

HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **GROUND AND ENVIRONMENT** Committee held on 27 June 2019 at 7.30pm in the Parish Centre, Adastra Park, Hassocks.

Attendees: Cllrs Jane Baker, Leslie Campbell, Georgia Cheshire, Peter Gibbons, Bill Hatton, David Hammond, and Ian Weir.

In attendance:

Tracy Forte – Deputy Clerk
Juliet Merrifield (HKD Transition)
Margaret Ford (HKD Transition)

GE19/18 APOLOGIES. Apologies were received from Cllrs Frances Gaudencio and co-opted Member Tony Copeland. Absent without apology Cllr Kate Bailey.

GE19/19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST. There were no declarations of interest.

GE19/20 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR. At the last G&E meeting it was agreed to carry forward the election of a Vice Chair as several members were absent from the meeting, and no expressions of interest had been received. The Deputy Clerk informed the Chair that to date, there still had not been any expressions of interest.

Therefore, as it was not compulsory to have a Vice Chair, it was **AGREED** that the Committee would continue without this role being filled for the time being.

GE19/21 MINUTES.

RESOLVED to accept the minutes of the Grounds and Environment Committee meeting held on 30 May 2019.

GE19/22 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION. There was no public participation.

GE19/23 As Juliet Merrifield and Margaret Ford had attended the meeting to answer questions regarding agenda item 10.2 Rain Garden Signage, the Chair proposed considering this item first. All agreed.

GE19/24 Rain Garden Signage. Members had the opportunity to view an A1 proof of the proposed signage for the Rain Garden as provided by HKD transition and were invited to approve signage as proposed.

Members were very impressed with the sign and were in full agreement that it was informative and attractive.

19/24.1 It was **RESOLVED** to approve the A1 sign design as seen at the meeting for the Rain Garden in Adastra Park.

Members were then invited to consider where the sign should be located in the vicinity of the garden. Members made a site visit to the rain garden to ascertain the most suitable location for the sign. After some consideration it was agreed to install the sign mid-way along the rain garden, adjacent to the path.

19/24.2 It was RESOLVED to approve the installation of the rain garden sign sited between the rain garden and the path slightly north of the bench. The exact location to be approved by the Clerk.

The Deputy Clerk informed Members that due to the excessive rain earlier in the week, the rain garden had worked very well and had stored a considerable amount of water which then drained away gradually over 36 hours. However this meant that at one point the bowl of the garden was full of water and resembled a small pond. The Deputy Clerk had some concerns over the safety of this for young children, given that the area was not fenced nor was there any signage advising caution. Therefore a temporary sign was erected until the water drained.

19/24.3 Members were therefore requested to consider whether a more permanent 'caution' sign might be required. This was discussed by Members and it was AGREED that no signage was required at this stage.

It was also AGREED that the rain garden would be monitored over the winter months to assess the situation.

The Chair thanked Juliet Merrifield and Margaret Ford for attending the meeting, and for all of the hard work HKD had put into flood mitigation around the village.

Juliet Merrifield and Margaret Ford left the meeting.

GE19/25 OFFICER'S REPORT.

19/25.1 **Anti-Social Behaviour.** In addition to the antisocial behaviour reported in the Officer's report, the Deputy Clerk also informed Members that the new Safety/Information signage installed at the Skatepark had been destroyed earlier in the week, and then completely removed the previous day. The Deputy Clerk reported that she was currently in discussions with a local sign company as to the best options for a replacement sign. She also informed Members that she had been advised that safety signage was a recommendation, not a legal requirement although noted that the Council would endeavour as far as possible to ensure signage was in place at the park.

Members expressed concern over the level of anti-social behaviour which is currently occurring both in Adastra Park and throughout the village. It was noted that there has been a higher level of Police presence and that the Clerk has been in communication with the local Police Sergeant. A preliminary meeting is also due to take place between Police representatives and invited community members including the Clerk to discuss the current situation. However Members requested that assurances were obtained from the Police that all possible approaches to enforcement and available laws were currently being utilised to address the anti-social behaviour currently being seen. (ACTION: CLERK)

19/25.2 **Science Trail.** The Deputy Clerk reported that she had met with Liz Jeavens who was working with the local Youth Group to produce the Summer Science Trail to take place in Adastra Park over the school holidays.

The trail consists of four individual practical science activities. The materials for each one will be contained in a box and hidden in a specific location in the park. A small A5 booklet will be produced providing clues to the location of the box and some information about the experiment. The booklet would also specify that adult supervision would be required for small children undertaking the activities. The booklet would be distributed via school book bags, downloadable on the Youth Club website and from the Parish Office.

The Deputy Clerk confirmed that Public Liability insurance was held by the organiser and a risk assessment would be carried out.

Members were very supportive of the activity and particularly the engagement between the youth club and younger children in the village. There was some concern over the risk of damage or vandalism to the boxes, the Deputy Clerk reported that this had been discussed with the organiser and that locations had been selected to minimise the risk. It was also agreed that it was preferable to trial the activity than to not do it at all.

GE19/26 **PARKLANDS ROAD ALLOTMENTS.** There was nothing to report.

GE19/27 **PARKLANDS COPSE.** The Parish Council manages Parklands Copse which incorporates a woodland trail that leads onto land owned by Lodge Farm. Cllr Ian Weir informed Members that since the establishment of this woodland trail, users have enjoyed the benefit of access onto permissive paths onto Lodge Farm that in turn links up with Public Rights of Way (PROW).

This benefit to the community was originally realised as the landowner received funding from the EU not to work this land and to permit access to the land by way of permissive paths. However the funding arrangement through the EU is due to expire in the near future and the intention is that the landowner will recommence working this land.

The Council became aware of the position regarding the EU funding and in light of the key benefit of accessing the Lodge Farm land, the Chair and the Clerk held a preliminary meeting with the landowner to explore opportunities to retain the benefit of this access for the community. The landowner is keen to work with the Council to ensure that the community enjoy the benefit of the woodland trail and the walks beyond, however it will need to be recognised that this piece of land will now be worked. In light of the EU funding coming to an end, the conditions attached to this, including the provision of access to the land, will no longer apply. The landowner technically could therefore withdraw access to his land. If this were to occur this would significantly reduce the enjoyment of this walk and the benefit of Parkland Copse.

The landowner has indicated that this is not what he would wish to do and he is keen to work with the Council. At the preliminary meeting discussions took place as to what arrangements would need to be put in place to retain access to Lodge Farm land and to maximise the ongoing benefit of Parklands Copse. If the Council were unable to negotiate an arrangement to access the farm land, the walk would cease at the boundary of Parklands Copse.

It was suggested that to protect the interests of both parties that a formal agreement should be entered into between the Council and the landowner so that access can be secured for a defined period (to be determined).

It is proposed that this agreement would also detail:

- The meterage of permissive path that would be made available and would be managed by the landowner to existing standard.
- Agree an annual sum to be payable by the Parish to continue to enjoy the permissive path rights. (to be negotiated)
- Term (length of agreement)
- Provide signage acknowledging that the path is being funded by HPC.
- Permit the installation of a kissing gate or similar for access from the corner near Parklands Copse. Subject to agreement on positioning

Members were requested to consider in principal that the Council negotiate an arrangement with the landowner to secure the ongoing benefit of access to Lodge Farm land and to instruct an appropriate legal representative to draw up a suitable agreement between the parties. Members were fully in support of this proposal.

19/27.1 It was RESOLVED that in principal that the Council should proceed with negotiations with the landowner of the field adjoining the eastern access to Parklands Copse towards securing ongoing benefits of access.

19/27.2 It was RESOLVED that an appropriate legal representative should be instructed to draw up a suitable agreement between the parties.

GE19/28 SID DEVICE. Members were invited to agree in principle a proposal for the Parish Council to apply to the CIF fund that is allocated by County Councillors at the CLC, for funds to purchase a mobile Speed Indicator Device (SID) for the parish.

Members considered this proposal and a vote was taken. 1 member abstained.

It was AGREED that Members were in favour of progressing an application for funding to purchase a mobile SID. (ACTION: DEPUTY CLERK)

GE19/29 ADASTRA PARK.

19/29.1 **Japanese Knotweed.** It was noted that HPC had a duty to ensure the safe and effective removal of the confirmed Japanese Knotweed.

Members RESOLVED to approve the appointment of Japanese Knotweed Sussex to carry out treatment and monitoring of Japanese Knotweed in The Garden of Remembrance, Adastra Park at a cost of £1475.00 over five years. To be funded from the Adastra Park Grounds Maintenance Budget.

19/29.2 **Adastra Park Masterplan.** Cllr Jane Baker updated Members that the Adastra Park Working Group had met to consider the next phase of the Masterplan and that the small children's play area was one area of focus. However it was noted that this was at a very early stage and that it was necessary to allow the new Skatepark to settle before moving onto further projects.

19/29.3 **Adastra Skate Park.** Cllr Jane Baker and Cllr Georgia Cheshire confirmed the following details:

- The Skatepark opening was to take place on Saturday 13 July between 12 noon and 2pm.
- It had been arranged that the park would be opened by the three young men who had been pro-active in the initial instigation of the Skatepark project, and

a local girl who is a very keen skater. The young men were very pleased to be invited to open the Skatepark, however unfortunately realised that they had a previous commitment on this date. Therefore further thought is to be given as to who will open the Skatepark with the girl who has agreed to do it.

- Cllr Georgia Cheshire would be the appointed first aider for the event.
- Police presence had been requested to support the event.

GE19/30 PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY (PROW).

Footpath 11C. Cllr Ian Weir reported to Members that following discussions with WSCC, improvements are to be carried out to a section of Footpath 11c which becomes very waterlogged in the winter months. This would be funded wholly by WSCC. This news was well received by the Committee.

Footpath 7K. Cllr Georgia Cheshire informed Members that clearance along of Footpath 7K (at the end of Semley Road/ Little Copse Road) had been carried out by The Monday Group. Cllr Cheshire expressed her gratitude to The Monday Group for assisting with improving this footpath, and this was reiterated by Members.

The Deputy Clerk reported to the Committee that she understood there would be no weed spraying programme undertaken by WSCC this year, and that this maybe a matter for consideration at a later G&E meeting. Currently, members of the public who report concerns or overgrown vegetation are being advised to report this to WSCC via Love West Sussex. It is understood that any vegetation which is considered to be affecting visibility or causing a significant obstruction would be treated.

GE19/31 URGENT MATTERS at the discretion of the Chairman for noting and/or inclusion on a future agenda. None.

GE19/32 DATE OF NEXT MEETING. The date of the next meeting is Thursday 25 July 2019.
There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.48 pm

SignedChair Date.....