

WARBOYS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Leisure Areas Committee** held on 27th June 2022 at the Parish Centre.

PRESENT

Councillors R J Dykstra, D W England, D R A Fabb, Ms L A Gifford, J A Parker, Mrs C L Sproats, Mrs S J Wilcox, G C M Willis, Dr S C Withams and Mrs A R Wyatt.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Mrs J M Cole, Ms M L Morrow and A Ntuk and Mr M Croucher.

01/22 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Upon being moved by Councillor Ms Gifford and seconded by Councillor Parker, 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.

02/22 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

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

RESOLVED

that Councillor Mrs C L Sproats be appointed Vice Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

03/22 MINUTES

Upon being moved by Councillor Parker and seconded by Councillor Dr Withams, the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 1st November 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

04/22 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor England declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Minute No. 07/22(i) (Maintenance Requirements – Onyetts Field) as he farmed adjoining land. A dispensation to speak but not vote on the matter had been granted previously by the Council.

05/22 MATTERS ARISING

The Committee noted the following matters arising from its meeting held on 1st November 2021:-

Feast Week

Further to Minute No. 11/21, the Clerk reported that the Community Association had circulated a programme of activities during Feast Week which included a street market that they had organised in the High Street on Sunday, 24th July while the road was closed in anticipation of the arrival of the funfair attractions. Members were advised that the Association were targeting the occupants of the David Wilson Homes and Bellway estates with a leaflet encouraging them to attend to find out what was happening in the village.

06/22 SPORTS PROVISION

Although he had submitted an apology for absence from the meeting, Mr Croucher had asked that the Committee be informed that the football, colts football and cricket clubs were continuing to thrive but had encountered an increasing problem with attracting volunteers. As a result, it had been necessary to employ external coaches to ensure a continuation of junior training at a cost of £1,000 during the past year. Although this had been met by the club, this would need to be passed on to the families of the players unless support could be provided by the Parish Council.

The Chairman suggested that this might be qualify for a grant from the Whittome Wind Fund and the Clerk undertook to notify Mr Croucher accordingly.

07/22 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.

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.

With regard to the strimmer damage to an entrance sign, the Clerk reported that the Council had engaged a new contractor earlier in the year to cut the grass which hopefully would reduce any further damage. As the sign recognised the receipt of a grant some 12 years previously to fund new play equipment and was becoming faded with age, the Committee had no objection to its removal if the damage to the posts continued.

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 again drawn attention to decay in the timber edging of the sand pit which required replacement. The Clerk reported that a number of options had been investigated over the past year without success but that further enquiries would be made.

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

Similarly, the inspector had pointed out that the embankment slide did not have barriers around its summit to prevent falls but Members had accepted that the unit had been in situ for 12 years without problem and had expressed the view when this had been raised in the previous year's report that the installation of barriers would create an additional hazard by increasing the potential fall height for users.

The inspector had drawn attention to a gap in the wet pour surfacing between the embankment and the supporting sleeper wall and the Clerk was asked to obtain a quotation for additional wet pour to fill the gap.

The inspector had again recommended that the cableway fixings be dismantled to inspect the cable inside the metal tubing and the Clerk reminded Members that this had been undertaken by Caloo after the receipt of the previous year's report. The inspector had also recommended the installation of barriers on the cableway platform to prevent falls and drawn attention to the fact that children under 36 months could climb the ramp to the platform. As the equipment had been in use for many years as installed by the suppliers and the provision of barriers would be impractical, Members agreed that no action should be taken.

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 inspector had drawn attention to the fact that the opening on the new multi-play unit to the fireman's pole was wider than 500 mm without a guardrail but the Clerk reported that the suppliers had given an assurance that the equipment met play safety standards.

The inspector had drawn attention to the fact that one of the posts of the agility rope walk was unstable after it had been repositioned by Bellway after the company had installed a pathway too close to its previous location. Bellway had been asked repeatedly to rectify the problem, together with improvements to the footpath that they had provided and the installation of a kissing gate to their new estate but they had failed to undertake the work. The Clerk reported that he was continuing to liaise with the company but Members suggested that the work to stabilise the post be undertaken by the Handymen.

(c) Orchard Close Playground

All of the matters raised by the inspector in his report had either been dealt with by the Handymen or were in hand.

(d) Heath Pond and Sheepwash

The Chairman reported that he and the Clerk had met representatives of the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust about the possibility of installing a pond for newts, etc at Onyetts Field and had also raised with them the possibility of dredging the Heath Pond under the grant scheme. The Trust's officers had undertaken to investigate and report back.

(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

The Handymen had cut back vegetation encroaching onto the path between Woodlands and the High Street in response to a request by the Minister of the Grace Baptist Church but the Chairman drew attention to further work that was required, including the removal of low hanging branches from trees in the adjoining cemetery. The Clerk undertook to raise this with the Handymen and the Minister for the work to be undertaken.

(g) War Memorial

Members noted that no action was required.

(h) The Weir

Members drew attention to the fact that the hedge bordering a property in High Street was impeding pedestrian access via the footpath on the eastern side of the pond and the Clerk was requested to raise this with the occupiers of the property concerned.

(i) Onyetts Field

The Chairman informed Members of the outcome of the meeting with the representatives of the Wildlife Trust referred to in (d) above. The Trust's officers

had recommended a new pond be created in the south-eastern corner of the land to benefit great crested newts and other amphibia as these would be absent from the other pond in the field due to the presence of fish. The work would be organised by the Trust at no cost to the Council. Councillor England suggested that the wettest part of the strip extending to the south-east tended to be near the boundary with the land to the west and the Clerk was asked to point this out to the Trust as a potentially better location for the pond

Members had no objection to the creation of the proposed new pond and the possible dredging of Heath Pond and the Clerk was requested to continue to liaise with the Trust.

The Clerk also indicated that he would arrange a meeting of the working party in the near future to progress the Management Plan and discuss future arrangements for the attraction of volunteers to help with management of the land.

(j) Miscellaneous

Members extended their appreciation to the Handymen for the planting and watering of the various garden areas throughout the village in recent weeks.

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

Chairman.