

PETERSFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Grounds Committee held at the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Petersfield, on Thursday 16 June 2011 at 6.30 p.m.

PRESENT: Cllr R Ayer (Chairman), Cllr G Budden, Cllr Ms J Dickinson and Cllr Mrs L Farrow

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Mr N Hitch (Town Clerk) Mrs S McMorrان (Deputy Town Clerk), Mr P Jones (Maintenance Contracts Officer) and two members of the public.

G 0101 CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

The Chairman advised that he had received a deputation from Burnett's Fun Fairs regarding the charges for fairs made by the Town Council, which were significantly higher than other Councils. The Chairman voiced the view that a review of the charges made for Grounds should be undertaken prior to the budget process. This was noted.

The Chairman also advised that he had received a letter from David Petche regarding a proposal for partial devolvement of management of the allotments to the Allotment Association. This would be discussed at the July meeting of the Grounds committee. The Chairman urged members to have a look at the allotments prior to the next meeting.

G 0102 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Cllr Marshall.

G 0103 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Grounds Committee held on 19 May 2011 be approved.

G 0104 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

G 0105 PUBLIC REPRESENTATION

David Petche, Treasurer of the Allotment Association outlined plans for partial devolution of the management of the Tilmore Allotment site to the Allotment Association. In return for saving the Town Council money by undertaking inspections at Tilmore the Allotment Association would like to have more say on how the budget for the allotments is spent and also on priority for projects. He advised that the plan which would be discussed at the July meeting of the Grounds committee were suggestions only and he hoped that a mutually agreeable way forward could be found.

G 0106 MAINTENANCE CONTRACT'S OFFICERS REPORT

Members received and note the MCO's report, copy attached to these minutes at Appendix A.

G 0107

FESTIVAL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE - SKATE JAM 2012 - LOVE LANE SPORTS GROUND

Members considered a request from the Festival for Young People to hold a Skate Jam over the Diamond Jubilee bank holiday weekend (3 June 2012) at Love Lane Sports Ground.

Members were very supportive of this event and it was suggested that the Festival for Young People contact the Town Council's Diamond Jubilee working party to discuss how the event could be included in the celebrations being planned (Cllrs Clarke and Watkinson).

RESOLVED that permission be given for a Skate Jam to be held at Love Lane Sports Ground over the Diamond Jubilee weekend with the event taking place on 3 June 2012. The Festival for Young People to liaise with the Maintenance Contracts Officer regarding the details of the event.

G 0108

THE HEATH - EXTENSION OF GRID PAVE TRIAL

Members had attended a site visit prior the meeting to view the current trial of the grid pave and to see where a further trial could take place.

Following discussion it was agreed that a trial of some value could be carried out around the cantilever swing on The Heath. It was also suggested that a trial around the adventure playground should also be priced.

RECOMMENDED that a further trial of grid pave be agreed around the cantilever swing on the Heath. Officers to obtain quotation for this work together with a quotation for work around the adventure playground in time for consideration by Council on 4 July 2011.

G 0109

THE AVENUE PAVILION AND PLAYING FIELD

Members received a suggestion from a member of the public for the provision of security fencing at The Avenue Pavilion and Playing Field. Members were not in favour of this suggestion as it was felt that the fencing was very unattractive and there were concerns at managing the additional gates at the site. It was also felt that the proposal would cut off areas of the site. Officers advised that vandalism had not been a problem for quite some time, due in part, because the site had been substantially improved since the demolition of 'The Kabin'. If the fencing was erected it would also make access to the outside lavatories difficult.

RESOLVED that the member of the public be thanked for their interest in this matter but that the fencing would not be erected as this would make the site less attractive, access to the outside lavatories would be restricted and the need for security fencing was not deemed necessary as vandalism and anti-social behaviour had substantially reduced at the site in recent times.

G 0110 **SHEET RECREATION GROUND - SENSORY GARDEN**

Members received a proposal from the proprietor of the Little School Nursery at Pooh Corner to provide a sensory garden for the use of children attending the Nursery School and also the wider community. The plan included a seat, shed, wooden planters and a water butt.

Members were reminded that permission had been given recently (May 2011) for the Stepping Stones Nursery (resident in Scout Hut on the site) to erect a small shed.

Whilst members thought the idea of a sensory garden was good, concern was raised at the upkeep of the site, vandalism and lack of supervision at the site. The Chairman advised that other sites had been used for this purpose in the past by other groups but had resulted in costs to the Town Council for reinstatement when the area had not been adequately maintained.

RESOLVED that permission for use of an area of Sheet Recreation Ground for a sensory garden for the Little School at Pooh Corner be refused due to concerns regarding the upkeep of the site, vandalism and lack of on-site supervision of the area.

G 0111 **BELL HILL AND THE HEATH PLAY SITE UPGRADES - PROGRESS REPORT**

Members were advised that a bid for developer's contributions had been submitted to EHDC and a decision would be known by 6 July 2011.

The Deputy Town Clerk informed those present that a meeting had been held with Greenspan earlier in the day. The consultation event for Bell Hill was planned to be held in early August, hopefully at the ATC hut. If the ATC hut was not available then an alternative venue would be found (Sheet Village Hall, Avenue Pavilion or Festival Hall). Greenspan would be providing pictures of equipment and possibly a DVD presentation loop to run at the event. The event would be run over an afternoon and early evening. The event would be publicised using posters, advertisements, letters to residents and contacts obtained at the Play and Say day event.

A contract for the work would be drawn up and everything would be in place prior to the decision at the Community Forum on 5 July so that orders for equipment could be placed by Greenspan as soon as possible after that date. The lead time on equipment was 8 to 12 weeks and Greenspan hoped to start work on the Heath Toddler play site at the end of August or beginning of September. The project would take 4 - 6 weeks to complete. It was hoped that signage would be provided by Greenspan free of charge, this would be confirmed at a later date.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.25 pm.

June 2011

This report seeks to inform councillors of matters of interest affecting any of the public open space land which we own or manage. Members are reminded that its contents are not available for debate, but questions can always be asked and we will seek to answer them, however it should be borne in mind that if they involve the need for investigation or would be complex or lengthy, answers will need to be given outside of the meeting. If councillors consider that any matter on the report is in need of debate, the subject can be added to a future meeting's agenda for this purpose. ~ Town Clerk.

General:

- Our Grounds Maintenance contract is operating satisfactorily and to agreed schedules. I am not aware of any particular problems or issues this month.
- Litter collection and cleaning operations are being carried out satisfactorily. Our electric vehicle has been repaired under warranty and is now back in full service.

Love Lane Recreation Ground:

- The Skate Jam which was organised by the Festival for Young People took place on 29th May. It appears to have been a very successful event attracting over 300 attendees. It has done much to raise the profile of and interest in our skatepark. There has been lots of positive feedback from skaters and riders concerning the existing skate facility as well as for phase 2 of the project. There were no reported incidents of trouble or vandalism and the site was left completely clean, tidy and in reasonable condition.
- The refurbished bench which was salvaged from the old skatepark has been installed adjacent to the bowl.
- Fold-down bollards which allow emergency access to the playing field and skatepark were installed at the top of the pedestrian path. The installed locks were subsequently damaged (vandalism) and have had to be replaced with more robust ones.
- A further outcrop of Japanese Knotweed which appears in the "wild area" corner of the site has been treated with herbicide in accordance with the recommended approved guidelines and procedures required for dealing with this virulent and persistent weed. This treatment has been ongoing for the last 3 years but there are signs that we are slowly winning the battle as each year the re-growth gets weaker and smaller.
- An outside lockable water tap has been installed on the southern side of the Pavilion this will facilitate future operations such as grass/turf/seed watering as well as cleaning and graffiti removal.
- Due to lock failures it has been necessary to renew the locks to the east and west doors of the pavilion. The football club has, with our approval, installed a new combination code lock to the west door at their own expense. This code lock negates the need for multiple copies of keys being necessary.

Penns Farm Playing Fields:

- A small number of "dragons teeth" posts have been replaced.
- The annual Dog Obedience Show took place on Sunday 5th June. As usual this very popular event was well organised, and well attended. The site was left clean and in good condition.
- Petersfield Town Junior Football Club's annual Six-Aside Football Tournament takes place this weekend the 18th and 19th June.

Bell Hill Recreation Ground:

- Travellers who had managed to access the ground on 26th May did not vacate until 1st June. They left behind a large quantity of litter and household waste including human waste which was deposited in the hedgerows. There was also a quantity of green waste, tree branches and cuttings etc which would seem to indicate that they may have been engaged in some kind of garden or landscape contracting business whilst occupying our land.

Had we been able to produce tangible evidence that they had forcibly removed the locks from our barrier then the police would have had the power to evict them much earlier.

The brand new pedestrian gate which we had installed to the play area just a day before their arrival went missing on the day they left. Again, with no evidence to support our believe that it was stolen by our uninvited occupants, the police were unable to pursue the matter further and bring charges.

A replacement gate has been installed and the barrier secured with new locks.

We have seen that even heavy duty hi-security locks cannot deter an indomitable attempt to gain access and it would seem sensible to consider the possibility of installing a fixed security camera at this and similar sites. This would have the potential to at least provide the police with enough evidence to identify pursue and take action against the culprits.

- Reports of small bonfires and anti-social behaviour late at night continue. Police are aware and are monitoring the area
- An old damaged concrete bench seat which is situated beneath a tree is to be removed. I am pleased to say that we have managed to identify funds which will allow this seat to be replaced with a new "Forest Saver" bench seat which will be installed in due course.

The Heath:

- The vehicle access adjacent to the nursery building which was worn away by water and traffic has been repaired. My sincere thanks to Mr Tony Clear who has given time and materials FOC.
- Maintenance work to top-up and dress the Millennium path has been carried out this week. Our contractor has topped up and dressed as much of the path as has been possible within the current budget.
- We have carried out emergency work to fill and compact the most severe of the trip hazards at the playground and the slipway adjacent to the boat jetty. This is a temporary solution only and is intended to try and manage the risk at the worst affected areas.
- The Pond has been used by Churcher's College for supervised kayaking on the 7th and 14th June.
- Burnett's Fun Fair visited the Heath on spring bank holiday weekend 28th and 29th May. There were no reported problems and the site was left clean and tidy.
- Hampshire Highways intend to re-surface Heath Road towards the end of this month. They plan to take the asphalt surface right up to the Heath boundary hedge where currently there is bare earth and which is eroded in places. Currently there is on-street parking along most of this boundary on the bare earth. The road edge will be marked with white line road marking paint denoting the extent of the road width, beyond which vehicles may still park on the new hard standing surface. The double gate emergency and fairground access to the Heath will be marked "Keep Clear – Emergency Access" or similar, in order to deter parking in front of the gates.

Rotherlands Nature Reserve:

The Rotherlands volunteer work party carried out a number of repairs and improvements to the pathways within the conservation area on Sat 21st May. Everyone worked very hard and we are, as always, very appreciative of the group's efforts and valuable conservation work.