

**MINUTES OF THE OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD AT BANSONS ON 7 JANUARY 2016**

PRESENT: Cllrs A. Wingfield (chair) P. Gode N. Fletcher  
A. Kaye\* J. Reynolds J. Rushton

\*Non committee members

Officers: J. Farr (Deputy Clerk)

Public: One member of the public.

**58/15 Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Cllrs P. Bolden (work commitment), B. Freeman (annual leave), D. Roberts (family illness) and J. Browning (work commitments).

**59/15 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest**

Cllr J. Reynolds declared a pecuniary interest in item 63/15 ii) Allotments – consider refund of deposit

**60/15 Public participation**

One member of the public wished to address the committee. He had several ideas on how the Town Council may assist in measures to reduce the amount of litter in Ongar. While he appreciated that the Council organised litter picks helped highlight the situation with members of the public he also suggested the following –

- That local schools (both primary and Ongar Academy) were addressed to make pupils aware of the problem
- The Council organise a poster competition for local children
- The Council ask local retailers to display posters asking their customers to be responsible for their own litter
- That future Council litter picks include the Fyfield Rd and the area around the Four Wantz roundabout
- That the Council requests the EFDC street cleaner be redirected to problem areas around Ongar
- That fines for litter be enforced
- That EFDC were made aware of commercial rubbish that was allowed to accumulate outside retail premises

**61/15 To agree the minutes of the Open Spaces committee meeting held on 5 November 2015**

The minutes were agreed as a true record and signed by the chairman.

**62/15 Clerk's Report**

**Allotments**

Lease

At the last Open Spaces committee meeting Councillors recommended to the Finance committee that the Clerk and Council chairman be authorised to sign the "Form of Notice that Sections 24 to 28 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 are not to apply to a Business Tenancy". At the Finance committee meeting held on 29 October it was agreed that the Clerk and Cllr Browning sign the document and this was done on 17 December 2015.

Water supply

Affinity Water connected the mains water supply to Moreton Rd allotments on 5 January 2016.

### Trees

A tree was blown down in November 2015 which fell across allotment plots at Moreton Rd site. This was removed at a cost of £240. This expenditure was approved by the Clerk under Financial Regulations 3.4.

### Vacant plots

As at 18 December 2015 there were a total of 3 half and 2 full vacant plots at Castle St and 3 vacant plots at Moreton Rd.

The plots that remain vacant would be cleared and covered with plastic to prevent weed growth until new tenants could be found.

The Council had advertised vacant plots in the Ongar News and on the Council notice boards, website and social media.

### Plots that were let but not worked

Council staff would inspect both allotment sites in the New Year. The Council would write to the tenants concerned and give them notice that improvements were to be made.

### **Cemetery**

The draft memorial risk assessment was agreed by Human Resources committee at the meeting on 10 December 2015.

### **Greensted Rd play area**

At the last Open Spaces committee meeting Councillors recommended to the Finance committee that the Clerk and Council chairman be authorised to sign the "Form of Notice that Sections 24 to 28 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 are not to apply to a Business Tenancy". At the Finance committee meeting held on 29 October it was agreed that the Clerk and Cllr Browning sign the document and this was done on 17 December 2015.

The Council was successful in its application to ECC CIF for funding to replace the swing set at Greensted Rd. The swings were installed on 17 December 2015.

### **Notice boards**

Two notice boards (Greensted and outside Jubilee nature reserve) had been vandalised and repairs had been ordered.

### **Play in the Park**

The Full Council meeting on 19 November 2015 agreed to make provision in the draft budget for 2016/17 to fund 6 EFDC Play in the Park sessions during the Easter and Summer school holidays 2016.

### **St Martin's PCC**

The next scheduled liaison meeting would take place on Monday 11 January 2016.

### **63/15 Allotments**

i) To receive the notes of the liaison meeting held with Ongar Allotment and Gardening Society (OAGS) and representatives from the Moreton Rd site

The Deputy Clerk and Cllr Wingfield met with representatives from OAGS on 3 December 2015. The notes of the meeting were provided for Councillors information.

Councillors noted the report.

ii) To consider refunds on plots

One tenant at Castle St did not renew their tenancy and had requested the return of the deposit. The plot would need some work for it to be suitable to be re-let. However, the tenant advised the Council that due to an injury to her leg she had been unable to work the plot and was claiming disability. As specified in the Tenancy Agreement the Council would not return deposits if work was required to the plot before it could be re-let.

Councillors agreed that the terms were clearly laid out in the Tenancy Agreement so the tenant should have been aware of this condition.

Cllr Wingfield proposed that the deposit was not refunded and this was seconded by Cllr Gode.

Vote –

For – 3

Against – 0

Abstentions – 2

**AGREED**

- Not to refund the deposit

**64/15 Cemetery**

i) To receive quotes to reduce the lime trees

It was reported that the prices quoted at the last meeting were for the total job of removing the 13 lime trees and not per day as reported.

Cllr Fletcher proposed that the Council appoint Contractor A to carry out this work and this was seconded by Cllr Wingfield.

Vote –

For – 5

**AGREED**

- The Council to appoint Contractor A to the task of reducing the lime trees

ii) To reconsider the removal of the white elm tree

The committee received the tree survey completed in January 2015 which recommended the removal of the white elm tree situated near the road. It was reported that the tree surgeon had since revised this recommendation and advised that the Council should keep the tree and just remove the branches which were protruding over the bus shelter and footpath.

This work will be carried out by the Council's preferred contractor under Financial Regulations 11.1.

Councillors felt that it would be better to keep the tree if at all possible. As the expenditure had already been agreed to remove the tree the cost of removing the branches would save the Council funds.

Cllr Gode proposed that the tree be retained and the branches removed as necessary. This was seconded by Cllr Wingfield.

Vote –  
For – 5

**AGREED**

- To retain the tree and remove the branches as necessary

iii) To consider the clearance of vegetation and old hut to create additional burial space  
Following the success of the clearance of vegetation on the south west side of the cemetery it was suggested that this was repeated in the north east portion. This would involve the clearance of some trees, the removal of the dilapidated hut and levelling the ground. It was hoped that some trees would remain around the perimeter to provide shelter and privacy from the road and the adjacent garage.

A quote for the removal of the trees was received at £760 for two days work and to level the ground was £1046 including the hire of a skip to remove the debris.

Councillors considered the budget available.

Cllr Gode proposed –

- that the removal of the trees and vegetation be completed in this financial year
- to postpone levelling the ground until the financial year 2016/17

This was seconded by Cllr Fletcher.

Vote –  
For – 5

**AGREED**

- that the removal of the trees and vegetation be completed in this financial year
- to postpone levelling the ground until the financial year 2016/17

iv) To consider the draft Cemetery policy and make a recommendation to Full Council  
A Cemetery policy had been drafted for Councillors attention. The committee was asked to review the policy and make a recommendation to Full Council. The current Rules and Regulations were provided for Councillors information.

Councillors considered the draft Policy.

Cllr Rushton proposed that the policy be recommended to Full Council and this was seconded by Cllr Wingfield.

Vote –  
For – 5

**AGREED**

- To recommend the Cemetery policy to Full Council.

**65/15 Litter**

i) To receive an update on the litter picking event on 14 November  
The Council's litter picking event took place on 14 November. 5 councillors and 3 volunteers attended. The Council wrote to Mr Brett to thank him for his assistance in disposing of the litter and recyclable materials.

Councillors asked that the next committee meeting include an item on the location for the next litter picking event.

ii) To consider provision of litter bins at play areas and cemetery

It was reported that the waste bin at Greensted Rd play area was in very poor condition and had been burnt out several times. It was suggested that –

- this was replaced with a spare waste bin (stored in the Chapel)
- to refurbish the old bin from Greensted Rd play area and place this in the cemetery near the memorial benches and Cerizay rose garden
- to remove the old bin from the Love Lane play area and relocate this in the cemetery to replace an old one that was beyond repair
- to purchase a new bin for Love Lane play area

Photographs of the existing bin and a selection of new bins and costs were provided for Councillors information.

Cllr Wingfield proposed that the Billy Bin-it bin be purchased and this was seconded by Cllr Reynolds.

Vote –

For – 5

#### **AGREED**

- To purchase the Billy Bin-it bin for Love Lane play area

iii) To consider ways in which to reduce the amount of litter in Ongar

At the last Open Spaces committee meeting councillors expressed concerns regarding the amount of litter in Ongar. The committee was asked to consider ways in which the Town Council was able to reduce litter in Ongar.

Councillors were grateful to the member of the public for his suggestions on ways to reduce litter.

Councillors considered –

- Ask EFDC Waste and Recycling if they have the personnel to make presentations to schools
- Ask EFDC Waste and Recycling representative to meet with the Deputy Clerk and Cllr Wingfield to consider any further actions
- Ask Ongar Town Forum to provide posters for retail outlets
- The Council to organise a poster competition for local schools
- To consider purchasing additional litter pickers

Cllr Gode proposed that the committee recommend to Public Relations committee that the Council organises a poster competition for schools. This was seconded by Cllr Wingfield.

Vote –

For – 5

#### **AGREED**

- Ask EFDC Waste and Recycling if they have the personnel to make presentations to schools
- Ask EFDC Waste and Recycling representative to meet with the Deputy Clerk and Cllr Wingfield to consider any further actions

- Ask Ongar Town Forum to provide posters for retail outlets
- The committee recommends to Public Relations committee to organise a poster completion for local schools
- To consider purchasing additional litter pickers

#### **66/15 Nature Reserve**

To consider the draft 10 year plan for the management and development of the Nature Reserve

A development plan for the Nature Reserve for the next 10 years was drafted for Councillors consideration with the aim of assisting the Council in planning projects and setting appropriate budgets.

A copy of the draft plan was provided for Councillors consideration.

One amendment was requested and members considered any action necessary for area numbered 14 on the plan. Councillors agreed to visit the area individually and this item would be added to the agenda of the next committee meeting.

#### **AGREED**

- One amendment to be made to the draft plan
- Committee members to visit the site before the next meeting

#### **67/15 Open Spaces Society**

To consider a donation to the Open Spaces Society

The Council was contacted by the Open Spaces Society requesting a donation for their continued work.

Cllr Fletcher proposed that the Council provide a donation of £25 to be taken from the Amenity Management budget. This was seconded by Cllr Gode.

Vote –  
For – 5

#### **AGREED**

- The Council to provide a donation of £25 to the Open Spaces Society from the Amenity management budget

#### **68/15 Play areas**

To receive an update on necessary repairs to play areas following the annual independent inspection

This item was deferred until the next committee meeting.

#### **69/15 St Martin's church yard**

To consider work to the tree stump to allow the necessary repairs to the perimeter wall

The Council was informed by Essex County Council that a planned closure of the footpath to allow the necessary repairs to the perimeter wall would cost approx. £995.00.

St Martin's PCC confirmed that the procedures for applying for a Faculty would be changing in January 2016. It was unclear at the moment whether a Faculty would be required for this work or whether the Arch Deacon would be able to grant permission for this work on his own authority.

The neighbour whose property was adjacent to the perimeter wall had offered a sum of money to the Council to assist with the cost of these repairs.

It was suggested that the remaining stump be cut away from the wall to allow the necessary repairs. This will negate the need for the footpath to be closed.

This work will be carried out by the Council's preferred contractors under Financial Regulations 11.1.

Photographs of the wall and tree stump were provided for Councillor's information.

Cllr Wingfield proposed that –

- the tree and roots be cut away from the wall to allow the necessary repairs
- the Council to request the donation from the neighbour
- to revisit the wall repairs at the committee meeting scheduled for March 2016

This was seconded by Cllr Fletcher.

Vote –

For – 5

**AGREED**

- the tree and roots be cut away from the wall to allow the necessary repairs
- the Council to request the donation from the neighbour
- to revisit the wall repairs at the committee meeting scheduled for March 2016

**70/15 Committee 4 year plan**

To consider the draft 4 year plan and make any changes necessary

A development plan for Open Spaces committee for the next 4 years was drafted for Councillors consideration and to assist the Council in planning projects and setting appropriate budgets. A copy of the draft plan was provided for Councillors consideration.

Councillors asked for costs for each item be added to the plan and to review the plan again at the next committee meeting.

**AGREED**

- Costs for each item to be added to the plan
- Add the four year plan to the agenda for the next committee meeting

**71/15 Open Spaces committee budget 2015/16**

To receive information on the committee budget between 1 April 2015 and 30 November 2015

Councillors noted this information.

The meeting closed at 9.16 pm

Signed

Chair

Date