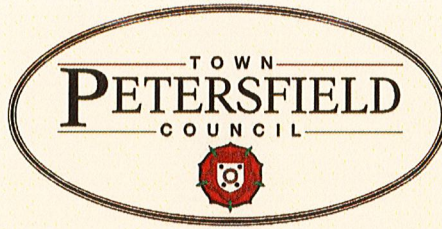


NEIL HITCH  
Town Clerk

Tel. (01730) 264182  
Fax. (01730) 231164

e-mail [admin@petersfield-tc.gov.uk](mailto:admin@petersfield-tc.gov.uk)  
[www.petersfield-tc.gov.uk](http://www.petersfield-tc.gov.uk)



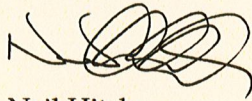
The Town Hall  
Heath Road  
Petersfield  
Hampshire  
GU31 4EA

6<sup>th</sup> July 2023

Dear Councillor

I hereby summon you to attend a meeting of the Grounds Advisory Group to be held on **Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> July at 6.30 p.m.** via Microsoft Teams. The log in details to join via Teams are as follows: 382 760 812 563 (members of the public are asked to email [admin@petersfield-tc.gov.uk](mailto:admin@petersfield-tc.gov.uk) by 5.p.m on the day of the meeting for the password).

Yours sincerely,



Neil Hitch  
Town Clerk

#### AGENDA

1. Chairman's comments.
2. To receive and record apologies for absence.
3. To consider the granting of a dispensation under Section 33 of the Localism Act (2011) to enable members to participate in, and vote on, an item of business on the agenda where they would otherwise have a disclosable pecuniary Interest and to confirm how long this dispensation may have effect.
4. To receive and record Declarations of Interest. Councillors are reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest which they may have in any item of business on the agenda no later than when that item is reached. Unless dispensation has been granted, members may not participate in any discussion of, or vote on, or discharge any function related to any matter in which they have a pecuniary interest as defined by regulations made by the Secretary of State under the Localism Act 2011. Councillors must withdraw from the Chamber when the meeting discusses and votes on the matter.
5. To approve as correct the minutes of the Grounds Advisory Group held on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023 (*previously circulated*).



EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME

BRONZE AWARD

Proudly supporting those who serve.

6. Public Representation - Councillors to receive representation (including items on the agenda) from members of the public provided they (public) have given due notice of their intention to the Town Clerk no later than 10.30 am on the day of the meeting. The maximum time limit allowed per person is three minutes, although this may be reduced if a large number of people express their wish to address Councillors.
7. To receive and note a report detailing decisions made under delegated authority since the previous meeting on 16th March 2023 (*attached*).
8. To appoint a Deputy Chairman for Grounds Committee
9. To receive and note the Grounds Report (*to follow*).
10. To receive and consider a presentation regarding wildflower meadow and wildfire risk (*attached*)
11. To review and consider the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (*attached*)
12. To receive and consider an initial discussion paper for the refurbishment of the Heath toilets (*attached*).
13. To receive and consider an email proposing the introduction of a water fountain to fill water bottles on the heath (*attached*)
14. To receive the notes of the Grounds users' meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2023 (*attached*)
15. To receive and consider quotations for the refurbishment of the Bell Hill play area (*attached*)
16. To review the current arrangements for provision of memorial benches on PTC land (*verbal*)
17. To receive and consider a proposal for the introduction of Safety Barriers at Paddock Way recreation ground and Love Lane playing fields (*attached*).
18. To receive and consider a document on allotment procedures produced by members and officers (*attached*)

Confidential

19. To receive and consider any staff or confidential matters.

~ End



## Grounds Advisory Group

### Scheme of Delegation Decision

#### **Background**

Members will be aware that under the Scheme of Delegation approved by Council at its Annual Meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2022 all decisions made between Advisory Group meetings require reporting to the next available meeting on the grounds of openness and transparency. To this end the following decisions have been made since the last Advisory Group meeting in November 2022.

- A Tenancy at Will agreement has been completed on the Grounds Depot following the expiration of the original lease. Discussions are hoped to be commenced on the possibility of purchasing a section of the compound where the Depot is based to enable the Council to construct a more permanent building.
- The Chairman and I met members of Liss Archaeology recently to discuss what they will be undertaking by way of excavations as part of The Petersfield Big Dig from 14<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> July. The group will be carrying out minor investigations by way of test pits or mini trenches on The Avenue playing fields and possibly The Spain Greensward. They will be engaging with residents to explain what they are doing along with any findings they may discover. As part of their work, we have asked them if possible to undertake a geophysical survey of Goodyer Meadows to assist in our plans to create a Management Plan for the site. It has been agreed that 2 car parking spaces will be reserved for the archaeology group for the duration of this period. In addition to these digs, the group are undertaking a number of test digs in various residents back gardens. Any discoveries as a result of this dig would become the property of the Town Council.
- Following the Travellers incursion during June, a quote for £800 has been approved for MJS Fencing to replace the mesh fence broken down by one of the groups of travellers. This is a company we know well and who regularly win competitive quotation work.
- MJS Fencing has also quoted £1,960 to repair and reinstall the metal bowtop fencing surrounding the toddler section of the play area at Bell Hill recreation ground to make it more secure and cure the wobble currently there.
- The two ride-on mowers that we own are both currently awaiting repair at Winchester Garden Machinery and it is anticipated that it will be a number of weeks before they are returned. This leaves us very short on grass cutting equipment at the height of the growing season. The Grounds Manager has explored hiring equipment and been given a cost of £2,500 per month for this purpose which seemed very expensive. He then explore the cost

of an additional ride-on mower and found a new Husqvarna mower at Sam Turner & Sons for a cost of £3,699 that can be delivered within the next 10 days. This will give us additional flexibility in the event of future mower breakdowns at almost the cost of renting a machine for a month in the height of the season which seemed a sensible and practical way to proceed.

Neil Hitch  
Town Clerk  
16th March 2023

## The compatibility of wildflower meadow areas and wildfire risk in Petersfield parish

Andy J Moffat and Melanie Oxley

April 2023

### Introduction

In the 2020s, it is more apparent than ever that Britain needs to retain, protect and increase its wildflower meadows. Kew Gardens suggests that our country has lost 97% of wildflower meadows since the 1930s<sup>1</sup> and that wildflowers are “crucial for pollinators, plants and people”. As a consequence there are several active national programmes which encourage communities to replace lost wildflower areas and/or to create new ones (e.g. GrowWild<sup>2</sup>, Plantlife<sup>3</sup> and Wildlife Trusts<sup>4</sup>). To celebrate the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III, English Heritage will be enhancing and creating one hundred meadows at its castles, abbeys, prehistoric stone circles and palaces, including many in urban areas<sup>5</sup>.

In towns like Alton and Petersfield, there has been strong support for actions of this kind. Alton has already been active in purposefully creating new meadow areas (Figure 1). The Petersfield Society’s Valuable Verges Open Forum in May 2021 attracted a large number of delegates and excitement amongst the community. Since then, both the Petersfield Society and PeCAN have encouraged the town to do more to create wildflower areas. In its Climate Action Plan<sup>6</sup>, Petersfield Town Council responded by stating its intention “to create & restore habitats encouraging biodiversity on the green spaces” it owns and manages on behalf of the community. Such proposals solidify the policies for biodiversity enhancement contained in Petersfield’s Neighbourhood Plan (2015)<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.kew.org/read-and-watch/meadows-matter>

<sup>2</sup> <https://growwild.kew.org/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.plantlife.org.uk/uk>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-grow-wild-patch-or-mini-meadow>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/about-us/search-news/100-meadows/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1sLlem1cxw85ppwoKbbRR7yFkiz2hdfYU/view?usp=sharing>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.petersfield-tc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/20160101-PNP-Main-Plan-Final.pdf>



**Figure 1. Wildflower meadow area created in Alton, 2021 (copyright The Sun).**

In June, July and August 2022, many parts of Britain suffered from a prolonged period of dry weather<sup>8</sup>, including several ‘heatwaves’. 2022 was the hottest year on record in the UK. At a national level, risk of wildfire to certain types of vegetation was increased, and fires broke out at several locations in the country, for example locally at Bisley Ranges in Surrey<sup>9</sup> and Yateley Common in Hampshire<sup>10</sup>. Fortunately, no wildfires were recorded in Petersfield parish in 2022, but a decision was made to intervene and cut back grass verges at some locations, such as Ramshill Estate where they had been left unmown during May in accordance with the national ‘No Mow May’ campaign<sup>11</sup>. Subsequently, the Head of Grounds Committee asserted at Grounds Committee meetings and at the Town Meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2023 that she has concerns about the establishment of new wildflower areas because of the risk of ignition and wildfire spread. As a result, proposals to establish small areas of wildflower meadow at two greenspace sites put forward in November 2022 by the Petersfield Society for consideration by Grounds Committee have been rejected.

This paper seeks to find an evidenced-based resolution to the predicament that the decision above poses – if taken forward across the parish without modification, it runs in contravention to the Climate Action Plan and Neighbourhood Plan and would restrict the community’s desire to support wildlife. However, it is recognised that the risk of wildfire is

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<sup>8</sup> [https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/binaries/content/assets/metofficegovuk/pdf/weather/learn-about/uk-past-events/summaries/uk\\_monthly\\_climate\\_summary\\_annual\\_2022.pdf](https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/binaries/content/assets/metofficegovuk/pdf/weather/learn-about/uk-past-events/summaries/uk_monthly_climate_summary_annual_2022.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.getsurrey.co.uk/news/surrey-news/live-updates-fire-crews-tackle-24398724>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.hampshirelive.news/news/hampshire-news/new-figures-show-hampshire-record-7980614>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.plantlife.org.uk/nomowmay>

greater now as a result of climate change and that this risk needs to be factored into grounds management procedures for the town's greenspaces.

### **The risk of wildflower meadow ignition**

The two wildflower meadow areas proposed for Petersfield referred to above were considered as substitutes for existing areas of grassland, and to be composed of a range of wildflower species. The Wildlife Trusts suggest that there are two main methods for establishing such meadows (a) let existing grass grow long (don't mow until July or August) and wait for wildflower seed to arrive by natural colonisation, and then germinate and establish. Alternatively, (b) it is possible to remove the grass turf by digging it up and then seed the site with appropriate meadow species<sup>12</sup>. Already established meadow turf may also be used, but it is a comparatively expensive method.

When considering wildfire risk, the combustibility of the type of vegetation cover should be considered compared to the alternatives that might already be present. If possible, 'fire resistant' vegetation types should be chosen in place of any that are known to be particularly flammable. Useful information on the relative combustibility of different forms of vegetation comes from a recent study on wildfire occurrence in nearby area on the borders of Hampshire, Surrey and Berkshire<sup>13</sup>. Here nearly 1000 actual wildfire records collected over a four year period by the Fire & Rescue Service were classified according to land-use (Table 1). Table 1 shows the 'Risk of Ignition' according to a five category system, from Very Low (score 1) to Very High (score 5). It shows that based on real data, some forms of vegetation such as heather grassland are comparatively flammable, whilst others such as grass and 'other vegetation' carry a very low risk. Taken as a whole, the Table suggests that wildflower meadow creation using both the methods described above is comparatively safe. However, it might be advisable to make a summer cut in newly establishing meadow areas, with the arisings being carried away from the site. The accepted practice of "cut & collect" in the management of such areas reduces the potential of dry arisings to become fuel for wildfires.

There is a lot of guidance from America that can help in the choice of fire-resistant species for new wildflower meadows<sup>14</sup>. Further American guidance can also help in the design of wildflower areas<sup>15</sup>. This suggests that near dwellings, fire resistance is aided by:

- designing plantings to be more widely spaced and lower growing than those further away;
- planting in small, irregular clusters or islands separated by breaks;
- incorporating a diversity of plant types and species in the landscape;
- using mulches to conserve moisture and reduce weed growth.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-grow-wild-patch-or-mini-meadow>

<sup>13</sup> <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6949092>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.firefree.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Fire-Resistant-Plants.pdf>;  
<https://naes.agnt.unr.edu/PMS/Pubs/2017-3448.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> <https://extension.colostate.edu/docs/pubs/natres/06303.pdf>

**Table 1. Comparison of relative Risk of Ignition scores for land cover types using method based on Fire and Rescue Service data for all vegetation fires for financial years 2009/10 to 2012/13.  
Score 1 = Very Low, Score 5 = Very High**

Land cover type	Risk of Ignition score
1. Broadleaved	3
2. Coniferous	3
3. Felled	2
4. Ground prepared for new planting	5
5. Mixed – predominantly Broadleaved	5
6. Mixed – predominantly Conifer	4
7. Young trees	4
8. Low density	1
9. Assumed woodland	1
10. Shrub land	1
11. Grass	2
12. Agricultural land	3
13. Other vegetation	1
14. Bare ground/rock	2
15. Urban/building	3
16. Quarry	5
17. Powerline	1
18. Open water	2
19. Forest road or track	1
20. Heather	2
21. Heather grassland	4

(from McMorrow et al., 2021)

American advice on ‘fire resistant landscaping’ is to purposely establish areas of wildflower meadows in areas of housing, but leaving a meadow-free zone of five feet (1.5 metres) around properties<sup>16</sup>. Other authoritative American advice for semi-arid areas in Utah states: “Furthermore, wildflower meadows could serve as an important buffer against wildfires at the urban-wildland interface”<sup>17</sup>. This implies that the authorities there don’t regard wildflower meadow as a risk, but instead see it as a way to prevent wildfire spread.

<sup>16</sup>

[https://cnga.org/resources/Documents/Resources/Landscaping%20with%20Nature/Kiers%20and%20Colvin\\_Summer\\_2019.pdf](https://cnga.org/resources/Documents/Resources/Landscaping%20with%20Nature/Kiers%20and%20Colvin_Summer_2019.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> [https://www.actahort.org/books/1345/1345\\_26.htm](https://www.actahort.org/books/1345/1345_26.htm)



## Conclusions

American research and experience in managing wildflower meadows in regions prone to wildfire suggest that this can be done without undue risk provided that wildflower areas are managed with regard to fire hazard, i.e. arisings are removed from site. Following these principles, establishment of wildflower meadow is seen as providing a low risk of ignition and this is borne out by British data from the Home Counties. Indeed, Surrey Heath Borough Council, with considerable heathland vegetation cover close to the study area referred to above, makes it clear to residents that it doesn't regard areas of wildflowers and long grasses as creating a fire hazard, if proper guidance is followed<sup>18</sup>.

We recommend that Petersfield Town Council continues to follow the policy on biodiversity enhancement by establishing new wildflower meadows as appropriate, following the ambitions set out in its Climate Action Plan, and best practice as laid out in the publications and guidance referred to in this report. It should suspend any policies to the contrary as a matter of urgency so as to allow more meadows to develop in 2023. Opportunities should be taken to gain grants for wildflower establishment and management, for example the South Downs National Park Trust 'Bee Lines' project<sup>19</sup>. In addition, in 2023 Petersfield could seek to emulate the English Heritage project by deliberately creating wildflower areas in commemoration of the coronation of King Charles III.

Based on recent local experience of wildfires and the research results summarised in Table 1, reducing fire risk will be of most importance on the small remaining heathland areas on Petersfield Heath. Preventative measures should be taken to reduce wildfire risk, including clear advice to the public, especially if further heatwaves are forecast.

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.surreyheath.gov.uk/residents/sport-leisure-parks/parks-playgrounds/wildflower-areas-and-long-grass-regimes/frequently>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.southdownstrust.org.uk/beelines/>

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## Report authors

**Andy Moffat** is a geographer, soil scientist and forester. He began his research career with the Forestry Commission studying the interaction of trees in urban and peri-urban environments. He has led research projects on a variety of subjects relevant to arboricultural policy and practice, including trees and wildfire, air pollution, climate change, trees, drought and moisture abstraction, species suitability and social aspects. Andy has published widely, and is the author of nearly 90 peer reviewed papers, 40 Government publications, nearly 60 books, book chapters and published conference proceedings, nearly 90 web-based, out-reach, trade and other publications and 40 contract reports.

In 2013, Andy set up his own consultancy company, specialising in trees and the built environment. He is a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Association and of the British Society of Soil Science, and is a Member of the Institute of Chartered Foresters (ICF), the England & Wales Wildfire Forum and a past member of the EU Expert Group on Forest Fires. He enjoys Chartered Consultancy status from the ICF.

**Melanie Oxley** is an ecologist, botanist and lifelong environmental campaigner who has worked for a number of not-for-profit organisations, delivering campaigns including Planta Europa and The Peat Inquiry for Plantlife. She most recently worked for The Ecology Consultancy in London on ecology and species protection in the built environment.

Now retired, she devotes her knowledge and experience to local groups including the Petersfield Society (PFS), Petersfield Physic Garden and Merritts Meadow Nature Reserve. Her work as a PeCAN Trustee focuses on the biodiversity crisis and new approaches to green infrastructure, through planning and management interventions. Melanie spear-headed PeCAN's Verges Campaign and is part of the Tree Location initiative for PFS, which will complement PeCAN's fruit tree planting.

SITE	PROJECT	COMMITTEE	STATUS	ESTIMATED COST	FUNDING SOURCES	START TARGET DATE	COMMENTS	PNP	Criteria 1 Positive impact on the community (including different sections of the community)	Criteria 2: Land and visual appeal
G2a Green Space east - Goodyer Meadow	NEP2 Green Network and Open spaces	G	Break down for SDNPA funding	£ 75,000	over 5 years	2023	New Allocation - drainage, planting, cycle access to TPS? (LCWIP), access to Sussex Road -	PTC IDP includes - G1, G3, G5, G7, G8, G9, G10 and G11 - need to rationalise and co-ordinate		5
The Heath	Refurbish and improve existing poor toilet facilities (Now on project list)	G	To Start	£ 100,000			Current toilets are very poor and do not reflect well on the town or the Council. The Heath is heavily used by visitors and improved facilities are required sooner rather than later. Planned for 2021-22. 106 Monies allocated. Work to start after Pond Bank Stabilisation - Self Cleaning, Changing Facilities			5
Avenue	Outdoor Exercise Gym Play Area	G	To Start	£ 60,000			New Play Area - no update			4
Penns Place Playing Fields	Extension to football pitches, provision of changing facilities	G	To Start	£ 2,000,000		2022	Penns Field B to be converted into new football pitches with a new changing facility for football to be provided plus an appropriate store for the Town Juniors and PTC grounds staff. Dependent on Penns Field B	CP4 & CP5		4
Penns Place Gym Playing Area	Create a playing area for Adult Gym exercises and fitness	G	To Start			2025				4
The Heath	Heath access	G	To Start	£ 70,000		2022	Heath Road car park surface is poor. No plans to tarmac surface as don't wish to urbanise the area. Sussex Road car park will need re-surfacing in the not too distant future. Desire to create a series of way-marked walks around the Heath taking in the points of interest (incl. Tumuli) and connecting with the footpath network leading out of town. Consider new cycle racks			4
G5 Merritts Meadow	NEP2 Green Network and Open spaces	G		£ 100,000		2022	New Allocation - drainage, renovatio	PTC IDP includes - G1, G3, G5, G7, G8, G9, G10 and G11 - need to rationalise and co-ordinate		4
Merritts Meadow North	Renovation of derelict meadow and water courses through meadow	G		£ 50,000		??	Depending on when or whether area is transferred to PTC ownership. Currently in residential ownership			4
Various Ground Improvements	Fencing to Bell Hill play area	G				??				2
Penns Place Playing Fields	Provision of rugby club all-weather pitch	G		£ 400,000		2023	Funding required for project and precise site on the Penns Farm complex still to be agreed. Potentially could replace existing rugby training pitch. Dependent on Penns Field B	? Should this be removed		5
Bell Hill	Improvements to car park surface at Bell Hill, and install path from car park to road	G		£ 50,000		2022	Bell Hill car park resurfacing			3
Penns Play Area	Upgrade of all play areas	G	WIP	£ 175,000	Developers Contribution	2023	Penns Farm - Transfer to Projects?	CP 2 & 4		3
Love Lane Playing Fields	Construction of a community park	G		£ 250,000		2025	Planned to be constructed in conjunction with the new Youth/Community Facility Building to provide an attractive community park.			4
Love Lane Playing Fields	Refurbishment of Pavilion including sewerage and facilities	G		£ 50,000		2023	Pavilion currently used by Nursery and Juniors football club but not really suiting either group in present state. Planned re-organisation of internal aspects of building plus sewerage service and water drainage generally			3



## Heath Toilets – Discussion Paper

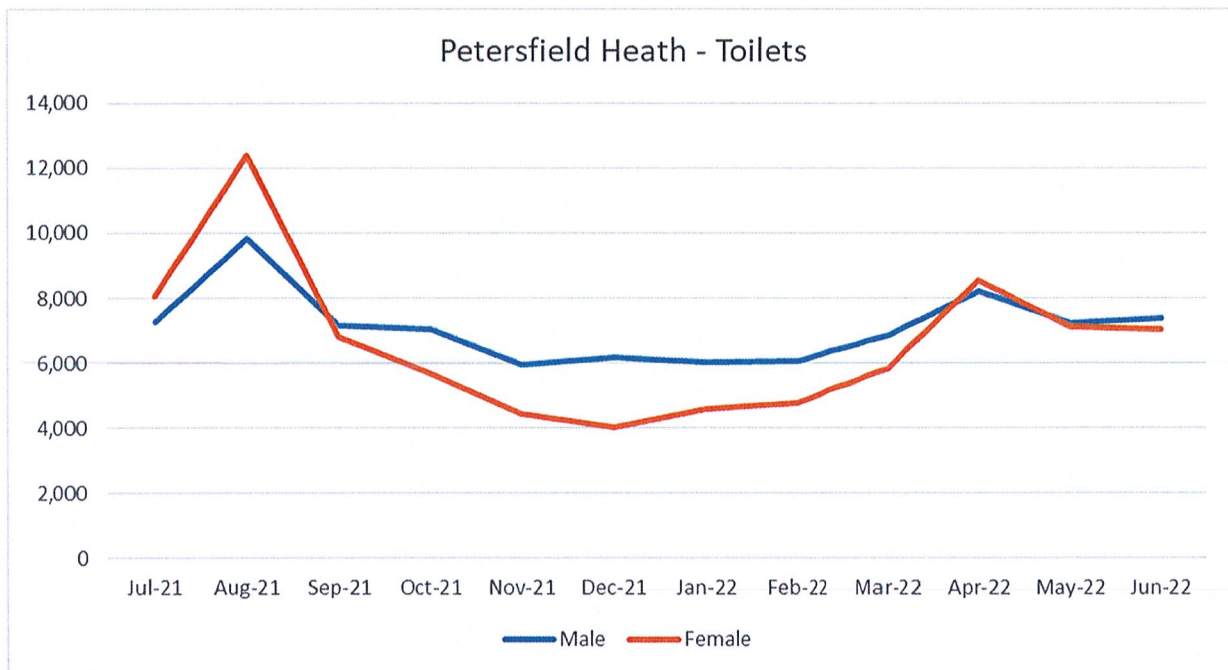
### 1. Introduction & Background

As part of the ongoing redevelopment of our halls and buildings, the heath toilets have been due for refurbishment for several years with a view to modernising them. Two main options exist as follows:

- Knocking the building down and rebuilding
- Gutting out the interior and redistributing the space

We currently have counters on site to view the frequency and volume of use, and this will provide us with essential data to assist with determining how many toilet cubicles may be required.

The latest data that has been extracted from these counters is as follows:



### 2. Proposal

The Heath toilets are long overdue a refurbishment, and consideration has been given to what kind of facilities we may wish to consider having in the re-build

We would consider that the following should (or could) be part of the newly built toilets:



- Self-cleaning ‘gender neutral’ cubicle provision that are programmable to provide automatic locking and unlocking, but still allowing a person inside to exit. Consideration needs to be given to how we would deal with a person wishing to remain in the toilets after locking time
- Timing of internal lights being on or off. Alternatively lights could be on a sensor system
- Wash basin with sensor taps in each cubicle
- Disabled changing place provision (for children and adults)
- Carbon neutral strategy and plan as part of our response to the Climate Action Plan
- Solar panels and storage batteries for the provision of light, hot water and hand dryers
- Automated closing time set on a timer so that doors lock and lights turn off
- Adequate storage space for stock of toilet consumables
- Storage for the grounds team for hand tools and other equipment regular used on the Heath

If the structure of the existing building is remaining, then the external walls and roof will require a full inspection

### **3. Landscaping**

The area around the toilets is in need of some landscaping, and the following should be considered

- Planting around the front and sides of the building to blend the brick building into the landscape of the heath
- Replacing steps with a slope that runs from the top to the east towards the Plump Duck to provide access to both able and disabled
- Introduce ‘grasscrete’ or similar on the areas that have been worn down to sand, to encourage growth of grass
- Consider better use of area between the toilets and Plump Duck, possibly making it an extended area for seating where the public can enjoy the scenery or some refreshments

### **4. Contract Finder and Planning**

Once members have agreed a final specification, this will be placed on Contract Finder for contractors to submit their proposals and drawings under the tendering process.

A small team of members and officers will meet to score the tenders based on an agreed criteria which will also be included in the specification, and a contractor will be recommended from this meeting.

A planning application will be sought on the basis of what has been submitted by the chosen contractor when final drawings and ideas have been approved by the Grounds Committee.

**Steve Field**

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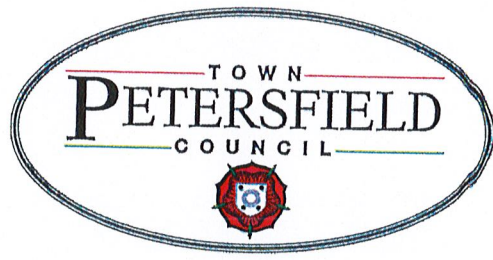
**Subject:** Water Fountain

Message: Hi,

I visit the heath most days and have done since I moved to Petersfield seven years ago. I run around it two or three times a week and I also take my toddler there for walks. The heath is always full of people jogging and walking but there is no access to a water fountain or a tap! I would like to ask if there is any chance of that being installed so that there is somewhere to fill up bottles or have a drink!

Many thanks,

(name provided)



**Notes from Grounds Users Meeting**

**Held at 5.00pm on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2023 via Zoom teleconferencing facility  
(The start of meeting was delayed until 5.25pm)**

- Present:**
- Mr D Cole (Grounds Manager)
  - Mr M Dypevag (Deputy Grounds Manager)
  - Mrs S Fisher (Committees Administrator)
  - 3 "User" Representatives:
  - 1927 Petersfield Squadron Air Cadets
  - Hampshire Monday Group
  - Plump Duck

Due to technical difficulties with Zoom, the meeting did not start until 5.25pm and the Chairman of Grounds was unable to join.

**Hampshire Monday Group**

The Chairman of the group explained that they were happy to help the Grounds team but that they did not want to overcommit. He advised that they are currently booking days into March so he stressed that the Grounds Manager should book in some days soon, if required.

**Air Cadets- Bell Hill**

They did not have any issues other than that the track next to the old gate by the children's play area gets flooded when it rains.

**Plump Duck**

They would like to see better communication from the Grounds team when works are scheduled to take place (e.g. to the play area) so that they are aware and also so that they can pass information on to the public. Better signage of closures at the Heath would also be welcomed.

The ladies' toilets need attention, 2 doors don't shut, and one is out of order and the hand dryer needs repairing. The Grounds Manager explained that the doors had been repaired and a new hand dryer will be fitted next week.



There were problems last summer with boats, especially inflatables, on the pond which did not have a licence. Who is responsible for enforcing the rules about boating as it should not be the responsibility of the Plump Duck/boating concession. The Grounds Manager explained that the Grounds team did try to check and deal with any issues when they are at the Heath but they cannot maintain a permanent presence. This issue would be raised internally.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 5.35 pm.



### Grounds Advisory Group

### Bell Hill Play Area Refurbishment

#### **Background**

The play area at Bell Hill recreation ground last had a major refurbishment in 2010. Since then it has become far more popular than it had been previously and is now in need of some more refurbishment due to the condition of some of the equipment and the safety surfacing that in many areas has worn out.

In addition to the proposed equipment refurbishment, it is proposed to remove the play tunnel as this has become a magnet over the years for antisocial behaviour of various types. The tunnel is no longer sold, so the proposal is to replace it with a slide attachment that will benefit much younger children and provide a better balance to the equipment available on the site.

The Grounds Manager, as well as seeking these quotations for the play equipment has asked the contractors to quote for the installation of galvanised bow top fencing around the entire play area site. The existing wooden fencing and hedging is no longer providing the secure barrier necessary so this alternative is also being considered.

#### **Contractor A**

This company has not been used by the Council before but is well known within the industry.

The quote is as follows:

- Pinnacle ridge play tower including ramp, challenging bridge, climbing wall, ridge beam, rope ladder, pole and slide
- Crag walk – consists of stepping logs and upright 116mm x 116 mm posts
- Swing logs – 116mm x 116mm timber frame supporting 4 logs suspended with reinforced rope
- Twist log – features a rotating beam and 16mm wire reinforced rope
- Vine ropes – 116mm timber frame with 16mm wire hanging ropes and one foot rope
- All equipment to have stainless steel feet plus rubber bonded mulch surfacing

The quote supplied is £22,035.50

All types of play equipment have the intended age range specified for the age of children that it is intended for.

There is a 1 year warranty on installation, 2 year warranty for all ropes and nets, 5 year warranty on safety surfacing, 10 year warranty on all timber products and 15 year warranty on steel feet.

The quotation does not include a toddler swing which is a disadvantage.

### **Contractor B**

This company has been used by the Council previously and has been in the play equipment sector for very many years with a good reputation. Their work has always been fully satisfactory.

The quote is as follows:

- High pedestal slide following removal of existing
- Baroc eco-tumble with wetpour safety surfacing

The quote supplied is £17,487.33

There is a 1 year warranty on all installation, 2 year warranty on eco-tumble surfacing, 10 year guarantee on corrosion of painted galvanised parts and a 15 year guarantee on structural failure of slides.

They have also indicated that following the Covid-19 pandemic and the current Ukraine/Russia conflict there are difficulties in obtaining raw materials which may delay delivery timescales. Any impacts would be advised at the time of order.

### **Contractor C**

This contractor is also well known in the sector and has done some work for us previously to a fully satisfactory standard.

The quote is as follows:

- Supply and install new toddler swing with safety surfacing
- Supply and install new junior climbing unit onto an existing area of safety surfacing. Includes play towers, climbing traverse net and ramp plus steel pole
- Remove the existing slide and replace with junior adventure trail items, repairing the existing area of safety surfacing. Includes log roll, log crossing, drop rope traverse and stepper logs
- Supply and fit new seats to the overhead rotator

The quote supplied is £31,959.00

There is a 5 year warranty on the safety surfacing and a 20 year guarantee on hardwood timber equipment.

## **Tunnel Replacement**

Quotation received to remove the tunnel and replace it with a mini-slide with associated handrails, grips and bars

**Cost £3,095**

## **Play Area Fencing**

Our regular fencing contractor has been asked to quote to install metal bow top fencing around the exterior of the play area. This amounts to 55m of 1.2m high galvanised bow top steel railings including a 1.2m wide pedestrian gate with a self closer.

The current fencing is a mixture of wooden picket fencing and hedgerows. When this was done it was intended that by the time the wooden fencing needed replacement the hedge would have become sufficiently robust to prevent people getting through it. This hasn't worked quite as intended unfortunately. It is now planned to place the metal fencing around the extremity of the hedgerow to provide a double barrier from people penetrating the fencing.

The Grounds Manager has asked all the above contractors to also quote for this work but as yet no further prices have been received.

The quote supplied is £7,216

## **Financial Considerations**

The requirements of the Council's Financial Standing Orders have been fully met 3 quotations having been provided for the play area refurbishment. Whilst only one quote has been received so far for the fencing, the contractor is our regular for this type of work and he has won work from us through competitive quoting procurement in the past.

There are funds totalling £76,259 in Capital Earmarked Reserves for the replacement of play equipment and it is proposed that the cost of this work be taken from this sum, leaving a resultant balance of just under £44,000 if the recommendations of this report are approved.

Under the Scheme of Delegation approved by the Council at the Annual Meeting, authority to commit to this work cannot be delegated to the Town Clerk because the use of Capital Earmarked Reserves is proposed. The Advisory Group will need to recommend to Council, via Finance & General Purposes Advisory Group to approve the expenditure.

No investigations have been made into the financial standing of any of the contractors in view of the relatively modest cost of the proposed works.

## **Environmental Considerations**

The South Downs National Park Authority is keen for as much timber play equipment to be installed across the Park on sustainability grounds. It does though often not last as long as steel equipment which is a factor to consider. The bulk of the equipment quoted for is timber on this occasion especially as the location of the equipment is in a more rural aspect of the town. The exception to this is the fencing, but as can be seen through the existing wooden fencing

having not lasted that long, there is a value for money case to be made by using metal fencing in this instance as well as making the site more secure for the children and families that use it, which must be considered a priority.

### **Recommendation**

Having considered and reviewed all the quotations received for this work, it is considered that for the variety and scope of the proposed equipment to be provided, as well as the financial value on offer, it is:

#### **Recommended as follows:**

- 1. That Contractor A be appointed to refurbish the Bell Hill play area at a cost of £22,035.50;**
- 2. That the proposal to replace the tunnel with a mini-slide at a cost of £3,095 be accepted;**
- 3. That the quotation to provide bow top galvanised fencing around the extremity of the play area at a maximum cost of £7,216 be approved with delegated authority being granted to the Town Clerk in conjunction with the Advisory Group Chairman to consider and potentially accept a less expensive quote for the work if one should be received, depending on the perceived quality of the less expensive proposal.**

Neil Hitch  
Town Clerk  
5th July 2023



## Grounds Advisory Group

### Safety Barriers

#### **Background**

Following a number of incidents where Travellers have accessed the Council's grounds, open spaces and recreation areas over the last few years, the previous Council, as part of its budget setting process last autumn decided to allocate some funds towards improving the security of our public open spaces.

Necessarily, this means that the Council cannot act to protect all of its public spaces at once because of the cost, so priority has been given to the two sites that have been most adversely affected in the town – namely Paddock Way recreation ground and Love Lane playing fields.

The need for this work has become even more evident after the two recent Traveller visitations to Love Lane playing fields last month.

The Grounds Manager has obtained two quotations for the provision of height restriction barriers for the car park and/or recreation ground entrance which are summarised for your consideration. It also includes protection at Paddock Way to prevent vehicular access getting around the current gated entrance.

Members will be aware that under the Scheme of Delegation, expenditure up to £10,000 can be approved but with these quotes being at the very top end of this spectrum, plus the fact that the expenditure is from the Capital Earmarked Reserves the proposals have been brought to the Advisory Group.

#### **Contractor A**

This company has been used by the Council before with fully satisfactory results.

The quote is as follows:

*'to supply and fit height restriction barriers at Love Lane, Petersfield plus to supply and fit height restriction barriers at Paddock Way, Petersfield including additional fencing either side, allowing pedestrian access on the left'*

The quote supplied is £10,874.52

The quote does not indicate the height of the barriers however, it is understood to be of standard height and of metal construction.

### **Contractor B**

This company has been used by the Council previously. Their work has always been fully satisfactory.

The quote is as follows:

*'Paddock Way recreation ground and Love Lane playing fields. Supply customised fabrication of 2 overhead barrier gates; 1 at 4.3m x 1.9m; 1 at 1.74m x 1.9m. Heat treated and galvanised. Hardened extra plates to clasps. Posts concreted into ground using 0.5 of a cube to each post. 3m fence of security mesh weld and security post and fixings to stop vehicle access. Hit and miss barriers installed to allow pedestrian walk through.'*

The quote supplied is £9,411

### **Financial Considerations**

The sum allocated in the budget for this security work is £14,000 and is currently held in Capital Earmarked Reserves.

The requirements of the Council's Financial Standing Orders have not been fully met because it has not been possible to obtain a 3<sup>rd</sup> quotation in the time available. The pressing need for this work to be done urgently in order to protect the Council's property can be considered by members as a suitable reason for not fully following Financial Regulations in this instance.

Under the Scheme of Delegation approved by the Council at the Annual Meeting, authority to commit to this work cannot be delegated to the Town Clerk because the use of Capital Earmarked Reserves is proposed. The Advisory Group will need to recommend to Council, via Finance & General Purposes Advisory Group to approve the expenditure.

No investigations have been made into the financial standing of any of the contractors in view of the relatively modest cost of the proposed works.

### **Environmental Considerations**

Any work of this type does not fit naturally into an environmentally friendly place. However, in considering the potential damage done to public property and the clean up work that is often required as a result of a Travellers encampment, it can be viewed as a defensive measure to save potentially worse environmental issues should a further encampment arrive.

### **Recommendation**

The price from both contractors is competitive with little to choose between them. It is believed that Contractor B, whilst being the cheaper quote is also able to undertake the work more promptly and potentially within the next few weeks, so it is:

**Recommended that Contractor B be chosen to supply and install the overhead car park barriers at a cost of £9,411.**

Neil Hitch  
Town Clerk  
30<sup>th</sup> June 2023



## ALLOTMENT PROCEDURES COMPARISON

David Petche	Current PTC	Comments
<p>The Council's aim is to ensure a well managed site for the tenants to enjoy. To this end allotments vacated will be let to new tenants as soon as practically possible and tenants repeatedly not meeting the standards of cultivation in their tenancy Agreement, without a valid short term reason, will have their tenure terminated. All communal paths and the surrounding tree canopy will be maintained by the Council Grounds Team.</p>	<p>Yes PTC's aim is to ensure a well managed site for everyone to enjoy. Standards of cultivation have to be met but we are sympathetic to any illness or problems. Prospective tenants are contacted as soon as practically possible but we do also have to follow a process. All communal paths and surrounding trees are maintained by the Grounds Team. Borders and paths around each plot are to be maintained by the tenant.</p>	<p>We are governed by the amount of time awaiting responses from current and potential tenants and also availability/workload of staff.</p>
<p><b>Termination. By the tenant.</b> The tenant should give at least one month's notice by email or letter. A member of PTC's Grounds team will visit the plot during the month of termination to review the condition of the plot and determine whether the tenant is entitled to a refund of their deposit.</p>	<p>The tenant sends a termination notice by email and/or letter. This gives one month to remove all personal objects from the plot. One of the Grounds Team will then inspect it to determine whether the deposit will be refunded.</p>	
<p><b>Termination by PTC</b> PTC will carry out a monthly inspections of all plots, starting in February and finishing with an inspection at the end of October.</p>	<p>PTC carry out monthly inspections from March to October. If a plot is not up to the standards required, a first letter is sent to ask if everything is alright and urging the plot holder to contact</p>	<p>If a plot holder needs some short or long term assistance, sometimes they will contact the STAA and help will be given. This is totally acceptable.</p>

<p>If any plot is not up to the cultivation standards set out in the Tenancy Agreement, PTC will contact the tenant by email or letter to inform them of the inspection result and request that they contact PTC to explain.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If the problem is a short term one, then the tenant will be referred to the Allotment Association who may be able to provide help.</li> <li>- If a long term problem (tenant cannot cope with size of plot etc.) then the tenant will be asked to bring the plot up to standard by the next inspection, or if they prefer, to give up part or all of their plot to a prospective tenant on the waiting list.</li> </ul> <p>If on the subsequent inspection the plot has not been brought up to (or near) the Agreement standards then the tenant will be given one month's notice of the termination of their Agreement and to quit the plot. The tenant will be asked to clear their plot of anything they wish to take away during the notice period. A visit will also be made during this period by a member of the Grounds team to determine whether the tenant is entitled to a refund of their deposit.</p>	<p>us if they are having any problems/illness/holidays etc.</p> <p>If the plot has not been worked on by the next inspection and we have had no explanation, a second letter is sent asking the plot holder to work on their plot and stating that if there is no significant change by the next inspection, their tenancy will be terminated. If this happens, a letter is sent and they are given one month's notice to remove anything they wish to take from the plot. A member of the Grounds Team will visit and determine whether their deposit will be refunded depending on the condition of the plot.</p>	
<p><b>Allocation of plots to people on the waiting list</b> Every September PTC will contact people who have been on the waiting list a year, or the top</p>	<p>Plot holders contact us if they wish to terminate their plot. Finance Department sends out invoices at the end of August/beginning of September to every</p>	

<p>ten people, whichever is the longest number, to ask if they still want a plot and of what size. When a plot is vacated, voluntarily or involuntarily, during the notice period the first person on the waiting list will be contacted either by telephone or email to ask them if they want the plot now available.</p> <p>Having been given a maximum of 48hrs to decide whether they are interested, a visit will be arranged over the following week with a member of the Grounds team, whence a final decision will be requested. The prospective tenant will be given a copy of the Tenancy Agreement to read, sign and take/post to PTC offices.</p>	<p>plot holder. One or two may decide to give up their plot.</p> <p>When a plot becomes vacant, the next person on the waiting list is emailed. They are given seven days to reply and asked to let us know as soon as possible even if they no longer require a plot. If they do not respond within a few days, we telephone them to make sure they have received the email. Arranging a viewing between themselves and the Grounds team can take some time depending on their availability and Ground's work load.</p> <p>The Tenancy Agreement has details of the plot: items left, shed/greenhouse remaining etc and whether Grounds need to tidy, strim or rotovate it. These details can only be inserted when the prospective tenant has chosen a plot and Grounds have agreed if they need to do any work.</p>	
<p><b>Communal path maintenance</b></p> <p>PTC Grounds Team will mow communal paths when necessary to keep. Grass height below approximately 6/7 cms and review the trees/shrubs surrounding the site to see if any maintenance is necessary and organise for it to be carried out. This will normally be monthly, but could be more/less frequent depending on the weather.</p> <p>Grounds will also switch off water taps during winter periods when severe frost is expected.</p>	<p>Yes, this happens depending on Ground's workload and availability.</p> <p>Taps are turned off over the Winter period.</p>	

