

**MINUTES OF THE OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD AT BANSONS ON 4 JUNE 2015**

PRESENT: Cllrs A. Wingfield (chair) N Fletcher (vice chair) B. Freeman  
P. Gode D. Roberts J. Rushton

Officer: J. Cook (Deputy Clerk)

Public: No members of the public were present

**01/15 Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Cllrs P. Bolden and J. Browning. Cllr J. Reynolds was absent without apologies.

**02/15 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**03/15 Public participation**

There were no members of the public present.

**04/15 To agree the minutes of the Open Spaces committee meeting held on 9 April 2015**

The minutes of 9 April 2015 were reviewed and agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

**05/15 Clerk's Report**

**Allotments**

The Council was negotiating with the landlord (Castle Farm Trustees) for a new lease for Castle St allotment site to include the old Horticultural Society plots.

It had been reported that there was a rough sleeper at Castle St allotments and this had been reported to Epping Forest District Council Homelessness Team.

It was reported that the Council was working with Essex Police Crime Prevention Officer on suitable methods to deter the use of guns at the allotments following several incidents in the last two years.

**High St Planters**

The planters were replenished on 17 May with summer planting. The Council purchased the plants and labour was provided by volunteers from Ongar Allotment and Gardening Society (OAGS) free of charge.

**Litter**

It was reported that the next Council litter picking event would take place on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> June between 10am and 12 noon. Litter pickers, gloves and high viz tabards would be provided. Volunteers were asked to meet at Jubilee Park and refreshments would be served there afterwards. A further event would take place in November.

**Nature Reserve**

At the last Open Spaces committee meeting it was agreed to remove the vandalised notice board from the reserve and re-use it in another location. It had since become apparent that the notice board had been so badly damaged that it was unable to be re-used.

### **Play areas**

The Council was negotiating a new lease for Greensted Rd play area with Essex County Council (ECC). The Chancelcheck and Environment Report were both clear.

The Council had entered its play areas into the Best Kept Playing Field competition organised by Essex Playing Fields Association. The Council had previously been very successful and had won several awards and a silver cup.

The Council's preferred contractor for an independent annual inspection of play areas was off sick and had recommended an alternative company who had been asked to complete the inspections in June.

### **Vandalism**

Vandalism had occurred to the play house at Cerizay play area. Repairs by the manufacturer will cost £930. The Council had made a claim to the Insurance Company which was agreed. The Council's excess is £250.00.

Damage had been done to the balance beam at Shelley Park. Repairs by the manufacturer had been ordered and would cost £225.00 plus VAT (supply, delivery and installation).

The new bench at Cerizay Garden was covered in obscene graffiti which Council staff were able to remove.

Council staff repaired the vandalised fence at Greensted play area.

### **06/15 Terms of Reference**

Draft Terms of Reference were considered by Councillors and no alterations were made.

### **AGREED**

- To recommend the draft Terms to Full Council.

### **07/15 Liaison group membership**

To appoint Councillors to meet with –

- Ongar Allotment and Gardening Society (OAGS)
- St Martin's Church PCC

### **AGREED**

St Martin's Church PCC –  
Cllrs D. Roberts and J. Rushton

OAGS –  
Cllr A. Wingfield

### **08/15 Allotments**

Councillors considered a proposed rise of 2% from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2016.

Cllr Peter Gode proposed and Cllr D. Roberts seconded that this increase be recommended to Finance committee. Unanimously agreed.

### **AGREED**

- To recommend the proposed increase to Finance committee

### **09/15 Cemetery**

- i) To consider access arrangements and clearance of land for a new row of graves for cremated remains interments

The committee was asked to consider using a contractor to build an access ramp to the new rows of cremated remains graves and to clear the remaining tree stumps. Cllr D. Roberts proposed and Cllr B. Freeman seconded to employ a contractor to carry out this work. Unanimously agreed.

#### **AGREED**

- To employ the contractor to build a ramp and clear the tree stumps.

- ii) To consider raising the fees for cemetery services

At the Full Council meeting on 22 January 2015 it was agreed to raise the fees in keeping with other local authorities. Councillors were keen to ensure that the Council continued to provide a high level of service both in dealing with relatives and in grounds maintenance. Councillors asked for more detailed breakdown of expenditure to be provided to Finance committee. Cllr P. Gode proposed and Cllr J. Rushton seconded that the proposed increase be recommended to Finance committee. Unanimously agreed.

#### **AGREED**

- To recommend the proposed increase to Finance committee.

### **10/15 Nature Reserve**

To consider the removal of a gate at the Turners Close entrance

There were two gates at the entrance to the Nature Reserve from Turners Close. The external gate was kept locked to prevent unauthorised access. The internal gate had been damaged and it was recommended to remove the gate rather than the cost of repairs. Cllr B. Freeman proposed and Cllr N. Fletcher seconded that the gate be removed. Unanimously agreed.

#### **AGREED**

- To remove the gate at Turners Close entrance.

### **11/15 Open Spaces Society**

To consider making a donation to the Open Spaces Society

The Council had been approached by the Open Spaces Society requesting a donation. Cllr B. Freeman proposed and Cllr D. Roberts seconded that the Council made a donation of £25 to be taken from a committee budget at the Deputy Clerk's discretion. Unanimously agreed.

#### **AGREED**

- To make a donation of £25 to Open Spaces Society

**Cllr B. Freeman left the meeting at 7.58 pm.**

### **12/15 Open Spaces committee budget 2015/16**

To receive information on the committee budget (income and expenditure) between 1 April 2015 to 28 May 2015. Councillors noted the budget.

Open Spaces committee 04.06.15

The meeting closed at 8.00 pm

Signed

Chair

Date