

# WESTERHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Allotments, Playing Fields and Open Spaces Committee held virtually  
on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020 at 2.00pm

Present: Councillors: Mr A Jowett (AJ) - Chairman  
Mr N Robson (NR)  
Mr K Thompson (KT)  
Mr C Pither (CP)

In attendance: Deputy Clerk: Mrs D Rogers (DR)  
One member of the public

Item		Action
1.	<b><u>Apologies for Absence</u></b> None received.	
2.	<b><u>Declarations of Interest not previously declared</u></b> None.	
3.	<b><u>Minutes of the Meeting</u></b> Held on the 9 <sup>th</sup> March 2020 were approved at Full Council on the 16 <sup>th</sup> March 2020.	
4.	<b><u>Information items arising from the minutes of the previous meeting not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda</u></b>	
5.	<p><b><u>Clerks Report</u></b></p> <p><b>Hanging baskets and bedding plants</b> –The Deputy Clerk had liaised with the Westerham Society and discussed the ordering/invoicing changes required for VAT purposes as outlined at the last meeting by the RFO. It had also been agreed with the Westerham Society to award CJS Plants the summer hanging basket contract. The term of this contract is for three years, with the option to extend for a further period of up to two years.</p> <p>It was agreed not to award a winter basket contract at this stage. The winter basket display had not been as visual as had been hoped, and we are reviewing with the Westerham Society whether to have them again.</p> <p>The summer hanging baskets went up at the beginning of June and the bedding plants were delivered and planted at the end of May. Whilst the overall hanging basket order is less than previous years, owing to the pandemic affecting the amount raised, we had been able to provide baskets in the same general locations as last year. This should provide a good display throughout the town.</p> <p>The total order for 2020 is £3,635 (53 baskets) - to be paid as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £2,775.00 from money raised by the Westerham Society; and</li> </ul> <p>the balance of £860 is to be split between Westerham Town Council and the Westerham Society. The Deputy Clerk took the opportunity to thank the Westerham Society for its support with the hanging basket campaign, especially during the challenge of a lockdown and pandemic.</p> <p><b>Water bill at KGF</b> - a larger than expected water bill for King George's Field had been</p>	<b>DR &amp; WS</b>

	<p>received in March. This is being investigated with Castle Water by the Deputy Clerk. Cllr Pither offered to assist with the enquiry if needed.</p> <p><b>New equipment</b> - a commercial lidded wheelie bin had been purchased to store the litter bin bags from KGF (cost £399.00 inc VAT and delivery). Currently the litter bin bags are kept on the floor of the Grounds Maintenance Operative's (GMO's) hut until the weekly refuse collection day. This arrangement is not ideal at any time and particularly so during hot weather and the pandemic. The wheelie bin will be kept inside the GMO's hut. A new fire brigade lock had been purchased and installed for the main vehicle gate into the field at KGF. This is to replace the existing one that had seized.</p> <p><b>Abandoned cars in Costells Meadow car park</b> – one car had moved following a visit to the owner from the PCSO. The remaining car had been served a 28-day notice before removal. As the vehicle has still not been moved and the notice period has expired it will be removed from our land and crushed.</p> <p><b>Relighting the Darenth Project</b> – no further update due to the pandemic.</p> <p><b>Assessment of football pitches at KGF</b> - the FA carried out an assessment of the football pitches on 1<sup>st</sup> July. Cllr Jowett, the Clerk and Deputy Clerk had been present. Once the FA has produced its report this will be shared with WTC and the football club.</p> <p><b>Weed and feed treatment at KGF</b> – The annual weed and feed treatment was carried out in May at the playing field. The treatment benefits the health of the grass and helps prevent the grass becoming strangled with weeds, or moss-bound.</p> <p><b>Dogs not kept on leads at KGF</b> – there had been several complaints of dogs not being kept on leads at the playing field during April and May. A polite message to keep dogs on leads had been put on our Facebook page during May and into June's TN16 magazine. 'Dogs on leads' signage is on display throughout the field area. The dog warden was not able to offer any other practical advice or support.</p> <p><b>WTC noticeboard on bus shelter (London Road)</b> – this had been taken down for repair as it was leaking. Repair has been delayed somewhat but is now under way.</p> <p><b>Bench maintenance programme</b> – remedial work to repair the missing arm of the bench on the Green has not been completed due to the pandemic.</p>	DR
6.	<p><b>COVID-19</b></p> <p><b>Outdoor equipment</b> - in response to the COVID – 19 pandemic and following Government advice the playground, outdoor gym and tennis courts were shut in March. A COVID-19 page was set up on the Westerham Town Council website outlining details. As at 4<sup>th</sup> July, and again in line with Government advice and guidelines, all have now re-opened. Individual risk assessments and visual inspections have been carried out and relevant signage at each location has been installed.</p> <p><b>Use of The Green</b> - the Town Clerk is in discussion with our insurance provider, Zurich, for advice on use of the Green during the pandemic.</p> <p><b>Use of our playing fields</b> – as restrictions relax and more activities are approved by Government all sports clubs using our playing fields, including tennis, cricket, footballers and all commercial exercise groups and personal trainers are asked to check with their insurance company that they are covered to carry out their sporting activity during the pandemic and are required to undertake their own risk assessments. <u>Without these requirements being met permission to use our playing field will not be granted.</u> This has been communicated to all current approved users along with advice that they must ensure that <u>all their activities are consistent with Government guidelines/requirements with regard to health, travel, social distancing and hygiene.</u></p> <p><b>Grounds Maintenance Operative (GMO)</b> - The Grounds Maintenance Operative (GMO)</p>	DR

	<p>has had to shield. A date for an annual appraisal has still to be arranged and undertaken by the Clerk and Deputy Clerk upon the GMO's return.</p> <p>Duties such as bin emptying, general repairs, watering, strimming and visual inspections continue to be undertaken by an external contractor. FG&amp;P and the RFO are aware and are monitoring this additional spend. The GMO is due to return at the beginning of August. A risk assessment had been carried out and identified that the toilet and hand washing facilities at the GMO's hut should be cleaned before the employee returns to work. The cost of this will be some £20, to be undertaken by the Council's cleaning contractor and will come out of the KGF maintenance budget. <b>A ONE-OFF CLEAN WAS APPROVED</b> - the Deputy Clerk will arrange.</p> <p>The previous APFOS clerk had advised that general cleaning of the hut including the sink and toilet facilities after use is part of the GMO's duties. The hut is only used by the GMO, who works part time over three days a week. The GMO also has access to the Russell House office kitchen and toilet facilities. On return to work the GMO will be provided with the necessary PPE, hand washing and cleaning materials. <b>The APFOS committee AGREED it was satisfied with the current cleaning arrangements and that a further final review of cleaning will take place once the employee had returned to work.</b></p> <p><b>Saturday bin emptying and litter removal at KGF</b> – The Deputy Clerk reported that by Monday mornings each week there had been a huge amount of litter on the field, the bins had been overflowing, there had been glass in the tennis courts and skate park and most worryingly human faecal material has been found on several occasions recently at KGF and Russell House. This is felt in part to be due to very exceptional circumstances that have existed during the pandemic as well an increase in the number of visitors to the field. Nevertheless, this sort of situation has also arisen in the past, mainly in the summer months - but not on this scale.</p> <p>To manage this issue an additional litter pick and bin emptying at KGF has been undertaken each Saturday as from the last week of June. The Deputy Clerk advised that this should be reviewed at the end of the summer when use of the field usually reduces and that future summer weekend cover should also be considered by the APFOS committee and, if agreed necessary, should be budgeted for and built into the GMO's role. The Committee asked for a review of the number of litter bins provided. <b>ACTION: REVIEW AT NEXT MEETING.</b></p> <p>The Committee felt strongly that an external public toilet at the pavilion should be provided as part of the KGF re-development project. The Deputy Clerk will investigate if this is currently envisaged as part of the pavilion re-development plans and will report back to the committee.</p> <p><b>Application for events on our land:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KGF - VE DAY celebrations by WSA – 9th May – cancelled due to COVID-19</li> <li>• The Green - Beating of the Bounds and Rotary Fair – 10th May – cancelled due to COVID-19</li> </ul>	<p>DR &amp; AH</p> <p>DR</p> <p>DR</p> <p>DR</p> <p>DR</p>
7.	<p><b>Finance</b></p> <p><b>7.1 To receive the APFOS end of year financial statement</b> The end of year financial statement was received and noted.</p> <p><b>7.2 A financial statement up to 31 May 2020</b> The financial statement was received and noted.</p> <p><b>7.3 Rollovers from 2019/2020</b> The rollovers were noted as follows: 201/4400 maintenance <b>£746</b> 202/4400 maintenance <b>£1500</b></p>	DR

	<p>202/4710 Costells car park <b>£1000</b>  205/4404 Crockham Hill <b>£21108</b>  205/4418 hanging baskets <b>£400</b>  205/4427 work on trees <b>£1700</b></p>	
8.	<p><b><u>Allotment Sites</u></b>  <b>8.1 Renewals/vacant plots and promotional material</b> - One existing plot holder still had not paid their rent. Owing to the pandemic it was felt that a termination letter should be put on hold for now. There had been a surge of interest in allotments, with several new plot holders recently started. The promotional banners have been produced but, owing to the pandemic, they have not been used yet.  WTC and the police dealt swiftly with breaches to social distancing and the WTC allotment tenancy agreement by a plot holder, who had held several parties during lockdown on their allotment plot. There have been no further incidents to date.  <b>8.2 The allotment competition</b> – this year's competition had been cancelled due to the pandemic.  <b>8.3 Currant Hill allotment site clearance and levelling work</b> - the clearing of vegetation needs to take place during July/August - the work is expected to take three days as it is over a large area. A quote had been received for £700. The Deputy Clerk sought agreement by the committee to proceed. <b>AGREED TO PROCEED.</b>  The levelling work had now been scheduled for September 2020. This work had already been approved by the APFOS committee. <b><u>The RFO has advised that all work is within budget.</u></b></p>	DR
9.	<p><b><u>King George's Field</u></b>  <b>9.1 Proposal for Cricket at KGF</b> - a letter was sent on 12 June by Cllr Jowett to Chris Bechervaise, Chair/Club Secretary of Westerham Cricket Club. The letter has been circulated to the APFOS Committee.  <b>9.2 Installation of speed bumps and signage</b> - the speed bumps have been installed. The signage will be installed this month. Feedback received so far has been positive.  <b>9.3 Emergency and hiring procedures</b> – had been circulated to APFOS committee for approval. <b>The Committee APPROVED the procedures.</b>  <b>9.4 Use of field by Bodyworx</b> – it had been agreed that Bodyworx can use KGF for personal training (PT) sessions. PT Sessions will be charged at £2.50 per session. Bodyworx had been advised that they need to check with their insurers that they were insured to undertake PT activity during the pandemic and they have since confirmed that this was OK. They are also required to forward a copy of the COVID-19 risk assessments to WTC.  <b>9.5 Unauthorised use of the playing fields by personal trainers</b> – we have been made aware that the field may be being used commercially by personal trainers without our permission. The Community Warden is undertaking spot checks.  <b>9.6 Annual playground inspection</b> – this will take place during July.</p>	
10.	<p><b><u>Open Spaces</u></b>  <b>10.1 Car parking project update</b> - The RFO is awaiting updated costings from Amey for the work.  <b>10.2 Works to Granville Road Green</b> – no development to report, given the pandemic  <b>10.3 Replacement trees for Granville Road Green</b> – the trees have been planted and, to date, all seems OK.</p>	

<p><b>10.4 Environmental policy</b> – the Deputy Clerk had produced and circulated to the committee an environmental policy statement review 2020. This review demonstrated the environmental activities undertaken by the APFOS committee to show how IT had contributed to the objectives detailed in the policy.</p> <p>In addition to the environmental policy a climate change policy for Council is to be developed. The Town Clerk will lead on the climate change policy.</p> <p>A member of the public had attended the meeting to enquire about the policy.</p> <p><b>Action: Cllr Jowett is to draft a baseline creation for implementation of the environmental policy across the Council's activities.</b></p> <p>In addition to the contractor's advice already received on weed control treatments (see item 10.8) impartial advice on alternatives to weed control and other environmentally friendly initiatives that APFOS maybe able to adopt is to be sought by the Deputy Clerk.</p> <p><b>10.5 For information only</b> - All risk assessments were reviewed at a high level by the H&amp;S Committee in June 2019; they are now referred to the appropriate committee for a detailed review. <b>Action: The Chair and Clerk of APFOS will undertake a review.</b></p> <p><b>10.6 Quarterly Visual Inspections</b> – these are now due. Cllr Thompson will take over Granville Rd open space instead of the bus shelter at London Road. The Deputy Clerk will undertake the bus shelter at London Road. Cllr Robson will take on Verralls Corner. The Deputy Clerk will circulate visual inspection forms as necessary.</p> <p><b>10.7 Outcome of the Tree Survey</b> – the tree survey has been circulated to the committee. All of the tree works outlined in the report and future surveying have been adequately budgeted for in the 2020/21 budget. We also have a tree reserve.</p> <p>To summarise the report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there are 3 trees that require action within 3 months at a cost of £520.00 – please note that <i>this work already has been scheduled, to ensure that the work is carried out within the timescale;</i></li> <li>• 12 trees require action within 6 months - cost £1,920.00;</li> <li>• 7 trees require action within 12 months - cost £1,880.00</li> </ul> <p>Total tree works = £4,320.00 plus the survey report cost £2,420 ext. VAT.</p> <p>Further work will be required within 2 years - 3 trees at a cost £540.00.</p> <p>Another tree survey should be undertaken in 18 months time (October 2021).</p> <p><b>The APFOS committee to AGREED TO APPROVE all the tree work proposed to be carried out and endorsed the contractor's recommendation as to the suggested timescales.</b></p> <p><b>10.8 Quarterly weed killing around the Town</b> – weed killing on hard surfaces took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> July. The Deputy Clerk is looking into environmentally friendly alternatives/products for such treatments and had asked our contractor to advise us. They have responded by saying that they are currently very satisfied with the safety aspects of glyphosate as they currently use it around the town. They further advised that no other alternative options provide a high enough level of control when it comes to weed kill. All the various alternatives need 4/5 times the amount of applications per annum and, in most circumstances, are not as environmentally friendly or safe and are much more expensive.</p> <p>They further advised on the use of a hot foam system v HSE approved product glyphosate.</p> <p>The hot foam machine itself uses 8 litres of diesel per hour (excluding fuel for the flat bed truck that tows it around) and it also uses 500 litres of clean drinking water per hour as well. Each machine costs upwards of £60,000. The hot foam system requires constant use, some 10 visits a year as a minimum, and is very slow operationally when trying to cover large areas. It is also a large machine, so it will struggle downside</p>	<p>AJ</p> <p>DR</p> <p>DR</p>
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	streets and alleyways. It also uses boiling HOT foam, palm oil, coconut oil and olive oil, with the heating being by propane gas with a naked flame and diesel emissions. The contractors concluded by advising that – in their view - a well-managed herbicide spray programme is far less damaging to the public, operators and environment than any of so called “environmentally friendly” solutions for killing weeds when they are looked at ‘in the round’. The contractors are monitoring the situation regularly. If a new option emerges, they have undertaken to advise us straightaway.	
11.	<b><u>Public Rights of Way</u></b> No update was available at the time of meeting on footpath application SR341.	DM
12.	<b><u>Correspondence</u></b> <b>12.1 Parking on green spaces at Ash and Hartley Road</b> – parking on the grass spaces continues to be an issue. This needs to be looked into once the parking projects have been completed and a review of funding and options available has been undertaken. <b>12.2 Request for support with maintenance costs for Greensands Common equipment</b> It was suggested that the APFOS committee should take the same stance to this request as that taken by the Westerham Society and the Church - and pay the requested amount out of our contingencies, but with no commitment for the future. The cost is £20.50 and, subject to the no-commitment caveat – <b>IT WAS AGREED TO PAY THIS COST.</b> The Deputy Clerk will respond to the request.	DR
13.	<b><u>Reports from Councillors</u></b> Cllr Jowett had attended a site visit at KGF by the FA. Cllr Jowett's participation as APFOS Chair in responding to the challenges faced from the COVID-19 crisis over the last few months was acknowledged and appreciated by the Deputy Clerk and the Committee.	
14.	<b><u>TN16 and website</u></b> An article on keeping dogs on leads at KGF. We also need to communicate that allotments had stayed open during the pandemic.	
15.	<b><u>Matters for District and County Councillors</u></b> None.	
16.	<b><u>Further Matters for consideration at the next meeting</u></b> 16.1 Review of mowing contract tender 16.2 Review of football fees 16.3 Effect of Covid-19 on costs v funding 16.4 Review allotment rents	
17.	<b><u>Date of next meeting</u></b> - Monday 7 <sup>th</sup> September 2020.	

The meeting was concluded at 3.45pm

Minutes confirmed as a correct record: **Chairman**