

**MINUTES OF THE OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT BANSONS ON 19 DECEMBER 2013**

PRESENT: A. Wingfield (chair) A. Kaye (vice chair) R. Richardson
D. Roberts J. Rushton B. Surtees

Officer: J. Cook (Deputy Clerk)

Public: Two members of the public.

Action

61/13 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs D. Gambadella, F. Knights, and R. Prosser

62/13 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

63/13 Public participation

One member of the public addressed the committee with his concerns regarding the increase in allotment fees and that the Council was not keeping proper records of income and expenditure for the allotments.

Cllr Surtees explained that the Council did keep detailed records of all expenditure and that all fees for public services were regularly reviewed. The Council did not feel that the rental sum was onerous on tenants.

64/13 To agree the minutes of the Open Spaces committee meeting held on 7th November 2013

Cllr D. Roberts asked for an amendment to be made to item 51/13. With this amendment the minutes were agreed as a true record and would be signed by the Chairman.

Chair

65/13 Matters arising from previous committee meeting

Cllr B. Surtees asked that the unspent grant funds allocated to Ongar Community Orchard be added to the agenda for the next Finance committee meeting.

Clerk

**66/13 Clerk's Report
Allotments**

It was reported that the Clerk was working with Affinity Water to provide the water supply to the Moreton Rd site.

Tenants had been informed of the rent increase with effect from November 2014.

A written request was received from a tenant with regard to the rent increase. A written response was provided.

At the Full Council meeting on 5 December it was agreed that the Council includes the old Ongar Horticultural and Allotment Society (OHAS) site into the new lease agreement with Castle Farm Trustees. It was agreed that every effort would be made to standardise the plots sizes to conform to other allotment sites.

Ash trees

There have been no reported incidents of ash tree die back to date.

Cemetery

A leaflet on the cemetery had been drafted and would be available for Councillors at the next Open Spaces meeting on 16th January 2014.

The Deputy Clerk had continued to input records on to the new cemetery IT software.

Clerk

Footbridges

The Council had received complaints that the foot bridges at the Nature Reserve and on the footpath to the rear of Shakletons were very slippery. The Council's Health and Safety consultant's advice was to fit weld mesh and this was supplied and fitted to both bridges by Countrycare at a cost of £141 plus VAT.

Nature Reserve

The Council had received an anonymous donation of 1200 bulbs and the contractor provided labour free of charge to plant them. A press release was issued and an article included in the December edition of the Council newsletter.

A new dog waste bin had been received and installed.

Ongar Community Orchard (OCO)

The OCO committee was asked to provide receipts for expenses to date. Due to the uncertainty of funding and contractual matters the committee had spent their own money to date. Expenditure over the next few months would include the purchase of trees to be planted in January 2014 and receipts would be forwarded to the Council.

The OCO committee was advised by EFDC on 28 November that planting could begin in January 2014.

Play areas

QE II Jubilee Field (Love Lane)

At the last Open Spaces meeting it was agreed to order additional equipment and alterations of the existing Jubilee Play area (Love Lane). The Clerk had checked with external funders who provided money for the play area development to ensure they had no objections. One organisation had no objections but the other had yet to respond to the Council's enquiry.

The zip wire was installed and opened on Thursday 15th November. A press release was issued and an article included in the December newsletter. Funding had been received from Essex Environment Trust and the remaining funds were expected shortly.

Greensted Rd

At the last Open Spaces committee meeting it was reported that the Clerk had received approx 30 emails from parents and carers regarding the poor condition of the fence at Grensted play area. Quotes to replace the fence had been requested but not yet received.

It was reported that a sewerage blockage in the drains had caused an overflow into the site. The play area had been closed until further notice and a cleaning company were instructed to clean and disinfect the area.

Councillors agreed that the Council would take the advice of EFDC Environmental Health officers before reopening the play area and that the Clerk would inform the Council's insurance company of the incident in case of additional expenditure.

Clerk

St Martin's churchyard

The next working party meeting is scheduled for 14 January 2014.

The self sown lime tree had been removed as far as is possible. The tree surgeon would need to liaise with the contractor who will repair the perimeter wall in order to remove the remaining stump.

Terms of Reference

The new terms of reference were adopted at the Full Council meeting on 5th December 2013.

Trees

There are several jobs that had been agreed by the committee that had not been completed due to poor weather and ground conditions.

67/13 Allotments

- i) To agree the wording on the plaque to mark the donation of the notice board from Ongar Horticultural and Allotment Society

The draft wording was amended and it was
AGREED to order the plaque

Clerk

- ii) To receive correspondence from a tenant at Castle St allotments

A tenant of Castle St allotments has suggested the following items for consideration –

1. Separate Accounts for each site.
2. Deposits are not strictly income and should be detailed separately. Any interest earned on deposit sums would be income.
3. List the individual figures for rents, water, site rent, insurance and miscellaneous items.

N.B. Water usage varies with weather variation and as pointed out at the last meeting water is being used and not paid for (not for the reason of not wanting to pay).

4. Any items carried out in connection with Grants obtained or using the Council's funds should be shown separately.

AGREED

That these items be noted and considered when the rent is next reviewed.

Clerk

68/13 Cemetery

To consider the practice of providing free rose bushes for each cremated remains plot. Roses are provided free of charge at the time of interment and replaced free of charge should the plant fail for any reason or be damaged.

AGREED

The Council will provide the initial rose plant free of charge
That owners may replace the rose if it should fail or be damaged
The replacement must be a half standard rose
To amend the Cemetery Rules and Regulations
That any future planting in the cemetery be considered by the Open Spaces committee

Clerk

69/13 John Holness Garden

To receive advice for the tree surgeon on removing evergreen trees and shrubs to the rear of John Holness Garden

The tree surgeon had advised that the three large evergreen trees and a large shrub to the rear of John Holness Garden should be removed. An estimate for the cost of this work was £500.

AGREED

To instruct the tree surgeon to remove the trees and shrub

Clerk

70/13 Manor Square

To receive a report on the ownership of Manor Square

The land was first registered as common land in 1965 by Ongar Parish Council.

AGREED

That the Council registered the land and has since taken on the responsibility for managing and maintaining the area and will continue to do so

Clerk

To consider cleaning arrangements for Manor Square

The Council had received a quote for jet washing the area for £50. EFDC had offered a one-off clean of the area for £22.60 and this could be done quarterly at the same cost. The cost for regular cleaning would be £40 for six months.

Open Spaces committee minutes 19.12.13

AGREED

The Council to instruct EFDC to carry out an initial clean of the area Clerk
The Council to instruct EFDC to carry out regular cleaning of the area for six months
These costs to be taken from Grounds maintenance budget
The Committee to review this arrangement in six months' time
The Clerk to report this decision to the Finance committee

To receive a quote for the relocation of one planter

At the last committee meeting the Clerk was asked to ascertain the moving cost of one of the planters in the Square. The quote received was for £220 inc VAT.

AGREED

Not to move the planter Clerk

71/13 Notice board

To agree to repairs to the notice board at Pleasance car park

The Perspex cover on the notice board at the Pleasance car park had become so degraded by sunlight that it was difficult to see the notices. An estimate for a replacement Perspex had been received for £227.50 + VAT.

AGREED

The Clerk to seek further quotes for replacement Perspex Clerk

72/13 Open Spaces Society

To consider a request for funds from the Open Spaces Society

The Council had received a request for additional funding from the Open Spaces Society. The Council pays an annual subscription of £45 to the Society.

AGREED

Not to make any further contribution to the Open Spaces Society Clerk

73/13 Play areas

To consider the quotes received to replace the perimeter fencing at QE II Jubilee (Love Lane) play area

Quotes for replacement fencing were verbally reported at the meeting.

AGREED

That the fence be replaced with galvanised flat top fence Clerk
The Clerk to obtain further quotes for this work

74/13 River Meadow

To receive information on the ownership of River Meadow

A land registry map showed the owner of the land to be EFDC Housing. Councillors asked for clarification that this is in the correct location.

AGREED

Cllr R. Richardson and the Deputy Clerk would meet on site and report back to the Clerk
Open Spaces committee

75/13 Tree work

To consider advice on tree works required on footpath to rear of properties in Onslow Gardens and on footpath to the rear of properties in Shakletons

The Council had received advice from the tree surgeon regarding work to be done on trees in the footpath to the rear of Onslow Gardens, the footpath to the rear of Shakletons and to remove a large branch that was brushing the roof of the old Council building. An estimate of the cost for all this work was £500.

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AGREED

The Clerk to instruct the tree surgeon to carry out this work.

Clerk

76/13 Youth

To consider sponsoring EFDC's Play in the Park sessions in Ongar in 2014
EFDC had invited the Council to sponsor Play in the Park sessions in Ongar in 2014 at a cost of £65 per session.

AGREED

To sponsor 6 Play in the Park sessions in 2014
That the costs are not taken from the Youth budget
To recommend to the Finance committee to decide which budget the cost should be allocated to

Clerk

77/13 Open Spaces committee budget 2013/14

Councillors noted the budget information.

78/13 Unlisted items

Cllr A. Wingfield requested that the Planning and Environment committee consider the condition of the footpath and surrounding land between Fyfield Rd and Queensway.

Clerk

Cllr B. Surtees requested that the Planning and Environment committee consider the use of the car park to the rear of Ongar Leisure Centre for car racing.

Clerk

Cllr B. Surtees requested that Full Council considers the possible parking problems should Epping Ongar Railway reconnect with London Underground and resume a commuter service.

Clerk

The meeting closed at 9.59 pm

Signed

Chair

Date