

## HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **GROUND AND ENVIRONMENT** Committee held on 24 April 2017 at 7.30pm in the Parish Centre, Adastra Park, Hassocks.

**PRESENT:** Cllrs Peter Gibbons  
Jane Baker  
Kate Bailey  
Leslie Campbell  
Georgia Cheshire  
Peter Gibbons  
Bill Hatton  
Chris Hobbs (From 7.40pm)  
Darryl Sinclair  
Ian Weir

In attendance: Ian Cumberworth –Parish Clerk  
Tracy Bates – Deputy Clerk  
Tony Copeland (Chair of Hassocks Allotment Holders Association)  
Rachel Paget from the Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust (OART).  
1 member of the public

**17/753** **APOLOGIES.** Apologies were received from Penny Wadsworth.

**17/754** **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.** None.

**17/755** **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Grounds and Environment Committee meeting held on 30 March 2017.

There were no matters arising.

**17/756** **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** There was no public participation.

**17/757** Following a request from the Clerk, the Chairman proposed moving item 9, Rain Planter, to the beginning of the meeting and item 8, Adastra Skatepark and Play Facilities, to the end of the meeting. This was AGREED by Committee.

**17/758** **CO-OPTION.** Cllr Ian Weir explained that Sally Booker has been actively involved in the Traffic and Parking matters in the village, and asked members to consider a proposal for Sally Booker to be co-opted onto the Grounds and Environment Committee in this capacity. Members unanimously AGREED the co-option of Sally Booker onto the Grounds and Environment Committee.

**17/759** **RAIN PLANTER.** Approval was sought from Members for a request from HKD Transition, Hassocks Amenity Association and OART to install a rain planter outside of the Parish Centre, and to carry out the installation as part of a public workshop. Rachel Paget from OART had attended the meeting to answer any questions Members might have. A proposal had previously been circulated to Members for consideration. (Appendix 1) Cllr Bill Hatton noted that he would have found the inclusion of a plan useful to show exact location and dimensions. Rachel

Paget informed Members that as this was a proposal the group had not wanted to presume approval of the Rain Planter at this stage.

Cllr Chris Hobbs joined the meeting.

Two possible locations near to downpipes at the front of the Parish Office had been suggested and shown on the proposal document. The Committee was unanimously in favour of the installation of a planter and the two locations were discussed. It was noted that Location 1, as shown on the proposal, would not be suitable as it is very close to a Gas Access Chamber which needs to be left clear. However, Location 2, on the north-eastern corner of the Parish Office was considered to be a good location.

Concerns were raised about the risk of vandalism and it was agreed that steps could be taken to limit the risk, however that this should not be a restriction to installing the planter. The aim is to reduce flood risk and to promote the installation of residential Rain Gardens around the village, a project which the Parish Council supports fully.

It was unanimously AGREED that a rain planter would be planted by HKD Transition, HAA and OART, to be located alongside the downpipe on the north-eastern corner of the Parish Office.

Rachel Paget left the meeting.

**17/760**     **HANGING BASKETS.** In Penny Wadsworth's absence, the Deputy Clerk informed Members that everything was progressing well with the hanging baskets and that these would be in situ by the end of May.

**17/761**     **STREET TREES.** In Penny Wadsworth's absence, the Deputy Clerk informed Members that the letters regarding Street Trees for 2017/18 had been recently distributed to residents in Manor Avenue and Farnham Avenue by West Sussex County Council, and that the Parish Office had already received requests from interested residents.

**17/762**     **PARKLANDS ROAD ALLOTMENTS.**

Allotment Security. Following concerns regarding a spate of break-ins at the allotments, various options for security had been explored, and Members were asked to consider the options as follows:

- i.        To leave the allotment fencing as it stands, and to accept the level of potential risk of occurrences of trespassers and to continue to monitor the situation OR
- ii.       To approve the expenditure of £3450.00 plus VAT on the installation of new gates and fencing across 24m of the Allotment Boundary taking into consideration the experience of other Councils and the Contractors observations. At present there is currently £1400 allocated in the Grounds Project Budget therefore any additional funding would need to be met from General Reserves. OR
- iii.      To purchase additional mature preventative plants which could be planted in the more vulnerable areas of the allotment boundary and to review periodically.

*Example cost: 1.5-1.8m bare root blackthorn plant £2.89 per plant. 3-5 plants per metre. Available until mid to late May. Estimated cost £350.00 (supply only)*

Tony Copeland reported that his personal preference would be to install a natural defence system. It was also noted that the installation of an area of fencing may prevent entry at certain points at the allotment boundary, however entry could still be gained elsewhere along the boundary. In addition information from various sources suggests that the likelihood of unauthorized access remains despite the installation of palisade fencing.

It was noted that the fencing and the gate may need replacing at some point in the future although were still currently functional.

Following a discussion of the three options, it was proposed that defensive planting, using blackthorns, was a preferable option and most likely the most effective. Concern was expressed as to whether planting near to the fencing would hinder any future replacement fencing. It was therefore agreed that the planting would need to be set back from the fence sufficiently.

Tony Copeland was asked whether HAA members would be able to undertake the planting of the blackthorns. Tony expressed a willingness to do so, however reported that the last planting had been a challenge as only a small number of members had assisted. It was noted that the volume of planting required this time was considerably more, and therefore would be labour intensive. Members therefore proposed that the costs of external labour should be included in the project.

It was RESOLVED that sufficient 1.5-1.8m bare root Blackthorn plants should be purchased to provide adequate hedging at vulnerable locations along the northern boundary of the allotments, at an approximate cost of £350 plus VAT. To be funded from the Grounds Projects Budget.

It was RESOLVED that associated labour costs to plant the Blackthorns would be covered by the Parish Council, subject to the Clerk's approval once a cost had been obtained. To be funded from the Grounds Project Budget.

Concerns were raised regarding watering the Blackthorns. It was noted that the use of hosepipes is not allowed at the Allotments, however it was AGREED that a dispensation should be made for the watering of the Blackthorns.

It was AGREED that Tony Copeland would be responsible for watering the blackthorns with the use of a hosepipe.

The use of hosepipes on the Allotments was discussed, and it was agreed that this could be re-visited at a later stage.

**17/763** **PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY (PROW)**. Verbal Update (Cllr Leslie Campbell). Leslie Campbell reported that Sue Phillipson the Public Rights of Way Ranger from WSCC would be carrying out her inspection of the PROW in Hassocks next week.

Cllr Jane Baker raised a concern regarding a missing fingerpost in Clayton. The fingerpost had previously directed walkers from the north of footpath 15C across Clayton recreation Ground and towards the Cinder Track 14C. However in its absence, walkers are frequently taking a route across private land which includes an arable field. This would be passed onto the PROW ranger by the Deputy Clerk.

**17/764** **URGENT MATTERS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN.** There were no urgent matters.

**17/765** **DATE OF NEXT MEETING.** 30 May 2017 Cllrs Georgia Cheshire, Bill Hatton, and Chris Hobbs gave their apologies in advance of this meeting.

**17/766** **ADASTRA SKATEPARK AND PLAY FACILITIES**

A draft proposal had been received by the Parish Clerk from the Consultants for the formulation of an Adastra Park Masterplan and was distributed amongst members for consideration. The proposal set out a suggested engagement process as below, and a draft timetable

Costs had also been provided, however due to the commercially sensitive nature of these, the Clerk advised these would need to be discussed confidentially should Members wish.

In the first instance, Members were asked to consider the proposal and whether there was a desire to pursue a Consultant lead process to provide Masterplan for the whole of Adastra Park.

The proposal was discussed by Members. The importance of involving the young people originally involved in the Skatepark proposal was raised, and it was noted that a positive aspect of the engagement process is that it would involve all stakeholders. It was also noted that although there would be some additional workload for the office staff, the benefit of using a consultant lead approach would mean that much of the work would be carried out by the Consultants.

Concerns were raised about the time scales involved and the subsequent delays to any progression, there was also some concern as to whether the costs involved would require the need to go out to tender, which would again delay the process further.

There was a consensus that should the Council go forward with a Masterplan, there must be a commitment to acting on the plan and for short term and longer term investment to improving facilities in Adastra Park. The Council would need to budget over a 10 year period.

There was some concern that the plan may require a greater level of expenditure than the Council is able to commit to. However the Parish Clerk advised that the Consultants maybe able to help source funding streams, and also to note that the Consultants would work within a given brief which could include a level of expenditure.

Members were positive to the concept of a consultant lead Masterplan in principle, however in order to consider this further, proposed costs needed to be discussed.

The member of the public left the meeting.

**17/767** **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS:** In view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted it was proposed that the meeting should be closed to the public and the press. Any members of the public or press are in attendance were requested to withdraw from the meeting in the public interest.

**17/768** **RESOLVED** the Meeting is closed to the public and press to enable confidential matters to be considered.

Members were advised of the indicative cost provided by the Consultants for the Masterplan. The Deputy Clerk had not yet had the opportunity to discuss this further with

the Consultants and the opportunity to do so would allow exploration as to how realistic the allocation of time was and whether there was any room for reducing the costs.

It was AGREED that in order to satisfy Standing Orders, quotations should be sought from two other Consultants for a similar Programme.

The Clerk was asked to contact Play England to obtain details of further Consultants who could provide a similar service within a similar timescale.

**17/769** There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.45pm.

Signed .....Chairman

Date.....