

HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **GROUND AND ENVIRONMENT** Committee held on 30 January 2017 at 7.30pm in the Parish Centre, Adastra Park, Hassocks.

PRESENT: Cllrs Jane Baker
Kate Bailey
Leslie Campbell
Peter Gibbons
Bill Hatton
Chris Hobbs
Darryl Sinclair
Ian Weir

In attendance: Ian Cumberworth –Parish Clerk
Tracy Bates – Deputy Clerk
Phil Mead
Georgia Cheshire (after item 3 - Minutes)
Cllr Sue Hatton
6 members of the Public

17/625 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Tony Copeland and Penny Wadsworth.

17/626 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Cllr Darryl Sinclair declared a personal interest in item 7.

17/627 MINUTES

627.1 **RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Grounds and Environment Committee meeting held on 28 November 2016.

There were no matters arising.

Georgia Cheshire joined the meeting.

17/628 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

628.1 Mr Malcom Roweth spoke on behalf of his son, Cameron, and Cameron's friends, who had made the original request to the Parish Council for a review of the skatepark over eighteen months ago, and had been actively involved in the project once it started. Mr Roweth read out the initial presentation that the boys had made to the Committee and reminded the Committee of the commitment that had been made by the boys and Hassocks Parish Council to this project.

628.2 Mr Ian Tovey spoke to the Committee about the skatepark project. Mr Tovey and his son had also been involved in the working group and he expressed his disappointment the way the sub-committee had been run. Mr Tovey was unhappy to see reference to appointing an outside consultant to look at play provision and the skatepark in the agenda, as he understood that a contractor was already in place to progress the skatepark project.

Mr Tovey had been asked by his son and some of his friends to pass on their feelings that the sub-committee had been disorganised and had let the boys down.

628.3 Ms Jean Sims spoke regarding the skatepark/play provision in Adastra Park. Ms Sims expressed her full support for the skatepark, however also requested that the Committee widened the project and considered provision for a wider range of children in addition to a skatepark. Ms Sims emphasised that she was not supporting one over the other, but asking that the children who are not keen skateboarders are also given a voice.

628.4 Ms Chantelle Martin echoed the requests of Ms Sims. Ms Martin asked that the provision in the park is looked at more broadly. Ms Martin reported that she had submitted a proposal for a Netball Court last year and that this had not been answered. The Deputy Clerk apologised for this and would follow this up.

A further member of the public entered the room.

628.5 Mr Frank Rylance spoke about two matters in item 2 on the Officer's Report: Bridlepath 3K. Mr Rylance believed that Bridleway 3K runs from Ockley Lane to Lodge Lane runs into East Sussex and asked therefore whether both East Sussex County Council and West Sussex County Council were working on a joint venture. If so this was to be commended.

Cllr Ian Weir explained that the Bridleway 3K was wholly in West Sussex, running from Oldlands Mill north to join Ockley Lane.

The Monday Group donation. Mr Rylance asked why a wheelchair accessible kissing gate was to be installed onto a footpath which, in his opinion, was not accessible by foot due to being incredibly muddy. He suggested that a site visit would be useful before progressing this project.

The Deputy Clerk explained that The Monday Group were acting independent of the Parish Council and that this was a project request from another source. The Committee had previously approved an annual donation of £750 a year to be paid to The Monday Group in recognition of the work carried out on behalf of the Parish Council, however the donation was to be used as The Monday Group saw fit. In thanking the Parish Council for the donation, the Monday Group had cited this project as a possible use of the money. Cllr Leslie Campbell commented that on his work with The Monday Group, he believed that the path was not in such an inaccessible state. Mr Rylance felt that it was not sensible project and re-suggested that a site visit should be undertaken.

17/629 OFFICER'S REPORT.

Item 3.3. Cllr Chris Hobbs questioned the application for a grant from Tesco to renovate the paintwork on play equipment in the children's play park and for the replacement of the Springy, when S106 money is available for play equipment. Cllr Hobbs also questioned the wisdom of spending money on improvements when a full review of play provision maybe agreed.

Georgia Cheshire reported that the Tesco Grant is for a maximum of £5000 and must be used for one complete project.

The Deputy Clerk noted that that the children's play park is for under 8's and that it is play provision for over 8's which is being reviewed. This was echoed by Cllr Ian Weir.

2 Members of the public left.

17/630

ADASTRA SKATEPARK AND PLAY FACILITIES.

Members had received a report (Agenda Item 6 Appendix 2) on the current situation with the skatepark and other play provision, and were asked to consider approving the appointment of an independent consultant to support the progression of this project.

Cllr Bill Hatton asked for clarification on items 6.1 and 6.2 on the report. There was some confusion as to whether these were two separate options, and he was concerned that the option of looking at projects wider around the village in partnership with Mid Sussex District Council could delay the progression of projects in Adastra Park.

The Deputy Clerk clarified that the two options were not to be considered in isolation, but were intended to be suggestions for discussion. In recognition of the fact that Adastra Park is limited in space there might be an avenue for fulfilling some provision within the park and extending other provision further afield. The report was not meant as a definitive recommendation to enter into partnership with other authorities, this was an example. It is possible that projects with local schools, or other local community groups could be considered for example.

Cllr Chris Hobbs reminded the Committee that prior to joining the Council he had originally put in a proposal last year requesting a review of Play Provision for over 8's in Hassocks. CH emphasised that he is in favour of developing the Skatepark, however expressed a concern about doing so in isolation. As an example of a good balance of provision CH distributed photographs of Henfield Park. This was discussed in detail.

It was noted that the Parish Council had already recognised a clear need for further provision for over 8's in Hassocks. This had been very clearly shown in the initial Neighbourhood Plan work. A survey carried out in Downlands Community School resulted in a Youth Club being the most requested facility followed by a skate park. Cllr Ian Weir felt that by progressing the skatepark the Parish Council were making a positive contribution towards starting to address those needs.

Georgia Cheshire emphasised the amount of hard work and effort that had gone into progressing the Skatepark project. The project had only been delayed due to excess demands on office resources due the Neighbourhood Plan and to changes in Clerks.

After considerable discussion it was agreed that all were in favour with the skatepark being progressed, but there was a clear recognition of the need to consider widening the scope of play provision. However concerns were raised about making any decisions which might lead to slowing down or even halting the skatepark project.

Concerns were also raised again over any partnership working and it was generally agreed that this was not a route to pursue.

The appointment of an independent consultant was discussed in depth. The Committee had been provided with a draft proposal of suggested ways in which the Consultant could provide a service to the Council (Appendix 1). The Deputy Clerk explained that the Consultant would work within any brief provided and that the scope and range of his work was down to the Committee to decide. Concerns were expressed that a decision to appoint the Consultant could result in further a further slowing down of progression, however it was noted that a slight increase in time may be preferable to ensure the right decisions are made could be of benefit in the longer term. It was questioned as to whether

there was a need to bring in a Consultant or whether the Parish Council could use the skills amongst Councillors to progress and widen the project.

After further discussion, it was accepted that the current location for the skatepark was the correct location, however it was recognised that there maybe potential to expand the footprint of this site.

630.1 It was **RESOLVED** that Mr Doyle would be appointed at a cost of £495 plus VAT plus mileage, to make a site visit to Adastra Park. Mr Doyle will be asked to review existing skatepark proposals, alongside the additional play facilities proposal produced by Cllr Hobbs and to provide a report to Committee on possible options for incorporating additional play provision for older children in Adastra Park in addition to providing a skatepark. Members requested that Officer's endeavour to have the completed report available by the next Grounds & Environment meeting

3 members of the Public left.

17/631 **CHRISTMAS LIGHTS.** To consider approving the continuation of the existing lighting contract for a further two years with Merlin Lighting.
Cllr Darryl Sinclair reported that in her role as Chair of Light Up Hassocks, she had found that Merlin Lighting provided an excellent service, and had been very flexible in meeting requests. DS also reported that there had been no difficulties in contacting Merlin and that any reported problems with lights were swiftly dealt with. Cllr Ian Weir also noted that should the Council decide to go out to tender for a new contract, this would place additional workload on the office, at a time when the new Clerk has just taken up post.

631.1 **RESOLVED** to approve a bolt on contract with Merlin Lighting until 2019 at a cost of £3,200 plus VAT per annum under the current agreement, with an option to amend the contract at an additional cost if necessary.

17/632 **HASSOCKS OUTDOOR PERFORMANCE SPACE.** Members were asked to consider approving a donation of £10,000.00 towards the cost of building an outdoor performance space at Downlands School. This would be a community facility as well as an educational facility.

A discussion took place as to whether Downlands School could apply for S106 money, but it was thought that this can only be applied for by a local authority. Some consideration was given as to whether the Parish Council could apply on behalf of this project as it was noted that MSDC holds a considerable sum of S106 money which the Parish Council should be looking at projects to apply for. Some concern was expressed over the timescale which is involved in applying for and being awarded S106 money in relation to the timescale of the project. However it was not clear what the projected timescale for this project was at this stage.

The project was positively received by the Committee as it was recognised there is very limited provision for the arts in Hassocks.

632.1 **RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** to Full Council that a financial contribution of £10,000 should be made to Downlands Community School towards the building of an outdoor performance space. This donation would be subject to the project being fully funded.

17/633 **LONDON ROAD BUS SHELTERS.** Members were asked to consider the condition of two bus shelters on London Road. One located at the bus stop on the west of London Road just north of Stonepound crossroads, and the other on the east of London Road just south

of Little Copse Road. Members were also asked to consider approving a monthly cleaning contract on these two bus shelters.

It was noted that both bus shelters are in varying states of deterioration, and due to their enclosed nature, the shelters provide a perfect location for anti-social behaviour. Members had been provided with a quote for the complete replacement of a bus shelter with a shelter of a style similar to two newer shelters installed by HPC. The proposed new shelter is marginally deeper to provide a bit more protection to passengers from the elements. The cost inclusive of removal of existing shelter and installation of the new shelter would be in the region of £10,000 per shelter.

Cllr Bill Hatton left the meeting.

After some discussion it was agreed that both shelters were in need of replacement. Some discussion was given as to design and glazing. It was decided that the Deputy Clerk would produce a full quote for the replacement of both shelters which would be presented to Full Council for consideration.

Cllr Bill Hatton re-joined the meeting.

633.1 **RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** to full Council that funding is agreed for the replacement of two bus shelters located at the bus stop on the west of London Road just north of Stonepound crossroads, and the other on the east of London Road just south of Little Copse Road. Full costings and details to be presented to Full Council.

633.2 It was **RESOLVED** to approve a monthly cleaning contract on both of the above shelters in the interim. To be carried out by Burgess Hill Town Council at a current total cost of £37 plus VAT per clean for both shelters.

17/634 **JAPANESE KNOTWEED.** Members were asked to agree the appointment of Sussex Environmental Pest Solutions Ltd to carry out treatment and monitoring of Japanese Knotweed in at the bottom of the North Field of Adastra Park at a cost to Hassocks Parish Council of £1,912.50.

It was noted by the Committee that a joint investigation with Mid Sussex District Council has shown that a mother plant of Japanese Knotweed is growing at the bottom of the North Field. Hassocks Parish Council therefore has a duty of care to carry out treatment and to cover the costs of doing so. As this is also partly on Mid Sussex District Council land, MSDC will make a contribution to the cost. The work will be carried out by a MSDC appointed contractor and the quotation included chemical treatment over three years with two further years monitoring

634.1 It was **RESOLVED** that Sussex Environmental Pest Solutions Ltd should be appointed to carry out treatment and monitoring of Japanese Knotweed in at the bottom of the North Field of Adastra Park at a cost to Hassocks Parish Council of £1,912.50.

Cllrs Bill Hatton and Sue Hatton left the room.

17/635 **STREET TREES.** Phil Mead recapped on the planting which had taken place in 2016 and informed members that a refund of £1200 had been received from the WSCC arboroculturalist, Jim Mellor. JM had funded some of the replacement tree planting through his own WSCC budget. PM informed Members that the planned roads for tree planting for 2017 are Manor Avenue and Farnham Avenue.

PM also announced that he will be leaving the village shortly and will therefore no longer be involved in the Hassocks Tree Group nor be able to continue in his position as a co-opted member of the G&E. As Penny Wadsworth is a member of the Tree Group and the G&E Committee, PM informed the Committee that PW will take over his role in managing the Street Trees and liaising with HPC, subject to Committee's agreement.

Cllr Leslie Campbell expressed his sincere thanks to Phil for all his hard work on behalf of the Council, this was echoed by the entire Committee. It was agreed that Phil would be sorely missed.

It was AGREED that Penny Wadsworth would take over the role as the representative for the Hassocks Tree Group on the G&E Committee.

17/636 **MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL GRANTS** Cllr Ian Weir asked the Committee to note Appendix 7 which listed a range of grants awarded to various local projects by MSDC. IW informed the Committee that MSDC have a significant revenue from property throughout the district and that a proportion of this revenue is to be put back into the Community in the form of grants. This was NOTED for future reference.

17/637 **PARKLANDS ROAD ALLOTMENTS SECURITY**. Members were asked to consider ongoing issues with security at the allotments. There had been another break-in recently and allotment holders had suffered damage to sheds and loss of equipment. A report by Tony Copeland was considered, alongside photographs showing damaged fencing bordering the park.

There was some discussion about fence ownership around the allotments and it was noted that MSDC have stated they do not own any of the fencing around Parklands Copse. However Cllr Jane Baker informed the Committee that the land owner of the land south of Parklands Copse confirmed that the existing fencing had not been installed by himself or the previous landowner, he believes that the fencing is owned by MSDC.

Various options of reducing access to the Allotments were discussed and it was considered that high palisade fencing around the entire border of the allotments may be the best solution. Planning restrictions and cost were noted as significant considerations, and the Deputy Clerk was asked to explore both further. It was suggested that quotations should be obtained for the supply and installation of 6ft, 8ft and 10ft palisade fencing around the allotments and reported back to the Committee.[Action: DC]

It was also suggested that the top of the entrance gate to the allotments could be wrapped with barbed wire or painted with anti-climb paint. Haha would be asked if this was something they could undertake. [Action: DC]

A further request made by Tony Copeland was considered, this was the removal of the small Oak tree growing hard against the perimeter fence, and seems to be the main entry point. This was considered by the Committee and although it was agreed that the tree could be potential source of entry, some concern was expressed that the tree was a reasonably sized oak and a complete fell of the tree would be a loss. It was noted that it might be possible to raise the canopy of this tree rather than completely fell it. This would be explored by the Deputy Clerk in consultation with Tony Copeland and reported back to the Committee. [Action: DC]

Cllr Kate Bailey left the meeting

17/638 **PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY.** Cllr Leslie Campbell informed the Committee that due to his recent accident and subsequent recovery period, he had been out of action for recent months and therefore was not aware of any matters to report.

Cllr Ian Weir noted that the hedgerow along the London Road Hassocks – Burgess Hill Cycle path had been cut back, and congratulated WSCC on ensuring this was completed prior to the nesting season.

Cllr Kate Bailey re-joined the meeting.

17/639 **URGENT MATTERS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN.** There were no urgent matters.

17/640 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING.** 27 February 2017

17/641 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS:** In view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted Councillors would be referred to the Confidential Agenda. Any members of the public or press are in attendance were requested to withdraw from the meeting in the public interest.

641.1 **RESOLVED** the Meeting is closed to the public and press to enable confidential matters to be considered.

The two members of the Public and Cllr Kate Bailey left the room, the meeting was suspended until Cllr Bailey returned to the room.

17/642 **MINUTES.**

642.1 **RESOLVED** to accept the Confidential Minutes of the Grounds and Environment Committee meeting held on 28 November 2016.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.40 pm.

SignedChairman

Date.....

Hassocks Parish Council

Grounds & Environment Committee Meeting 30.1.17

APPENDIX 1

Play England Consultancy

Potential support from Play England for Hassocks Parish Council to look at the play and informal recreation provision within Aadastra Park including the skate park and play provision.

Play England practice is in the areas of design, community engagement, youth engagement, conflict resolution, play and youth and advocating for the shared use of public spaces by children, teenagers, families and adults. Below are some initial thoughts that could be offered to the Parish Council.

Stage 1

Initial Support - One day consultancy session, involving Play England consultant, Phil Doyle to visit Aadastra Park in Hassocks with an Initial assessment, to assess the current site, look at current plans and consider proposals to include integrating improvements to play provision as well as together with skate and wheeled sports provision within the park. Following the site visit a discussion with those above and any other key person(s) will take place. The site visit and first meeting should involve someone from the Parish Council (Client) either Town Clerk and or a key Councillor. The approach would be exploratory, to review the relocation site in question and provide a written report of recommendations for the Council

Costs: - The one-off day will incur the cost of £495 plus travel expenses and VAT

Stage 2

Design Development Proposals and Community Engagement stage

After consideration of the initial recommendations from the Play England consultant, the Parish Council could request further support from Play England to develop a detailed proposal to look at developing a Landscape led designed scheme effectively a 'masterplan' that considers an overall plan for the park incorporating new play, skate and informal recreation provision within the park. This plan will also include the relationship with the Memorial Gardens, Community Pavilion and sports provision within the park.

We would if commissioned by the Parish Council produce a fully costed proposal outlining our assessment of the site, potential options, the professional services we could offer to the Parish Council including: developing a design brief for the site, prepare sketch layout plan, design and specification details, community engagement and involvement event/ activities with residents including children, young people, adults, stakeholders, Parish Council staff and Councillors. Production of CAD drawings. For procurement purposes undertake Tender preparation and Tender evaluation and on site supervision services etc. if required by the client.

Costs -to be identified if additional assistance as outlined above is thought useful, all parties will be in a better position to define more precisely what shape that further assistance should take after consideration of the initial recommendations. And of course, any potential costs beyond the initial day described above here, can be tied down when a scope of works for any stage 2 works is agreed.

Phil Doyle

Play Consultant for Play England