

REPORT OF THE OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE
HELD ON 22ND NOVEMBER 2016

MEMBERSHIP & ATTENDANCE

Chairman: * Tony Edwards

Councillors Jo Clark
* Raj Khiroya
* Jill Leeming
* Alison Preedy
* Steve Watkins (ex officio)
* Sarah Wright
Jane White (ex officio)

* Denotes members present

Officers present Yvonne Merritt – Clerk
Claire James – Deputy Clerk
Andrew Goddard – Parish Ranger

There were three members of the public present.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Village Day

To consider the revised plan for Village Day and seek commitment from other councillors to the event and the budget implications.

See Minute 16/60 Summer Event

16/46 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were apologies for absence from Cllrs Jo Clarke and Jane White

16/47 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

16/48 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 20th September 2016 which had been taken at Full council and agreed with one correction to the date of the last minutes to the 19th July 2016 be approved as a true and correct record.

16/49 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the minutes that would not be covered under the agenda.

16/50 FINANCIAL COMPARISON STATEMENT 2016/17

The Chairman advised that the apparent overspend on line 330 / 4705 Grounds Maintenance was due to the fact that the money for the wall at Christchurch had been received in the previous year and therefore showed as an overspend on this current year when the work had been done.

The Committee

RESOLVED

To note the report.

16/51 OFFICER'S REPORT

Recommendation 1 Cemetery Hedge – It was noted that whilst the arch was looking splendid at the current time, it could no longer be cut under safe working practices by the Rangers and other options were cost prohibitive.

The Committee

RESOLVED

To remove the arch and to bury the water pipe under the path with grating to cover the pipe on the path to allow access to it should it be necessary.

This was proposed from the Chair by Cllr Tony Edwards and carried unanimously.

Cemetery – the daily removal of mole hills in the Cemetery and the number of flower vases that were present at any one time were noted. Both of these require daily attention from the Rangers.

Dog Bins – It was noted that since the installation of the additional bins at the War Memorial Hall and Shepherds Bridge permissive parking areas no further overspill had been noted.

Litter Bins - The issue of domestic waste being put in several of the litter bins around the Common was noted. It was noted that unless someone was actually caught in the act of dumping rubbish, there was rarely anything in the rubbish to identify the household responsible and therefore there was little that could be done. Different types of litter bin were however being considered that might help alleviate the problem.

The Committee

RESOLVED

To note the report

16/52 REVISED BUDGET 2016/17

The Clerk briefed Members on the contents of the report highlighting several points. The urgent works on the trees at Christchurch and the laying of the gravestones that had failed the stress testing this year were additional costs. With a further two year programme of tree work resulting from the survey, it was suggested that further ongoing provision for this would now need to be made with a proposed three year cycle of surveys to be established. In response to a Member's question the Clerk advised that the Council had taken on the maintenance of the Closed Churchyard in the mid eighties by agreement of the Chair of the Council at that time. The operation of the maintenance contract for the

churchyard was discussed and it was noted that this was due to be re-negotiated shortly with the Church and the results of this would be brought back to the next Open Spaces.

It was noted that there was an overall net increase of £12433 on the year.

The Committee

RESOLVED

To accept the revised budget for 2016/17

This was proposed from the Chair and carried unanimously.

16/53 DRAFT FEES AND CHARGES 2017/18

The Committee

RESOLVED

To accept the 2017/18 Fees and Charges as detailed in the report.

This was proposed from the Chair and carried unanimously.

ALLOTMENTS

16/54 OCCUPATION

It was noted that there had been no issues with the trial of the bees at The Swillett allotment site that had now been running for over a year. It was agreed that should a bee keeper approach the Council to install bees hives at Copmans Wick Allotment site this was acceptable subject the same provisions as the introduction at The Swillett.

The Committee

RESOLVED

To note the occupation

16/55 WAITING LISTS

The Committee

RESOLVED

To note the details on the waiting list.

LAWN CEMETERY

16/56 INTERMENTS

The Committee

RESOLVED

To note the number of interments that had taken place.

16/57 REVISION OF LAWN CEMETERY RULES

The revised wording that had been agreed at a previous meeting had been put into booklet format with a different approach to the cover and back page. This had been designed by the French student currently on work experience in the Parish Office.

The Committee

RESOLVED

To accept the newly designed brochure containing the Lawn Cemetery Rules.

COMMON AND GROVEWOOD

16/58 WINTER WORKS PROGRAMME 2016 - 17

The Clerk advised that the priority for the Winter was the tree work and May bushes. When ground conditions prevented this work the other jobs listed would be tackled. The main issue with the May bushes was the difficulty and therefore the safety issues of getting the tractor in to move the wood. If the weather stays wet the Rangers may fell the trees but leave the wood there until they can get in with the machinery. It was noted that work on the May bushes was behind target and as a key element of the Stewardship agreement it needed to be brought back in line. The agreed programme would go on the website and the committee would be updated in the Spring on progress on the programme of works.

The Committee

RESOLVED

To agree the Winter Works Programme 2016-17.

This was proposed from the Chair and agreed unanimously.

16/59 GOLF CLUB WINTER WORKS 2016 - 17

The Clerk advised members that criticism was often levelled at the Council questioning why the Council spent money on the Golf Club. It should be made clear that the Golf Club seek permission for the works programme from the Council but then undertake the works themselves, it is not done by the Parish Rangers. It was noted that the Golf Club were concerned with the height and invasion of the gorse near the 9th tee. However it was noted that removal of this would upset many parishioners. It had been suggested that if the Golf Club wanted to remove this they should consider establishing an area of equal size elsewhere and the Common Ranger outlined how this could be done. The idea of reducing the height was raised. It was agreed that as a first step the height should be reduced by a third. It would then be revisited next year to re-assess the Health and Safety issues and general reaction to the work and review the best way forward.

The Committee

RESOLVED

To agree the Golf Club Winter Works 2016 – 17 with the amended treatment of the Gorse near the 9th Tee

This was proposed from the Chair and agreed unanimously.

16/60 SUMMER EVENT

The Committee had been asked to look at

1. The consequences of combining Village Day and the best of Commons Day
2. Budget and staffing implications
3. The appointment of a lead councillor for the event.

The Chair advised that such events took considerable officer time and cost to arrange and an extra event such as commons Day multiplied this by an order of magnitude. He felt that combining the events was therefore the best way forward. A report by Friends of Chorleywood Common on the subject had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting and was covered under the discussion that then took place.

It was suggested that the two most popular items from Commons Day were the Birds of Prey display and the outdoor screening of the film. Whilst all who had attended the outdoor screening agreed that it had been very good, the practicalities of adding this to Village Day were too great and the organisation of such an item would need to be taken on by someone other than the officers. Members wondered whether the Film Club would wish to take on. There were however issues regarding security of the Common and litter picking following such an event. It was felt that perhaps this should be a separate event, not combined with Village Day.

On the subject of introducing Country Crafts to Village Day it was noted that the Council would need to pay some to attend rather than the current situation where most stalls pay the council to attend. It was noted that a budget in the order of £2.5K would probably be required. Ideas included blacksmiths, lathe turners and chainsaw carvers

The Dog Show was agreed to be a good attraction and it was felt that the Tug of War would also pull people in. The idea of separating the different activities/stalls into Zones was well received.

On the subject of nominating a lead Councillor to work with officers to keep Councillors informed, Cllr Tony Edwards felt that the Chair of Open Spaces should take the lead and therefore offered to act in this role for the coming year. Cllrs Steve Watkins and Raj Khiroya also volunteered to assist.

Parking control for the day was discussed and the Clerk would attempt to find out the costs of bringing an outside company in as an alternative to the people currently employed.

It was suggested that the food outlets could be increased.

Charges were reviewed and the following increases agreed:

Commercial/Business stalls - increase to £35
Food – increase to £85
Charities to remain at the current charge of £15

The Committee

RESOLVED to recommend

To Full Council

To consider the revised plan for Village Day and seek commitment from other councillors to the event and the budget implications.

16/61 FOUR YEAR VISION

Permissive Parking Areas - The Clerk brought Members up to speed on the current situation on the ramps at the War Memorial Permissive parking area and advised that she was still trying to get the company who potentially had a surfacing material that could be used in the parking areas out to view the area.

The Clerk advised that a very positive response had been received back from Natural England with respect to the Nature Trail and that this would be going off to the Planning Inspector with a copy of the Common's Scheme of Regulation to advise if a Section 38 application is needed for the Nature Trail.

GENERAL

16/62 HEALTH AND SAFETY

Members were advised that the French Student currently on work experience in the Parish Office was undertaking work on the Risk assessments to put them into a new format which would then be reviewed by the appropriate officers before adoption.

16/63 CLOSURE

The meeting having commenced at 7.30 pm closed at 9.49pm.

Signedagreed via email..... Date28.11.16.....

These minutes were agreed as a true and correct record at the Open Spaces meeting and signed by the Chairman.

Signed..... Date.....

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS REQUIRING ACTION

See Next page

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS REQUIRING ACTION

REFERENCE	RESOLUTION / ACTION	ACTION REQUIRED	BY WHOM
OS 16/51	Resolution	To remove the arch hedge and to bury the water pipe under the path with grating to cover the pipe on the path to allow access to it should it be necessary.	Parish Rangers
OS 16/52	ACTION	The maintenance contract for the churchyard to be re-negotiated with the Church and the results brought back to the next Open Spaces.	Officers
OS 16/58	Action	The agreed Winter Works programme 2016-17 to be put on the website.	The Clerk
OS16/58	Action	To update the committee in the Spring with progress on the Winter Works 2016 - 17 programme of works.	The Clerk
OS 16/60	Action	To investigate the costs of bringing in an outside company for parking management on Village Day.	The Clerk