

## HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of the **GROUND AND ENVIRONMENT** Committee held virtually on 3 September 2020 at 7.30pm.

Attendees: Cllrs Jane Baker, Frances Gaudencio, David Hammond, Bill Hatton (from item 6.1) and Ian Weir.

In attendance: Tracy Forte – Deputy Clerk  
Ian Cumberworth – Parish Clerk  
Cllr Claire Tester  
Cllr Sue Hatton from Item 6.1

**GE20/18 APOLOGIES.** Cllrs Leslie Campbell, Peter Gibbons, Frank Rylance and Alex Simmons and co-opted member Tony Copeland. Absent without apology Cllr Kate Bailey and Kristian Berggreen.

**GE20/19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.** There were no declarations of interest.

**GE20/20 MINUTES.**

It was noted that the minutes from the meeting held on 9 July 2020 omitted apologies which had been received from Cllr Leslie Campbell. This was amended and signed by the Chair following the approval of the Committee

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Grounds & Environment meeting held on 9 July 2020, with the approved amendment as above, be signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

**GE20/21 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.** There were no members of the Public present.

**GE20/22 OFFICER'S REPORT.** Member's noted the Officer's report (Appendix 1 of the Agenda). The Deputy Clerk also informed Members that the WSCC Access Ranger, Sue du Chemin had announced that she would be leaving her post from Friday 4 September. Members noted that Sue had been very supportive to the parish and proactive in addressing Public Rights of Way matters. The Deputy Clerk confirmed that a message had been sent to Sue thanking her for her hard work.

#### **PARKLAND ROAD ALLOTMENTS**

**GE20/23 Division of Plots.** Members were invited to consider increasing splitting five half plots to assist with reducing the allotment waiting list. Members were informed that over the last 18 months, the allotment waiting list has steadily increased with 39 residents waiting for a plot, and the average wait being 18mths - 2years. Therefore it was requested that the Committee approve the splitting of a further five half plots as they become available, and where it is deemed suitable, to provide 37 quarter plots and 22 half plots for rent.

Members discussed the demand on allotments and the aspiration to increase allotment availability. It was noted that the Council should consider requesting land for allotment provision as part of the proposed new developments planned for the village.

Cllrs Bill Hatton and Sue Hatton joined the meeting.

**GE 20/23.1** It was **RESOLVED** to **approve** the dividing of a further five half plots as they become available and where it is deemed suitable to provide 37 quarter plots and 22 half plots for rent.

**GE 20/24** **Allotment Rent.** Members were invited to approve an increase in the allotment rent from £36.00 per half plot to £38.00 from 1 October 2020 based on inflation and a review of the water charge.

Using the agreed formula, applying inflation to the basic rent for a half plot for 2019/20 would make an increase of 17p (0.83%) bringing the total overall rent to £35.80.

However, it was noted that the water charges, which form part of the formula, had not been increased since 2016. Following a review of water use and cost since 2018, it was recommended that the water charge element of the rent was increased by £2.00 per half plot from 1 October 2020, with a review in July 2022.

Members reviewed the calculations as set out in Appendix 3 of the agenda.

Using the previously adopted principle that the rent should be rounded up or down to the nearest pound, it was proposed that the total rent should be increased to £38.00 pa per half plot.

**GE 20/24.1** It was **RESOLVED** that rent for Parklands Road Allotments would increase to £38.00 per half plot and £19.00 per quarter plot for the year commencing 1 October 2020.

**GE 20/25** **SPORTS CLUBS FEES.** At the meeting of the G&E Committee on 9 July 2020, the full rate Winter Pavilion Charge was approved as £31.80, and the discounted rate as £16.00 (min 20/08.1). The discounted rate should have read as £15.90. Members were therefore requested to approve the Winter Pavilion discounted rate as £15.90 for 2020/21.

**GE 20/25.1** It was **RESOLVED** to **approve** the Winter Pavilion discounted rate as £15.90 for 2020/21

**GE 20/26** **ADASTRA PARK MASTERPLAN.** The Clerk reported to the Committee that the play areas have now been completed, with the markings on the basketball area being installed last week. The facilities are proving extremely popular however limited social distancing is occurring in some areas. Specific high-risk pieces of equipment were initially cordoned off, however the tapes were being removed daily and therefore these items are no longer isolated and are reliant on users, parents and carers applying the appropriate level of caution in line with Coronavirus safety restrictions. Whilst it is a real positive to welcome so many people to the park, unfortunately this has also seen a significant increase in litter. Despite numerous bins being placed in easily accessible locations, many users continue to drop litter on the grass resulting in an unsightly mess and a significant amount of work for the Groundsman each morning.

The Clerk acknowledged the work of the Groundsman to ensure that the large amount of turf laid in the play areas has survived. This is despite being laid at a far from ideal time of year and particularly given the exceptionally dry weather conditions and high temperatures this summer.

The Clerk confirmed to Members that the s106 contribution of just under £33,000 from Mid Sussex District Council(MSDC) has now been received towards the play installations.

The Clerk informed the Committee that a request has been received from Bendcrete (Skate park contractor) to release the Contract Retention sum of £2,500 (net). He has sought confirmation from them that they have undertaken an inspection on or around the anniversary of the completion of the contract, to confirm no defects were identified. The Clerk has requested sight of any inspection report prior to the releasing any funds.

Cllr Jane Baker expressed her thanks on behalf of the Committee to the Clerk for his hard work in overseeing the project and ensuring it reached completion despite the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. This was echoed by members and extended further to express thanks to Cllr Frances Gaudencio and the members of the entire Adastra Park Masterplan Working Group, for their hard work in driving this successful project.

Cllr Frances Gaudencio requested a meeting of the Masterplan Group in the near future to reflect and review the whole project so far and to consider future steps. It was agreed that this would be useful and that Cllr Gaudencio would set up a meeting.

#### **GE 20/27**

**DOG WASTE BIN.** Members were invited to consider correspondence received from the South Bank Residents Association (SBRA) for the Parish Council to adopt responsibility for a dog waste bin which was installed privately by a resident of South Bank some years ago. (Appendix 4 of the agenda). The Deputy Clerk informed members that MSDC were not taking any further requests for new dog bins and that should the Council decide to adopt responsibility for this bin an external contractor would need to be employed.

The request was discussed in detail by the Committee. The Committee acknowledged that the adoption of this bin would necessitate the need to reconsider the Council's approach to other dog bin requests in the village and have a financial impact for the Council.

However it was also felt that the role of the Parish Council is to serve the village as a whole. It was noted that the new developments in the village, both those under construction and those which have not yet commenced, are very likely to be private estates. Yet there will be an increase in the population of the village and most likely in the number of households which are dog owners, as will be the case throughout the many proposed developments in Mid Sussex. Therefore it was considered that it was not acceptable for MSDC to reject responsibility for Dog Waste bins on private land, as in the case of housing developments. Members also questioned why MSDC is not accepting any further requests for new dog bins at this current time.

The Committee agreed that this matter should be discussed in further detail at a future meeting and the Deputy Clerk was requested to action the following:

- i. To ascertain clarity on the MSDC policy for the responsibility and emptying of dog bins on private land, particularly unadopted developments.
- ii. To explore the cost of employing a private contractor to empty one bin, and also all of the bins under the responsibility of Hassocks Parish Council.

- iii. To write to all three MSDC Cllrs for Hassocks to request that the District Council reviews the current policy to refuse all requests for the installation of new dog bins and the lack of responsibility for the installation and collection of dog bins on adopted estates and roads.

The Committee agreed that once further information had been gathered, this matter should be reconsidered at a future meeting. The Deputy Clerk to contact the representative of the SBRA to provide an update.

**GE 20/28 MONDAY GROUP ANNUAL REPORT.** Members were invited to note The Monday Group Annual Report and Accounts 2019 for information (Appendix 5 of the agenda). The Parish Council makes an annual grant to The Monday Group West in recognition of the support provided by the organisation in the maintenance of the Council's assets. Members found the report informative and expressed their ongoing thanks to the Monday Group for its hard work.

**GE 20/29 URGENT MATTERS at the discretion of the Chairman for noting and/or inclusion on a future agenda.** There were no urgent matters.

**GE 20/30 DATE OF NEXT MEETING** 22 October 2020 at 7.30pm

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.16pm

Signed .....Chair Date.....