

**MINUTES OF THE OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD AT BANSONS ON 8 JANUARY 2015**

PRESENT: Cllrs A. Wingfield (chair) A. Kaye (vice chair) P. Gode  
S. Jackman J. Rushton B. Surtees

Officer: J. Cook (Deputy Clerk)

Press: One member of the press

Public: No members of the public

Action

**80/14 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr D. Roberts.

**81/14 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**82/14 Public participation**

There were no members of the public present.

**83/14 To agree the minutes of the Open Spaces committee meeting held on 6 November 2014**

The minutes of 6 November 2014 were reviewed and agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

Cllr Wingfield

**84/14 Matters arising from previous committee meeting**

Councillors asked for clarification on the new lease for Castle St allotments and it was reported that this had not yet been signed.

Clerk

**85/14 Clerk's Report  
Allotments**

The calendar of events for OAGS was attached for Councillors information.

OAGS confirmed that they would not be pursuing the proposal for the Council to offer any concessions on allotment rent.

It was reported that most of the annual rent had been received and that any vacant plots would be advertised for let.

Clerk

**CCTV**

The Planning and Environment committee considered providing CCTV at the Skate Park and broadband at Shelley Park but both of these projects had been postponed and would be reconsidered again during 2016/17.

Clerk

Cllr B. Surtees reported that assistance may be obtained from EFDC in monitoring the Town Council's CCTV and with updating the Code of Practice.

Clerk

**Cemetery**

The Open Spaces staff had refurbished all of the memorial benches in the cemetery.

The Open Spaces Supervisor had worked with 3<sup>rd</sup> Ongar Cubs to build a Bug Hotel.

The Cemetery leaflet would be paid for from the Cemetery maintenance budget.

Exhumation – a change in procedures for exhumation applications came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015. Further information from ICCM was provided for Councillors information.

### **Community Payback Team**

The Open spaces Supervisor had arranged for the Team to carry out some tasks for the Council in the New Year.

### **John Holness Garden**

The poplar tree had been removed from the garden.

### **St Martin's church yard**

The Diocese had granted the Council's Faculty application to allow necessary work to be done on trees in the church yard.

Cllr. S. Jackman asked that the Council's outside spaces staff receive a formal letter thanking them for their hard work over the past 12 months.

Clerk

### **86/14 Allotments**

The Council held its regular liaison meeting with OAGS in November and notes of the meeting were provided for Councillors information. After the liaison meeting it was agreed with OAGS that a representative of the tenants from the Moreton Rd allotments would be invited to the next meeting as OAGS do not have any members at that site at present.

Cllr B. Surtees asked to be kept informed of any problems with the Town Forum's Christmas Tree damaging the plants in the Council's tubs located in Manor Square.

Clerk

### **87/14 Cemetery**

- i) To consider the layout of future cremated remains plots and access

Councillors considered the creation of a ramp to allow access to a new row of cremated remains plots and the removal of the small copse of trees (no. 8 on the tree survey map).

### **AGREED**

Council outside spaces staff to

- create a ramp
- lay out a new row of cremated remains plots
- arrange for the removal of the copse of trees

Clerk

- ii) Update on complaint regarding the use of mechanical diggers

There has been no further communication from the resident who raised concerns regarding the use of mechanical diggers.

Councillors noted this report.

- iii) To consider complaints from residents regarding the decision to lock the gates

The Council had received one written and four verbal complaints from residents regarding the decision to lock both gates into the cemetery.

Councillors considered the objections from residents as well as the reported reduction in anti-social behaviour in the cemetery.

### **AGREED**

- To open the gates between 10 am and 4 pm Monday to Friday
- To review this decision in 3 months' time

Clerk

**88/14 Essex County Council**

- i) To note ECC's policy on banning "sky lanterns"

ECC have agreed a policy that prohibits the use of "sky lanterns" on ECC owned sites.

Councillors noted this information.

- ii) To consider adopting the same policy for Town Council owned and managed land.

**AGREED**

- The Town Council to adopt the same policy
- To place notices prohibiting their use on Council notice boards
- To issue a press release

Clerk

**89/14 Greensted Rd play area**

- i) To consider the removal of the tree overhanging the swings at Greensted Road

It was reported that there was an oak tree growing near to the swings at Greensted Rd play area. Advice from the Council's tree surgeon and the Open Spaces Supervisor was to remove the lower branches.

**AGREED**

- To arrange for the removal of the lower branches

Clerk

- ii) To note that the funding bid for new swings at Greensted Rd was unsuccessful

Councillors noted this information.

**AGREED**

- The Clerk to continue with funding applications to complete this project.

Clerk

- iii) To receive information on the costs incurred to renew the lease for Greensted Rd play area with Essex County Council (ECC)

The Council's solicitor has advised that costs to renew the lease for Greensted Rd play area will be £1,500 for ECC's surveyor's fees and ECC legal fees will be approx. £950.

Councillors noted this information.

**AGREED**

- The Clerk to continue to liaise with ECC to complete the lease

Clerk

**RECOMMEND** to Finance committee

- The costs to be taken from the Play Area Improvement budget

Clerk

**90/14 Open Spaces Society**

To consider making a donation to the Open Spaces Society

The Council had received an application from the Open Spaces Society for a donation of any amount to help it continue its work.

**AGREED**

- To provide a donation to the Open Spaces Society for £25
- The donation to be taken from the Grounds Maintenance budget

Clerk

**91/14 Open Spaces committee budget 2014/15**

- i) To receive information on the committee budget

Councillors noted the information.

- ii) To consider an increase in the agreed budget for Youth for 2015/16 and make a recommendation to Finance committee

At the committee meeting on 9 October 2014 Councillors agreed an Open Spaces committee draft budget for 2015/16 which included £300 for Youth. Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) advised that Play in the Park sessions for 2015 would be £65 each. The Town Council usually supports 6 sessions (2 at Easter and 4 in the summer) and this would cost £390.

Councillors suggested that the Youth budget was not appropriate for the Open Spaces committee.

**RECOMMEND** to Finance committee

Clerk

- The Youth budget be removed from Open Spaces committee
- A designated budget be set up in General Admin to facilitate the EFDC Play in the Park sessions
- That this budget be sufficient to allow for 6 sessions in 2015

- iii) To review the agreed budget for Tree work for 2015/16 and make a recommendation to Finance committee

At the committee meeting on 9 October 2014 Councillors agreed an Open Spaces committee draft budget for 2015/16 which included £12,000 for Tree work.

**RECOMMEND** to Finance committee

Clerk

- The tree budget for 2015/16 to be £6,000

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm

Signed

Chair

Date