

**MINUTES OF THE OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT BANSONS ON 15 SEPTEMBER 2016**

PRESENT: Cllrs J. Battersby* J. Browning J. Devonald
C. Feetham* N. Fletcher B. Freeman
P. Keska

*Non committee members

Officers: J. Farr (Deputy Clerk)
A. Laws (Assistant to the Clerk)

Public: No members of the public.

Press: No members of the press.

As both the chair and vice chair of the committee were absent the chair for this meeting was taken by Cllr J. Browning.

Cllr Browning made a statement to congratulate Ongar in Bloom for this recent achievement in gaining the Silver Award for Ongar.

36/16 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Birch, Bolden, Bicknell and Reynolds.

37/16 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

38/16 Public participation

There were no members of the public present.

39/16 To agree the minutes of the Jubilee Park and Open Spaces committee meeting held on 16 June 2016 and the Open Spaces committee meeting held on 18 August 2016

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 June were reviewed and agreed as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 August were reviewed and agreed as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

40/16 Clerk's Report

EFDC Community Engagement

It was reported that EFDC Community Engagement held Street Play sessions at Shelley Park on Thursdays 1st, 8th and 15th September. This provided an opportunity for games and arts for local children and parents.

High St Planters

OAGS had planned a winter planting regime which would be carried out in October.

John Holness Garden

The replacement bench for the garden had been ordered.

Jubilee Park trees

At the last Open Spaces committee meeting it was decided to reduce the fir trees surrounding the tennis courts by 15 feet. Ongar Lawn Tennis Club had written to the Council to offer a donation of £400 towards this cost.

Litter pick survey

The results of the survey were reported to P & E and PR on 21 July in the Clerk's report. Extract of the minutes are below –

Brentwood County High School – Community Day – 8th July 2016

Students carried out a litter survey in Ongar High Street on behalf of OTC and the results identified that the main problem areas of litter found were at bus stops, outside shops and alleyways. 57% of consultees thought that the amount of litter in Ongar had increased over the past five years. The pupils then returned to the Council office to design posters for the Council's 'Clean up Ongar' initiative.

Notice boards

At the last meeting the committee asked for staff to clean the Castle sign prior to any decision regarding a replacement. Outside staff would clean all the notice boards as soon as possible including the Castle sign.

Ongar in Bloom

Ongar won a Silver Certificate at the Anglia in Bloom Awards held in Gorleston, Norfolk. Weighbridge Court was nominated for the Best Retirement Home.

St Martin's perimeter wall

It was reported that the contractor planned to complete the repairs to the wall in the coming weeks.

Onslow Gardens hedge

The Council had received a complaint from a resident of Onslow Gardens regarding the overgrown hedge at the bottom of their garden. It was reported that it was planned to cut the hedge in late October after the birds had finished nesting.

41/16 Finance reports

To note the finance report for the Open Spaces committee up to 31 August 2016
The finance reports were noted by the committee.

42/16 Committee Business Plan

- To review the committee business plan and make a recommendation to Finance and Human Resources committee

A draft committee business plan was provided for Councillors consideration.

Cllr Fletcher proposed that the committee recommended the draft plan to Finance and Human Resources committee. This was seconded by Cllr Keska and unanimously agreed.

43/16 Open Spaces four year plan

- i) To review the current year of the four year plan for all outside spaces
A copy of the plan was provided for Councillors consideration.

The committee noted the plan.

- ii) To consider the draft plan for the year 2017/18 and make any amendments necessary
A copy of the draft plan was provided for Councillors consideration.

Councillors asked that the task of repainting the listed railings at St Martin's church yard was put out to tender and that the Clerk investigate funding opportunities.

44/16 Allotments

- i) To appoint an additional member of the liaison group

Councillors were asked if they wished to appoint an additional member to the liaison group following the resignation of Cllr Wingfield. It was reported that current members were Cllrs Bolden and Bicknell.

Cllr Battersby volunteered for this role.

- ii) To receive an update on the condition of plots, both let and unlet

Mrs Laws gave a verbal report detailing the number of plots available and those recently let to new tenants. It was reported that a contractor had been clearing plots ready for let and that the cost would be taken from the allotments deposits held for this purpose.

45/16 Castle sign

To consider quotes for a replacement sign and agree a course of action

At the Open Spaces meeting on 18 August it was agreed to request an additional quote for this work. This had been received and three quotes were considered by the committee. It was reported that the original artwork cannot now be located as the sign was more than 10 years old.

Cllr Keska suggested that if a new sign was purchased that it should be upright and not angled.

Cllr Devonald proposed that Epping Forest District Council and other local organisations be approached to see if they would contribute towards this project. Cllr Browning seconded the proposal and it was unanimously agreed.

46/16 Cemetery

- ii) To consider the draft Shallow Graves policy and make a recommendation to Finance and Human Resources committee

The committee considered the draft document which had been drafted with the guidance of the Institute of Cemeteries and Crematorium Management (ICCM).

Cllr Fletcher proposed that the committee recommended the document to Finance and Human Resources committee. This was seconded by Cllr Devonald and unanimously agreed.

- iii) To consider an amendment to the adopted Cemetery Policy and Rules and Regulations documents and make a recommendation to Finance and Human Resources committee

The Council recently interred remains following an exhumation from another local cemetery. The Deputy Clerk recommended amendments to the adopted Cemetery Policy and Rules and Regulations to indicate that should an exhumation take place at Love Lane cemetery the Council would buy back the plot at the purchase price and to the re-sale of the plot for a new interment.

Cllr Browning proposed that the committee recommended the changes to the Finance and Human Resources committee. This was seconded by Cllr Devonald and unanimously agreed.

47/16 Cerizay Garden

To note the installation of an unauthorised bench in Cerizay Garden and to agree a course of action

Cllr Browning proposed that the Council contacted the resident responsible for the bench to make it clear that the responsibility for maintenance and repairs would not lie with the Council and this was seconded by Cllr Keska.

Vote –

For – 4

Cllr Freeman abstained.

48/16 Litter

i) To consider organising a litter pick event this autumn

The Council had usually organised two litter picking events per year, one in spring and one in the autumn. Councillors were asked if they wished to organise another event to take place this autumn.

Councillors asked that the event be advertised in local press and in Ongar News, Council notice boards and social media and in shop windows. The Clerk was instructed to invite local organisations (Ongar in Bloom, Ongar Town Forum, Shelley Residents Association and Ongar Residents Association) to take part in this event.

It was agreed that the date would be set for Saturday 19 November 2016 and would concentrate on the Shelley area.

ii) To agree to take part in the Great British Spring Clean (Keep Britain Tidy campaign) Keep Britain Tidy is organising a national litter picking event, “The Great British Spring Clean”, on 3 – 5 March 2017.

Councillors agreed to take part in this event on Saturday 4 March 2017 and concentrate on the southern end of town.

iii) To receive information on litter in play areas and agree a course of action

Council staff reported an increase in the amount of litter at play areas, especially in Shelley, which generally consists of take away food wrappers. This was attracting rats and foxes. Councillors were asked what measures they wished to introduce to reduce the amount of litter in play areas.

It was agreed that the litter poster and CCTV signs be placed around the park to remind residents not to litter. It was agreed that Shelley Ward Councillors would attend the Shelley Residents Association meeting to be held on 14 November 2016 to highlight this issue and invite residents to join the litter pick event on 19 November.

The Clerk was asked to check with Planning Enforcement if there were any conditions imposed on the take away shop near the park as part of the planning permission conditions.

49/16 Love Lane Rec Field

To receive a request to install a basketball hoop near the existing play equipment
The Council received a request from a resident to provide a basketball hoop in the vicinity of the existing play equipment on the Recreation Field. Quotes from the contractor were verbally reported at the meeting.

Councillors felt that this was not a suitable location for the hoop and the Clerk was instructed to obtain quotes for a hoop to be placed on the lower level at the skate park in Bansons Lane ready for the next committee meeting.

50/16 Play Policy

To review the policy and make a recommendation to Finance and Human Resources committee

Councillors were asked to review the current policy and make any amendments necessary.

Cllr Freeman proposed that the committee recommended to Finance and Human Resources committee to adopt the policy. This was seconded by Cllr Fletcher and unanimously agreed.

51/16 St Martin's Church PCC

i) To receive the notes of the working group meeting on 18 July 2016

Councillors noted the minutes of the meeting.

ii) To review the draft St Martin's policy and make a recommendation to Finance and Human Resources committee

The St Martin's church PCC and the working group reviewed the document and recommended that the committee accepted the draft policy.

Cllr Freeman proposed that the committee recommended to Finance and Human Resources committee to adopt the draft policy. This was seconded by Cllr Keska and unanimously agreed.

52/16 Vehicular access to Council property

i) To consider restrictions to vehicles accessing property and agree any action necessary.

Following the recent unauthorised entry onto Council property the committee was asked if it wished to review security arrangements. The outside spaces staff had been instructed to check all the gates on a daily basis. Councillors did not feel that any additional measures were necessary.

Councillors were reminded that should they become aware of any instances of unauthorised access onto Council property they should inform the Clerk immediately so that the necessary procedure can be implemented.

ii) To consider additional security at the Jubilee Nature Reserve

The Committee was asked to consider installing additional security measures to prevent unauthorised access.

Cllr Devonald proposed that staff ensured the gates were locked at all times to prevent unauthorised access. This was seconded by Cllr Freeman and unanimously agreed.

53/16 To consider budget bids for 2017/18

To receive suggestions for budget bids for the financial year 2017/18

Councillors considered several examples of possible budget bids and the Clerk was asked to obtain further information and quotes for the following items ready for the next committee meeting –

New see saw at Greensted Rd play area

Additional adult gym equipment

Repaint St Martin's Church yard listed railings

Castle sign

Concrete raft for cemetery memorials

54/16 Allotments funding

i) To receive information on funding secured from Tesco's Bags of Help to create allotment plots accessible to the less able.

Three projects would be put to public vote at local stores between 26th September and 9th October and the minimum the Council would receive would be £8,000.

Cllr Browning thanked Mrs Laws for her hard work and initiative on this project.

ii) To agree the Clerk's recommendation that Castle St Plot 2 be set aside for this project. Cllr Browning proposed that the committee accepts the Clerk's recommendation to use Plot 2 for this project.

The meeting closed at 9.41 pm.

Signed

Chair

Date