

# WESTERHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Allotments, Playing Fields and Open Spaces Committee  
held at Russell House on  
**Monday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillors: Dr J Lord (JL) - Chairman  
Mr N Robson (NR)  
Mrs L Rodgers (LR)  
Mrs S Sheen (SS)

In attendance: Mrs D Marshall (DM) – Interim officer for APFOS  
Cllr N Proudfoot (until the end of public session)

Item		Action
1.	<b><u>Apologies for Absence</u></b> No apologies were 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 11 <sup>th</sup> September 2023 were approved at Full Council on the 2 <sup>nd</sup> October 2023.	
4.	<b><u>Information items arising from the minutes of the previous meeting not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda</u></b> None. Cllr Lord thanked Deborah Rogers for all her hard work in supporting the APFOS committee and members wished her all the best in her new job.	
5.	<b><u>Clerks Report - this is a general update since the last meeting for information.</u></b> The report was received and noted. DM advised that a £1,200 water bill had been received for Currant Hill allotments, considerably higher than usual; investigation would be needed to ascertain whether there was a leak or increased usage. A dog bin lid had been vandalised and destroyed on King George's Field – a replacement would be ordered. It was noted that the railing planters hadn't been re-planted when the bedding plants were changed – DM to follow up.	DM DM  DM
6.	<b><u>Finance</u></b> <b>6.1 To receive the APFOS Financial Statement up to 30th September 2023</b> – the report was received and noted. The committee noted that the seat refurbishment programme had gone over budget and this additional expenditure would be met from the contingency budget.	

	<p>The likely need for a third, unbudgeted, weed killing treatment was discussed and it was agreed that this expenditure would also be met from the contingency budget.</p> <p><b>6.2 To consider draft budget 2024/25</b> - Cllr Lord reported that he and the Deputy Clerk had had a meeting with the Finance Officer to discuss the Budget 2024/25. Time was spent analysing the spend for each budget line over the past 3 years to form realistic future expenditure forecasts. Also taking into account changes in practice and indications of price increases from existing contractors.</p> <p>Cllr Lord outlined the draft budget to the Committee and following discussion it was <b>agreed</b> to propose a draft budget of £51,700 to Council.</p> <p>The main items to note were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small overall increase from £50,650 to £51,700</li> <li>• Small inflationary increases had been made to some budget lines.</li> <li>• Open space mowing budget had been reduced slightly to reflect no mow May.</li> <li>• The budget lines for Playground Equipment, Skate Park and Costells Meadow Car Park would be removed. The budgets would be transferred to KGF Maintenance line 202/4400, to allow greater flexibility around prioritising maintenance needs at KGF.</li> <li>• The weed killing budget had been increased to allow a third annual treatment, as two treatments had proved insufficient in 2023.</li> <li>• The seat budget was increased to reflect increasing costs from our contractor.</li> </ul> <p><b>6.3 APFOS 4-yearly budget</b> – was discussed and <b>agreed</b>.</p>	
7.	<p><b><u>Allotment Sites</u></b></p> <p><b>7.1 Allotment rent renewals:</b> 4 plots had been given up; 2 new plots had been taken on and there had been 2 new enquiries; hopefully maintaining a status quo with plot occupancy. At this point only 4 plots had not been paid for – a second and final reminder had been sent.</p> <p><b>7.2 Farley pipework replacement</b> – had been delayed due to bad weather but was scheduled to be undertaken before the end of the year.</p>	
8.	<p><b><u>King George's Field</u></b></p> <p><b>8.1 Update on KGF redevelopment project</b> – the Project Officer advised that the skate park was being well used. A tree had been planted, a bin installed and further seeding of the surrounding area undertaken. New signage was ready for installation and further planting around the tree needed to be arranged. Due to the muddiness of the site currently, it was felt best to have an official opening in the Spring once the grass had 'taken'.</p> <p>The contractor undertaking the installation of the perimeter path had been delayed by the ongoing wet weather. He was due to site at the end of week commencing 20<sup>th</sup> November. The works were expected to take approximately 6 weeks, running into the new year.</p> <p>Further works on the KGF redevelopment project had been put temporarily on hold, whilst DM acted as interim officer for APFOS and CHWMPF Trust.</p>	
9.	<p><b><u>Open Spaces</u></b></p> <p><b>9.1 Proposal for further seating on The Green – SDC UK Shared Prosperity Fund</b></p> <p>The grant to create a further accessible seating area on the top corner of the</p>	

	<p>Green, by the church (re-siting the noticeboard) had been approved and the order for the works placed. This would be undertaken in the new year. A further round of funding would be made available for town centre improvements in the new year (up to a maximum of £24,995 per project). It was agreed that Cllr Lord would put in an application to pave the top strip of the Green: the area behind the benches/adjacent to the parking bays, to make the area more attractive and less muddy for drivers accessing their parked vehicles. It was necessary to have three quotations to support the application. The Interim Clerk was asked to chase a quotation from SRM Building Contractors and to seek a third quotation.</p> <p>The Interim Clerk queried whether the 'path' would be wide enough to meet accessibility minimum width guidelines and was asked to investigate.</p> <p><b>9.2 The Green Policy</b> – after discussion the Committee <b>agreed</b> a change of policy addressing non domestic/exotic animals on The Green. This will now be recommended to Full Council for consideration.</p> <p><b>9.3 Visual Inspection</b> – quarter four inspections are due to be completed before the end of the year and sent to DM. Interim Clerk to forward the visual inspection sheets to councillors.</p> <p>A councillor needed to be appointed to cover the open spaces in Granville, Hartley, Ash and Madan Roads. Cllr Proudfoot kindly offered to undertake the visual inspections in this area on a temporary basis, until a new member of the APFOS committee has been appointed.</p> <p><b>9.4 Annual review of number of treatments to hard surfaces</b> – a third treatment was <b>agreed</b> for the first quarter. This had not been budgeted for and it was agreed to meet the cost from the contingency budget.</p> <p><b>9.5 Events on our land</b> – for information only.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual pumpkin display &amp; competition, WHS, 31.10.23 – The Green</li> <li>• Carols on The Green, St. Mary's Heritage Trust, 10.12.23</li> <li>• Winter Wonderland, WSA, 02.12.23 – KGF</li> </ul> <p><b>9.6 To consider the planting in the Crockham Hill Memorial Garden</b> – Crockham Hill Councillors had asked whether some additional planting could be done in the beds to brighten the garden. It was <b>agreed</b> that evergreen/hardy plants would need to be planted rather than bedding plants as we have no facilities to water the garden. Cllr Sheen agreed to discuss our plans with June Davis from the WI who had previously undertaken planting at the garden. Cllr Lord agreed to discuss the hedge cutting with Cllr Coen.</p> <p><b>9.7 Maintenance plan for bollards around the Green</b> – the bollards along the Green were installed in 2018 and five years on they are looking in need of a repaint. There may be some of the town centre grant remaining that could be utilised, together with any unspent APFOS budget at year end, to fund a repaint in the Spring. It was <b>agreed</b> to create an Open Spaces reserve to ensure that a repainting programme could be funded in future. This would also be used for replacing posts/knee rail/benches/notice boards etc.</p> <p><b>9.8 Emergency Procedures for the Workshop, KGF</b> – these had been circulated. It was <b>agreed</b> to recommend them to Council for approval.</p> <p><b>9.9 Installation of knee rail at Madan Road open space</b> – the quotation received was £300 over budget. It was <b>agreed</b> to proceed and this additional expenditure would be met from the contingency budget.</p>	<p>JL</p> <p>DM</p> <p>DM</p> <p>ALL</p> <p>DM</p> <p>NP</p> <p>SS</p> <p>JL</p> <p>DM</p>
10.	<p><b><u>Climate Change/Environmental &amp; Biodiversity</u></b></p> <p><b>10.1 APFOS Eco Action Plan</b> – an updated plan was circulated.</p>	

	<p><b>Surplus food sharing</b> – Cllr Lord advised that a poster had been circulated at the allotment sites encouraging the donation of surplus food; donations were being made to Westerham Food Bank.</p> <p><b>Greensands Commons</b> – WTC had awarded a £1,000 pa grant towards the ongoing costs of employing a new project manager. The Interim Clerk was asked to find out whether this appointment had been made yet.</p> <p><b>10.2 Wilder Kent Awards</b> WTC had maintained a Silver Award for the second year running. The Wilder Kent Awards for 2024 had just been launched. After discussion it was reluctantly <b>agreed</b> that WTC would not have the capacity to apply for a 2024 Award, due to the forthcoming changes in staffing and the need to allow new staff a period to settle in. It was hoped that WTC might be able to work towards achieving the Gold Award in 2025.</p>	<b>DM</b>
11.	<p><b><u>Correspondence</u></b> 11.1 Kent's Plan Bee Newsletter had been circulated for information. 11.2 DVLPs Autumn e-Newsletter had been circulated for information. 11.3 Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy had been circulated for information.</p>	
12.	<p><b><u>Reports from Councillors relevant to APFOS (not already covered elsewhere in the minutes)</u></b> 12.1 Cllr Lord had attended a WSA meeting to discuss the perimeter path and a finance meeting to agree a draft APFOS budget. Cllr Lord was working on a grant application to secure further funding from the SDC UK Shared Prosperity Fund.</p>	
13.	<p><b><u>TN16 Magazine, Crockham Hill Newsletter and website</u></b> 13.1 Skate Park and perimeter path official opening event in the Spring, once the re-seeded surrounding areas have become established grass.</p>	
14.	<p><b><u>Matters for District and County Councillors</u></b> None.</p>	
15.	<p><b><u>Further Matters for consideration at the next meeting.</u></b> None.</p>	
16.	<p><b><u>Date of next meeting</u></b> Monday 15th January 2024 at 7pm.</p>	

The meeting was concluded at 9.32pm

Minutes confirmed as a correct record:

Chairman