

HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **GROUND AND ENVIRONMENT** Committee held on 26 September 2019 at 7.30pm in the Parish Centre, Adastra Park, Hassocks.

Attendees: Cllrs Jane Baker, Leslie Campbell, Frances Gaudencio, David Hammond, Bill Hatton and Frank Rylance.

In attendance: Tracy Forte – Deputy Clerk

GE19/45 APOLOGIES. Apologies were received from Cllrs Kate Bailey, Georgia Cheshire and Peter Gibbons and co-opted Member Tony Copeland

GE19/46 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST. There were no declarations of interest.

GE19/47 MINUTES.

RESOLVED to accept the minutes of the Grounds and Environment Committee meeting held on 25 July 2019.

GE19/48 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION. There were no members of the Public present.

GE19/49 OFFICER'S REPORT.

Members noted the Officer's report as in the agenda.

Science Trail – Adastra Park. Members were very pleased that the Science Trail had proved such a success. The Deputy Clerk reported that Ms Jeavens had worked very closely with the Parish Office throughout the planning process and had been very responsive and flexible in ensuring the organisation of the activity was such a success. Members asked the Deputy Clerk to pass on their sincere thanks to Liz Jeavens and to the young people involved who had created and implemented this excellent project.

Pavilion Roof. The Deputy Clerk informed Members that the Pavilion Roof was leaking into the bar area. This has been an ongoing problem due to the roof being accessed externally via a drain pipe, the drain pipe being pulled away from the building and rain water leaking into the building rather than down the pipe. This has been repaired once, but in a very short space of time the problem has resurfaced. Stronger fixings are to be used to attach the drain pipe and hopper, however options for a longer term deterrent are currently being explored by the Clerk. The Deputy Clerk reported that the damage to the roof has created additional costs for the Council, however the other concern is the danger to those climbing onto the roof and the risk of physical harm.

Anti-Social Behaviour. The picnic bench in the top south west corner of the South Field has been subject to extensive offensive graffiti recently from school pupils who use the bench. This has been painted over on several occasions. The Deputy Clerk reported that the Parish Office has been well supported by Downlands School in working to reduce this graffiti and that there is an ongoing communication between the school and the Parish Office.

Hanging Baskets. The Deputy Clerk informed Members that the Hanging Baskets were coming to an end this year and would be taken down over the next few days. Members agreed that the baskets had been very colourful and attractive this year and were pleased with the impact they had had on the village street scene. Thanks were expressed to Penny Wadsworth who had been a great support in making initial contact with businesses and in supporting the office to initiate the project. Members also passed on their thanks to the Deputy Clerk for organising the project.

GE19/50 PARKLANDS ROAD ALLOTMENTS. The Deputy Clerk informed Members that renewal of tenancy letters had been sent out and almost half of allotment holders have renewed already. On confirmation of their wish to renew, a copy of the revised tenancy agreement is being sent out for signing, with FAQs and a path plan so that all plot holders are clear of allotment regulations and expectations. Members again noted their thanks for the hard work carried out by Jane Barker in the Parish Office in managing the allotment.

GE19/51 BURIAL GROUND GATES. The Deputy Clerk updated Members on the situation with the Burial Ground entrance. At the previous G&E meeting, Members had been informed that the wooden entrance gates had been damaged by a vehicle and had to be removed. The entrance was then being protected by the three drop down bollards. The bollard on the west of the entrance had been previously run into and damaged which meant it could not be used. The Deputy Clerk reported that since the last meeting, a second bollard had now also been run into and damaged. Therefore currently only one bollard is working to allow vehicular access to the Burial Ground and a long term effective and practical solution for securing the entrance of the Burial Ground is urgently required

The intention had originally been to explore various options for securing the entrance prior to presenting a full report to the Committee. However the recent additional damage had necessitated a more reactive approach given that should the third bollard be damaged, access to the burial ground would be severely compromised. The Deputy Clerk informed Members that given the need to resolve the situation quickly, a quote had been sought from the company who had previously supplied and installed the Height Restriction barrier in Adastra Park for a similar quality low defender barrier. This company was recommended and used by Mid Sussex District Council for security barriers.

In the first instance, the Deputy Clerk proposed that Members considered whether a defender barrier gate was a suitable option for the Burial Ground entrance as opposed to further stronger bollards, wooden gates or any alternatives that the Committee may prefer.

Members discussed various options for the entrance, however were all in full agreement that the Burial Ground was an important asset which should be suitably protected. Appearance was also considered an important factor. Members agreed that a robust gate was required given the repeated incidents of damage to date and fully supported the installation of a barrier gate.

Having made this decision, Members were then invited to consider the following options for a barrier gate.

Option 1: The total cost to supply and install 1 No. 7.0m Defender vehicle barrier c/w/integral lock and lock open post would be £4,285.00 excl. VAT. The barrier would be galvanised steel, if a coloured barrier is preferred this is an option for an additional cost of £375 excl. VAT.

Option 2: A second quote had been requested from the same company for a less robust similar style gate. The cost for this would be £3,695 excl VAT in galvanised steel plus £375 excl. VAT for a coloured option.

Option 3: The Deputy Clerk had also sought a quote from a company which did not make a site visit and supplied the gate on the dimensions provided by the purchaser. The gate was a similar design but less robust and lower quality. However this would allow a saving of approximately £1,750 excl. VAT.

Option 4: A further quote was also awaited from one additional company, but this had not yet been supplied.

Members did not favour an inferior quality gate and whilst acknowledging the additional expense of the first quote, Members were in full agreement that this presented the most appropriate preferred long term solution. Members also favoured using a previously proven company in terms of quality and product. The majority of Members expressed a preference for a green coloured barrier rather than galvanised.

The Deputy Clerk informed Members that prior to placing any orders, further practical information would be confirmed with the chosen supplier to ensure ease of opening and long term function of hinges etc. It was also noted that the barrier would have accompanying signage in terms of opening hours etc.

The Deputy Clerk had informed Members previously in the written report that the Repair and Renewals budget code had £1,500 remaining in it and that £3,500 was in an EMR reserve for the Burial Ground.

Members agreed that there was a need to proceed with installing a barrier without further delay and after considerable discussion it was proposed that a defender barrier was installed as described in Quote 1 at a cost of £4285 plus VAT with green coating an additional cost of £375 plus VAT.

The Deputy Clerk noted that should Quote 4 present a lower cost 'like for like' option then this would be actively explored.

GE19/51.1 It was **RESOLVED** to proceed with the purchase and installation of the defender barrier as described in Quote 1 - 7.0m Defender vehicle barrier c/w/integral lock and lock open post at a cost of £4,285.00 excl. VAT to have a green coating at an additional cost of £375 excl. VAT. Expenditure to come from Burial Ground EMR £3,500 and £1,160 Burial Ground Repair and Renewals Fund.

GE19/52 ADASTRA PARK MASTERPLAN. Cllr Frances Gaudencio provided a verbal update on the recent activity within the Adastra Park Working Group. The key matters discussed were as follows:

1. Skatepark Area. The Clerk and the Consultant are exploring the possibility of installing a basketball hoop and suitably surfaced area adjacent to the Skatepark and the installation of further bins and seating in the area.
2. Children's Play Area (North Field). This is the next area of focus and it has been agreed that this should become an area to accommodate children up to the age of 12. The Consultant is currently drafting a design brief to provide an overall area of Play Value as opposed to focussing on individual items. It is hoped that this will be presented to the Working Group by mid-October for initial comments, with the aim to complete a draft design ready to invite tenders by early 2020.
3. Multi Use Games Area (MUGA). The group are still keen to pursue the installation of MUGA in Adastra Park and this remains a priority within the overall Masterplan.

Members reflected on what had been achieved so far in a relatively short time, and noted that the installation of the Rain Garden and the improvements to the Garden of Remembrance had been achieved at very little cost. Cllr Jane Baker was thanked for her work with organising the Garden of Remembrance volunteer group, and Cllr David Hammond for his more recent involvement with the group. All Members were very appreciative of the work carried out by the volunteers. It was also noted that the Masterplan Plan was initially a five year project and it was important to remember this. The aim is to keep the Masterplan moving forward in a realistic and achievable timeframe.

The Committee also wished to put on record its thanks to Cllr Gaudencio for all her hard work with the Adastra Park Working Group and the Park Masterplan.

GE19/53 MASTERPLAN FUNDING. Cllr Jane Baker introduced a written report provided by the Clerk requesting approval for the preparation of an application for a s106 funding bid in relation to the planned improvements to the Children's Play Area. Members were provided with a hard copy of the report for consideration.

The report informed Members that to enable the project to progress to the next phase of the Adastra Park Masterplan, it is likely additional external funding will need to be secured to support this. There are likely to be some potentially smaller initiatives that may come forward prior to this but these would not necessarily be reliant on external funding streams. To meet the proposed delivery timescale (2020/21) this additional funding would need to be secured/agreed in principal as soon as practical before the end of 2019. Therefore any bid for section 106 funding would have to align with MSDC grant panel meeting timetable.

It is anticipated that the final budget for this phase will come forward to this committee in the near future to enable the committee to approve the overall value of the scheme prior to formal submission.

Members views were sought to authorise the Clerk to commence/preparation of the necessary papers to seek additional funding from MSDC via s106 funding which has been specifically set aside for play space in relation to Adastra Park (circa £30 k). The Council needs to ensure any submission to MSDC to gain access to this funding is co-ordinated to enable our projected tendering timelines to be delivered. (Jan 2020)

The Clerk is seeking authority to prepare the application and supporting papers to bid for s106 funding from the District Council in readiness for submission once the budget for this phase has been finalised.

Members considered the report.

GE19/53.1 It was **RESOLVED** to approve the preparation of necessary papers by the Clerk to seek additional funding from MSDC via s106 in support of the next phase of the Masterplan for improvements to the Children's Play Area in Adastra Park.

GE19/54 ADASTRA PARK TREES. Members were invited to consider two options for the removal of ivy on trees along Orchard Lane. The Deputy Clerk reported that ivy had been severed on these trees following remedial safety works carried out in 2015, however the ivy has since grown excessively again. Recently a branch fell from one of the trees into Orchard Lane and removal of the ivy is considered necessary to allow a clear visual inspection of the trees and also to prevent the ivy acting as a sail in high winds. The Committee were presented with options for the removal of the ivy:

Option 1 for the severing of the ivy only, which would prevent the current growth from continuing. This would leave the greenery in situ for some time until the leaves dropped. The cost of severing the ivy is £200 excluding VAT.

Option 2 for the complete stripping and removal of the ivy at a cost of £650 excluding VAT.

Members were informed that there is £1,550 currently in the budget for Tree Maintenance in Adastra Park. Members were informed that it was considered preferable to enable a full visual inspection of the condition of the trees under consideration, therefore it is suggested that completely stripping the ivy would be the most beneficial course of action.

Members discussed this matter in detail, concern was expressed as to the impact of completely stripping the ivy as it serves an important function for wildlife. However after detailed consideration, it was agreed that enabling a full visual safety inspection of the trees should take priority in this instance. It was also suggested that advice should be sought with regard to a longer term solution to preventing the regrowth of the ivy.

GE19/54.1 It was **RESOLVED** to approve the expenditure of £650 excl. VAT for the full stripping and removal of ivy on the trees along the northern end of Orchard Lane.

GE19/55 PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY (PROW). Footpath 11C. Cllr Ian Weir informed Members that the resurfacing of the northern section of this footpath had now been completed and the path was greatly improved. It was noted that the resurfacing would be paid for by Hassocks PC, however this would be reimbursed by WSCC from s106 funding.

GE19/56 URGENT MATTERS at the discretion of the Chairman for noting and/or inclusion on a future agenda. None.

GE19/57 DATE OF NEXT MEETING. The date of the next meeting is Thursday 24 October 2019.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.26pm

SignedChair Date.....