

PETERSFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Grounds Committee held at the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Petersfield, on Thursday 13 February 2014 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT: Cllr Mrs L Farrow (Chairman), Cllr J Deane, Cllr Mrs S Harwood and Cllr W Organ.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Mr N Hitch (Town Clerk), Mrs A Church (Committee Administrator), and three members of the public.

G 0637 CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

The Chairman said that Petersfield in general had been lucky to avoid flooding from the adverse weather conditions that had affected other parts of Hampshire.

An invitation to a half day conference 'Paths to Partnership' on 5 June 2014 had been received from Hampshire County Council. However, it was felt that the conference on countryside access and rights of way would be of more value to rural rather than town parishes. Detailed information on rights of way could be found in the publication "Rights of Way: A Guide to Law and Practice - Blue Book".

G 0638 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr G Budden and Cllr Mrs J Dickinson.

G 0639 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Meeting of the Grounds Committee held on 14 November 2013 be approved and signed.
(Note: The meeting scheduled for 16 January 2014 was non-quotate)

G 0640 DISPENSATION UNDER SECTION 33 OF THE LOCALISM ACT (2011)

No requests for dispensation were received.

G 0641 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

G 0642

PUBLIC REPRESENTATION

A request to speak had been received from:

Mr Andy Salmon - Cricket Development Officer, Petersfield Cricket Club.

Mr Salmon spoke with reference to the draft lease for the Cricket Club

Mr Salmon said that the Cricket Club were trying to reflect the current arrangements in their report. The Town Council had given the Cricket Club a draft lease in January 2012 and important comments on the draft had been made at that time by Cllr Organ. Consequently, it had been agreed to set up a Sub-Committee to discuss the draft lease but this had not yet been progressed. It would be helpful if the matter could now be brought to a conclusion.

Considerable discussion took place on the inference of the wording used in the draft lease which could be read that the Council owns the cricket pavilion. The historical details of the acquisition of the land on which the pavilion is built were noted; The Heath had been gifted to Petersfield by John Bonham-Carter and he had authorised that a pavilion could be built on that part of it. The present pavilion had replaced the original one that had been destroyed by fire. As the original building would have belonged to whoever owned the land, the replacement building would belong to the Town Council who now owned the land. The Cricket Club were expecting the Council to take ownership of the building.

It was agreed that a Memorandum of Understanding should be drawn up, outlining the history of the land and the pavilion used by the Petersfield Cricket Club, and to be signed by both the Town Council and the Cricket Club. It was also agreed that the Grounds Sub-Committee, looking at the lease, should meet on Thursday 13 March 2014 at 10.00 am in the Council Chamber after which a meeting of both the Grounds Committee and officials of the Cricket Club would be arranged.

G 0643

GROUNDS REPORT

Members received and noted the Grounds Report of 5 February 2014 by the Town Clerk who updated the Committee on the following points:

The Heath: English Heritage had approved the removal of the unsafe beech tree and the work had been carried out.

Penns Farm Playing Fields: The tree, that had fallen from a garden in Clare Gardens' into the cycle path, had not yet been removed by the resident and was becoming dangerous.

The Town Clerk reported that the manhole in a resident's garden in Lower Heyshott was overflowing and running through to the playing fields. It was believed to be coming from the underground drainage system but Southern Water were disclaiming responsibility at present.

The Town Clerk also advised that the wooden bridge on Rotherlands was becoming very dilapidated and would need attention.

G 0644 **COST OF VANDALISM**

The Committee received and noted the report on the cost of vandalism to date in the current financial year

G 0645 **GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT**

The four-year Grounds Maintenance Contract with Burleys expired on 31 December 2013. As requested by the Town Clerk, Burleys had extended the contract and had submitted extended contract costings based on three timeline options: (1) twelve months; (2) nine months; (3) six months.

It was noted that Option 1 for twelve months was based on the current annual sum with a 3.5% increase. The Town Clerk explained that contract costs are based on the required equipment lasting for the life of the contract. If the contract is merely extended, then the budgeted capital equipment costs of replacement or refurbishment are affected.

RESOLVED **that the Grounds Maintenance Contract with Burleys be extended by Option 1: twelve months @ £133,042.73 to include both grounds maintenance and litter clearing contracts.**

G 0646 **COPPING OF TWO LARGE WILLOWS & CLEARANCE OF SCRUB**

The Town Clerk reported that Heath Road residents had asked him and the Chairman to investigate the clearance of two scrub areas between Heath Road and the Pond. The Heath Pond Association had already done a considerable amount of clearance work in the south-east corner of the Pond. The Heath Road residents had offered to assist with the cost of clearance and to help the Friends of Petersfield Heath in their work.

The Town Clerk said that both the clearance of the two scrub areas and the coppicing of the two large willows in the south east corner of the Pond could be considered as they were included in the budget at £650 (scrub) and £1,600 (willows). The Heath Pond Association, who relied on the advice of their wild life expert, were not happy with the proposed clearance of those two particular areas of scrub although they would support other areas to the left of the sluice gate being cleared.

The Committee felt that the budgeted monies should be spent on The Heath and that a short meeting with two Heath Road residents, two members of the Friends of Petersfield Heath and two/three members of the Grounds Committee should be held within a week at The Heath to discuss the option concerning the scrub clearance.

RESOLVED **that the two large willows in the south-east corner of the Pond be coppiced within the budgeted sum of £1,600.00 and**

that a figure of up to the budgeted sum of £650.00 be used to clear areas of scrub on The Heath.

RESOLVED that a meeting with two Heath Road residents, two Friends of Petersfield Heath and two/three members of the Grounds Committee should take place on The Heath within the coming week to discuss the options for the scrub clearance.

G 0647 PLAY EQUIPMENT INSPECTION SHEETS

The Committee received and noted the Inspection Sheets dated 16 December 2013 from S D Playground Services. The Town Clerk referred to the comments/general observations and advised that work on the Bell Hill gate had been carried out, the tunnel at Bell Hill was being kept under police observation, and there had been no further deterioration to the swing at Penns Farm.

G 0648 LOGWORLD UNIT ON THE HEATH (*Minute G 0362 October 2013 refers*)

The Committee discussed in detail the safety issues and future of the Logworld Unit on The Heath. The beam across the scramble net was rotten because so much water had gone into the wood that it had rusted the metal inside which was pushing the beam apart. The cost of replacing the whole Logworld Unit had previously been estimated at £25,000.00 which was prohibitively expensive. One option to make the Logworld Unit safe, without replacing it, would be to remove completely the whole scramble net section of the unit.

RESOLVED that, for reasons of safety, the whole scramble net section of the Logworld Unit on The Heath be removed.

(Cllr Harwood left the meeting at 7.30 pm owing to a prior engagement)

G 0649 PETERSFIELD CRICKET CLUB REPORT

The Committee received the report for 2013 from Petersfield Cricket Club on The Heath Grounds Maintenance Funding.

RESOLVED that Standing Orders be suspended to enable the Petersfield Cricket Club to comment on their report.

The Committee thanked the Petersfield Cricket Club for their excellent, detailed report and expressed their admiration of what the Club had achieved. Various points in the report were discussed and clarified with the Committee and the Chairman confirmed their wish to be able to continue with their support of the Club.

RESOLVED that meeting be reconvened.

G 0650 **ROTHERLANDS CONSERVATION GROUP**

The Committee received and noted the Working Party reports September – November 2013 from the Rotherlands Conservation Group.

G 0651 **FRIENDS OF PETERSFIELD HEATH**

The Committee received and noted the Minutes of the Committee Meetings of the Friends of Petersfield Heath held on 19 November 2013 and 14 January 2014.

G 0652 **HEATH WORKING PARTY**

Members received and considered a Heath Pond Report dated 28 January 2014 to the Grounds Committee prepared by Cllr Organ following four meetings of the Heath Pond Working Party between February and July last year.

Cllr Organ explained the rationale behind the five conclusions in his report which dealt with: (1) the work on the banks; (2) funding for the pond work; (3) Higher Level Stewardship Grants based on a whole Pond and Heath programme; (4) updating of the Heath Management Plan; (5) regular meetings with Friends of Petersfield Heath, Heath Pond Association, Council ground staff and representatives of the Grounds Committee.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Organ for his excellent report on the Heath Pond and the conclusions reached on future action.

RECOMMENDED that the Heath Pond Report dated 28 January 2014 be accepted by the Town Council; that Cllr Organ provide a précis of the five Conclusions in the Report for the Town Council to accept as a Resolution.

G 0653 **GROUND USERS MEETING**

The Committee received and noted the Notes from the Ground Users Meeting held on 16 December 2013 (*a copy is attached to these Minutes as Appendix A*)

The Town Clerk advised that he would progress the repair of part of Beckham Lane which was in the current year's budget but which would be brought forward to the next year 2014-2015 in earmarked reserves.

G 0654 **HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL VEGETATION CUTTING PROGRAMME**

The Committee received and noted the Hampshire County Council Vegetation Cutting Programme for the Petersfield footpaths.

G 0655 LOVE LANE CAR PARK

The Committee considered the future management of the Love Lane Car Park once the Hampshire County Council restructuring proposals were in place for the area north-east of Petersfield town centre. The proposals were intended to restrict more areas to residents which would make less space available for daytime parking which, in turn, was likely to impact on the Love Lane car park. The Love Lane car park currently was used by hirers of the pavilion and by Churcher's College who purchased parking permits.

The Town Clerk advised that there was parking space for around seventy cars and the marking of parking bays was in the budget for next year.

General discussion took place on possible parking scheme options to control parking in the Love Lane car park and the costs involved. The Town Clerk would contact East Hampshire District Council for information on their charges if they were to inspect the car park. He would also ask Cllr V Clarke to make a statement about the car parking policy.

RECOMMENDED that the Town Clerk prepare a paper of parking scheme options and costs for the Love Lane car park for consideration by the Grounds Committee.

G 0656 QUOTED ALLOTMENT MEASUREMENTS

The measurement of the allotments in the Town Council's pricing information was given in imperial (rods) and the current legal requirement was that the metric measurement should be given. The Committee considered what changes should be made to their information.

RESOLVED that the measurement details of the allotments in the Town Council's pricing information be amended to be given in both imperial and metric; the size to be shown with the imperial (rods) first and then, in brackets, the equivalent in metric (metres).

G 0657 CYCLING COACHING FOR LOCAL CHILDREN

The Committee received and considered an enquiry to the Town Council for a possible outdoor space for cycle coaching for local children. The Committee were happy to offer either the Love Lane car park or the Penns Field cycle track but there was no outdoor space available for the sole use of the cycle coaching. An approach by the cycle coach to local schools to use their grounds may result in a better solution.

RESOLVED that the Town Council offer either the Love Lane car park or the Penns Field cycle track for cycle coaching for local children but advise that neither were available for sole use.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.45 pm

Notes from Grounds Users Meeting

Held 7.00p.m. Monday 16th December 2013 in the Rose Room, Petersfield Town Hall

Present:

- Mr N Hitch (Town Clerk)
- Mr J Pike (Friends of Petersfield Heath)
- Mrs V Pike (Friends of Petersfield Heath)
- Mr A Salmon (Petersfield Cricket Club)
- Mr S Barden (Petersfield Rugby Football Club)
- Mr R Mocatta (Petersfield Rugby Football Club)
- Mr G Oakley 1927 (Petersfield) Sqn Air Cadets
- Ms K Elsom (Playball)

The Town Clerk welcomed everyone and explained the purpose of the meeting was to give the users of our grounds facilities the opportunity to feedback to the Council their views on the quality of facilities and service they receive as well as highlight potential future improvements that would be desired.

Bell Hill Recreation Ground

It was reported that the entrance to the car park in Beckham Lane was getting very rough. This was noted as repairs were a budget item for this year for which the work had been delayed with the loss of Peter Jones from the Council's staff earlier in the year. Issues also remain with dog walkers on the recreation ground not picking mess up left by their dogs. No real answer existed for this problem.

The ATC Hut would need some attention very shortly as cracks had appeared along one end of the building as a result of the foundations not being laid deep enough. This work would be done by the ATC shortly and would mean the area around the works would be fenced off.

The Heath

There are problems with the water supply to the Cricket Pavilion. South East Water has already visited and advised that it is not their responsibility as the problem lays on our land.

The Cricket Club also enquired on progress with their lease which is long outstanding.

A request was made for the litter collection van to utilise the newly renovated footpath around the cricket outfield at this time of the year to avoid the risk of damage to the cricket outfield in very wet conditions.

The latch on the gate entrance to the Heath by the Little School was broken and needed repairing.

It was reported that the area of scrub next to the Boathouse had been cleared by the Friends of Petersfield Heath. This work now highlighted how awful the old notice board looked. The 'Friends' suggested that an alternative site for a new board would be between the Pond Jetty and an oak tree. The Town Clerk confirmed that the Grounds Committee Chairman intended meeting the 'Friends' on site to discuss potential sites for a replacement notice board.

The Avenue

Questions were asked about the car park and when the new locking regime would begin. They were advised that it would start in the New Year with all users of the building and grounds facilities that pay for their service being provided with the code to enter the car park. The Council had made a decision that the car park would in future only be available to those people and groups that contributed financially to the maintenance of the facilities.

An enquiry was made over the Council's plans for the external toilets amid reports that closure was being considered. The Town Clerk confirmed that there were no current plans to close the toilets as they were used by a variety of groups accessing the ground's facilities and were also needed by one of the Pavilion hirer's under OFSTED regulations.

It was also reported that someone was using the tennis courts for coaching without permission. The Town Clerk responded saying we were aware of these reports but had not been able to catch the individual concerned as yet as his attendance was very irregular.

Penns Farm Playing Fields

The work completed on the sports pitches during the summer was much appreciated with the pitches currently being in very good condition. It would have been preferred if the work could have been completed earlier in the spring but it was acknowledged that this hadn't been possible due to the late finish to the football season after the hard winter and fitting the work around other known summer events.

It was requested that suitable pitch markers be used in the corners of each pitch to facilitate re-marking at the beginning of the season.

Representatives from the rugby club highlighted the area at the back of the rugby clubhouse. It is included within the grass cutting schedule and the club asked that the old tree stumps be removed. The Town Clerk advised that he thought this would be work additional to the regular contract for which an additional charge would be levied.

It was also requested that a schedule of work to be done on Penns Farm playing fields be provided to the club. The Town Clerk advised that whilst he gets an advice of proposed works most weeks it wouldn't indicate what day work would be done. The club also advised that they would be playing Touch Rugby through the summer months on a Wednesday evening which may expand further depending on its success. The dates for the end of the current season and beginning of the next season were also provided.

It was reported that the low gate between the 1st XV pitch and the TARO Centre had been damaged and needed the weld repairing. It was also requested that all rugby goalposts be removed and re-painted at the end of the season.

Conclusion

The Town Clerk advised all present that the Grounds Maintenance Contract had been extended until at least the end of June although it was likely to be extended further until the end of September. All those attending were thanked for coming.
The meeting closed at 7.51p.m.