

HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

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

PRESENT: Cllrs Jane Baker
Kate Bailey
Leslie Campbell
Georgia Cheshire (during public participation)
Peter Gibbons
Bill Hatton
Chris Hobbs

In attendance: Ian Cumberworth –Parish Clerk
Tracy Bates – Deputy Clerk
Penny Wadsworth
8 members of the public

17/707 APOLOGIES

Cllrs Darryl Sinclair and Ian Weir, and Tony Copeland.

17/708 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST. None

17/709 MINUTES

RESOLVED to accept the minutes of the Grounds and Environment Committee meeting held on 27 February 2017.

There were no matters arising.

17/710 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Sian Phillips spoke regarding item 5 on the agenda, Natural Flood Management. Sian expressed concern that due to the excessive parking in Hassocks, contractors are not able to sweep the roads and clear the drains properly which then contributes to excess surface water collecting on roads. Other authorities close roads temporarily to allow road sweeping to take place – notice is given to drivers and parking is not permitted for a period of time. Sian asked that the relevant authority responsible for sweeping roads in Hassocks should be asked to consider the same strategy.

Frank Rylance asked if the Chairman would consider agenda Item 10, Adastra Skatepark and Play Facilities first. This proposal was put to the Committee and it was agreed that Item 10 would be considered following agenda item 5, SuDS Mapping Project and Natural Flood Management update.

Nathan Reeve spoke about item 10, Adastra Skatepark and Play Facilities. Nathan expressed concerns that the proposed Skatepark was aimed primarily at teenage boys and did not take into account other groups within the village. Nathan presented the Committee with a petition which he indicated contained 200 signatures – this had been collected in one day and included signatures from children and staff from all three schools within the village and parents. The petition request was as follows:

‘We are happy for Nathan Reeve to represent our views about the facilities being provided for children in Hassocks at the council meeting. We don’t want our money spent on a Skatepark, we would like to see other facilities for example a chill out area out of the rain,

Parkour, Table Tennis table, good size rock climbing wall, more exercise equipment, basketball and multi-purpose courts. Better play park for older children.

We believe the Skatepark encourages bad behaviour, just recently a friend of ours was attacked at Burgess Hill Skate Park and having a bigger facility encourages lone older children into Hassocks and increases problems and risks to our safety.'

Nathan also handed out some photographs of examples of play equipment located at other parks which could be considered for Adastra Park. Mrs Reeve supported Nathan's comments and reported that there is a lack of facilities in Hassocks for older children and for families in general. She expressed concern that a considerable amount of money has been ear-marked by the Parish Council for the Skatepark only. Mrs Reeve also noted that Burgess Hill Skatepark seems to have ongoing problems with anti-social behaviour and asked whether this was something Hassocks wanted to encourage.

Cllr Georgia Cheshire joined the meeting.

Cllr Peter Gibbons took the opportunity to clarify some of the points. He reported that a petition had been received previously in favour of a Skatepark and that had initiated the project. The current Skatepark is coming to the end of its life and Hassocks Parish Council (HPC) have committed to improving it. Cllr Gibbons agreed that there is a gap in provision for over 9's, and noted that the Parish Council is aware of this and that the aim is to address this issue alongside the provision of an improved Skatepark. In relation to concerns about increased anti-social behaviour, Hassocks is not proposing a destination Skatepark, more a Skatepark similar to that in Henfield.

Mrs Reeve also asked that provision for families with children of varying ages could be considered.

Mr Reeve added that the trampoline net in the young children's playpark is the newest piece of equipment to be installed, and yet it seems to have very little function. It is probably the least used piece of equipment in the park, and he therefore questioned whether any consultation had taken place before the selection of this piece of equipment.

17/711

SuDS MAPPING PROJECT AND NATURAL FLOOD MANAGEMENT

Update from Bob Kenhard (Hassocks Amenity Association), Rachel Paget (Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust) and Juliet Merrifield (HKD Transition). Various papers were circulated and the following presentations were given:

1. Rachel Paget - An overview of Natural Flood Management. It was explained that the aim is to work with natural processes to reduce flooding. Using natural dams, retention areas and planting additional trees. The Committee was informed as to how these systems can be used and a document was circulated showing ways in which natural flood management could be used in Adastra Park to reduce flooding.
2. Juliet Merrifield - Sustainable Drainage Systems. (SuDS) It was explained that in urban areas water flows off roofs, down driveways, along roads and into streams which can result in the streams flooding. SuDS looks at ways of reducing this through the use of green roofs, rain butts, and permeable driveways and so on. A Mapping Project is underway which is intended to audit and map SuDS sites in Hassocks.
3. Bob Kennard - Raingardens. A photo was circulated of a recently installed raingarden at the URC Church in Hassocks. A rain box planter is situated at the end of a downpipe and the flow of water is stemmed through the rain box. It is hoped that the Parish Council building may be able to accommodate rain gardens. This would promote the project and support the aim to reduce surface water, as well as provide attractive planters.

Members thanked the group for a very interesting presentation.

Further details of each presentation and additional papers can be found in Appendix 1.

Rachel Paget, Juliet Merrifield and Bob Kennard left the meeting.

17/712 ADASTRA SKATEPARK AND PLAY FACILITIES

To consider the content of the report provided by Playlink providing options for consideration regarding play provision in Adastra Park.

A detailed discussion took place regarding the content of the report and it was noted the Consultants had digressed from the original brief, however their report had raised some interesting views. It had raised the issue as to whether HPC should consider taking a more strategic approach to the future enhancement of Adastra Park prior to commencing the improvements to the skate park. The suggested approach was to develop a phased plan setting out the short term, medium term and long term objectives to deliver initiatives within the park.

After a detailed discussion, Members preference was for a more strategic approach to be adopted, however concern was expressed over any further delay to the committed skate park. It was reiterated that the Committee were not looking at an 'either/or' situation and that improvements to the Skatepark were committed to. However, it was also agreed that opportunities to improve the overall facilities on offer within Adastra Park should also be considered parallel to any Skatepark improvements. It was suggested that in order to provide for the future, the best path forward would be to undertake further consultation, which although may result in a short- term delay, such an approach would assist the Council in making decisions for the longer term. As part of any consultation it would be important to engage with all stakeholders in the park including sports groups and other users.

2 Members of the Public left during the discussion.

It was unanimously agreed that the current Skatepark location is the most suitable site. However, it was suggested that it would be valuable to explore the possibility of creating additional play facilities, alongside the proposed Skatepark improvement. The ideal would be to provide an area which gives flexibility to address future needs.

Discussions followed as to whether HPC could undertake its own consultation or whether independent consultants should be brought in. It was felt by some that the Committee had sufficient experience to manage the consultation in house, and that Hassocks Councillors were better placed to make decisions on the village than outside consultants. Nevertheless, it was also recognised that due to different expectations and aims, this may be difficult to achieve. An outside consultant would ensure the process is totally objective and provide relevant knowledge of sport and play provision.

It was therefore PROPOSED that the Clerk should look into the costs involved in order to produce a plan for provision in Adastra Park and that Members agree deferring a decision on proceeding with the Skatepark until this has been done. Members were clear that this process would need to be completed within a clear and realistic time frame.

This was unanimously AGREED.

2 Members of the Public left.

17/713 ADASTRA PARK FUN FAIR

Members were asked to note that the annual Fun Fair has been booked to take place at Adastra Park over the weekend of 5-7 May 2017. This was noted.

17/714 HANGING BASKETS

Penny Wadsworth reported that a site visit had been carried out with the Contractor and that brackets were to be installed very soon. The baskets are in the process of being planted now and will be displayed in May.

17/715 STREET TREES.

Penny Wadsworth informed Members that for 2017-18 trees were to be planted in Manor Avenue and Farnham Avenue. The Hassocks Tree Group would soon be in touch with West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) Arboriculturalist, Jim Mellor, to undertake the process. There would also be an infill of damaged or removed trees as usual. Concern was expressed over a tree near the corner of Mackie Avenue/Grand Avenue as it had been noticed that a car was repeatedly parking up on the grass verge and was touching the tree.

Members were also informed that the Tree Fund had recently received a £1500 bequest from the Hassocks Field Society, following a donation to the group from a former member. The Field Society had asked that trees from this bequest were planted in Manor Avenue as the founder member of the Field Society had lived there.

Penny Wadsworth left the meeting.

Cllr Georgia Cheshire left the room.

Cllr Georgia Cheshire re-joined the meeting.

17/716 ADASTRA FACILITIES HIRE CONDITIONS, FEES AND CHARGES.

Members were asked to approve the fees and charges for the hire of Adastra Park facilities for 2017-18 and to approve Terms and Conditions of Hire for all facilities. (Previously circulated.)

Members were also asked to consider whether an increase in casual hire charges for the Tennis Courts should be implemented as these have remained unchanged for a number of years.

Members discussed the Public Hire of the Tennis Courts and were informed that there had been a drop in public hiring over the last year or so. Various considerations were discussed including the arrangements for obtaining the keys to access the facility together with possible impact that Hassocks has a local Private Tennis club with courts available for Public Hire. Members considered reviewing the booking process, however it was noted that in light of the proposed review of facilities in Adastra Park it should be deferred for the time being.

It was PROPOSED that no changes should be made to fees or arrangements surrounding the Tennis Courts until a full overview has taken place.

There were three votes in favour, three against and one abstention. The Chairman cast a vote in favour and the proposal was carried.

It was AGREED that the increases in charges and fees for the use of Adastra Park facilities as proposed should be implemented for 2017-18. (Appendix 2)

It was AGREED that the Terms and Conditions of Hire for Adastra Park Facilities as proposed should be implemented for 2017-18. (Appendix 3)

17/717 PROPOSAL FOR THE INSTALLATION OF A GOAL POST IN ADASTRA PARK, NORTH FIELD.

Members were asked to consider a proposal by Cllr Chris Hobbs for the installation of a single goal post in the North Field, Adastra Park for informal use.

Cllr Hobbs informed Members that in order to allow goal mouths to recover, goal posts are removed for the summer. Cllr Hobbs asked Members to consider approving the installation of a single 9v9 goal in the North Field of Adastra Park which could be removed during the winter if necessary.

The Clerk and the Groundsman had located a potential location towards the North boundary of the field, situated between the senior pitch and the mini pitches, however the Clerk expressed some concerns about the impact this may have on the adjoining pitches and would therefore have to be monitored. The goal would be a socketed permanent goal, however could be removed as necessary and the sockets covered for safety. It was proposed that the goal would not have a net.

The Clerk informed the Committee that the Senior Goal posts were also in a considerable state of disrepair and would need to be replaced this season therefore would also require to be funded. However, from initial discussions with MSDC it was believed that S106 money would be available to fund both the single goal and the replacement posts. The Clerk indicated that there may be alternative funding available for the main posts via the Football Foundation.

It was noted that a goal had previously been sited in the North Field which had resulted in numerous complaints from residents who frequently had footballs kicked into their gardens. The goal had subsequently been removed. However, this was in a different location within the park.

It was PROPOSED that the Clerk should be authorised to proceed with the installation of the 'summer' Goal Post in the agreed location and the replacement of the main goal posts. The cost of the single goal should be limited to a cost up to £1000 and the Clerk be requested to submit funding applications for both the single goal and replacement goalposts via section 106 funds or Football Foundation funding. In the event of the applications being unsuccessful the Capital Reserve of £3000 allocated to play equipment for 2017-18 should be utilised.

This was unanimously AGREED. It was also AGREED that the Clerk would monitor the condition of adjoining pitches and that the post should be removed should any damage become apparent. (Action: Clerk)

17/718 HASSOCKS TWINNING ASSOCIATION.

Members were asked to agree a suitable location and species for the planting of a tree in Adastra Park as part of the Twinning Association 25th Anniversary Celebrations. Verbal Report (Cllr Georgia Cheshire). Cllr Cheshire provided members with a report of suggested locations and species of tree.

It was AGREED that an Amelanchier 'ballerina' should be planted in the first section of the Memorial Garden to the south of the path. This location would mirror the tree opposite to the north of the path.

17/719 PARKLANDS ROAD ALLOTMENTS.

Members were asked to note that allotment security is still being reviewed. This was noted.

Verbal Update (Tony Copeland). The Deputy Clerk reported that Tony Copeland had sent his apologies. He had asked that Members be informed there was nothing to report from the allotments and that Tony was still exploring fencing prices. He is in the process of arranging a meeting with a contractor.

17/720 PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY.

Cllr Leslie Campbell informed members that the next Public Rights of Way (PROW) inspection would take place in May by the WSCC ranger. Cllr Campbell had informed the Ranger that a signpost needs re-erecting on the junction of footpaths 19K and 21K.

Cllr Hobbs asked about reporting graffiti along PROW, as he had noticed offensive graffiti along one of the local footpaths. The Deputy Clerk informed him that the Burgess Hill Town Council maintenance team remove or paint out graffiti, and this would be referred to them. (Action: DC)

17/721 URGENT MATTERS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN FOR NOTING AND/OR INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA.

The Chairman informed the Committee that a request had been received from a young person regarding a very recent passing away of a 16 year old friend who was a Hassocks resident.

The request was for permission to hold an evening gathering in Adastra Park in remembrance of their friend. It is anticipated that between 80-120 family and friends would be present at the event and permission was also requested to light fireworks and candles. The event would be held under parental supervision.

Members were asked to consider the request for the event to be held in Adastra Park and if so, to consider whether fireworks were to be permitted.

The Committee were very keen to support this special event, however concerns were expressed over the use of fireworks. Therefore, it was AGREED unanimously that the event would certainly be permitted but that the Council would be unable to approve the use of Fireworks or Chinese Lanterns.

17/722 DATE OF NEXT MEETING. Monday 24 April 2017 at 7.30pm.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.40pm

SignedChairman

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