

# WESTERHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Allotments, Playing Fields and Open Spaces Committee  
held at Russell House on  
**Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 7.00pm**

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

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

Item		Action
1.	<p><b><u>Apologies for Absence</u></b> Apologies were received from Councillor Sheen, who was on holiday.</p>	
2.	<p><b><u>Declarations of Interest not previously declared</u></b> None.</p>	
3.	<p><b><u>Minutes of the Meeting</u></b> Held on the 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023 were approved at Full Council on the 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023.</p>	
4.	<p><b><u>Information items arising from the minutes of the previous meeting not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda</u></b> None. Cllr Lord welcomed Carla, who will become the committee's new Clerk, to the meeting as an observer.</p>	
5.	<p><b><u>Clerks Report - this is a general update since the last meeting for information.</u></b> The report was received and noted.  <b>5.1 Farley allotments pipework</b> – the replacement had been further delayed and was now scheduled for March.  <b>5.2 A replacement dog lid</b> for KGF had been ordered and fitted.  <b>5.3 The electrical vehicle charging points</b> at KGF had been completed and were now in use.  <b>5.4 Groundsman's hut sewage</b> – the sewage pipe continued to be blocked. The path contractor had helped to expose the pipe, which was found to be clear until it ran under the contractor's container, so further investigation by the groundsman would not be possible until the end of the work and the removal of the container.  <b>5.5 Hanging baskets</b> – the contractor hadn't responded to any recent correspondence, or provided prices for the 2024 baskets, which was delaying the start of the Summer campaign. Clerk to liaise with other local parishes to find out whether they were also experiencing difficulties.  <b>5.6 The railing planters</b> had now been planted.  <b>5.7 Madan Road knee rail</b> had been installed in-line with the removed posts, rather than along the kerb line. Though not ideal, the area was still much improved. A</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>TC</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>DM</b></p>

	<p>section of rail had been cut out to allow access for an unofficial path across the green space – it was not clear whether this was by the contractor or a homeowner (Clerk to investigate) - councillors were happy for it to remain. Contractor to be asked to cap/tidy up the cut ends.</p> <p><b>5.8 Greensands Commons</b> – the funding needed for a new project manager had not yet been reached. A further update was expected at the end of January.</p>	DM
6.	<p><b>Finance</b></p> <p><b>6.1 To receive the APFOS Financial Statement up to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023</b> – the report was received and noted.</p> <p><b>6.2 Amendment to proposed 2024/25 APFOS budget:</b> the committee noted and <b>agreed</b> the F&amp;GP recommendation that the pavilion budget line should be increased from £4,000 to £4,700 in order to start building a realistic budget over the next couple of years for re-opening the pavilion. The budget needs to be increased due to the substantial increase in utility costs and the requirement to introduce legionella testing, which was not undertaken previously.</p>	
7.	<p><b>Allotment Sites</b></p> <p><b>7.1 Allotment rent renewals</b> - a second and final reminder had been sent and only 2 plots had not been either relinquished or renewed.</p> <p><b>7.2 Currant Hill water usage</b> – investigation had confirmed that the high water bill was not due to a leak on the site, but increased usage. The increased usage exceeded the rental income. Councillors discussed the usage of hoses pipes at the site, which was contrary to the tenancy agreement. It was agreed that all plot holders at Currant Hill should be written to advising them of the issue, reminding them of the ban on hose pipe usage, the need to conserve water and the inevitable dramatic increase in plot rent if the issue is not improved. It was agreed that hosepipe usage would result in the termination of the plot holder's tenancy agreement.</p>	DM/JL
8.	<p><b>King George's Field</b></p> <p><b>8.1 Update on KGF redevelopment project</b> – the Project Officer advised that the works to install the perimeter path at KGF were going well. There had been some delays due to adverse weather which meant that the works were now expected to be completed end of January/early February. The top dressing had been completed in some areas and was providing a well compacted/solid surface. Three additional spurs had been added: to the kissing gate on the far side of the field; to the area leading to the culvert near Aqualisa; from the path to the WSA entrance.</p> <p><b>8.2 Skate Board Lessons</b> – Councillors considered a proposal to provide skate board lessons, including a girls only session, by qualified instructors. Lessons would be during a holiday period and after school. Councillors felt that this would be a worthwhile initiative and it was agreed to approach Youth &amp; Community to see if this was something that the committee could support/fund.</p> <p><b>8.3 Memorial Bench</b> – permission had been given for a memorial bench to be sited near the WSA in 2023. Unfortunately, the bench and base had been covered with numerous floral tributes, pots, personal tributes and beer bottles, which were inappropriate for its location on the playing field and more befitting a cemetery. The bench is currently unusable and the glass bottles pose a health and safety risk. It was agreed that the Clerk would investigate whether permission for the bench</p>	DM

	was granted to the WSA or an individual, so that a gentle conversation could be had about the items being removed.	
9.	<p><b><u>Open Spaces</u></b></p> <p><b>9.1 Paving cross the top of the Green</b> – the Interim Clerk had secured two more quotes for paving the top strip of the Green with York stone: the area behind the benches and adjacent to the parking bays, to make the area more attractive and less muddy for drivers accessing their parked vehicles. In view of the cheapest quotation for York stone being £13,825+vat, a quote to use Breedon gravel had also been secured for £4,474+vat (reduced to £2,938+vat if undertaken whilst the KGF footpath contractor is still working in Westerham). The committee discussed the options at length and couldn't reach agreement on the way forward. In view of the cost implications and the importance of the Green, it was agreed to take the matter to Full Council for consideration.</p> <p><b>9.2 Granville Road Open Space</b> – the Committee agreed that the road surrounding the Green was not wide enough to accommodate parked cars and allow the rubbish cart sufficient access to manoeuvre, which was the cause of the damage to the corners. It was felt that it would be best to resolve this issue by allowing small areas of the Green to be used to widen the road on the corners and then discuss the best way to protect the remaining open spaces. It was <b>agreed</b> to approach H&amp;L committee to ask for this work to be added to the Highways Improvement Plan.</p> <p><b>9.3 Visual Inspections</b> – most of the quarter four inspections had been completed. There were small items to be added to the groundman's workload, but nothing significant to report.</p> <p><b>9.4 Crockham Hill Memorial Garden planting</b> – the WI had been consulted about further planting in the garden and no suggestions had been made. There was very little room in the two beds to add additional planting, so it was <b>agreed</b> to add some small shrubs, such as rosemary, lavender or heathers to the area, with bark dressing. Cllr Coen had brought a gap in the hedge to the committee's attention and it was <b>agreed</b> to ask the garden contractor to fill the space with prickly plants, such as holly, native to the hedgerow.</p>	DM  DM/JL  DM
10.	<p><b><u>Climate Change/Environmental &amp; Biodiversity</u></b></p> <p><b>10.1 ECO Action Plan</b> - Councillors considered APFOS's ECO Action Plan and discussed further initiatives that could be added. It was agreed to seek feedback from the Wilder Kent Award for areas of development. Further wild flower planting would be undertaken. The feasibility of introducing recycling bins at KGF would be investigated.</p>	DM
11.	<p><b><u>Correspondence</u></b></p> <p><b>11.1 Fun Fair</b> – a request to hold a fun fair on KGF had been received. This was denied: following the installation of the skate park the only area available would be on the pitches, which would cause damage to the playing surface.</p>	DM
12.	<p><b><u>Reports from Councillors relevant to APFOS (not already covered elsewhere in the minutes)</u></b></p> <p>None.</p>	

13.	<u><b>TN16 Magazine, Crockham Hill Newsletter and website</b></u> <b>13.1 Skate Park/perimeter path official opening event</b> in the Spring, together with skate boarding lessons, if these are agreed.	
14.	<u><b>Matters for District and County Councillors</b></u> None.	
15.	<u><b>Further Matters for consideration at the next meeting.</b></u> <b>15.1 The Green</b> - surfacing across the top of the Green to be added to Full Council agenda for discussion. <b>15.2 Skate park</b> - Invite Laura Trott to open the skate park/path.	<b>DM</b>  <b>DM</b>
16.	<u><b>Date of next meeting</b></u> Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 7pm.	

The meeting was concluded at 9.48pm

Minutes confirmed as a correct record:

Chairman