

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RECREATION AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE held on Monday, 3rd August 2015 in the Jubilee Hall, South Darent at 7.30 pm.

PRESENT: Cllrs I Blackamore (Chairman)
R House, D Mitchell, C Page, J Stewart

Mr T May, Cllr Rushbrook, Malcolm Dunn DRiPS

IN ATTENDANCE: H Rohard, Parish Clerk

18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Received from Cllr M Stead, Mr M Mason and Mr M Burroughs were accepted.

19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

20 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the last meeting held on 22nd June 2015 be approved and signed as a correct record.

21 MATTERS ARISING

Top Paddock investigate any restrictions of use for future: will be brought to a future meeting when details checked by Clerk.

Shrubbery Road fence panel quotes: action yet to be completed.

Burial Ground –liaise with Tree Surgeon: action yet to be completed

Franks Lane River Bank: planning consent to be sought – action yet to be completed.

Lower Paddock – Avenue House tree: write to owners to request fallen tree removed

Replace watering cans in Burial Ground: to be actioned

Hedge cutting quotes for September: to be actioned

Esparto Way street furniture and bollards responsibility for upkeep: still waiting for SDC to check plans

List of assets and maintenance schedule to be drawn up: to be actioned

22 PARISH COUNCIL OWNED OR MANAGED HEDGES, VERGES AND PATHS

Information was received from the Clerk following NWKCP visit to look at the River path and costs for managing to 2 volunteer days to facilitate 21 volunteers who have expressed an interest in the project.

Malcolm Dunn felt that the bank running next to Holmesdale Road should be a priority however this was cut last year by KCC Highways which suggest that it is their riparian duty as it is next to their road. The clerk would report this as in need of cutting again.

The EA used to regularly cut all vegetation back but this stopped 5 – 6 years ago with policy now being that 50% of the wet channel is now cut. Now Himalayan Balsam has taken hold and is spreading along the banks. The removal of this non- native species was felt to be important but in the spring before it sets seed. To try to remove before then would spread more seeds as the seed heads ‘explode’ when touched.

RESOLVED that £440 be spent to engage NWKCP to manage 2 volunteer days for October and Spring 2016.

ACTION: Clerk to liaise with NWKCP and Volunteers

23 100 YEAR WOOD

NWKCP report for the planned works for the 8 days was received.

A Teddy Bear Picnic was organised for 22nd August to engage families with the 100 Year Wood and a honey bee demonstration would be part of this event.

24 WESTMINSTER FIELD

Information about how to reduce the grass growing onto the path was considered; rotivating the ground either side to cut roots had been suggested but the uneven ground this would then create would cause other issues. No further action on this was deemed necessary at this time.

The picnic area bin is not big enough to cope with demand during the summer despite bins beside the Pavilion having room; despite notices being used last year to remind visitors to use them or take rubbish home, tied up plastic bags of rubbish has still been left, causing problems especially when it is only emptied 3 times a week.

RESOLVED that a bigger bin be bought and installed and that the existing bin be moved to 100 Year Wood.

ACTION: Clerk/Cllr Blackamore

25 PAVILION & PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

Cllr House reported that whilst the picnic area improvements were well received the toilets were in need of attention. Budget had been allowed for a deep clean and it was agreed that this would be requested straight away for the Summer period.

ACTION: Clerk

26 HEATHSIDE

Plans for Firework event discussed and following agreed;

- barriers would be used this year to help with queuing at Heathside entrance
- Suggested Bowls Club Car park be available for volunteers only
- Cllr Blackamore will arrange pallets for the fire
- No fairground attractions would be allowed
- Bar to be allowed
- Improved lighting to be investigated
- Firework budget to stay at £1000

The nettles around Heathside entrance have caused some complaints this year and RESOLVED that £50 be spent to have weed killer applied.

27 TOP and LOWER PADDOCK

Matter of fallen tree is still in Lower Paddock from Avenue House is outstanding.

Nothing else to report.

28 SHRUBBERY ROAD

Fence panel quotes to be obtained by Clerk still outstanding.

29 PLAY AREAS

Action list has been drawn up from the Play Inspection Reports and is being worked through. All low risk items.

Saxon Place play area: whilst Community Association has been enthusiastic to help Dave Hollands, Chair had expressed his view that their aim to fundraise so much money was unachievable. Cllr Mitchel offered to take all the play equipment brochures and contacts away to look at and would report back at the next meeting on ideas/costs to move the project forward.

The dilapidated state of the play area was of concern. The gate, which is beyond repair and a finger entrapment hazard, will be removed as soon as possible.

School Play Area: The lease to the Parish Council from KCC (school) will end in 2018. A meeting with the school should be arranged to ascertain its' future viability and what the school's hopes are for the site.

ACTION: Clerk to liaise with school

30 BURIAL GROUND

The Clerk had written a Health and Safety Policy for the Burial Grounds including procedures for checking memorials with reference to 'Managing the Safety of Burial Ground Memorials' from Ministry of Justice.

Cllr Mitchell asked that the document be considered at the next meeting to enable members to scrutinise it more fully.

ACTION: to be reviewed in October

31 FRANKS LANE RIVER BANK

No progress to report.

32 ALLOTMENTS

A large group of student volunteers from Dartford Technology College worked in the car parking area to clear brambles and debris. 2 Allotment holders helped together with teaching staff from Wide Horizons School and DTC.

Martin Mason asked if the area could be flail mowed next summer to keep it in check and this would be considered at budget setting time.

33 STREET FURNITURE and BUS SHELTER

An enquiry regarding the upkeep of street furniture outside of Esparto Way is with SDC Planning, who are checking the original plans. Still outstanding.

34 PLANNING

SE/15/02051/HOUSE

26 East Hill, South Darent

The construction of a two storey rear extension along with raising the external walls to form living accommodation at first floor level.

OBJECTION: Proposed building is out of keeping with the street scene and is overdevelopment of the site within the Greenbelt

SE/15/020132/FUL

The Co-operative Food Building 25 Horton Road, South Darent

Change of use to vacant first floor and part ground floor and alterations to form 8 x 2 bedroom apartments, with formation of ground floor entrance hall and stairs, 2 x internal car parking spaces, cycle store and refuse bay, external alterations, and use of 10 x external allocated parking bays (an additional shared parking spaces). Internal and external alterations and refurbishment.

OBJECTION: Parking scheme for this site has not been finalised. The proposed allocated parking spaces are already in use by visitors to the co-op and other businesses. Until the overall parking scheme of the site is formalised, creating the need for additional parking by making the upper storey habitable is opposed.

35 DATE OF NEXT COMMITTEE

26th October 2015

The Clerk asked for assistance with putting together the Grass Cutting tender packs. Cllr Stead was suggested in his absence; the Clerk would liaise with him.

Meeting ended at 9.35pm

Chairman

Date