

PETERSFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Grounds Committee held at the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Petersfield, on Thursday 14 July 2011 at 6.30 p.m.

PRESENT: Cllr P Marshall (Deputy Chairman), Cllr G Budden, Cllr Ms J Dickinson and Cllr Mrs L Farrow

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Mr N Hitch (Town Clerk) Mrs S McMorran (Deputy Town Clerk), Mr P Jones (Maintenance Contracts Officer), Petersfield Post, Petersfield Herald and 6 members of the public.

G 0153 CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

The Deputy Chairman advised that he and Cllr Budden had representation from two members of the public regarding Bell Hill, these would be discussed when the MCO report was received.

Finally Members were reminded of the unveiling of the Interpretation Board on 26 July 2011 at 11 am at the Boathouse on The Heath.

G 0154 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Ayer and Organ.

G 0155 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Grounds Committee held on 16 June 2011 be approved.

G 0156 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

G 0157 PUBLIC REPRESENTATION

Mr John Crowhurst expressed his concerns at the lack of progress for the necessary erosion work along the bank of the pond on Sussex Road. Mr Crowhurst was advised that this project would be brought to committee in due course.

G 0158 MAINTENANCE CONTRACT'S OFFICERS REPORT

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

The Deputy Chairman was pleased to note that the seat had been installed at Bell Hill. A member of the public had also contacted him regarding the recent travellers on Bell Hill. It was suggested that bollards be placed at the entrance to Bell Hill. Members were advised that there were budget constraints to any work and also that barriers/bollards were destroyed to enable access to sites.

G 0159 **THE HEATH - TARO FAIR**

Members received and considered a request from John Wall and Son to change the operating date of the Taro Fair on The Heath (6 October) to the 7 and 8 October 2011. A token ride would be available on 6 October 2011 so that the Charter was kept intact.

Members agreed that this was acceptable but felt that an additional charge should be made for the extra day.

RECOMMENDED that it be agreed that the Taro Fair be held on 7 and 8 October 2011 with a token ride operating on 6 October 2011 with a charge of 50% of the charge for an operation day (£162.50) being made.

G 0160 **SHEET AND TILMORE ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION**

Members received and considered a proposal from the Sheet and Tilmore Allotment Association for devolved management of Tilmore Allotments (attached to these minutes at Appendix B) together with a report from the Town Clerk (attached to these minutes at Appendix C).

RESOLVED to suspend standing orders to allow Mr David Petche to address the meeting.

Mr Petche outlined the proposals from the Allotment Association regarding their proposals for partial devolution of the management of the allotments.

The meeting was re-convened.

Members agreed that more information was required regarding this matter and it was

RESOLVED that a working party comprising of Cllr Mrs Dickinson, Cllr Budden, The Deputy Town Clerk and two members of the Allotment Association be formed to explore the possibility of the devolution of the management of the allotments to the Allotment Association and report to the September meeting of the Grounds committee.

Prior to discussion of the next item it was

RESOLVED to alter the order of business the Heath Pond Association item would be discussed prior to the EHDC Open Space, Sports and Recreation Study

G 0161 **HEATH POND ASSOCIATION - MANAGEMENT OF HEATH POND**

Members were advised that the management of the Heath Pond had been carried out very successfully by the HPA during the last year with no problems to report. This followed the resolution by Council in June 2010 (C0098 refers) that the management of Heath Pond be undertaken on a volunteer basis by the Heath Pond Association from 1 July 2010. Members were also advised that the income from the sale of fishing permits had been £1601.16 with expenditure at £689.98 a net profit of £911.18.

Members were very content with the situation regarding the management of Heath Pond and agreed that the HPA were doing a very good job.

RECOMMENDED that the Heath Pond Association continue to manage the Heath Pond on behalf of the Town Council with annual reviews being undertaken.

G 0162 **EAST HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILS OPEN SPACE, SPORTS AND RECREATION STUDY**

Members gave consideration to the formation of a working party to review the content of East Hampshire District Councils Open Space, Sports and Recreation Study and also to the terms of reference for the working party.

Following consideration it was

RESOLVED that a working party comprising of Cllr Mrs Farrow, Cllr Organ, Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk be formed to review the content (relevant to Petersfield) of the EHDC Open Space, Sports and Recreation Study to ensure it accurately reflects the current situation for Petersfield and report back to the October meeting of committee.

G 0163 **PLANTING SCHEME FOR THE AVENUE PAVILION**

Members were advised that £7,000 was available from Developer's contributions for landscaping works and it was suggested that a planting scheme for The Avenue Pavilion be considered.

Members agreed that this was a good idea and wished that a bid for the Developer's contribution be made. Final plans would be presented to committee for decision once the funds had been secured

RECOMMENDED that a bid for the available Developers Contributions of £7,000 for landscaping works be made for a planting scheme at the Avenue Pavilion with plans to be presented to committee once a decision is known regarding the bid.

G 0164 **ST. PETER'S CHURCHYARD**

Members received a report regarding two trees in St. Peter's churchyard which needed urgent work as they were in a dangerous condition, copy attached to these minutes at Appendix D.

Following consideration it was

RECOMMENDED that the sum of £2,000 be made available from contingency reserves for the felling of two trees at St. Peter's churchyard.

G 0165 **BELL HILL RECREATION GROUND AND THE HEATH PLAY SITES UPGRADING**

Members received and noted a progress report on the upgrading of play equipment at Bell Hill Recreation Ground and The Heath, copy attached at Appendix E.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.23 pm

July 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 to agreed schedules and I am not aware of any particular problems or issues this month. Increased levels of litter have been expected as is typical for this time of year. Litter collection and cleaning operations remain satisfactory.

Love Lane Recreation Ground:

- The Skatepark: As all works are now satisfactorily completed in accordance with our agreement and requirements I have been content to 'sign off' Phase One of this project. The final invoice for Phase One in favour of Wheelscape Ltd; has been approved for payment. A 5% retention remains for 12 months. Phase One of this project is covered by a 10 year guarantee against faulty materials, workmanship and design.
- Missing wooden posts between the car park and playing field have been replaced.
- Work to remedy leaks at a roof soil vent pipe has been carried out on the pavilion.
- Young people were found to be camping overnight in tents in order to use the Skatepark early in the day. They cleaned up and left no litter or damage as soon as I asked. However, their response that they 'were not aware that they could not do this' has highlighted the need for us to provide more information signage outlining our rules and conditions of use as well as the statutory H&S information. I shall be installing more signs as soon as I am able.
- I am a little concerned that on several occasions I have found the car park so full of vehicles that parents and carers collecting children from the two nurseries have been forced to park along Love Lane where it is often quite dangerously busy and this danger is made worse by a blind approach and exit from the recreation ground. The large number of parked vehicles does not seem to equate with the number of users found to be using the football clubs, nurseries or our facilities at the time. I also note that there are a lot of marked trade vehicles and vans etc. also a coach.
- A "Proof of Concept" trial of CCTV security equipment by The Alarming Company Ltd; has been arranged to take place on 27th July 2011.

Penns Farm Playing Fields:

- The Petersfield Town Junior Football Club's annual Six-A-Side Football Tournament took place over the weekend of 18th and 19th June. Unfortunately the ground suffered considerable damage and a retracting bollard was also damaged beyond repair. The retracting bollard has had to be replaced at a cost of £400 and repairs to the ground are being carried out by our Grounds Maintenance Contractor at an initial cost of £490.
- At the time of writing, travellers have gained access and are encamped on the field to North of EHDC offices East of the Rugby Club. This is not our land, it belongs to EHDC and is used occasionally by the Rugby Club. We are keeping "on guard" lest they venture on to our land.

Bell Hill Recreation Ground:

- A new seat has been installed; this replaces the old damaged concrete (Southampton) bench seat which was situated beneath the oak tree. Another moderately damaged seat on the western boundary is being repaired.
- An additional animal waste bin is to be installed in the Southwest corner.

The Heath:

- Essential work to remove dangerous overhanging and damaged tree limbs has been carried out in the Sussex Road car park. Overgrown ground shrub and greenery which was obstructing the path from the car park to the Millennium path has been cleared and tidied.
- Heath Pond Association: The HPA report that fishing on the Pond is going well with no problems concerning the fishing fraternity or the general public. HPA have returned £858 in collected permit fees to the Town Council this month. Fish stocks are good and healthy. Water level remains low but the water condition is reasonable. There are some indications of algae present in the water but this does not appear to be the toxic blue/green variety, HPA have sampled the water and are currently taking advice from the Environment Agency.
- Two new memorial bench seats which have been donated by private individuals are soon to be installed adjacent to swims 20 and 29.
- A damaged bollard at the entrance from the junction of Heath Road West will need to be replaced.
- Petersfield Infant School and Herne Junior School will be holding a combined picnic for the children on the Heath on Thursday 21st July.

St Peters Churchyard:

I have visited the churchyard with the EHDC Tree Officer and we have identified two dead trees which are dangerous and must be removed. The Church Authorities are aware and are in agreement. I no longer hold funds for this work within the Grounds Maintenance Budget. I understand that this will be discussed as an agenda item at the Grounds Committee Meeting on 14th July 2011.

Woods Meadow Recreation Ground:

- Repairs to the chain-link fence surrounding the children's play area are being carried out.

Paddock Way Recreation Ground:

- Repairs to the Chain-link fence are being carried out along the boundary and play area are being carried out.

The Avenue Recreation Ground:

- A new animal waste bin is to be installed, this replaces the old corroded original.

Sheet and Tilmore Allotment Association proposal for Devolved Management

Sheet and Tilmore Allotment Association (the Association) would like to discuss entering into some form of devolved management for the allotments in order that Petersfield Town Council (PTC) have less work to do in managing the allotments, saving money, and the Association has more say in how allotment rent monies are spent.

The proposed changes are:

- The Association's committee members would carry out plot inspections to identify where allotments were not being fully utilized, instead of PTC staff as now. The Association would then write to PTC telling them which plots were under utilized, with photographs and PTC would issue letters to holders of these plots as currently.
- The Association would take responsibility for determining where monies collected from plot holders was spent and recommend to PTC suitable organizations to carry out the work. All work would be commissioned and paid for by PTC as currently.
- The proposed changes would be reviewed after one year to see if they met both sides expectations or needed improvement, greater clarification or should be discontinued.
- Due to the current uncertainty over Sheets future status, it might be sensible to pilot this change at Tilmore for this first year.

The Association sees these changes as offering a win-win position for both the Association and PTC, saving PTC in the region of 20 mandays of work and giving the Association more ownership of how rental monies are used for allotment maintenance.

6 JUN 2016



GROUNDS COMMITTEE

Allotments Association Proposal

Members will be aware of the proposal for devolved management of the allotments received from the Sheet and Tilmore Allotments Association following the Chairman's comments last month.

The letter of proposal is included within the 'councillors pack' for this meeting. In summary, the suggested changes are as follows:

- 1 Allotments Association to carry out plot inspections**
- 2 Allotments Association to determine how budgets for the allotments are spent**
- 3 Pilot the proposed changes at Tilmore only**
- 4 Review efficiency of the revised structure after 1 year**

In addressing the committee last month, Mr Petche commented that these proposals were intended as a starting point for discussion rather than necessarily being a 'final offer'.

It should be noted that a significant number of allotment plottolders are not members of the Allotments Association and so may object to proposals of this nature. It would therefore, seem sensible to undertake a consultation with all plottolders before proceeding with any 'devolvement of function' plans.

Turning to the proposals in more detail, the following information may be helpful to members in considering these proposals:

- 1 The Town Council has recently invested a significant amount of time and effort, working with the Allotments Association to revise the Allotment Tenancy Agreement along with various policies. This includes the creation of inventories relating to greenhouses and sheds.
- 2 The Allotments Association have, from time to time, accompanied officers on their inspections and approved the standards being upheld. The Association is also part of the formal review process for dealing with sub-standard plots.
- 3 If devolved management of the allotments is agreed, the Town Council will still be the 'Allotment Authority' and need to check on the effectiveness of the devolved process.
- 4 Currently, inspection of the Sheet site takes approximately 2 hours and Tilmore, approximately 1 hour.
- 5 It must be questionable whether inspections done by one organisation and correspondence by another is either effective or efficient use of resources.

Plot holders unhappy at receiving a letter do telephone to discuss or complain about its content and managing these situations can become time-consuming. The credibility factor in this situation is critical and probably cannot be achieved successfully by splitting responsibilities in this way. It is also quite conceivable that rather than saving time as is intended, the proposals as they stand may take more officer time and have the opposite effect.

- 6 The total allotment budget for both sites is approximately £6,500 of which £3,750 is already committed as part of the Grounds Maintenance Contract. This contract has a further 2 years 6 months to run and the contractor would be fully within their rights to either decline to have the sites removed from the contract or charge a premium for it to be done although the situation has not yet been discussed with them. The remaining moneys are mainly allocated for a mixture of road repairs within the sites, pest control, rotovation and strimming of plots plus rubbish removal. Whether there would be value in the Allotments Association seeking alternative organisations to carry out this work must be questionable as it is mostly done now by local small contractors.
- 7 Mr Petche in his address to members last month suggested that full devolved management of the allotment sites was not desired by the Association.

Recommendations

- 1 **Before commencing with any plans for the devolution of management for the allotments, either now or in the future, all plot holders must be consulted on the detailed proposals.**
- 2 **If it is desired to devolve the management function of the allotments to the Allotments Association it should be commenced at the start of a financial year.**
- 3 **If devolvement of management is desirable, for it to be effective and to achieve its stated aims, both allotment sites would need to be included.**
- 4 **The current proposals are likely to involve more officer time to implement and manage rather than create a saving as is desired. It also has the potential to be seen as a significant worsening of service provision by those plot holders considered to be not utilising or maintaining their plot as required.**
- 5 **It may make sense to delay any decision on the proposals until the outcome of the application for independent parish status in Sheet is known.**
- 6 **For devolved management of the allotments to be successful, full devolution needs to be explored but this will take time and may or may not be the route that councillors wish to take at this time.**
- 7 **It is important that relationships between the Town Council and the Allotments Association remain constructive and that the Association continues to have a positive input into the ongoing management of unsatisfactory plots as at present.**

Dangerous Trees within St. Peter's Churchyard.

Two trees within St. Peter's Churchyard are dead and have been identified as a high health and safety risk to the public as well as a potential risk to property. St. Peter's Churchyard falls within a conservation area.

The trees:-

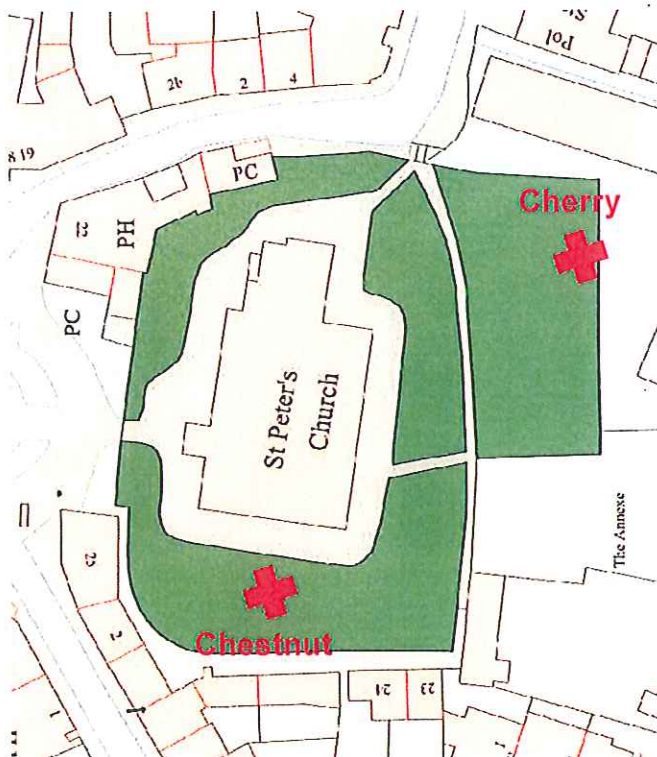
1. A large, very old Chestnut adjacent to the western (tower) entrance to the church.
2. An large ornamental Cherry, which has reached the end of it's life, near the southern

Both trees are situated in very public and busy area's of the churchyard for which the Town Council holds a duty of care and maintenance.

Following consultation with qualified arboriculturists and with East Hampshire District Council's Tree Officer, I have been advised that these two trees should be felled and safely removed.

The Church Authorities are in full agreement with this action and have asked that they be allowed to plant two new trees in place of the demised ones. The cost of any new trees and their replanting would be borne by the Church Authority or Community. The species and exact location have yet to be agreed.

The cost to remove these trees will be approximately £2000. As there is currently no provision within this year's budget cost centre, I am requesting that funds be allocated for this urgent work.



THE HEATH AND BELL HILL RECREATION GROUND PLAY SITES

PROGRESS REPORT

The bid for developer's contributions was approved with a total of £108,000 being awarded.

Final details are being put together and an order for the Heath Play equipment will be placed prior to the Grounds meeting on 14 July 2011.

The consultation event for Bell Hill will be held 4 August 2011 at The Avenue Pavilion from 1.30 - 7pm. Unfortunately it was not possible to hire the ATC hut at Bell Hill for the event. Letters of invitation have been sent to residents in the area of Bell Hill and also to those who left details at the Play and Say Day in July 2010 - 365 letters in total. Posters have also been placed on notice boards and the event will be advertised in the local press. It is also hoped that the papers will run an editorial on the event.

Sue McMorran
7 July 2011