

PETERSFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Grounds Committee held at the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Petersfield, on Thursday 16 October 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), and three members of the public. There were no press present.

G 0320 CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

The Chairman said that she had been most impressed by the Taro Fair that had been on The Heath for three days from 4-6 October. There had been no problems with litter and they had left the site in an impeccable condition.

G 0321 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr P Marshall.

G 0322 DISPENSATION UNDER SECTION 33 OF THE LOCALISM ACT (2011)

No requests for dispensation were received.

G 0323 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

G 0324 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Meeting of the Grounds Committee held on 11 September 2014 be approved and signed.

G 0325 PUBLIC REPRESENTATION

A request to speak had been received from Mr Sutton concerning Woods Meadow (*Item No.10 on the Agenda*).

Mr Sutton showed the Committee photographs of Woods Meadow, that he had taken in July 2014, of the large grass arisings over the site that had made ball play by children very difficult. The Chairman advised Mr Sutton that, because of cost issues involved in the removal of arisings, the contractors were only contracted to cut the grass. There had been a recent change to the cutting methods at Woods Meadow which had resulted in an improvement

in the condition of the site since then. Woods Meadow would be further discussed at item No. 10 on the Agenda.

The Committee were grateful to Mr Sutton for having raised the issue of the condition of Woods Meadow and confirmed that the matter would be investigated further.

G 0326 **GROUNDS REPORT**

Members received and noted the Grounds Report for October 2014 by the Town Clerk. *(A copy is attached to these Minutes as Appendix A)*

The Committee discussed the poor condition of the piece of land leading into the Bell Hill Recreation Ground car park. The Town Clerk said that he would check whether the piece of land in question was actually in the car park area under the responsibility of the Town Council and he would report back to the Committee.

G 0327 **PRESENTATION FROM JIGSAW MONTESORRI NURSERY**

The Committee received and considered a presentation from Mrs Dewey, owner of the Jigsaw Montesorri Nursery that leased the Love Lane Pavilion, to request that an all-weather surface be installed in the enclosed garden there. It is a requirement of Ofsted that the outside play area be safe. The current outside rubber matting becomes very slippery when wet and the children are then not able to play outside. Mrs Dewey wished to have an all-weather grass surface installed which would be funded entirely by the nursery. The installation lead time was about six weeks, with a day's installation. The Committee examined a sample of the proposed surface and agreed the request. Mrs Dewey invited any Councillor who wished to come to see the finished surface.

RESOLVED that the Jigsaw Montesorri Nursery be permitted to install an all-weather grass surface in the enclosed garden at the Love Lane Pavilion; that the total cost of the installation be funded by the nursery.

G 0328 **QUOTATION FOR THE REMOVAL OF GRASS ARISING FROM RECREATION AREAS AFTER CUTTING**

The Committee received and considered a quotation dated 2 October 2014 from the grounds contractor for the removal of grass arisings from recreation areas after cutting. The cost of collecting the green waste was very high as it was labour intensive and involved skip hire. It was felt that, as the unacceptable level of arisings was not a regular problem, the extra cost could not be justified. The problem arose when the grass was cut when it was too long. The Town Clerk had contacted the contractor about this and, for some

areas, the cutting had alternated between gang and rotary mowing which had made an improvement.

After considerable discussion, the Committee agreed not to proceed further with the quotation to remove grass arisings from the recreation areas after cutting.

G 0329 **MAINTENANCE CONDITION OF WOODS MEADOW**

The Committee considered the current maintenance condition of Woods Meadow. As minuted in G 0324 and G 0327 above, the Town Clerk advised that the change in cutting by the contractor to alternate between gang and rotary mowing had resulted in an improvement in the maintenance condition of Woods Meadow and the level of arisings since July 2014.

It was felt that the worn goalpost at Woods Meadow should be replaced and the Town Clerk would investigate the cost of a new goalpost.

G 0330 **CLEARANCE OF THE CONSERVATION AREA AT LOVE LANE RECREATION GROUND** *(Minute G 0243 Sep.14 refers)*

The Committee considered a quotation dated 3 October 2014 from the grounds contractor for the clearance of the conservation area at the Love Lane recreation ground.

After flailing the entire area and clearing away all rotting tree branch debris, the contractor had recommended that the whole area be cut on a 2-3 week schedule by rotary machine until the end of the season (4 cuts) and started again early in 2015. After several cuts, the area could be re-assessed with a view to importing soil to level the undulations and to seeding the area. Because of the presence of Japanese Knotweed, it was not advisable to clear away any arisings as this may cause contamination. The Town Clerk said that, with this regular cutting and maintenance, he had been advised that the Knotweed would be weakened and eventually not cause a problem.

RESOLVED that the quotation dated 3 October 2014 from Burleys for the conservation area at Love Lane recreation ground be accepted in the sum of (1) £859.00 for the flailing and clearance of the area and (2) £208.00 for rotary cutting the area to the end of the season (4 cuts), making a total of £1067.00.

G 0331 **PROBLEM WITH THE STEEP AREA AROUND THE TUNNEL PLAY AREA ON THE HEATH** *(Minute G 0245 Sep.14 refers)*

The Town Clerk showed the Committee artist's impressions of a possible solution to the problem on the steep area around the tunnel play area on the Heath which had suffered considerable erosion as a result of its popularity

and constant use by children. The Committee considered the solution proposed by Greenspan to prevent the water penetration caused by the erosion by covering the whole area with artificial grass, moving the log wall out a little further to do away with the steepest part of the bank and shoring up the main part of the bank behind with soil. The use of logs had already been shown to work in the play area to prevent erosion.

The Town Clerk advised that the cost of doing the erosion prevention work would be £4,896.00 and the laying of artificial grass over the whole play area site would be an additional £8, 746.00, making a total of £13,642.00. Funding could be met partly from Capital Receipts Reserve of £12.5K, which had been put aside by the previous Council for erosion control in the play area vicinity on The Heath, and the remainder from Earmarked Reserves from funds put aside for play area equipment. The Committee agreed that, as funds were available, this essential work should be carried out. Council would have to approve this capital work but, in the first instance, a recommendation would be made to the Financial & General Purposes Committee.

It was agreed that, before a final decision could be made, two further quotations should be sought for the supply of the artificial grass and that these should be brought back as an agenda item for the next Committee meeting on 13 November 2014.

G 0332

MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE FRIENDS OF PETERSFIELD HEATH HELD ON 16 SEPTEMBER 2014

The Committee received and considered the Minutes of the Committee Meeting of the Friends of Petersfield Heath (FoPH) held on 16 September 2014. Cllrs Mrs Farrow and Organ had attended the meeting and had reiterated the Council's wish that there should be greater liaison between them and FoPH. The FoPH had been asked by the Petersfield Museum to carry out bracken clearing and tree work to make the Museum's Secrets of the Heath project more accessible and, again, these requests should be made through the Town Clerk as this type of work could be done through the Heath Management Plan.

The Committee noted that members of the Museum's project would be attending the Annual Town Meeting on 22 April 2015. They also noted that Mr John Pike, the current Chairman of FoPH, would be standing down in April 2015 and wished to record the Council's great appreciation of all the work Mr Pike had done for Petersfield Heath during his time as Chairman.

G 0333

WORK PARTY REPORTS FROM ROTHERLANDS CONSERVATION GROUP

The Committee received and noted the Work Party Reports from Rotherlands Conservation Group for the period June to September 2014.

G 0334 **NOTES OF ALLOTMENT HOLDERS MEETING HELD ON 16 SEPTEMBER 2014**

The Committee received and considered the Notes of the Allotment Holders Meeting held on 16 September 2014. It was noted and agreed that:

- Trees: Mr Robin Burleigh would be asked to look at the trees.
- Grass Cutting: The Town Clerk advised that, following the proposed changes to the grounds contract, it was intended that the strimming of the allotments would be done in-house.
- Padlock: The combination lock number should be changed.

G 0335 **RESPONSE TO THE REVIEW AND UPDATE OF THE HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL ACCESS PLAN FOR THE SOUTH DOWNS (HAMPSHIRE) 2008 - 2013**

The Committee received the review and update of the Hampshire County Council Access Plan for the South Downs (Hampshire) 2008 - 2013 to which a response was invited.

It was agreed that a Working Party should be set up to complete the on-line response form from a laptop in the Council Chamber.

RESOLVED that a Working Party of Cllrs Mrs Dickinson, Mrs Farrow and Organ be set up to complete the on-line response form to the Hampshire County Council Access Plan for the South Downs (Hampshire) 2008 - 2013; that the form be completed from a laptop in the Council Chamber at 11.30 am on Tuesday 21 October 2014.

G 0336 **GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY JUNE 2014 FROM THE PEOPLE OF THE HEATH**

The Committee received and noted the Geophysical Survey June 2014 from the People of the Heath on Understanding and Conserving Petersfield's Prehistoric Barrows.

G 0337 **WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION JULY 2014 BY WEST SUSSEX ARCHAEOLOGY LTD**

The Committee received and noted the Written Scheme of Investigation July 2014 by West Sussex Archaeology Ltd for the Archaeological Excavation of Barrow 11 on The Heath.

G 0338

STRATEGY FOR COUNCIL OWNED LAND IN PETERSFIELD

(Minute G 0070 June 14 refers)

The Committee received and considered the Notes of the Working Party set up to develop a Strategy for Council Owned Land in Petersfield. Discussion took place on the recommendation made about Bell Hill Common in Point 3.5.1 and it was felt that this matter required further consideration by the Council.

RECOMMENDED that Council approve the Working Party's proposed Strategy for Council Owned Land in Petersfield, subject to a discussion on the action to be taken on Bell Hill Common.

Grounds Report October 2014

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

- John Pike from The Friends of Petersfield Heath has requested that permission be granted for Peter Caines to undertake a further clearance of bracken from some of the barrows to facilitate the ongoing Petersfield Museum project. Funds are available in the Heath Management Plan budget for the work which I have approved. He also asked my reaction to the possibility of South Downs National Park Rangers spraying the bracken as a means of control. I agreed to discuss the matter with Dan Cornell from the National Park before agreeing anything further.
- The Friends of Petersfield Heath have asked for permission for one of their volunteers to use a chainsaw on the Heath to clear holly and other saplings that need removing from the vicinity of barrows 13 & 14 near the Pond and 21 in the south east corner of the Heath. Prior to granting permission I have asked for a risk assessment and method statement to be provided.
- The South Downs National Park Authority has asked once again to hold 'The Secrets of the Heath' event next year on 5th and 6th September 2015. As the event has been held for the last two years I have given permission for next year's event.
- Ian from the Plump Duck has asked permission to hold another 'event' similar to the one Council approved around the anniversary of the kiosk opening on the Friday of October Half Term week on the theme of Halloween. All activities for children will be supervised by parents.
- A team of Rangers from the South Downs national Park Authority has been assisting the Friends of Petersfield Heath with some of the barrow clearance work required for the Secrets of the Heath Project.

Rotherlands

- The tree with a large split in its bough that was overhanging the main footpath has now been removed.
- Members may recall me reporting the issue with the wooden footbridge over the Tilmore Brook a couple of months ago. Hampshire County Council has replaced the wooden handrails on the bridge and will undertake a regular inspection of the structure every 3 months to review its ongoing safety. Replacement of the bridge will be undertaken by Hampshire County Council's 'bridge team' but there is no indication of when this job will reach the top of the 'to do list'.

Tilmore Allotments

- The large leylandii and a couple of dead trees near the road are scheduled to be removed in the next couple of weeks.

Avenue Playing Fields

- A wire has been broken on one of the nets in the tennis courts. It seems likely that a replacement net will be required but advice is being sought before proceeding further.

Love Lane Recreation Ground

- A price has been requested to bring into normal maintenance the 'wild area' of the recreation ground.
- Further treatment to the Japanese Knotweed has been carried out on places where growth has been identified within the 'wild area'.

- The Festival for Young People are still in discussions with Wheelscape in connection with amending the plans for the skatepark extension so that a planning application can be submitted. Grant funders need to see that planning permission has been obtained before they will confirm their willingness to be involved in supporting the project.

Penns Farm Playing Fields

- The Taro Centre contacted me over a pile of wooden posts that had been left it appears by the Petersfield Town Juniors from their 6-a-side tournament in June. I have asked the club to remove the material quickly.
- It has been reported to me by the rugby club that a hole has been left from the Town Juniors 6-a-side tournament which I have requested our grounds maintenance contractor to correct urgently. Similarly the club has reported some tyre track damage from the same tournament in the area around the junior rugby pitch on the far side of the 2nd XV pitch which again I have asked our contractors to deal with quickly.

Neil Hitch
Town Clerk
9th October 2014