

**Minutes of the Meeting of the
Playing Fields, Allotments and Amenities Committee
held on Tuesday 6th August 2024 - 7pm at Diamond Jubilee Lodge**

Present: Cllr D. Maidstone (Chairman)
Cllr N. Barker
Cllr D. Fahy
Cllr M. Hicks
Cllr S. Lowthorpe

Also in Attendance:
Mrs F LeBon (Clerk), Mr K Sage (Facilities Manager) and 1 member of the public

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting.

1. Apologies and acceptance for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr S Gurney.

2. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

None made.

3. Approval of the Minutes from 13th March

The draft Minutes had been circulated from the meeting of 13th March 2024. These were **AGREED** after a proposal from Cllr Hicks and a second from Cllr Barker.

4. Public Participation

A member of the public raised concerns about numerous plots that were not being kept in accordance with the allotment rules. The Facilities Manager explained that the inspections by the Parish Council ought to be done once a month but other work had taken priority as of late. He further explained the letter system whereby plot holders receive 'red letters' when their plot is not in keeping with the rules. After three 'red' letters, further consideration is given to breach of contract by the plot holder.

A member of the public explained that it is hoped to run an allotment open day next year, to introduce people to the benefits of allotments. The committee was supportive of this and asked to be advised of the date when arranged.

A member of the public raised that there has been an increased number of thefts from the allotment site. Concerns were raised about the front gate and middle post not being locked.

The Clerk is to obtain quotes for options for CCTV. The member of the public confirmed that all incidents are logged and raised to the police.

A member of the public advised that concerns about pot holes on the allotment track had been raised to them. Due to the construction of the track it can be susceptible to pot holes and permanent repairs are not possible. The Facilities Manager will review and look to fill the worst of them.

5. Governance

a. To Appoint Members of the Committee to Form the Allotment Liaison Group

The Clerk reported that under the Terms of Reference for this committee, there is a requirement for an Allotment Liaison Group to be formed. There are no terms of reference for this group, but it is suggested that this is a non decision making group designed to improve engagement with allotment holders and bring forward recommendations for projects which require committee consideration. As a non decision making group it would be free to meet without formality of council agendas and the requirement of formal minutes, in a location and at times of the group’s choosing. It was **AGREED** that Cllr Maidstone and Cllr Barker would represent the council on this group.

6. Allotment Site

a. To Receive Update on Projects to Divide Plot 19 and Lay the New Car Parking Area

The Clerk reported that resource had been difficult for the grounds team with caretaker cover necessary in the early part of the year when they would normally take on these projects, and now they are busy with the height of the growing season. As a result, the Parish Council is now working in partnership with Groundwork East, a local charity which provides volunteers to support local projects. Groundwork East is happy to supply volunteers once a week, to assist with the division of plot 19 and the creation of the new car parking area, commencing on 21st August. The work has been risk assessed and the volunteers are selected and supervised by Groundwork East.

b) To Consider Options for the Community Apiary Site

It was established that the apiary site was now vacant. Options for this area were discussed to ensure that bees were still encouraged in this area due to their important role in pollination. It was **AGREED** that the Parish Council should try to continue to utilise the area as an apiary but that a formal tenancy agreement should be put in place for each hive space utilised. Once the formal tenancy has been drafted, professional beekeepers should be sought.

c) To Review Success of Community Orchard

The Facilities Manager reported that there was uncertainty about the aftercare of the community orchard, as the promised system of aftercare did not materialise. The grounds team did prune the trees in spring and some trees will need to be removed, whilst others require staking. Some trees do have small fruits on them, and this will improve with time.

It was **AGREED** that the grounds team should take on the maintenance of the orchard and this will form part of the job evaluations which are being done for the Staffing Committee. The Clerk will write to the original project partner and advise that the Parish Council will take on the project as the trees aren’t being maintained.

7. Parks

a) To Receive Annual RoSPA Reports

It was reported that the Facilities Team do visual inspections every morning when they open the parks, so are able to act upon repairs swiftly before too much damage occurs. A product has been trialled to fill the cracks in the skatepark and this works well, so extra money will be placed in the budget for next year to complete the works.

The Facilities Manager and the Clerk will look at resolutions to help prevent bird strikes on the play equipment, particularly the swings.

It was noted that the skatepark poses the biggest risk of all the play equipment, but no remedial work will bring that risk down, as it is at the lowest risk for this type of recreation.

Discussions occurred as to a forward plan for the play equipment and other areas under the committee’s jurisdiction. This is to be placed on the next agenda.

8. Equipment

a) To Receive Report and Consider Options for Tractors

The Parish Council purchased a T4 tractor in 2018. This was unsuitable for the works required around the parish due to its large size. It has only done 348 hours of operation and has had five services. The Parish Council is leasing a smaller John Deere tractor at £495 per month, which is much more suitable for the work the parish requires.

Quotes had been obtained to trade in the T4 and purchase a smaller, more suitable tractor. To do this would mean the Parish Council continues to own a machinery asset but will not have the monthly outlay of the leased tractor. The most favourable quote was for an Iseki TG6687 tractor which has all the horse power and lifting capacity of the T4, but is of a more compact size. The balance after trade on would be £12,707.00.

It was **AGREED** to proceed with this purchase, trade in and cessation of the lease, and the item will be placed on the agenda for Full Council in September to move the funds out of earmarked reserves. In the meantime, the Facilities Manager will arrange for a demonstration of the Iseki and the Clerk will check the terms and conditions of the lease of the John Deere.

b) To Receive Report into Failure of Bowling Green Mower

It was reported that the mower used to cut the bowling green was regularly losing power and cutting out. It was taken in for repair but none of the parts are now available due to the age of the machine (16 years old). Some welding was done to make do, but there is no guarantee of how long the repair will last.

Discussions occurred as to the provision of amenity for all demographics of Hellesdon.

It was **AGREED** that since the bowling season is nearing the end for this year, and the mower is currently operational, the Facilities Manager should look into some new equipment and present this for the 2025/2026 budget.

9. Memorial Garden

a) To Agree Rules, Application and Prices for Memorial Garden

The Parish Council provides a memorial garden at the far end of the bowls green. Having recently received a request for a rose in this area, it was established that there has never been any form of formal application or rules for this area. A draft application form and set of rules had been circulation and it was **AGREED** to adopt these. A spreadsheet for applications and monitoring for ten year expirations was also required.

10. Items for the Next Agenda

Vision for the play areas – what equipment should be provided and where would it be best placed?

Five year plan for parks, open spaces, hard play areas and tennis courts.

Budget

Report from Allotment Liaison Group.

Report on CCTV at allotment site.

Update on Tractor and Bowling Green Mower.

11. To Confirm Date, Time and Venue of the Next Meeting

To be agreed.

MEETING CLOSED AT 8.55pm