

## WESTERHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Allotments, Playing Fields and Open Spaces Committee  
held on Monday 7th September 2015 at 7.30pm  
in Russell House, Market Square, Westerham

Present: Councillors: Mrs H Ogden (HO) (Chair)  
Mr A Bates (AB)  
Mr A Holman (AH)  
Mr N Moore (NM)  
Mr N Proudfoot (NP)

In attendance: Deputy Clerk: Mrs D Marshall (DM)  
Mr D Edwards

Item		Action
1.	<b>Apologies for Absence</b> – None. Mrs B Tidy and Mr M Brewer, advisory representatives, sent their apologies.	
2.	<b>Declarations of Interest not previously declared</b> – None.	
3.	<b>Reports from Advisory Representatives</b> <b>3.1 Bloomfield Allotments</b> – Mr Edwards reported that despite the Council sending letters to plot holders who were not working their plots, some were still not being cultivated. Follow up letters would be sent. A BBQ for plot holders held at the site had been very well attended.	
4.	<b>Minutes of the Meeting</b> held on the 8 <sup>th</sup> June '15 were approved at Full Council on the 13 <sup>th</sup> July 2015.	
5.	<b>Information items arising from the minutes of the previous meeting not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda</b> <b>(3.3) Westerham Football Club</b> - the Junior Footballers had elected a new Chair and Vice-Chair. A meeting could now be arranged between WTC, the Senior Footballers and the Junior Footballers to consider future arrangements. <b>(7.9) Defibrillator</b> – the WSA had advised that they may be able to secure 1 or 2 donated defibrillators. The Deputy Clerk to follow up to see if this had been successful. <b>(10.5) Hanging Baskets</b> – the Deputy Clerk was asked to enquire about the situation regarding the hanging baskets and the Council's £850 donation. <b>(17.1) Outside Gym</b> – Councillor Parry should be approached for funding for an outside gym.	DM DM DM DM

6.

### **Clerk's Report**

#### **Allotment Sites**

**6.1 Allotment Competitions** -both the Town Council and Kent Allotment competitions had taken place. The Kent judges commented on the improved standard of plots entered in the competition from Westerham and commended WTC for the proactive role being played in managing the allotment sites.

**6.2 Volunteers** - Sevenoaks School sent a group of young volunteers to work for a morning at Currant Hill allotment site, under the supervision of the Deputy Clerk and Tom Buckley. The youngsters were extremely helpful and worked very hard clearing overgrown allotments of discarded tyres, wood, debris, ready for strimming. The Deputy Clerk sent the school a letter of thanks.

**6.3 Health and Safety inspection** - had been completed by ROSPA at King George's Field and the report had been received for consideration and action.

**6.4 Farley Trees** – a joint letter had been approved by WTC and the police and sent via registered post.

**6.5 Plot inspection** – had been undertaken by the Deputy Clerk at all three sites and 24 warning letters had been issued. As a result of this, some plot holders had elected to give up their plot. A further re-inspection showed a dramatic improvement in the condition of many of the plots, with only a handful requiring a follow up letter.

**6.6 Plot markers** – had been commissioned for Farley and Bloomfield sites.

#### **King George's Field**

**6.7 PAT testing** - the annual PAT testing had been undertaken at KG Pavilion and there were no matters of concern.

**6.8 Signage** – had been removed from the playground gate and from the ball court gates, and had to be replaced.

**6.9 Weed & feed/worm caste treatments** - had been completed at KGF.

**6.10 KGF damage** - a large area of KGF had been set alight, between the levelled pitches and the river – it is hoped that this will recover naturally and is being monitored.

**6.11 Darenth Bridge** – the slip prevention wire had become loose and torn and presented a trip hazard. It had reached the point of needing to be replaced.

**6.12 Skate park accident** – a young child had cut her foot on a raised piece of metal on one of the skate park ramps. WTC office closed the park immediately that the incident was reported. The ramp was repaired and reopened within 48 hours. The ramp had been inspected the day before the incident and showed no signs of damage. The child would appear to have been barefoot. A full record of the incident has been kept and there has been no further correspondence with the parent.

#### **Open Spaces**

**6.13 Fullers Hill notice board** – this had been fully enclosed with the addition of a new door. Tom had rubbed down and re-oiled the roof and the legs. A notice had been placed inside advising the public to bring their notice to the office for display, and the same advice was posted in the Gazette. There had been no adverse comments, but positive comments about it looking tidier.

**6.14 Additional dog bins** – had been installed in Rysted Lane and the Church yard, and one was due to be installed in Croydon Road, in response to the public identifying these areas as being places with a dog poo problem.

**6.15 Grange Island** - the arbour resin in one of the tree pits had been damaged by a car driving on it. A quote for remedial work is awaited.

	<b>6.16 Tree Survey</b> – had been completed and a report presented to Full Council, who agreed that quotations should be sought for the remedial works outlined.	
7.	<p><b>Allotment Sites</b></p> <p><b>7.1 Allotment rents</b> – it was agreed to freeze allotment rents for 2016/17, in view of the withdrawal of concessions.</p> <p><b>7.2 Criminal damage at Farley</b> – a joint letter from WTC/the police to the perpetrator, clearly stating that he may not enter the allotment site without prior written permission, was sent via registered post. The letter was circulated to the committee. The Deputy Clerk would track the delivery online and hold a copy of the receipt on file.</p> <p><b>7.3 Allotment competition/presentation</b> – the Kent judges commented on the high quality of the plots put forward. The presentation of the cup and prizes will take place at the Westerham Horticultural Society’s Autumn Show on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September. Cllrs Ogden, Proudfoot and Bates plan to attend.</p> <p><b>7.4 Management of uncultivated plots</b> – the Deputy Clerk inspected the plots at all three sites in July and sent over 30 letters to plot holders. The plots were re-inspected at the end of August. The majority had improved their plots, some had given up, and a handful required a follow up letter. Councillors were in agreement that a trampoline could not remain on an allotment at Farley and that plots at Bloomfield were to be cultivated and not left overgrown with brambles to attract wildlife.</p> <p><b>7.5 Allotment occupancy</b> – councillors considered the maps provided by the Deputy Clerk, identifying a large number of vacant allotments, despite regular advertising. It was agreed to continue to advertise and that local sites should be contacted to see if they had waiting lists that could be offered our plots. The Deputy Clerk was asked to reproduce the maps for the next meeting, to update the situation following the annual renewals.</p> <p><b>7.6 Allotment site meetings</b> – councillors wanted to hold meetings with allotment holders to discuss improvements. These would be held on a Saturday morning – councillors to advise the Deputy Clerk of their availability.</p> <p><b>7.7 Notice boards</b> – the cheapest quote obtained for notice boards for the allotment sites was £695 per board. Cllr Bates agreed to approach his contact at HSW Timber to see if this could be improved upon.</p>	<p>DM</p> <p>DM</p> <p>DM</p> <p>All Cllrs</p> <p>AB</p>
8.	<p><b>King George’s Field</b></p> <p><b>8.1 Westerham Fireworks</b> - the committee ratified approval of Westerham Fireworks being held on KGF on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2015.</p> <p><b>8.2 It’s a Knockout</b> - the committee ratified approval of a private event on KGF on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2015.</p> <p><b>8.3 Bowls Club</b> – the committee considered a request from the Bowls Club to install an independent electricity meter, taken from the grounds man’s hut supply to power the pump for a new irrigation system. Councillors approved the request in principle, but stipulated that the cabling must be underground, rather than over ground. The contractor would have to be qualified and provide the relevant health and safety and insurance paperwork to the council.</p> <p><b>8.4 Hedge cutting</b> – councillors approved a quotation for hedge cutting at KGF.</p> <p><b>8.5 KGF bridge</b> – councillors approved a quotation for replacing the anti-slip wire on the bridge at KGF.</p> <p><b>8.6 Safety inspection report</b> – councillors noted that this had been received for KGF, the skate park and the playground. There were no major areas for concern. The</p>	<p>DM</p> <p>DM</p> <p>DM</p>

	<p>Deputy Clerk to create a maintenance schedule and cost estimates to address the minor actions identified.</p> <p><b>8.7 Bike racks</b> – a request had been received to install bike racks at KGF. The committee agreed that the need for bike racks should be added to the pavilion /MUGA redevelopment project. In the short term, the single bike rack removed from the Green could be installed behind the youth shelter.</p> <p><b>8.8 KGF side gate</b> – the gate adjacent to the groundsman's hut is rotten and there is concern about security. Councillors approved the purchase of a replacement.</p> <p><b>8.9 Costells Meadow Car Park</b> – a quotation for extending and re-surfacing the car park had been received. The question of funding needed to be referred to F&amp;GP to create a reserve. Cllr Ogden agreed to liaise with H&amp;L committee regarding the issue of how to protect the car park from usage from non-field users.</p> <p><b>8.10 Cricket</b> – the senior footballers had raised the potential to introduce cricket at KGF from 2017. The Deputy Clerk was asked to arrange a meeting to explore this further.</p>	<p>DM</p> <p>DM</p> <p>DM</p> <p>DM</p> <p>HO</p> <p>DM</p>
9.	<p><b><u>Open Spaces</u></b></p> <p><b>9.1 Talk of the Town</b> – the committee ratified approval for Talk of the Town to be held on the on the Green on 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> September.</p> <p><b>9.2 Dog bin</b> – it was agreed to site an additional dog bin by the round pond.</p> <p><b>9.3 Japanese Knotweed</b> – councillors discussed the prevalence of Japanese Knotweed in the town. The Deputy Clerk confirmed that all sitings had been reported to the relevant landowner. Japanese Knotweed is not reportable and landowners are not obliged to remove it. The committee formed an action plan to deal with any Knotweed found on WTC owned land and Cllr Ogden had produced information which could be shared with local organisations, estate agents, the gazette and WTC facebook page/website.</p> <p><b>9.4 Talking statues</b> – councillors discussed the prototype for talking statues and were very supportive of the initiative in principle. The new design was felt to be a little large, but the additional information displayed was beneficial. Councillors agreed not to give permission for plaques to be attached to the plinths of Churchill and Wolfe statues, but to give permission for them to be freestanding: displayed on a lower oak post in Wolfe flowerbed, and to a stone set in the paving around Churchill. The best colour to blend in with the surroundings was felt to be green.</p> <p><b>9.5 Tree survey</b> – the survey had taken place and a detailed report had been received. Full Council had approved expenditure for the six month work schedule. Two alternative quotes need to be sought, so that the contract can be awarded.</p> <p><b>9.6 Grange Island</b> – the committee approved the repair of damage to the arbour resin on Grange Island.</p>	<p>DM</p> <p>DM</p> <p>DM</p> <p>DM</p> <p>DM</p> <p>DM</p>
10.	<p><b><u>Councillors' Away Day</u></b> – Cllr Ogden would be meeting with Cllrs Marsh and Wesley to form an action plan from the away day. Residents will then be consulted to test response, before actions come to committees.</p>	<p>HO</p>
11.	<p><b><u>Crockham Hill and King George Pavilions</u></b></p> <p><b>11.1 Pavilion/MUGA redevelopment project</b> – amended plans for refurbishing the pavilion were awaited from Bond Bryant. The initial plans presented had not fully reflected the objectives of the proposed development. Deputy Clerk to follow up.</p>	<p>DM</p>
12.	<p><b><u>Public Rights of Way</u></b></p>	

	<b>12.1 Permissive paths</b> – Squerries to be contacted to enquire whether any permissive paths are planned to be closed due to farming operations.	DM
13.	<b>Finance</b> <b>13.1 Committee Year End Accounts to 31st August '15</b> – were received. <b>13.2 The grass cutting budget</b> - for open spaces is likely to be overspent and will need reviewing when setting the 2016/17 budget.	
14.	<b>Correspondence</b> <b>14.1 Sevenoaks Greensand Commons bid</b> – the committee confirmed their continued support for the bid and were unaware of any recent projects/activities that would impact on work related to the Common. The Deputy Clerk to respond accordingly. <b>14.2 Darent Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme</b> – the invitation to the Countryside Morning on the 24 <sup>th</sup> September was noted. <b>14.3 Westerham Cycling Club</b> - achieved Go-Ride Clubmark status. The Deputy Clerk was asked to write a letter of congratulations and to advertise their success on WTC facebook page. <b>14.4 Kent Environment Strategy Consultation</b> – Councillors delegated responding to this consultation to Cllr Ogden.	DM  DM HO
15.	<b>Reports from Councillors</b> <b>15.1</b> Cllr Bates had met with Stuart Merrylees and the Environment Agency to discuss de-silting the round pond. SM is seeking funding for this initiative. Cllr Bates was thanked for all his hard work in clearing the pond. <b>15.2</b> Cllr Proudfoot is a member of Westerham Horticultural Society. He encouraged councillors to support the forthcoming Autumn Show on Saturday 12 <sup>th</sup> September, at Churchill School. <b>15.3</b> Cllr Ogden had met with Chip Carpenter and advised that he had offered to co-ordinate a community group to clear some of the overgrown allotments at Currant Hill allotment site.	
16.	<b>Newsletter and web-site</b> <b>16.2</b> Advise the public of the issue of Japanese Knotweed and how to treat it.	DM
17.	<b>Matters for District and County Councillors</b> <b>17.1</b> Approach Cllr Parry for funding for the outside gym.	DM
18.	<b>Further Matters for Consideration at the next meeting</b> <b>18.1</b> New Street to Croydon Road footpath. <b>18.2</b> Pavilion/MUGA redevelopment update. <b>18.3</b> Budget setting.	
19.	<b>Date of next meeting</b> Monday 2 <sup>nd</sup> November 2015.	

The meeting was concluded at 10.06pm

Minutes confirmed as a correct record:

Chairman