

Minutes of the Greens and Amenities Committee Meeting Held on 1st July 2021

Councillors present: Cllr Margaret Crompton, Cllr Johnny Denis, Cllr Clare Herbert, Cllr John Kay, Cllr Gavin May (C), Cllr Marcia Morgan, Cllr Sarah Phillips, Cllr Gordon Sims, Cllr David Terry and Cllr Richard Turner

In attendance: Karen Crowhurst – Clerk/RFO
Carol Hodgson – Financial Administrator
Gail Metcalfe – Administrator

Members of the public: 4

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

1.1 Cllr Gordon Sims asked for nominations for the position of Chairman. Cllr Gavin May was happy to continue in his position as Chairman as no-one else came forward. This was voted on with all being in favour of Cllr Gavin May. It was therefore **resolved** that Cllr May be elected as Chairman of the Greens and Amenities Committee.

1.2 **Resolved:** That Cllr Gavin May remain as Chairman.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2.1 Apologies were received from Cllrs Barber and Whitlock.

3. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

3.1 A proposal was made for Cllr Sarah Phillips to be Vice-Chairman, and this was seconded. There were no other nominations. Cllr Sarah Phillips was voted in on a unanimous vote.

3.2 **Resolved:** Cllr Sarah Phillips remains as Vice-Chairman. The Chairman welcomed her back to the role.

4. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS & DISPENSATION REQUESTS

4.1 There were no declarations of interests or dispensation requests.

5. TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES FROM THE GREENS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 6th MAY 2021

5.1 **Resolved:** That the minutes of the previous meeting be approved and signed.

6. **PUBLIC QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS** - This item shall last not more than 15 minutes or at Chairman's discretion and no contribution shall last more than 3 minutes.

- 6.1 At 7.03pm the Chairman invited the Meeting to suspend Standing Orders and asked for questions or comments from members of the public present.
- 6.2 A member of the public spoke on behalf of his family regarding installing a memorial bench for his late father (separate agenda item point 10a for discussion)). He stated that his late father had been a real servant of the community having worked for the Lewes police force for 30 years, was heavily involved in the Scout Group in Ringmer and volunteered in the local area. Unfortunately, in line with current guidance, attendance at the funeral had been limited and he explained that it would mean a great deal to the family, some of whom still live in the Village, to be able to mark his passing with a memorial bench.
- 6.3 Standing Orders were reinstated at 7.05pm.

7. **ACTION POINTS - UPDATES AND PROGRESS – REPORT FROM THE CLERK**

- 7.1 The Clerk advised that the recent offer of a donation of some reeds to the Village Green pond was no longer relevant as they had now been rehomed to someone answering our post on Facebook.

8. **CORRESPONDENCE FOR NOTING OR ACTION**

- a) To consider any correspondence after this agenda has been published – for noting or action
- 8.1 There was no correspondence for noting or action after this agenda was published.

9. **HIGHWAY MATTERS** - A report from Cllr Phillips has previously been circulated for items c) - e)

- 9.1 Items c) - e) were taken first and discussed as a whole before resolutions were voted on separately.
- 9.2 Cllr Sarah Phillips had reported on her meeting with Nick Skelton from East Sussex Highways on 10th May 2021 and she hoped everyone had had a chance to read the paper. She noted that the first issue Council was asked to consider was the Community Match Scheme on Church Hill. Secondly, she stated that she would like RPC to apply for a weight restriction order on Church Hill, Norlington Lane and Potato Lane. She informed that she had undertaken extensive research on Weight Restriction Orders and found that Norlington Lane and Potato Lane fitted the criteria for such an order and so she felt it was time to, “give it a go”. Thirdly, she felt that RPC should respond to requests made by residents as well as reporting back on a meeting she had had with the Police on Monday 28th June 2021 re. parking restrictions at the end of Bishop’s Lane at the Lewes Road. The primary focus had been on the issue of preventing restriction at that bend as residents had been quite vocal about this in recent months. Cllr Phillips asked to take questions otherwise she would take the papers as read and invited Council to consider these three proposals.

- 9.3 The Chairman thanked Sarah Phillips for the time and effort put into the report and noted that it was interesting reading. As he felt it was a meaty document, the Chairman asked to go round the room to see who had any questions or comments to make. The following issues were discussed:
- 9.4 **Expense** – this was of immediate concern. Cllr Sarah Phillips explained that the upper limit the Council would have to pay was £50k as a few signs and a bit of paint is all that could be expected. No real construction could be made for that money. The first hurdle was applying and once the idea had been generally accepted, RPC would be asked to pay £500.00 to cover the cost of their surveyor and any consultation they felt was needed.
- 9.5 **Weight Restriction Order** – Cllr Sarah Phillips explained that there was in fact already a Weight Restriction Order on Bishops’s Lane at Norlington Lane, it was just that all the signs had disappeared. Cllr Phillips has been in touch with East Sussex about this and it is being investigated.
- 9.6 **The process** – It was explained that it would not be quick. The first step was to nominate double yellow lines to ESCC as part of their annual consultation on parking and they will incorporate it. Their next one is due out in December.
- 9.7 After these discussions, each point went up for a vote separately as follows:
- 9.8 c) To apply to ESCC for the “Community Match” scheme to address traffic concerns on Church Hill – To use earmarked reserve for speed reduction initiative if successful (Earmarked Reserve held £1,000)
- 9.9 This was voted on with a unanimous vote in favour.
- 9.10 **Resolved:** That the Council unanimously agreed to apply for the “Community Match” scheme with delegated authority given to Cllr Sarah Phillips in consultation with the Clerk.
- 9.11 ~~d) To apply to ESCC for a Traffic Regulation Order to impose parking restrictions on Bishop’s Lane~~
- 9.12 This was an Agenda error and should have read:
- d) To apply for a Weight Restriction Order on each of Church Hill, Norlington Lane and Potato Lane
- 9.13 This was voted on with a unanimous vote, noting that RPC delegate authority to Cllr Sarah Phillips and the Clerk to act on their behalf.
- 9.14 **Resolved:** That Council unanimously agreed to apply for a Weight Restriction Order at the above locations with delegated authority given to Cllr Sarah Phillips in consultation with the Clerk.
- 9.15 e) To apply to ESCC for a Traffic Regulation Order to impose parking restrictions on Bishop’s Lane

- 9.16 A proposal was made for ESCC Highways to look into the issue related to parking at the Lewes end of Bishop's Lane with a view to restricting parking in the future and that RPC delegate authority to Cllr Sarah Phillips and the Clerk to act on their behalf. This was seconded and voted on. All were in favour.
- 9.17 **Resolved:** That Council unanimously agreed to apply to ESCC for a Traffic Regulation Order as above with delegated authority to Cllr Sarah Phillips in consultation with the Clerk.
- 9.18 a) Update on reaction to Council's letter to Rupert Clubb, Director of Communities, Economy & Transport at ESCC
- 9.19 This was taken after points c) to e) had been discussed. Cllr Sarah Phillips reported on this as this had been delegated down to a meeting with Nick Skelton. The result is that SLRs are now back in place (see point b) below).
- 9.20 b) Progress on holding an SLR meeting
- 9.21 The Clerk stated that she had been in contact with Ian Johnson Traffic & Safety Manager, East Sussex County Council and they are in the process of agreeing a date for the SLR meeting (now set for 5th August 2021). The Clerk explained that this meeting does not have to tie in with ESCC but the aim, from their point of view, was to work with Parish Councils on any issues on planning and transport etc. Historically, these meetings were held quarterly but had died out recently but were now being reinstated per Council's request.
10. **VILLAGE GREEN**
- a) To consider 3 memorial benches for installation on the village green in memory of 3 Ringmer Residents
- 10.1 The Clerk explained that usual practice is for her to provide estimated costs and meet with the person requesting on the Village Green to decide on the appropriate location. She explained that we can accommodate three more benches on the Green.
- It was proposed to accept the 3 more memorial benches be installed and this was seconded. This went to a unanimous vote with all being in favour.
- 10.2 **Resolved** - That Council unanimously agreed to 3 more memorial benches.
- 10.3 The Clerk pointed out that RPC will have to consider on the next agenda if they want to agree to any more as the previous number limit had now been reached.
- 10.4 **Action:** Next Agenda point.
- 10.5 b) To consider a request for permission for children to fish in the Village Green Pond

10.6 Cllr Gavin May said that he had spoken with the Environment Agency who had explained that they are specifically interested in this for children's mental health and that there was a pot of money to improve fish stock in the pond. After some discussion, it was decided that the Clerk would respond to the lady saying we are already aware this is happening and then pass this to the environment agency asking them for their view and ask them what should be done. Cllr Gavin May said he would take this as an action when they come back to him. A proposal was made to write to the person requesting that we as a Council see no change as to fishing in the village pond. Members were asked if anyone objected – there were no objections.

10.7 **Resolved:** That Council agreed the Clerk write to the person requesting stating Council sees no change as to fishing in the Village pond.

10.8 **Action:** The Clerk.

10.9 c) To consider replacing remaining bins on the green from dog bins to dual use bins

10.10 After some discussion, a proposal was made to leave things as they are and as the bins come to their natural end, or if we get some clarification on recycling, we revisit once can have separate recycling bins (that will get collected separately from non-recycling rubbish). The Clerk was asked to find out from Lewes District Council how to go about getting a recycling bin and what it would mean to get it picked up and the implications i.e., cost to us per year. Once this had been found out, the Clerk is to circulate her findings to everyone.

10.11 **Action:** The Clerk.

11. SKATEPARK

11.1 a) Update on current position

11.2 The Clerk had had an officer-to-officer meeting with Chris Bibb, at his request, which she reported back on. Firstly, she said that he did not think that the consultation was in-depth enough. He explained that it would be necessary for RPC to go through procurement for LDC to release the funds under s.106. He, therefore, required a more enhanced consultation with users and the Clerk stated that this would need to be worked out. Secondly, because of the requirement to go through procurement, the timeframe was now autumn 2022 completion.

11.3 This delivery date was questioned as on the timeline the Clerk had sent out it said that construction will start in March 2022 with an opening date of June 2022. The Clerk said that this was different to what he had told her yesterday.

11.4 **Action:** The Clerk to clarify timeline with Chris Bibb.

- 11.5 The Clerk suggested a working group meet in the Parish office to start deciding on the tender i.e., operation hours, materials to be used etc. She said that we do have some quotes that could be used as a starting point. She suggested RPC run it by Chris Bibb to see if type of equipment chosen is appropriate. One of his suggestions was to remove all the equipment from the Village Green and start from fresh but she emphasised that it was Council's decision.
- 11.5 The Clerk went on to say that RPC have the location of Fingerpost Field and Chris Bibb was happy to assist with a survey, but we need to be clear to manage expectations that the Skatepark will not be delivered until autumn next year.
- 11.6 Clarification was requested on the consulting with residents. The Clerk said that we had attempted to consult but the school pupils from one of the schools had not responded to the newsletter request and a request for a table in the foyer to discuss with pupils had been declined. This meant that RPC would have to do a more in-depth consultation based on the documentation sent out to Members. The Clerk made it clear that the process needed to start again, and RPC need to get their heads around the table to decide on a more wide-ranging consultation with users.
- 11.7 b) To agree to work with Lewes District Council to go through the consultation, tendering process, and installation
- 11.8 This was discussed at length. One Cllr's impression was that Chris Bibb was trying to frustrate the decision and slow it down by changing everything already agreed by Council. The Clerk reiterated that they will not accept on quotations.
- 11.9 Cllr Gordon Sims informed he had spoken to the Director of Service Delivery who had agreed to provide extra resource to help us speed up the tender process and had agreed to meet with the Greens Committee shortly.
- 11.10 Cllr Gavin May said we had agreed we would not go for a destination skatepark but one just for the village. All the research done in the working group showed that we would not have to spend more than £100k net to provide our village with the skatepark required. We have allocation of £75k from our own CIL and we have £45k from the developer of Caburn Fields. All Lewes are worried about is if we have not gone through due process the developer could ask for their money back. Cllr Gavin May said the developer would not do that. He advised he had spoken to them to ask them to release the money to us, as is his right, explaining that RPC would not, therefore, need Lewes Sussex Council or their help. We can continue doing what we are doing. He believed it is the Council's fault we do not have a skatepark. We had 5/6 years to find a replacement site, we did not. We have not had a skatepark now for the past 18 months and he said he did not want to go without for another year and a half potentially as he did not think it is acceptable.
- 11.11 The question of how much it would cost RPC if LDC got involved in procurement and advice was raised. It was advised this would cost £2k.

- 11.12 A proposal was made to ask the developer to write to LDC instructing them to release the funds that are held for the Skatepark to us to be held in our CIL account locally and allocate it to the Skatepark. This was seconded.
- 11.13 At this point, a suggestion was made to wait for Cllrs Gavin May and Gordon Sims to meet with LDC to find out about the tender process and working on a way around it. It was also suggested that Hassocks and Horam be consulted, as they are outside of Lewes District Council, to find out about their tender processes. They may share these with us for us to review. It is a little prescriptive in that you do not have to tender to the degree LDC are suggesting. You are running a risk at times because you are forcing a developer to come up with a solution which is based upon somebody else's idea rather than what may be better practice at a later stage. There is a level of judgment required otherwise you tie yourself down too much. It was mentioned that as RPC are a public body, we have to be accountable and go through a tender process when spending public funds. It is important we follow due process.
- 11.14 **Resolved** – That Council agreed Cllr Gavin May ask the developer to write to LDC instructing them to release the funds that are held for the skatepark to us to be held in our CIL account locally and allocate it to the Skatepark. Cllr Gavin May to draft a letter to be sent from the office.

11.15 **Action:** Cllr Gavin May

12. **PLAY AREAS RENEWALS AND REPLACEMENTS**

a) Update on current position

12.1 The Clerk stated that the current position was much the same as with the Skatepark in that it was necessary to go through the tender process, decide what equipment was wanted and anything else to do with the procurement process. The Clerk again suggested using the drafts of the specifications that were already available once which equipment to be changed had been decided.

12.2 b) To agree to work with Lewes District Council to go through the consultation, tendering process, and installation

12.3 A proposal was made that we work with them bearing in mind they have all the money. This was seconded. All were in favour of this proposal.

12.4 **Resolved** – That Council unanimously agreed to work with Lewes District Council to go through the consultation, tendering process, and installation.

12.5 The Clerk asked for volunteers to deliver this. Cllrs Margaret Crompton, Clare Herbert and Marcia Morgan agreed to work with the Clerk on this.

12.6 **Action:** Clerk to arrange a date for this w/c 12th July 2021 as she is away next week.

13. **GENERAL PURPOSES MATTERS (this was taken after point 17)**

14. **FLINT WALL SURROUNDING THE CHURCHYARD**

- a) To commission a specialist to conduct a report to establish the structural integrity of the wall and identify any remedial work
- b) To authorise expenditure from non-committed CIL fund for £750.

14.1 Points a) and b) were taken together. Cllr Sarah Phillips explained that there are lots of cracks for which the cause is not known, it may be down to vibrations on the road, but we do not know anything until we do a survey. She said that no money had been spent on the wall for a number of years (since 2008). She explained that the Church was not responsible for the Church wall, that it was entirely the responsibility of the Parish Council. It was explained that the budget of £750.00 for the Consultant was CIL expenditure. It was noted, in his absence, that Cllr Whitlock may be able to assist in finding an expert. It was agreed that it was not necessary to go to quotation to spend this amount, although Cllr Sarah Phillips did stress that this amount was a guestimate.

14.2 A proposal to agree to a) and b) was proposed and seconded. 9 were in favour and 1 abstained.

14.3 **Resolved:** To commission a specialist to conduct a report to establish the structural integrity of the wall and identify any remedial work along with evidence of this using the non-committed CIL fund of £750.

15. **QUEENS GREEN CANOPY**

- a) To consider planting a tree as part of this initiative

15.2 Cllr Sarah Phillips explained that she had seen an initiative to plant a tree for the Platinum Jubilee next year and there was a campaign to encourage villages, towns, and cities to plant a tree in recognition of this. She said if RPC do it then we can encourage other community groups to do it as well.

15.3 Members were asked if they agreed to planting a tree and all were in favour.

15.4 **Resolved:** That Council unanimously agreed to plant a tree for the Platinum Jubilee next year.

- b) To agree the location of the tree if agreed (<https://queensgreencanopy.org>)

15.6 Jubilee Gardens was suggested as an appropriate location as it was already a commemorative area for the Queen and a reef was laid there for the Duke. It was agreed to revisit this in 6 to 9 months' time.

15.7 **Resolved:** To revisit the location of the Platinum Jubilee tree in 6 to 9 months' time.

16. **ANY REPORTS ON GREENS OR AMENITY MATTERS (BY LEAVE) – NOT DECISION OR DISCUSSION**

16.1 The Clerk has asked Councillor Marcia Morgan to send out some introductory letters to the local schools.

16.2 **Action:** Cllr Marcia Morgan

17. **URGENT ITEMS (CHAIRMAN'S DISCRETION) OR ITEMS FOR REFERRAL TO NEXT AGENDA OR APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE**

17.1 None.

17.2 **Resolved:** To exclude press and public at 8.30pm.

13. **GENERAL PURPOSES MATTERS (moved to the end of the Agenda)**

- a) To consider the three quotations provided for new Bus Shelters on A26 and Lewes Road ***Exclusion of press and public***

13.1 It was proposed to consider either Contractor A, Enclosed Double Entry, £4,200.00 or Contractor B, Double Front Entry, £4,395.00. After some deliberation, and the mention that this does not include the concrete base, it was proposed to go with Contractor A. This was seconded and voted on with 9 being in favour of Contractor A.

13.2 **Resolved:** That Council agreed to go with Contractor A, Enclosed Double Entry, £4,200.00.

13.3 b) To agree to pay the sum of £1,508.00 for the installation of 2 signs to the Parish Office, at the B2192 Harrisons Lane Junction and the Harrisons Lane and Greater Paddock

13.4 This was deferred until after the Office and Finance meeting to identify how this would be funded.

13.5 **Action:** Agenda point once funding identified.

18. **CLOSE OF THE MEETING**

The Chairman reserves the right to call a meeting earlier than 30th September 2021 should there be anything important to discuss.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.47pm.

Date of the next meeting
Thursday 30th September 2021 at 7pm