

Wheathampstead Parish Council

Maintenance Committee 10 September 2018 19:30

Present: Councillors D Johnston Chairman
G Clark
L Halford
T Reason
P Woodhams

J Warren Clerk to the Council

Press 0
Public 5

5787-18 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor S Haynes (personal).

5788-18 Public Speaking

Five residents from Ash Grove attended. One suggested that large boulders be used between the trees to prevent vehicular access to Rectory Meadow. This he felt would look more natural than wooden bollards. The Chairman advised that an application had been submitted to St Albans District Council to install wooden bollards, similar to those on Canons Field and by the Memorial Hall. These were designed to be both visually discrete, installed so as not to damage adjacent trees, and that removable versions would allow vehicular access for mowing and maintenance work.

5789-18 Specific Declarations of Interest & Dispensations

None.

5790-18 Minutes of the Maintenance Committee of 25 June

The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed that the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2018 be approved.

Resolved:

To confirm the Minutes of the meetings held on 25 June 2018 to be a true and fair account and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

5791-18 Access to open spaces

Further to Minute 5686-16 and the security report on access to Parish Council owned sites, a ditch had been dug, similar to that at Nomansland and the Marford Fields to discourage unauthorised access at Maltings Drive. The earth bund was functional. Councillor Reason proposed, seconded by Councillor Halford, and it was agreed that the mound be sown with wild flower seed and maintained with an annual strim.

Further to Minute 5788-18 consideration was given to securing access to Rectory Meadow and Folly Fields recreation fields. The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed, that wooden bollards (including removable ones) as approved by St Albans District

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Council be installed at Rectory Meadow, and as required at Folly Fields within a budget of £7,000.

Resolved

- **That the mound at Maltings Drive be sown with wild flower seed and maintained with an annual strim.**
- **That wooden bollards (including removable ones) as approved by St Albans District Council be installed at Rectory Meadow, and as required at Folly Fields within a budget of £7,000.**

5792-18 Report of the Maintenance Contractor

The Maintenance Contractor had reported that the following maintenance jobs had been completed:

- Bushes pulled at Baxendale allotments
- Overhanging branches cut back Butterfield Road
- Branches removed from streetlight at Brocket View
- All allotment pipes frost proofed
- 2 benches uncovered at Leasey Bridge footpath
- Shelves from 24/7 store at St Albans delivered to new parish store
- 2 goal posts repaired at 3 G pitch
- Most of allotment strimming completed.

Outstanding tasks included fitting a gate closer on the 3G pitch, topping up loose fill at Marford Play Area, painting of gates of East Lane Car Park and removal of kerbs at East Lane Car Park.

Flailing of hedges around the perimeter of the Butterfield pitches was recommended to stop vegetation encroachment and facilitate litter picking. Estimated cost, £200.

The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed, that the hedges around the Butterfield pitches be flailed.

A request had been received from the Tennis Club that the fence height at the southern goal end of the ATP be raised to reduce the number of balls being kicked over and into the tennis courts. Quotations were being sought.

Resolved:

To approve the tasks as recommended above.

5793-18 Work of Rangers, open spaces management

The Rectory Copse Ranger reported that the Copse had been strimmed of overgrown nettles by volunteers, and a WOSV work group was scheduled for November. Many of the geraniums had struggled with the prolonged dry weather, but he was hopeful that these, along with the native trees had survived. White foxglove seedlings had been planted besides the ferns along the west crinkle crankle wall. At the request of a new resident of Moat House, a hedgehog home had been installed in the Copse.

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It was also reported that the relocated oak logs were proving popular with children as both a play and photo opportunity.

The ranger for Bower Heath had reported stashing of felled branches near a private hedge, subsequently moved well clear by the contractor. These had been the result of the recent WOSV (Wheathampstead Open Spaces Volunteers) tidying of the area and in particular the oak tree.

Councillor Halford proposed, seconded by Councillor Woodhams, and it was agreed, that a generator to the value of £500 be purchased to power equipment for the station fun day planned for 23 September. Also that the office produce signs and posters for this event. Volunteer marshals were sought

Resolved:

- **To note the reports.**
- **To purchase a generator up to the value of £500**

5794-18

Tree work and vegetation management.

It was reported that deadwood had been removed from the cedars on Rectory Meadow and that crown lifting of roadside trees at Melissa Field was in hand. A count of the tree rings of the felled oak on Rectory Meadow suggested that it had been in the region of 120 years old before fungal attack and disease caused it to be felled.

It was noted that the largest Norway maple at Melissa was diseased and dying back. The tree surgeon's recommendation was to keep a watching brief and to be aware that it may need felling in a year or two. Two of the cherry trees on the verge of Cherry Tree Lane were dead or dying.

Councillor Halford proposed, seconded by Councillor Woodhams, and it was agreed, that the dead/ dying cherry trees on Cherry Tree Lane be felled. Replacement cherries to be sought unless the soil appeared to be infected.

Resolved:

- **To note the reports.**
- **To fell the dead/ dying cherry trees on Cherry Tree Lane and consider their replacement at an appropriate point.**

5795-18

Bury Green Garden

It was reported that a working group was scheduled to tidy the garden on 7 October. 2,000 litres of Grosure smart Ground Cover was requested (£180), Pathclear weed killer, and £100 of bulbs and plants.

The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed,

Resolved:

- **To note the report.**
- **That the Clerk order up to £100 of bulbs and plants from Rochfords, and 2,000 litres of Grosure (subject to**

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discussing the future use of more ordinary mulch) plus Pathclear for delivery on 7 October.

5796-18 Benches

It was reported that there were 56 benches in the parish. The contractor was gradually tidying them up including a semi buried bench on the path to Leasey Bridge Farm which had been home to a wasp nest.

A request had been received to supply a teak bench for Rectory Meadow. Reference was made to the Council's adopted bench policy. The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed, that the policy should be amended to include a lifespan for donated benches. It was noted that the preferred 'conservation area' bench, many of which had previously been varnished, had horizontal back supports. This design had fewer joints and was easier to maintain. These benches were more expensive than that offered for donation.

Resolved:

To thank the residents for their offer of a donation for a bench at Rectory Meadow, and draw their attention to the preferred supplier specified and to the adopted bench policy (to be updated with a lifespan for donated benches).

5797-18 Bins

It was reported that Parish Council bins were located at 23 locations in the parish. Some were in need of replacement.

The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed, that an annual target for replacement or refurbishment of bins be set, three in the first year. Details to be agreed by the Clerk in consultation with two councillors and the maintenance contractor.

Resolved:

That an annual target for replacement or refurbishment of bins be set, three in the first year. Details to be agreed by the Clerk in consultation with two councillors and the maintenance contractor.

5798-18 Noticeboards

Following consultation on the use and retention of Parish Council noticeboards, through the Pump and notices recommending removal on each board, requests to retain noticeboards at the Memorial Hall, East Lane Car Park, The Broadway, Butterfield Road/ Wick Avenue, Hilldyke and the Elephant and Castle had been received.

Councillor Reason proposed, seconded by Councillor Halford, and it was agreed that up to £5,000 per year be spent on oak noticeboard replacement working down the list of priority.

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Resolved:

To gradually replace identified noticeboards with oak engraved boards similar to that outside the Memorial Hall.

5799-18 Licence to plant in the highway verges

Hertfordshire County Council had noticed a number of instances of encroachments and obstructions to Bridleway 12 in the form of steps to garden gates. The Rights of Way Officer had advised his intention to write to resident of properties fronting the Bridleway. He advised that planting that had occurred to Bridleway verges could be licenced under section 142 Highways Act 1980 as the cultivation was of a limited nature and could be controlled by means of such a licence agreement. The Parish Council's views on regularising the verge cultivation were sought.

The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed, that the Parish Council had no objection to HCC licencing planting under s142 of the Highways Act 1980 on land abutting homeowner's properties.

Resolved:

- **To note the report.**
- **That the Parish Council had no objection to HCC licencing planting under s142 of the Highways Act 1980 on land abutting homeowner's properties.**

5800-18 Budget report

Resolved:

To note the report, expenditure was within budget.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 21:40

Dated this day of 2018

Chairman