

WESTERHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Allotments, Playing Fields, and Open Spaces Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 17th January 2022
at 7pm in Russell House, Market Square, Westerham

Present: Councillors: Dr J Lord (JL) – Chairman
Mr C Pither (CP)
Mr K Thompson (KT)
Mr C Elsdon-Wortley (CEW)

In attendance: Deputy Clerk: Mrs D Rogers (DR)
Finance Officer/Project Manager: Mrs D Marshall (DM)

| Item | | Action |
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| 1. | <u>Apologies for Absence</u> Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Robson. | |
| 2. | <u>Declarations of Interest not previously declared</u> None. | |
| 3. | <u>Minutes of the Meeting on 1st November 2021</u> Were approved at the Full Council meeting on 6 th December 2021. | |
| 4. | <u>Information items arising from the minutes of the previous meeting not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda</u> Item 5 - Vandalism of the bench at Russell House - the Committee raised why the CCTV had not picked up the vandalism of the bench and should the CCTV be improved. The November Clerks report had advised that the pear tree was to be pruned on Saturday 23 rd October. This work was required as the tree was blocking the CCTV camera. The work had been carried out. Item 6.2 – Two points were raised about draft budget relating to the APFOS eco plan: - Shredder - the Deputy Clerk advised that any new equipment would come from the new equipment budget line. There had been no requirement for a shredder/chipper during 2021 and only one bonfire by the WTC's GMO. Therefore, the need for a shredder was currently being reviewed by the Deputy Clerk. Eco budget - the RFO had advised that an additional budget line to cover "Manage land for nature" was not necessary. Associated costs had been budgeted for. Item 7 – A question had been asked by the committee if the weed control membrane was environmentally friendly – the Deputy Clerk explained that allotment holders could purchase a high-quality weed control fabric from | |

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| | <p>the Town Council. This was an effective ground cover and a weed suppressant. It had planting lines incorporated into the material to facilitate accurate planting. It was a woven geo-textile made from HDPE threads. Using weed control fabric significantly reduces the need for chemical weed killers. UV treated, it will last for 5 to 7 years without the need for a mulch and even longer with one.</p> <p>Item 8.1 – Actions from the RoSPA H&S inspection report for KGF and how progress is documented – the Deputy Clerk explained the process was for them (DR) to investigate any areas identified in the report and take the appropriate action. There was an agreed budget for maintenance and repair expenditure. Updates were given via the Clerks report.</p> <p>Item 9.1 – Open Spaces – Use of the Green - commercial use of the Green had as requested by APFOS been discussed by Council in the December meeting. A draft policy for the Town Green had been included on the January APFOS agenda for consideration by the committee before going to Council (see agenda item 9.3).</p> <p>Item 10 - Eco Action plan – the Deputy Clerk responded to each point raised by the committee as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Environmentally safe processes (contractors) – this will form part of the tendering process. b) Reducing chemical use - this was being researched by the Deputy Clerk. Action so far had been a reduction of scheduled chemical hard surface treatments for 2022 . See agenda Item 10, APFOS action plan. c) Community engagement – this will be part of the Annual Town meeting in May. The Town Clerk will take this forward. | |
| 5. | <p><u>Clerks Report – for information</u> Noted.</p> | |
| 6. 6.1 | <p><u>Finance</u> <u>Financial Statement to 31st December 2021</u> The financial statement had been circulated and was noted.</p> <p><u>Water bill progress (since the last meeting)</u> – Thames Water had finally agreed to accept the return to sewer application (for KGF) submitted by WTC and it will be backdated to June 2020 (the date of the application). However, there remained further queries with the billing that the Deputy Clerk and RFO were looking into.</p> | DR/DM |
| 7. 7.1 | <p><u>Allotment Sites</u> <u>Update on rent renewals</u> All outstanding rents had been chased up by the Deputy Clerk; £600 remained unpaid. This amount did not reflect any bank transfers during January.</p> | |
| 8. 8.1 | <p><u>King George’s Field</u> <u>RoSPA Health & Safety inspection report Play Area Resistance testing of timber</u> - a resistance wood drill test had taken place and the report circulated to the committee for information. All but two pieces of equipment had no signs of timber decay which was positive news. The</p> | |

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| <p>8.2</p> <p>8.3</p> | <p>Multi Play and Agility Trail had some decay in the timber, the report states “but this is not likely to affect its stability significantly before the next annual inspection. Continue to monitor during routine and operation inspections, taking action as necessary”.</p> <p>The Deputy Clerk recommended that future wood tests were carried out on (old) play equipment at least every 3 years. This action was agreed by the Committee. The Deputy Clerk will build into the maintenance schedule.</p> <p>The KGF working group Project Manager had also been given a copy of the wood drill report to consider when planning the playground re-design.</p> <p>Grounds Management Association Pitch Assessment report – the report was circulated for information. The committee had been very pleased to learn that Westerham Football Club had been awarded a grant of £55,000 for works to be carried out to improve the pitches at KGF as part of a six year programme.</p> <p>Fence repair – the fence that borders the WSA car park was in need of repair. It was unclear who owned the land that the fence was sited on. The Committee discussed at length and felt that a potential resolution would be to approach the WSA and suggest a share of the cost between the WSA and WTC <u>as a one-off repair</u> until legal ownership of the boundary could be resolved. The Deputy Clerk will obtain a quote from a local fencing contractor.</p> | <p>DR</p> <p>DM</p> <p>DR</p> |
| <p>9</p> <p>9.1</p> <p>9.2</p> <p>9.3</p> <p>9.4</p> <p>9.5</p> | <p><u>Open Spaces</u></p> <p><u>Update on winter maintenance programme for the Green</u> - after a period of resting the grass and the removal of the Christmas tree work could now get underway (weather permitting).</p> <p>Damage to grass verges at Madan Road and Granville Road Green by delivery drivers – two members of the public had reported that considerable damage had been caused at Madan Road and Granville Road Green to grass verges and one wooden bollard was knocked down by delivery drivers. Photographic evidence had been provided. The damage had been reported to the companies by the Deputy Clerk and investigations were taking place. This had taken up a considerable amount of the Deputy Clerks time.</p> <p>Consider draft policy for the Town Green – a draft policy for the Town Green was circulated. The Committee was happy for it to be presented to Council. There had been a request from the Grasshopper on The Green before Christmas to place tables on the paved area around Wolfe Statue. This was accepted as a reasonable temporary measure due to the increased levels of covid and permission was given based on these tables being used by anyone irrespective of whether they are a patron of the Grasshopper or other establishments around The Green. This will need to be reviewed.</p> <p>Review of events on Council Land application form – reviewed and felt no changes necessary at this time.</p> <p>Crockham Hill Memorial Garden maintenance update – the contractor had decided not to continue with the maintenance of the garden. They will continue with Russell House and Beggars Lane Roundabout. Applications from the previous recent tender process will be looked at to see if there is a suitable contractor.</p> | <p>DR</p> <p>DR</p> <p>DR</p> |

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| 9.6 | <p>WI Centenary tree request – a request had been received from the WI to plant a small flowering cherry tree in the memorial garden at Crockham Hill with a small sized plaque to read “Presented by Crockham Hill WI to celebrate their centenary 1921 – 2021”. Request agreed. Deputy Clerk to liaise with WI.</p> <p>Update on Parking Project – The Finance Officer (DM), Car Parking Project Manager gave a comprehensive update on the parking projects and was pleased to report that they were now complete. There were a few snagging issues at each location to be followed up on with the contractor.</p> <p>Hartley Road & Madan Road – the following was discussed and agreed: There were some small areas that required re-seeding, WTC’s GMO would undertake this. Deputy Clerk to purchase grass seed. Low maintenance hardy evergreen shrubs to be planted on the island area at Madan Road parking bay. Costings had been received for installation of knee rail to protect the WTC owned grassed open spaces. Following discussion, it was agreed that a barrier in keeping with the area was needed to stop the grass from being parked on and damaged at Madan Road and the Hartley Road/Ash Road junction. DM will look into funding options for the cost of knee rail and update the committee. The committee would monitor if knee rail was required at the Hartley Road parking bays.</p> <p>Costello’s Meadow Car Park – the following was discussed and agreed: Signage for car park restrictions. 1) No overnight parking. 2) the car park is for users of the field only and for a maximum parking duration of up to 4 hours during the hours of 8am and 6pm, every day. Parking will be monitored. A letter drop to Costello Meadow residents advising them of parking restrictions. Draft letter to be circulated to committee. Wildflower seeding to be planted on the sloped area of earth along the newly fenced side of the car park to make the area more attractive. Investigate marking out some of the bays to maximise parking. Plant evergreen, low maintenance hardy shrubs along the KGF side of car park. The Deputy Clerk had purchased a salt bin and litter bin for the car park.</p> <p>The Committee recommended that the newly created parking bays at Madan and Hartley Road should come under the Highways & Lighting Committee to take responsibility for any future maintenance and with an appropriate budget. DM did not envisage any maintenance costs in the short term.</p> | DR DM DR DM DM DR DM/DR DM/DR DR DM DM JL |
| 9.7 | <p>Update on KGF redevelopment project – The Finance Officer (DM), KGF Working party lead advised that the consultation process had been positive with 543 responses. 97.93% of respondents supported re-development. DM would be meeting with SDC planning at the end of January. A full update will take place at a special Council meeting to be arranged for February.</p> | |

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| 10. | <u>Climate Change/Environmental & Biodiversity Action Plan</u> An update to the APFOS action plan had been circulated to the committee. Updates were shown in the comments/next steps column in bold. All areas were now in progress (amber). The Chair asked the committee to ensure they were happy with the APFOS action plan and to feedback any comments before the next meeting. The Committee asked how the eco plan will be presented at the Town meeting. The Deputy Clerk will ask the Town Clerk to clarify. Cllr Pither offered to help write an article. | ALL DR |
| 11. | <u>Public Rights of Way</u> No items noted. | |
| 12. 12.1 | <u>Correspondence</u> Sevenoaks Greensand Commons Project update – circulated for information. | |
| 13. 13.1 | <u>Reports from Councillors</u> Cllr Elsdon-Wortley was in the process of digitising the visual inspection forms. Cllr Pither raised concern about recent fire burning across the local hills and the effect on air quality. It was agreed to make Town Clerk aware. | DR |
| 14. 14.1 | <u>TN16 and website</u> Articles appearing in January were noted. The Committee asked for future articles on: Completion of Car Park at Costello's Meadow – this being a successful first step in the KGF re-development! Launch of ECO policy at the Town Meeting. What does the Community want? | DM AH |
| 15. | <u>Matters for District and County Councillors</u> None | |
| 16. | <u>Further Matters for Consideration at the next meeting</u> No items other than those that arise from the minutes. | |
| 17. | <u>Date of next meeting</u> Monday 7 th March 2022 | |

The meeting was concluded at 9.30 pm

Minutes confirmed as a correct record:

chairman