

PETERSFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Grounds Committee held at the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Petersfield, on Thursday 11 September 2014 at 6.30 pm.

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

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Mr N Hitch (Town Clerk), Mrs A Church (Committee Administrator), the Town Mayor, Cllr J Deane and six members of the public.

G 0236 **CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS**

The Chairman commented that she had been surprised and disappointed by a recent article in the Petersfield Post about The Heath. She would be inviting the Editor to walk around The Heath with her to point out its many areas of interest.

G 0237 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr P Marshall and Cllr W Organ.

G 0238 **DISPENSATION UNDER SECTION 33 OF THE LOCALISM ACT (2011)**

No requests for dispensation were received.

G 0239 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

G 0240 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Meeting of the Grounds Committee held on 17 July 2014 be approved and signed.

G 0241 **PUBLIC REPRESENTATION**

A request to speak had been received from Mr Burge concerning the wild area on Love Lane Recreation Ground (*Item No.8 on the Agenda*).

G 0242 **GROUND'S REPORT**

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

The Heath:

The Chairman, if she was available, would join the proposed site meeting with Greenspan and the Town Clerk to review the toddler play area.

Penns Farm Playing Fields:

The Chairman said that the markings for the football pitches had been carried out by the contractor when the grass was long and, when they had cut the grass shortly afterwards, most of the markings had been erased. Also, when grass cutting takes place, the loose grass arisings are not removed by the contractor which makes football play difficult. The Town Clerk advised that the removal of arisings involves an additional cost and, for this reason, was not included in the contract.

The Town Clerk would obtain up to date costings for the removal of arisings, particularly in the main recreation areas.

Woods Meadow

A member of the public had raised the question of the poor state of Woods Meadow and this would be considered as an agenda item at the next meeting of the Grounds Committee to be held at 6.30 pm on Thursday 16 October 2014.

G 0243

FUTURE MAINTENANCE OF THE WILD AREA IN THE SOUTH-WEST CORNER OF LOVE LANE RECREATION GROUND

Mr Burge, a resident whose garage and house were very close to the wild area in the south-west corner of Love Lane Recreation Ground, raised his and his neighbours concerns about further outbreaks of the Japanese Knotweed that had spread from that corner into one of the gardens. This could have a major impact on the value of houses around that area.

Mr Burge also raised concerns about (1) the length of time it had taken before a protective 1m strip had been cut between the Japanese Knotweed seeding area and his house (2) the tall self-seeded trees that had grown within the area up to 0.5m from his garage and (3) drainage issues. Mr Burge acknowledged that there were historic problems in that area going back many years.

Considerable discussion took place on the future treatment of the wild area which now had no flowers and was full of brambles and brush. It was agreed that, with specialist contractors, the whole area should be cleared and the Japanese Knotweed eradicated. The Town Clerk would investigate the cost of obtaining a guarantee from a specialist contractor that, with treatment and regular on-going maintenance, the Japanese Knotweed could be permanently eradicated from the wild area.

RECOMMENDED that the Finance & General Purposes Committee approve: (1) the cost involved to appoint a specialist

contractor to clear and treat the wild area in the south-west corner of Love Lane Recreation Ground to eradicate the Japanese Knotweed and (2) the on-going maintenance costs to ensure permanent eradication.

G 0244 **OUTDOOR FITNESS CLASSES ON THE HEATH** (*Minutes G 0284/C 0319 September 2013 refer*)

The Committee considered an update report from Mr Alexander on the OUT-FIT classes that are run on The Heath on Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings and it was noted that the class numbers were still low but with committed members. It was agreed that the OUT-FIT outdoor fitness classes on The Heath should continue without charge until January 2015 when there would be another review by the Grounds Committee.

It was noted that there had been injuries caused to keep-fit members on The Heath from holes dug for barbeques and from cans and bottles left behind. The Town Clerk advised that new signs, advising that barbeques by the public were not permitted on The Heath, were in the process of being erected.

RESOLVED that the OUT-FIT outdoor fitness classes on The Heath should be allowed to continue without charge until January 2015 when the position would again be reviewed by the Grounds Committee.

G 0245 **PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT INSPECTION SHEETS**

The Committee received and considered the playground equipment Inspection Sheets dated 12 August 2014 from S B Playground Services.

The Town Clerk advised that non-urgent rot problems, caused by wet weather, would continue to be monitored.

The Heath: All play equipment was very well used. The steep area around the tunnel is causing a problem and would be reviewed with Greenspan at a meeting to be held in the following week. Their views would be brought back to the Grounds Committee for further discussion.

The Committee queried why there was no litter bin at the main Heath Road entrance by the bollards and it was agreed that the Town Clerk would arrange for a litter bin to be put there.

Penns Farm: *Swinging Tyres* – The Town Clerk would obtain a price for replacing the worn tyre eye bolts.
Birds Nest Swing – The damaged wet pour surface areas had been repaired or would be repaired very soon.

Woods Meadow: A check would be made to see if the graffiti has been removed.

Bell Hill: Greenspan would be visiting the Bell Hill recreation play area to look at the repairs required to the artificial grass. They would also look at the damage to the tunnel on the 3-Tower Multi-Unit.

It was noted that damage to the gates was a continual problem.

The ground surface of the car parking entrance to the recreation ground was in a very poor state and the Town Clerk would arrange a site visit.

G 0246

COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE FRIENDS OF PETERSFIELD HEATH

The Committee received the Minutes of the Meeting of the Friends of Petersfield Heath (FoPH) held on 8 July 2014.

Discussion took place with reference to Minute 3b Item 10, concerning the scrub clearance and tree thinning taking place on The Heath by the Town Council's contractor. The Town Clerk advised that, over the last 5 – 6 years, with reference to the management plan, the Council had started to thin wooded areas on The Heath to create a glade and this action had the general support of the FoPH. Some trees have to be felled to allow other trees to flourish and the contractor, a tree surgeon, makes the decision on these. The oak tree that had been felled was in a poor condition. The good work done by the FoPH is greatly appreciated by the Town Council but it is not in their remit to take over responsibility for The Heath from the Council.

In view of the sensitive issue of the felling of any oak tree, the Chairman requested that she should look at the oak trees on The Heath at the site visit planned for reviewing the next area for woodland thinning.

G 0247

DATE FOR THE GROUND USERS MEETING 2014

The Committee agreed that the next meeting of the Ground Users should be held in the Rose Room at 7 pm on Monday 8 December 2014.

G 0248

REQUEST FROM 145 BRIGADE CADET TRAINING TEAM TO CANOE ON THE HEATH POND

The Town Clerk advised that he had received a request from 145 Brigade Training Team, based out of Winchester, for the Council's permission to allow army cadets to canoe on The Heath Pond on various dates between 21

June – 8 July 2015. There would be a maximum of 30 cadets canoeing at any one time, with fully qualified instructors and their own equipment. The Committee agreed to their request, subject to the Pond being available on their chosen dates and subject to receipt of confirmation of a full risk assessment.

RESOLVED that 145 Brigade Training Team, based out of Winchester, be granted permission to allow army cadets to canoe on The Heath Pond on various dates between 21 June – 8 July 2015; that the Town Clerk advise 145 Brigade of non-available dates and request confirmation of a full risk assessment.

G 0249 **TO REVIEW THE POLICY FOR THE GROUNDS COMMITTEE**

The Committee reviewed the Policy for the Grounds Committee
(Minute G0385 November 2010 refers)

Minor amendments to the wording were agreed to update the Policy and it was agreed that the Policy document should be reviewed annually.

RESOLVED that minor amendments to wording be made to update the Policy for the Grounds Committee *(a copy of the updated Policy 2014 is attached to these Minutes as Appendix B)* and that the Policy document be reviewed annually.

G 0250 **TO CONSIDER ITEMS FOR INCLUSION IN THE REVENUE AND CAPITAL 2015 – 2016 FIRST DRAFT BUDGET**

The Committee considered the items to be included in the Revenue and Capital first draft budget for 2015 – 2016.

RESOLVED that the following items be considered for inclusion in the first draft budget for 2015 - 2016

	Budget
	£
<u>Capital</u>	
The Heath Pond bank stabilisation project <i>(£20K put aside to date)</i>	10,000
Play Equipment – annual accrual	15,000
Love Lane toilets – annual accrual	10,000
Heath Toilets <i>(+ additional funding to be sought)</i>	20,000
	55,000
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<u>Revenue</u>	
Closed litter bins with lids to stop foxes and birds	5,000
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There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.22 pm

Grounds Report September 2014

APPENDIX 'A'

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

- The boardwalk is suffering with plant growth blocking part of the walkway. Instructions have been given to cut back the plant growth.
- Additional grass cutting was undertaken on the Heath to enable the 'Secrets of the Heath' event to take place over the weekend of 30th and 31st August
- There are a number of ash trees in the block of woodland between Sussex Road car park and the Pond that do not look to be in good health. I have asked the South Downs National Park Authority rangers to have a look at them to see if they are suffering from 'ash dieback' disease.
- For the tree thinning work to be undertaken this year it is proposed to work on the woodland between the Sussex Road car park and the Pond. Quotes will shortly be obtained.
- The toddler play area is still showing signs of erosion on the slopes above the tunnel despite recent improvements undertaken. I have asked Greenspan to undertake a further site visit to see what can be done to improve the situation and will report further once this visit has taken place.

Rotherlands

- There is a tree with a large split in a major bough that is overhanging the pathway. Robin Burleigh will deal with the bough shortly although there is no perceived danger to the public because it is resting on another large tree which will prevent it from falling.

Tilmore Allotments

- There are two dead trees at the corner of the allotments near the road. Arrangements have been made to have these trees removed in the near future on the grounds of safety.

Love Lane Recreation Ground

- A further treatment to the Japanese Knotweed has been undertaken in the last week. There was a very small amount of growth at the site where it was identified last year near the residential gardens. Further pockets of growth have been identified in the 'wild area' and these have been treated as well or are due to be treated in the near future.

Penns Farm Playing Fields

- The trees bordering the playing fields and Harrier Way have been trimmed back because of low overhanging branches impeding pedestrians.
- The pitches for both rugby and football have been re-marked and the goalposts erected. In addition to the 4 football pitches previously provided, Petersfield Town Juniors have asked for two 9 a-side pitches to be provided. Following the last conversation I had with the Grounds Maintenance Contractor, I understand that space has been found to provide these pitches for the club.

Neil Hitch
Town Clerk
28th August 2014

PETERSFIELD TOWN COUNCIL**POLICY FOR GROUNDS COMMITTEE - G 0249 September 2014 refers**

To encourage and promote full use of Petersfield Town Council's Open Spaces and Sports Grounds for the enjoyment of the public in a sustainable manner.

- Allotments:** To hold users meetings every year in the Autumn. To ensure all sites are maintained in a reasonable condition.
- Fairs/Circus:** To allow a maximum of 3 fairs/circus per year at each venue although this may be waived in exceptional circumstances. In letting any facilities the Town Council to be mindful of the impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents.
- Trees and Hedgerows:** To maintain existing trees and hedgerows and protect worthwhile specimens. To plant trees as necessary, in consultation with an arboricultural expert. To remove all dead/dying trees in accordance with Health and Safety policy
- Dogs} Litter}** To place dog signs and waste bins at all open spaces and sports grounds and to empty the bins on a regular basis.
- The Heath:** To encourage and promote the management of The Heath and The Heath Pond, as advised by the Heath Integrated Management Plan.
- Angling:** To work together with the Heath Pond Association to promote good fishing practice at The Heath Pond.
- Boats:** To work together with the Boating Concessionaire to ensure boating is carried out in a suitable and safe manner. To limit the number of boats on The Heath Pond to a maximum of 45.
- Model Boats:** To allow use of the Pond for the purpose of sailing model boats.
- Play Equipment:** To maintain, repair, enhance and replace (when necessary) play equipment at open spaces and sports grounds and to put in place a strategy document to determine appropriate play provision for both children and young people.
- Seats:** To maintain and repair existing seats at open spaces and sports grounds.
- Contractors:** To use local workforce whenever possible.
- Access for the Disabled:** To provide access for the disabled to all Petersfield Town Council's open spaces, sports grounds and facilities, where reasonable.
- Recreation Grounds:** To allow occasional use for overnight camping by established, organised groups.
- Fencing:** To maintain and repair existing fencing at sports grounds and open spaces.
- Sports Grounds:** To encourage full use by the public of all facilities available at Petersfield Town Council's Sports Grounds and to facilitate User Meetings.
- Conservation Group:** To work in partnership with conservation groups working on Petersfield Town Council land.
- Carbon Footprint:** To pay due regard to the Town Council's carbon footprint and the environmental impact of the Grounds policies and activities.
- Users Meeting:** To hold a Grounds Users Meeting in November or December each year.
- Children and Young People:** To recognise the needs and requirements for both children and young people of Petersfield

This Policy is subject to the Town Council's Financial Strategy.