

## PETERSFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Grounds Committee held at the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Petersfield, on Thursday 16 April 2015 at 6.30 pm.

**PRESENT:** Cllr Mrs L Farrow (Chairman), Cllr P Marshall, Cllr M Vincent, Cllr C Mills and Cllr W Organ.

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Mr N Hitch (Town Clerk), Mrs M Snow (Locum Minute Taker) and the Town Mayor. By invitation:- Mr Ian Baker. There were two members of the public present. There were no press present.

**G 0736** CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

The Chairman noted that this was the final Grounds Committee meeting before the election. She wished to thank the other councillors for their support.

**G 0737** APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

**G 0738** DISPENSATION UNDER SECTION 33 OF THE LOCALISM ACT (2011)

No requests for dispensation were received.

**G 0739** DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

**G 0740** APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Meeting of the Grounds Committee held on 16 March 2015 be approved and signed.

**G 0741** PUBLIC REPRESENTATION

A request to speak had been received from Mr Crowhurst concerning the maintenance of the Heath Pond.

Mr Crowhurst wished to raise concerns that in his opinion, the Heath Pond was being neglected. He stated that it was the responsibility of the Town Council to maintain the lake and that they were failing to do so. He considered the lack of public meetings last year a sign that the councillors did

not care. He added that previously the Petersfield Anglers Club had paid for the disposal of dead fish with this being the responsibility of the Council. Mr Crowhurst added that he was not speaking on behalf of the Anglers Club. He concluded his speech by saying he hoped that the newly elected Councillors would progress further with improvements to the pond.

In response the Clerk confirmed that the Pond is the responsibility of the Town Council. He continued by explaining that the Council were and continue to consult with various specialist advisors to improve the pond and surrounding areas. These advisory meetings are not made public as they are informal meetings to seek advice on the options available. The Clerk advised Mr Crowhurst that any costs to dispose of dead fish were met by the Town Council.

**A request to speak had been received from Mr Hart concerning the maintenance of the reeds and trees in and around the Heath Pond.**

Mr Hart is concerned that the reeds in the south east area of the pond are not getting enough sunlight. He stated that the areas that have received more sunlight due to the pollarding of the Willow trees had resulted in increased growth. Mr Hart shared his concerns that a management plan which had been devised ten years ago, agreed a maintenance scheme but had not been continued. Mr Hart's other concerns included the removal of mature trees more than 10 per cent of the overall copse size. Mr Hart stated that many of the areas which had been maintained had not been done so properly and contravened many bio-diversity regulations of which he listed. He added that in his opinion the removal of these trees had a negative result on the birds in the area as they were no longer using this area to nest. Mr Hart concluded by stating that a notice announcing forthcoming works should be displayed either end of the Heath but this has not happened. He invited Councillors to join him on a Spring watch like visit to the Heath.

Councillors explained that all works had been carried out following advice and consent from the South Downs National Park Authority's (SDNPA) rangers. SDNPA's aim is to return the Heath to heath land. Also that the management plan which was devised ten years ago never included the whole of the heath or a long term action plan. The Councillors and Clerk continue to liaise with the Friends of Petersfield Heath and SDNPA so that the Council can follow up all advice and suggestions. The Councillors also explained that all decisions have been made by a committee and not by an individual. Mr Hart was also advised to invite the newly elected Councillors along to a visit to the Heath.

G 0742

#### GROUNDS REPORT

Members received and noted the Grounds Report for April 2015 by the Town Clerk. *(A copy is attached to these Minutes as Appendix A)*

Love Lane Recreation Ground: The Town Clerk reported that the Japanese knot weed was due to be cut back and sprayed off in the next 1-2 weeks.

Heath Pond: The Town Clerk has recently received feedback from two contractors on the bank improvements work and noted another working party meeting is due to consider this.

High Meadow: The clerk explains that High Meadow bin should have been emptied but he shall follow this up. He explains that he expects the bins to be full because of increased use due to the Easter holidays and nice weather. It was noted that there is currently only one member of staff to empty the bins.

The matter of the full skip was also raised. The clerk explained that this should have been replaced recently and is to follow this up. It was noted that the rats may be resistant to the bait and the Clerk will contact the contractors to discuss.

G 0743

**INSPECTION SHEETS DATED 12 MARCH 2015 PROVIDED BY S D PLAYGROUND SERVICES**

The members noted all the points raised on the inspection sheets and the following comments were made regarding each site.

**Woods Meadow** - The Clerk believes that the obscene graffiti at Woods Meadow had been removed, but will confirm.

**Bell Hill** - The Councillors suggested that the safety surfacing under the swing be adjusted or changed so that the join in the two safety surfaces does not meet directly under the swing. The latch pin has been repeatedly broken so the councillors suggested looking at other options.

**The Heath** - The Clerk informed the members that the DDA seat has arrived and is due to be installed shortly. Also that the Cantilever swing requires two people to undo the bolt, the Clerk is to contact Steve from S D Playgrounds to discuss.

**Borough Hill** - The members were informed that the bottom log of the agility trail has splintered and requires sanding down.

**Love Lane Skate Park** - The Clerk informed the members that the recent graffiti has been removed by East Hampshire District Council as this was more cost effective rather than to hire the equipment.

G 0744

**CONSIDERATION OF A PROPOSAL TO PROVIDE MOBILE CATERING AT THE PENNS FARM PLAYING FIELDS**

Members received and considered a proposal from Mr Ian Baker the proprietor of The Plump Duck. After discussion the Committee agreed in principle to the proposal.

**RESOLVED** that in principle Mr Ian Baker could provide a mobile catering van at Penns Farm playing fields in line with the proposal document subject to the sports clubs agreement and a suitable place to pitch the mobile catering van being found.

**G 0745**      **CONSIDERATION OF A PLANNING APPLICATION AT THE PLUMP DUCK.**

Members noted details of a planning application submitted by Mr Ian Baker the proprietor of The Plump Duck concerning the retention of the hinged sides to the canopy of the kiosk. Disappointment was expressed that the application had been submitted without the Council being informed in advance for which an apology was received as it had been caused by a communication breakdown between the proprietor and his architect. A lengthy discussion followed covering a wide variety of topics including the recently installed picnic benches, the use of the hinged sides to the kiosk and the current ground surface condition under the kiosk canopy.

**RESOLVED**      that support was given to the provision of picnic benches for the exclusive use of café users. Also that a solid surface covered by the existing gravel could be placed under the kiosk canopy at the expense of Mr Baker so that its appearance remained unchanged.

**G 0746**      **MINUTES OF THE FRIENDS OF PETERSFIELD HEATH MEETING HELD ON 3 MARCH 2015.**

The Friends of Petersfield Heath minutes were noted. (See attached appendix B.)

**G 0747**      **AGENDA OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF FIELDS IN TRUST TO BE HELD ON 11 JUNE 2015.**

The Fields in Trust agenda was noted.

**G 0748**      **AVENUE PLAYING FIELDS**

A request had been received from a fitness instructor to hold boot camp style training sessions at The Avenue playing fields on Saturdays, Tuesdays and Thursdays.

**RESOLVED**      that the committee agreed to the boot camp training sessions for a trial period of three months, then to be reviewed by the committee.

In view of the confidential nature of the business about to be discussed it was

**RESOLVED**      that the public and press be asked to leave the meeting and that the Mayor was permitted to stay for the confidential session.

CONFIDENTIAL

G 0749

**CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED FROM SIMON MATTHEWS & CO LTD  
IN RESPECT OF BOROUGH HILL, PETERSFIELD**

The letter had previously been circulated to members and after discussion the contents was noted.

**RESOLVED**

that the contents of the letter were noted and any offer is unanimously rejected. Due to the nature and content of the letter the Town Clerk is to immediately hand the letter over to the police.

*There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.18 pm.*

DRAFT

## Grounds Report April 2015

*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.*

### **The Heath**

- Earlier today a vehicle accident occurred at the Durford Road crossroads resulting in some damage to the hedge and the wooden bollard at the pedestrian entrance to the Heath. Similarly the grit bin has been damaged. I am aware that the Police attended this incident and have asked them for contact details of the offending vehicle in order to seek reinstatement costs.
- The tree thinning work around the Sussex Road car park has revealed the size of the rat problem that we have in this part of the Heath. Pest control contractors have been used in the first instance to exert some control over the large population that exists there. A hedge will be planted around the car park boundary to hide the car park from view later in the year.
- A letter of support has been given to Petersfield Cricket Club in respect of the grant application they have submitted to improve the drainage on their ground.

### **Love Lane Playing Fields**

- With the warmer weather and longer days there has been a noticeable increase in the amount of litter being left around the skatepark. There has also been some instances of material being removed from litter bins and used as a bonfire on the grassed areas by the skatepark.

### **Penns Farm Playing Fields**

- There has been some vehicular incursion onto the playing fields from the area to the rear of the Taro Centre. The dragons teeth that were disturbed have been re-set although it remains unclear who has done this.

### **Merritts Meadow**

- The Town Mayor and I will be attending a meeting at EHDC on 20<sup>th</sup> April in connection with the proposed transfer of this land into the ownership of the Town Council.

### **General**

- Following the granting of the new Grounds Maintenance Contract, arrangements have been made with Sita to continue the arrangement that they previously had with Burleys in respect of litter collection from the skip in the Sussex Road car park on The Heath.
- Following discussions with the Chairman and Town Mayor a new vehicle is being leased for use by our grounds operatives via IVL in Bedford Road. The lease will be over a 3 year period and include all maintenance costs for a 4-wheel drive pick-up vehicle which is due for delivery in the next few days. In the interim period a temporary vehicle has been rented. Sign writing for the new vehicle will be arranged once it has arrived.

Neil Hitch  
Town Clerk  
8<sup>th</sup> April 2015

**FRIENDS OF PETERSFIELD HEATH**  
**MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2015**  
**AT 7.15pm IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, PETERSFIELD TOWN HALL**

**Present:** John Pike (Chairman), Nevill Brooke, Mark Greef, Vivien Pike, Peter Price, Alf Smallbone, Heidrun Warton, Richard Warton

**In Attendance:** Lesley Farrow, Drake Hocking, Peter Marshall

John welcomed Paul Harris, Estates Bursar at Churcher's College, to the meeting. He also welcomed three potential committee members: John Gummerson, Melanie Oxley and Gavin Thomas.

John thanked Richard for managing the role of Acting Chairman so effectively for the past two months while he was out of action.

1. **Apologies for Absence** David Burstall, Robin Hart

2. **Minutes of Meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2014**  
The Minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman.

3. **Matters Arising**

Item 10 Vivien reported that the Christmas party at The Plump Duck had been attended by 25 volunteers and committee members. Very successful and could become an annual fixture.

4. **Ecology and Conservation**

a) At the November Meeting, Robin had proposed a 5-minute seasonally-themed comment on Ecology and Conservation at the start of every meeting, to set the tone and keep our broadest goals in mind. In Robin's absence Drake presented Robin's notes about the naming of the Nordmann fir, the most popular Christmas tree in the UK. His final point was that the correct naming of every species, whether plant or animal, insect or worm, is essential for counting and recording populations. 'Only with that information can we decide what needs particular attention when managing sensitive habitats such as Petersfield Heath.'

b) Melanie said she was concerned about the proposed clearance work on some of the Barrows, particularly those covered with trees. There could be a danger of disturbing hibernating creatures at this time of year, and the autumn was the only window when such work could be carried out.

4. **Finance**

Nevill circulated the Accounts Summary as at 3 March 2015 showing an estimated closing balance of £2789.94, of which £1,000 is the ring-fenced PTC grant for path maintenance. The biggest item of expenditure was £384.37 for the Smart Cart which had proved to be very useful. He confirmed that the Colles Trust CAF cheque could not be paid into a bank account and would be returned to the donor. There are currently 135 paid-up members and 6 outstanding.

It was agreed that Richard Warton be added as a cheque signatory and John to be removed, and the following resolution was passed:

It was resolved that the **authorised signatories** in the current mandate, for the accounts detailed in Section 2, be changed in accordance with sections 5 and 6 and the current mandate will continue as amended.

Nevill also presented the Draft Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2015, which showed a deficit of £288.06.

John thanked Nevill for his clear and detailed Statements.

## 6. Membership

Heidrun reported that she had received another subscription, and there were two new members in the pipeline.

## 7. Work Parties

In David's absence, Vivien read out his notes on the work party season to date. He reported that the turnout had been spectacular, as had the amount achieved. At the start of the season we were swamped with requests by the Archaeologists to prepare the sites of various Barrows for the Geophys surveys and subsequent excavations. We were helped by Peter Caines with tractor and topper, and Andrew Williams and Jordan Bleach with brushcutter.

As a result of our involvement in the clearance work, normal work party activities were overlooked. However, we now have the services of the Offenders Payback Scheme (see Item 9 below), and FoPH can return to their normal duties. Recent work has involved refurbishing the dead hedge alongside the drainage ditch running eastwards from the Pond and repairing/building other dead hedges along the boundary -- thus using the piles of brashings which were left in the vicinity of the cleared Barrows.

## 8. Raised Paths

### a) Raised Path Extension alongside Sussex Road (2015)

Vivien read David's notes: Approval has been given by the Grounds Committee for FoPH to proceed with this further extension to the Raised Path in the summer, in collaboration once again with Churcher's College. The path will be in three sections over muddy stretches of ground under the trees alongside Sussex Road  
 Drake: has experience of protecting tree roots, if any section of the new path is to be built over roots.  
 Lesley: concerned that work on the Pond banks to combat erosion will interfere with the drainage channels required on two of the sections of the path. She will request Bruce Middleton of the SDNPA to look at the proposed sections.

Peter P: There should be an expert, such as Rob Banbury on behalf of the archaeologists, in attendance when the new path is built.

Paul Harris reported that David had talked with Tony Ostensen about a new joint project for 2015, and they had agreed on the further raised path extension under the trees. They have agreed the following dates when the students will be carrying out the work: Wednesday, 10 June digging the drainage channels  
 Saturday, 13 June laying the timbers  
 Wednesday, 17 June spreading the material

David had given Paul a ballpark figure for the cost of the materials. Paul confirmed that the College is happy to meet the cost.

John expressed our thanks to Churcher's College for their generosity in funding the project.

### b) Proposed Raised Path from Pond to Heath Road East (2016)

Richard reported that at the Grounds Meeting on 12 February, Neil Hitch had suggested that FoPH might be interested in dealing with some boggy areas on the Heath where there is pedestrian traffic. David has produced a design for a Raised Path to follow the existing desire-line across the eastern part of the Heath from the pedestrian access opposite Rival Moor Road to the Millennium Path on the eastern side of the Pond. (at the entrance to the Secrets of the Heath location).



Richard said that the project needed to be debated as there are arguments for and against a man-made path in this area, and it would be an Agenda item at our next committee meeting.

Lesley: a raised path would be suitable for wheelchair access. Not in favour of gate at Heath Rd East end, which could be used by Travellers getting on to the Heath.

Peter P: David's design shows the path going very close to Barrow 12. This has already been noted by George Anelay.

#### 9. People of the Heath

Richard reported that clearance work on the barrows for the archaeological project is now being undertaken by the Payback Offenders. The cost of this scheme is £75 per session for supervision and minibus, and is being met by the Museum. A group of offenders with supervisor started work on the Heath on 22 February and will be coming every Sunday until mid-May if required until then. We have a rota of 3 members (Melanie, Richard and Andrew Williams) to advise the supervisor on what work needs to be done.

Richard said the scheme is working well, but if they continue through to May, we need advice from conservationists about what work would have least impact on wildlife at this time of year.

#### 10. PTC Heath Pond Working Party

Drake reported that Robin had said that recommendations made a year ago have not been followed as yet.

Peter Marshall asked to speak at this point:

Members of the various PTC committees such as Planning and Grounds need guidance from outside qualified people. For example, The Petersfield Society send a report on planning issues to the PTC Planning Committee meeting each month, which the members find very helpful.

Peter suggested that something similar could be set up between FoPH and the Grounds Committee. Although FoPH experts' decisions and proposals are set out in our Minutes which are circulated to PTC, they are not necessarily acted upon by the Grounds Committee.

The matter will be debated at the next Grounds meeting to decide what form this guidance should take.

#### 11. Spring Newsletter

Peter said he needed copy and photos by the end of March. Offers came from Melanie, Alf, Lesley and Peter M (PTC's new policy for protecting the Council's green spaces), Paul (Churcher's outside activities other than building raised paths). Also Notice of AGM; dates of 2015 excavations; information about use of brashings for dead hedges and habitats.

#### 12. AGM 28<sup>th</sup> April

Elections will take place for Chairman and new committee members. We are looking for a Vice-chairman. The speakers will be George Anelay and volunteers Lyn Pease and Richard Warton.

#### 13. Retirement of Secretary (2016)

Members made many helpful suggestions as to how to find a new secretary for FoPH.

*[Afternote: John Gummerson has offered his services as Secretary when Vivien retires in 2016. He is well qualified to take on the role and has a year to learn the workings of the committee and the group as a whole.]*

#### 14. Correspondence

None

#### 15. Any Other Business

a) Peter Marshall passed round leaflets advertising the book 'Petersfield: A Town and its People', which has been produced by The Petersfield Society.

b) Heidrun said that we are down to the last box of FoPH leaflets, and that now is the time to start work on updating and changing it. A sub committee was formed: Heidrun, Melanie and Drake  
Paul suggested we drop some leaflets in to the Reception area at Churcher's for display.

c) Nevill suggested that we might consider reducing the number of committee meetings each year from 5 to 4. Vivien to look at the Constitution. To be debated at the next committee meeting.

[Afternote: Item 6 of the Constitution: 'The elected committee ..... shall hold regular meetings (at least quarterly)']

d) Richard reported that he, David Burstall, Melanie and George Anelay had looked at Barrow 8, which George is keen to get cleared before the Topographical Survey in the Spring. Melanie had said that it was essential for a professional wildlife survey to be carried out before work started on the barrow. If any species such as hibernating amphibians and dormice were found, we would require a license from Natural England to move them.

Alf: to his knowledge there are no dormice on the Heath.

Richard: we should engage with Bruce Middleton, Area Manager, SDNPA, on this matter.

Peter P: Barrow 8 is of particular interest as it could be a double barrow.

16. Dates of Next Meetings

Tuesday, 28 <sup>th</sup> April	AGM at 7.30pm in the Rose Room
Tuesday, 7 <sup>th</sup> July	Committee Meeting at 7.15pm in the Council Chamber
Tuesday, 15 <sup>th</sup> September	“ “ “ “ “ “ “ “
Tuesday, 17 <sup>th</sup> November	“ “ “ “ “ “ “ “

The meeting closed at 8.53pm

VAP  
06/03/15