Minute No. 05/20(b), Councillor Mrs Wyatt reported on the progress being made by the White Hart Bowls Club to re-establish the club and attract greater usage of the bowling green at the rear of the White Hart public house.

### **(b) Feast Week**

Further to Minute No. 06/20, the Clerk reported that Thurstons funfair had confirmed that they would be visiting Warboys during Feast Week with their fairground attractions. The funfair had been asked to provide details of the arrangements for managing events of this nature while the pandemic restrictions were in place but had yet to supply the information requested.

An announcement was expected from the Government on step 4 of the roadmap out of lockdown which was anticipated to happen on 19th July, unless there was a further delay following the recent increase in the number of reported cases. As the position on the lifting of restrictions was still unclear, the Committee requested that the funfair operators be asked again to supply the information required to enable a final decision to be taken concerning their visit at the Council meeting on 12th July.

## **06/21 MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS**

The Committee reviewed the maintenance requirements of the various areas within its remit with the benefit of the reports of safety inspections carried out by Playsafety Ltd. of the play equipment at Adams Lyons, Jubilee Park and Orchard Close.

A summary of the reports had been circulated by the Clerk with comments on the action taken or on which decisions were required. Members were informed that the playgrounds had been exceptionally well used since they had been re-opened in July after the first pandemic lockdown. Signs summarising Government guidance had been installed at the entrances to the playgrounds but had been largely ignored by users. The Handymen had continued to clean the equipment with disinfectant weekly but were unable to do so more regularly.

The Clerk confirmed that most of the repairs that could be dealt with by the Handymen already had been attended to or would be dealt with soon.

### **(a) Adams Lyons Playground**

The following issues arose from the inspection report and in the ensuing discussion.

Members noted the reference to trimmer damage to wooden posts. This had been raised previously with the grounds maintenance contractor but it was accepted that there was little further that could be undertaken other than to monitor the situation.

Members requested that the panels that showed signs of splitting on the wooden shelter be replaced.

Following comments by the safety inspector about ground erosion at the base of a number of items of equipment, Members recognised that this was largely unavoidable unless some form of safety surface was installed and the Clerk was asked to investigate the possibility of installing matting that grass could grow through.

The safety inspector had drawn attention to decay in the timber edging of the sand pit which required replacement. The Clerk reminded Members that the timber edging had been installed following an earlier safety report which had drawn attention to the dangers of the previous concrete edging. The Clerk advised that he would investigate the possible use of recycled plastic with a chamfered edge as a more permanent replacement and would report back.

Members were also advised that there had been two incidents in recent weeks when a dog had been permitted to foul in the sand pit.

Members were aware that the musical activity panel had been damaged as a result of vandalism. The Clerk reported that a claim had been submitted to the Council's insurers as the equipment could not be repaired. The outcome of the claim would be reported to Members when available to enable a decision to be made as to whether to replace the equipment.

Members were informed that playgrade bark to top up the safety surfacing was out of stock currently and that this would be ordered as soon as it became available.

Members noted the comments made in the report regarding the multi-unit climber and basket swing but had received assurances previously from the equipment suppliers that the work suggested was unnecessary.

The inspector had pointed out that the embankment slide did not have barriers around its summit and had recommended that this be referred to the manufacturer. However Members recognised that the equipment had been in situ for 10 years and this issue had not been raised previously. Members were of the opinion that the installation of barriers would create an additional hazard by increasing the potential fall height for users and would detract from the play value of the embankment.

The Clerk referred to the recommendation by the inspector that the cableway fixings be dismantled to inspect the cable inside the metal tubing as this could not be inspected visually. The Clerk pointed out this was a specialist task and he had referred the matter to the manufacturer.

Councillors Mrs Wyatt and Ms Gifford reported that a youngster had set part of the boundary hedge alight on 26th June when disposing of some paperwork and that this had necessitated a visit by the Fire Brigade.

**RESOLVED**

that the Clerk be requested to investigate the issues raised and report back where necessary.

**(b) Jubilee Park**

The following issues arose from the inspection report and in the ensuing discussion.

Members noted that the manufacturer had advised previously that the rubber sheaths encasing the metal chains on the basket swing should not be removed as these were designed to protect the chainwork. The Chairman mentioned that one of the sheaths was starting to split and the Clerk advised that the situation would be monitored.

The inspector had drawn attention to decaying beams in the ‘pick-up sticks’ equipment. Members proposed that the equipment be replaced as it had not been particularly well used and the timber beams would be prone to further decay. It was suggested that a similar item of multi-play equipment to that installed at Adams Lyons playground in early 2020 would be more suitable for the age group for which Jubilee Park was designed. The Clerk advised that he would report back after making enquiries into the cost of a replacement and would look into the possibility of removing the existing play equipment and publicising its removal on social media.

The inspector had drawn attention to the fact that one of the posts of the agility rope walk was unstable. The equipment had been repositioned by Bellway after having installed a pathway too close to its previous site and Bellway had been asked to rectify the problem.

**RESOLVED**

that the Clerk be requested to investigate the issues raised and report back where necessary.

**(c) Orchard Close Playground**

The following issues arose from the inspection report and in the ensuing discussion.

Members accepted a suggestion by the Clerk that the risk of tripping on the rubber mulch entrance to the playground was low and that no action should be taken. Following a request by the Chairman, the Clerk advised that he would ask the Handymen to remove the bolt on the gate which had been damaged.

Members were informed that a cap had been ordered for the carousel to replace the missing item.

All of the remaining issues raised would be dealt with by the Handymen.

**(d) Heath Pond and Sheepwash**

The Clerk reported that Froglife had submitted an unsuccessful bid for funding for the dredging of the pond but they had recently advised that they were seeking other

opportunities for funding for this and other ponds locally. A successful claim had been made to the insurers of a motorist who had crashed into the Sheepwash brickwork and reimbursement had been received. However more extensive repairs were required if the Sheepwash was to be returned to its original condition and no further action had yet been taken.

**(e) Pathfinder Way Open Spaces**

It was noted that no action was required with regard to the land owned and maintained by the Council.

**(f) School Road and High Street/Woodlands footpath**

Vegetation overhanging the path between Woodlands and the High Street had been cut back by the Handymen in 2019 with the assistance of Members of the adjoining Grace Baptist Church. Members referred to the amount of nettles encroaching onto the path and the Clerk advised that he would ask the Handymen to trim them down.

**(g) War Memorial**

Members noted that no action was required.

**(h) The Weir**

Members were reminded that extensive enquiries into the dredging of The Weir ultimately had not come to fruition in early 2020 due to the refusal of Anglian Water to permit the pond to be drained through its natural outfall to empty the water prior to dredging. The firm that been asked to undertake the work had been re-structured at the time and this had been followed by the pandemic lockdown.

No further action had been taken subsequently as almost all of the larger fish had been re-located and there had been sufficient rainfall to keep water levels reasonably high.

**(i) Land Adjoining the A141**

Members were informed that the purchase of the land adjoining the A141 was being progressed by Solicitors acting on behalf of the Council. With a view to considering the future maintenance of the land, it was

**RESOLVED**

that a working party comprising Councillors Green, Mrs Sproats and Willis be established to investigate the establishment of a management plan and report back.

**(j) Miscellaneous**

Councillor Mrs Wyatt drew attention to the fact that brambles were again growing across the footpath north of George Lane from the school hedge and the Clerk undertook to ask the Primary Academy to arrange for them to be cut back.

Councillor Green asked if the directional sign to the tennis court in the High Street could be removed as the tennis court was no longer in use and there were no plans to replace it.

The Clerk reported that a landowner had claimed that the Parish Council had planted the hedgerows on either side of the B1040 leaving the village in Ramsey Road as far as the entrance to Pelican Farm and had asked that these be cut back by the Council. The Clerk reported that he was unaware that the Council had planted the hedgerow or accepted any responsibility for its maintenance. Unless documentary evidence could be produced that demonstrated that the Council had accepted responsibility in the past, the Clerk reported that he had advised the landowner that the Council would not be undertaking the work.

## **07/21 SPORTS ACTIVITIES AND FACILITIES**

Members were reminded that the Council had agreed to widen the terms of reference of the Committee to include sport earlier in the year and had co-opted Mr M Croucher to the Committee to represent sports clubs.

Mr Croucher addressed Members on the activities currently undertaken at the Sports Field, involving the Warboys Town football club, Warboys Colts football club and St Ives Town and Warboys cricket club. The clubs had a combined membership of 328 people and were managed by 66 volunteers, providing a total of 1,503 hours of sporting activity throughout the year. The cricket club ran 5 adult and 6 junior teams, the football club two teams and the colts football a number of teams for children from the age of 5 to 17.

Reference was made to the extensive range of measures to ensure that the clubs complied with the appropriate guidance and legislation. Funding was obtained from membership subscriptions, grants and fund-raising activities. The rent charged by the Sports Field Committee was met equally by the three clubs.

Mr Croucher drew particular attention to the lack of available space to create additional pitches at the sports field to accommodate the interest in sport and the growth of the village. As the field was bordered by development on three sides, the field could only be extended southwards but the owner of the land had not been prepared to discuss its disposal when approached previously. Mr Croucher also drew attention to the poor condition of some the ancillary facilities used by the clubs such as the changing accommodation.

A number of questions were raised by Members concerning the age range of club members, their place of residence, the shortage of available land in the village in public ownership for sports use and the ongoing need to attract volunteers.

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

**Chairman.**