

PETERSFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Grounds Committee held at the Council Chamber, Town Hall,
Petersfield, on Thursday 12 June 2014 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT: Cllr Mrs L Farrow (Chairman), Cllr Mrs J Dickinson, Cllr W Organ and Cllr Ms M Vincent

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Mr N Hitch (Town Clerk), Mrs A Church (Committee Administrator). The Town Mayor and the Petersfield Herald were present.

G 0059 **ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN**

Cllr Mrs Farrow proposed Cllr Organ as Deputy Chairman and was seconded by Cllr Mrs Dickinson.

No further nominations were forthcoming. It was therefore

RESOLVED that Cllr Organ be elected as Deputy Chairman of the Grounds Committee for the ensuing year.

G 0060 **CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS**

The Chairman had no comments.

G 0061 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr P Marshall.

G 0062 **DISPENSATION UNDER SECTION 33 OF THE LOCALISM ACT (2011)**

No requests for dispensation were received.

G 0063 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

G 0064 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Meeting of the Grounds Committee held on 15 May 2014 be approved and signed.

G 0065 **PUBLIC REPRESENTATION**

No requests to speak had been received other than from Mr Ian Baker, Proprietor of The Plump Duck, who would be speaking concerning Item No.13 on the Agenda.

G 0066 **GROUNDS REPORT**

Members received and considered the Grounds Report of 11 June 2014 by the Town Clerk, a copy of which is attached to these Minutes as Appendix A.

The Town Clerk advised that:

The Heath:

- Algae: The water was being tested weekly. The algae was not toxic and was causing no distress to the fish. It was noted that a fat terrapin had been seen in The Pond.
- The excavation project on the archaeology of The Heath would begin shortly and the Town Clerk had been invited to the next meeting of the People of The Heath Project to be held on 23 June 2014.
- Some concern was expressed by the Committee that cars owned by the proprietors of the boats and café were having to drive on to the grass; Cllr Mrs Farrow would be looking at this problem.
- It had been observed that the bins in the vicinity of the children's play area were completely full at 11 am on a Sunday morning. The Town Clerk said he would follow up this query as there was an agreed schedule for the opening and closing of the toilets and the emptying of the bins.
- It was noted that Cllr P Marshall was the Town Council representative for the Friends of Petersfield Heath.

Penns Farm Playing Fields:

- The Committee understood that the grass cutting contract with Burleys was that the grass would be cut on the length of grass basis. If the grass was currently growing more quickly than usual, then this was still for the contractor to address and not the Town Council. The Town Clerk would speak to the contractor the next day.

G 0067 **GRASS CUTTING OF PENNS FIELDS 'A' AND 'B'**

The grass in Penns Fields 'A' and 'B' was currently very high and needed cutting. The Town Clerk said that he had received a quotation from Burleys of £118 + VAT to cut Field 'A' and £88 + VAT to cut Field 'B' and the Committee should now agree how many cuts should be done and at what times of the year. The cuts should not be so frequent that they would allow regular footpaths or rights of way to be made through the grass. It was noted that the ground nesting birds had now left. Following further discussion, it was:

RESOLVED that there should be three cuts for Field 'A', at a cost of £118 + VAT per cut; that there should be two cuts for Field 'B' at a cost of £88 + VAT per cut with the third cut for Field 'B' transferred to cutting the grass on The Heath for the event of "Secrets of The Heath" to be held in August; that these agreed cuts should be made between the current date and the end of October 2014.

G 0068

MAINTENANCE TO THE POND SLIPWAY

The Town Clerk advised that he had had a visit from the holder of the boating concession who had expressed concern about the slipway which was causing him to struggle to get a grip to enable the safety boat to be manoeuvred on and off the water from the Millenium Path. The other boats were moved on and off the water only once each season. The Town Clerk asked the Committee to consider possible maintenance to The Pond slipway to enable him to obtain quotations.

Considerable discussion took place about what type of maintenance work should be carried out on the slipway. It was generally felt that two sets of concrete paths, a wheel width apart, would be suitable. The Committee pointed out that the jetty had worn away but the Town Clerk advised that the maintenance of the jetty by the concession holder was part of the concession agreement. The concession holder had said that he was able to re-construct the jetty himself but would be most appreciative if the Town Council could give some financial assistance with the purchase of the wood needed. The Committee felt that the concession holder could consider applying for a Community Grant. In view of the various implications involved in considering the possible maintenance of the slipway and the re-building of the jetty, the Committee wished to defer any further discussion until the next meeting of the Grounds Committee on 17 July 2014 and, prior to that meeting, to meet with the boating concession holder at the slipway itself.

RESOLVED that consideration of the possible maintenance to The Pond slipway, to facilitate the concession holder to manoeuvre his boats on and off the water, be deferred and put on the Agenda of the Grounds Committee Meeting to be held at 6.30 pm on 17 July 2014; that, at 6.15 pm prior to that meeting, the Grounds Committee should meet with the holder of the boating concession at the slipway on The Heath to consider what maintenance was required.

RESOLVED that the order of business be altered to allow the item concerning The Plump Duck to be discussed next.

G 0069

THE PLUMP DUCK

Mr Ian Baker, proprietor of The Plump Duck, presented to the Committee his outline business plan and audited accounts. As a result of very hard work and innovative ideas, The Plump Duck had had a very successful year and Mr

Baker asked the Committee whether consideration could be given to moving him from an income-based rental to a fixed annual rental. This would enable him to better forecast his financial position. Some concern was expressed about whether such changes should be considered before the end of the current concession agreement term.

After discussion, the Committee agreed that this request should be put first to the Financial & General Purposes Committee to consider with a view to moving it on to full Council. However, they wished to propose and record a vote of thanks to Mr Baker for all that he had achieved in his first year of business which had also promoted the facilities on The Heath to the general public.

RECOMMENDED that the Financial & General Purposes Committee consider the presentation of the outline business plan and audited accounts of The Plump Duck by the proprietor at their meeting on 21 July 2014.

G 0070

PROPOSED POLICY FOR THE USE OF TOWN COUNCIL LAND

(Council Minute C0025 May 2014 refers)

The Chairman said that considering a policy for the Use of Town Council Land had arisen following the housing requirements of the Neighbourhood Plan and the fact that the Town Council holds quite a lot of open spaces. Apart from Penns Field 'A', which already was planned to be sold, the Town Council should be looking to hold those open spaces for the benefit of everyone in the town now and in the future. A Working Party would need to be set up to look at the proposed general policy already put forward through Cllr Marshall and to come back with a properly worded document. The document would need to cover every individual plot of land and state what the intention is to be for each one - for present use and for future use.

It was proposed that a list should be drawn up of every plot of land with the known history of each one detailed, including any restricted covenants.

It was agreed that the Working Party should comprise all members of the Grounds Committee plus the Town Clerk and that it should have its first meeting on a Thursday morning in the early part of July (*date to be agreed*) and report back at the end of three months.

RESOLVED that a Working Party of Cllrs Mrs Farrow, Mrs Dickinson, Organ, Ms Vincent and the Town Clerk be set up to consider and put forward a policy document, to cover every plot of land held by the Town Council, within three months of its first meeting in July 2014.

G 0071

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE FRIENDS OF PETERSFIELD HEATH

The Committee received and noted the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Petersfield Heath held on 6 May 2014 which had

been attended by several Town Councillors. It had been a very good meeting with an excellent speaker (*David Standing, Head Gardener at The Wakes Selborne*).

G 0072 **FLOODLIGHTING FOR PETERSFIELD RUGBY CLUB**

The Committee agreed that, as an Extraordinary Planning Meeting had already been called on 22 May 2014 to consider the request by Petersfield Rugby Club to erect floodlighting on Pitch 2 at Penns Farm playing fields, it would approve the request and recommend it to Council. It was noted that Petersfield Football Club were happy with the proposal.

RECOMMENDED that the full Council ratify the decision of the Grounds Committee to grant permission to Petersfield Rugby Club for the erection of floodlighting on Pitch 2 at Penns Farm playing fields.

G 0073 **MODEL AIRCRAFT FLYING ON THE HEATH**

The Committee considered a request for a resident to fly a radio-controlled helicopter on The Heath. It was agreed that permission could be granted but with restrictions on which areas could be used. The areas between The Pond and the Little School must not be used, nor must the cricket area when matches are played. It was noted that the resident was fully insured with the British Model Flying Association to use his equipment in an open space.

RESOLVED that the request by a resident to fly a radio-controlled model helicopter on The Heath be approved, subject to restrictions on areas to be used, as advised by the Town Clerk, and subject to full insurance by the resident.

G 0074 **PETERSFIELD IN BLOOM 2014**

The Committee received an update on Petersfield in Bloom 2014. The last date for entries to be received was 27 June and there would be a meeting of the Working Party early in July to finalise details. Cllr Ms Vincent was happy to be recruited to help with the event this year. The area of The Square was looking wonderful with hanging baskets, and businesses around The Square would be encouraged to enter the competition. It was noted that a new trophy had been purchased and engraved but with no specific classification.

There would need to be four Councillors available to help on judging day and this was an Agenda item for the Council Meeting on 19 June 2014. Refreshments would be provided in the Council Chamber for the judges on that day. Following judging day, the Mayor would distribute the plaques to the winners before their names were published in the local paper.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.45 pm

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

- 2 new triangular benches and 4 new waste bins have been delivered and installed.
- Blue-green algae have been seen in the Pond although it is not toxic and there is no distress to any fish. As a result I have asked the Heath Pond Association to start taking weekly readings of the water to keep a close watch on the water quality.
- The Heath Pond Association has advised me that they wished to cancel the membership of one individual for constantly flouting the Pond fishing rules, parking on Sussex Road as well as for his aggressive behaviour. I have supported them with this request and advised the individual concerned.
- One of the members of the Heath Pond Association has recently resigned because he had pushed the boundaries too far of what was acceptable to do in and around the Pond which was setting a poor example to others. I understand a new member is shortly to be brought to this committee for consideration/approval.
- The excavation project being undertaken on the Heath Tumuli by The Petersfield Museum and funded by a Lottery Bid is shortly to begin, focussing on the barrows in the central and northern part of The Heath. The Friends of Petersfield Heath will be doing some voluntary clearing work in advance of the main project work commencing.

Bell Hill Recreation Ground

- Damage has been done to the fence around the childrens' play area next to the entrance gate. Repair work is scheduled to be done shortly by Phil Hayler.

Rotherlands

- Working party reports were received from the Rotherlands Conservation Group but too late to add to the agenda for members to receive. Anyone wishing to see a copy of the report is welcome to one on request. In summary however it contained the following:
March – annual inspection and repair of insect homes along the rugby pitch boundary whilst checking the planted hedge plants and collecting litter.
April - cancelled due to Easter break and unavailability of leaders.
May - path maintenance on the wet and muddy corner path leading into the Central Meadow. Also installed gravel boards and filled with gravel. Held a stall during the Petersfield Spring Festival to promote the work they do and seek new members which was successful.

Love Lane Recreation Ground

- There appears to be a very small amount of Japanese Knotweed re-growth in the area treated next to residential garden fences last year. This is the area that was approved for a programme of treatment a few months ago. I am in liaison with the contractor concerned to see when it is appropriate for them to re-visit the site.

Penns Farm Playing Fields

- A comment has been received from the rugby club concerning the length of the grass when they were using the area for playing touch-rugby. Whilst it appears that the grass was mown the day after the comment was made it gave me the opportunity to discuss the problem with our grounds contractors. From their perspective, the grass is growing very quickly because of the prevailing weather conditions as well as the fertilisation that has been added to the field and so

we are 'a victim of our own success' up to a point. The contractor is scheduling a cut to the site every week-10 days and will keep the situation under review. The issue of 'arisings' continues because of the speed of grass growth, however the cost involved in having the arisings collected is very significant and has always been resisted by members in the past because of the cost.

Neil Hitch
Town Clerk
11th June 2014