

DITTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OPEN SPACES & AMENITIES COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AT DITTON COMMUNITY CENTRE ON MONDAY 23RD JANUARY 2006

PRESENT: CLLRS R G W BAKER (CHAIRMAN), MRS THWAITES (VICE CHAIR), J E DESAVE,

A R MULCUCK AND MRS MULCUCK
MR NIGEL SAUNDERS (GROUNDS SUPERVISOR)
MRS NICOLA GREENAWAY (ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT)

487. **OPENING OF MEETING**

The meeting was opened by the Chairman at 7.58pm.

488. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies previously notified, were **RECEIVED** and **ACCEPTED** from Cllrs Thorpe and Mrs Throssell.

489. **DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Cllrs Mulcuck, Mrs Mulcuck and Mrs Thwaites declared a personal interest in item 494(a) as they are members of the bowls club and therefore use the lock on the barrier.

490. **FINANCE**

(a) Financial Analysis

The financial analysis which had previously been CIRCULATED was **READ**, discussed and **NOTED**.

(b) Quotation from KCC to lease new mower

A quotation from KCC to lease a new gang mower over a five year period was **READ**. It was **NOTED** that this would cost £3,286 per year. Quarterly and monthly payment options were also available.

Members were reminded that an earlier quotation from Doe's to purchase the same mower outright was £8,100.00.

The Grounds Supervisor advised that the current gang mower was now over 14 years old and required a substantial amount of maintenance each year. It should be fine to use this year but would require a lot of work and money spent on its maintenance to run it in future years.

RESOLVED to keep this item on this Committee's Five Year Plan and to hope to purchase a new mower within the next 1 – 2 years.

The Chairman asked the Committee to consider two additional items relating to finance:

(c) Ditton United Football Club – Request for Reimbursement of Fees

A letter from Ditton United Reserves Football Team was **READ** and it was **NOTED** that the team had been withdrawn from the league and would no longer require use of the pitch. It was further **NOTED** that they had enquired as to whether they were entitled to a reimbursement of the pitch fees. Discussion took place and it was agreed that, although it was unfortunate that the team was now unable to use the pitch, it is over half way through the season and the grounds staff have had to spend time preparing the pitch and money had been spent on treatments, a refund was not possible in this instance.

RESOLVED to write to Ditton United Reserves football team to advise that, unfortunately, a refund was not possible in this instance.

(d) Multi Sports Unpaid Account

It was **NOTED** that a former regular hirer of the Multi Sports had been declared bankrupt and unfortunately still owed the Parish Council £410.00 for outstanding hire fees.

RESOLVED to make a claim for the amount outstanding and to ensure that future hirers of the multi-sports are invoiced regularly and not allowed to accrue large amounts owing on their accounts.

491. **ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD FROM LAST MEETING**

(a) Ditton Court Quarry [Page 277, Item 334(a)]

It was **NOTED** that it was hoped to hold a meeting with members of the former quarry working party. Cllrs Baker, Mulcuck and Mrs Thwaites said they would be able to attend a meeting on the morning of Friday 3rd February 2006. The Administrative Assistant will confirm this date with the quarry working party and arrange the meeting for 9.30am if possible on that date.

(b) New Road Recreation Ground [Page 279, Item 337]

(i) Wall behind Scout Hut

Two quotations to remove and rebuild the retaining wall to the rear of the Scout Hut at New Road Recreation Ground were **READ:-**

- (a) £3,095.00 plus VAT
- (b) £3,335.00 plus VAT

The quotation from contractor (a) was not clear as to whether they would need to take out the fence to do the work or if they did remove the fence whether they would reinstate it.

RESOLVED the Administrative Assistant to seek clarification of the quotation from Top 2 Bottom before this Committee RECOMMENDS to the Full Council that this work should be done as soon as possible and paid for as a capital item.

(ii) Concrete base

It was **NOTED** that confirmation of a quotation to remove the concrete base was still awaited.

492. **CHRISTMAS LIGHTS COMPETITION**

The Chairman **REPORTED** that there had been an excellent display of lights in Ditton again this year and that he and the Vice-Chair had enjoyed judging this competition. It was **NOTED** that the winners were Mr and Mrs Whitehorn of 2 Wilton Drive.

493. **VILLAGE GREEN**

(a) Trimming of Trees

It was **NOTED** that planning permission had now been granted in respect of having the two Lime trees and one Cedar tree trimmed on the village green. The Administrative Assistant advised that because of the delay in having this work done the original contractor was unable to undertake this work. The Grounds Supervisor had located another Tree Surgeon, M B Tree Care, who could do the work but his quotation (£950.00) was more than the previous one (£750.00) (although the original quote was over a year old and may have changed). It was further **NOTED** that funds were available in this year's capital items to pay for this work.

RESOLVED to accept the quotation from MB Tree Care to have the two Lime trees and Cedar tree reduced and to pay for this work from the capital items for the current year.

The Grounds Supervisor advised that a request from a resident had been received in respect of the trees on the other part of the village green (between St Peter's Road and New Road Business Estate). Photographs of the trees in question were CIRCULATED and it was **NOTED** that they are now very tall and causing obstruction of light into the resident's garden. A quotation from M B Tree Care of £750.00 to trim these trees was **NOTED**. The Administrative Assistant advised that she had contacted Liz Guthrie at TMBC Planning to ascertain whether permission was needed to trim these trees as they are within the conservation area.

RESOLVED to wait for reply from TMBC Planning about these trees and then to see if there are any funds available to cover the cost of having them trimmed and to advise the resident accordingly.

(b) Replacement of Christmas Lights for tree on Village Green

The Grounds Supervisor advised that the lights used each year on the tree in front of the Church are now very old and need replacing. The Administrative Assistant had

found details of one company that could supply 100m with 100 bulbs for £289.00 plus VAT.

RESOLVED to obtain more information on replacement lights and refer this matter to the full council.

494. **SECURITY PROBLEMS**

(a) Lock on barrier along top track

The Grounds Supervisor advised that the combination lock used on the barrier along the top track was continuously being damaged or stolen by youths and it was expensive to have to keep replacing the lock. Discussion took place about possible alternatives to the combination lock. It was suggested that a lock with a key that can be welded to a chain (as on the multi sports and allotments) might be the best solution but this would mean obtaining many keys for the allotment tenants and bowls club members.

RESOLVED to obtain a quotation for a new lock and up to 100 keys and to advise the allotment tenants and bowls club that the Parish Council is investigating an alternative lock.

(b) Intimidation of MUGA hirers by youths

The Administrative Assistant advised of an incident in December when many youths climbed over the fence to the multi sports and intimidated the tennis club teacher and children. The tennis club were subsequently offered time in the Community Centre. It was **NOTED** that there have been no further problems and this may have been helped now that the Community Warden patrols the site at about 4pm each day.

ADJOURNEMENT

Mr Len Mace of Woodlands Road, Ditton and a member of the Ditton Allotment Tenants Society wished to bring the following matters concerning the allotments to the attention of this Committee:- Prunings & Cuttings – there are a lot of wood cuttings at this time of year and would it be possible for these to be kept separate and for the Grounds Staff to burn these when they burn their cuttings; Bags – could better supports be provided for the bags as this would enable more to be put in them; Edges of Plots and main path – many plot holders are not cultivating to the edge of the plots which means the main path is very uneven. Could tenants be reminded to keep their whole plot tidy up to the edge of the path. Also, was there any chance of the main path being made more “barrow friendly” as discussed some time ago. Finally, Mr Mace advised that the sign on the London Road indicating the New Road Recreation Ground was pointing in the wrong direction. ***Mr Mace thanked members for listening to his comments and Mr Mace was thanked for bringing these matters to the Council’s attention.***

495. **ALLOTMENT MATTERS**

The matters raised by Mr Mace were discussed:

Woody cuttings – the Grounds Supervisor said he would be able to collect the woody prunings and take them to the burning site.

Supports for bags – the Grounds Supervisor will look at relocating the supports for the bags to enable them to be more substantial.

Edges of plots and main path – the Grounds Staff will mark out the plots again to enable to tenants to see exactly which part they are responsible for. They will also measure the main path to enable quotes to be obtained for a better surface for the main path, possibly a “Matta” type product.

RESOLVED to write to the Allotment Tenants Society to let them know that these matters are being looked into and to write to all tenants when changes are to be made. Also, to write to any tenants not properly looking after their plot.

496. **CORRESPONDENCE FOR DECISION**

- (a) Forestry Commission England - Felling Licence – Bradbourne Lane
THIS WAS **READ** AND IT WAS **NOTED** THAT WORK IS NEEDED IN THIS AREA.

RESOLVED - TO CLARIFY WHAT THE FELLING LICENCE IS FOR AND THE GROUNDS STAFF TO TIDY UP AREA AND LOOK AT NEW PLANTING.

- (b) Ditton Minors Football Club - Request to hold Fun Day and Annual Presentation on Saturday 20th May 2006 (format to be same as last year)

RESOLVED - TO ACCEDE TO THIS REQUEST PROVIDING THAT THE BAR AND BBQ ARE CAREFULLY SUPERVISED AND THAT ANY DEBRIS IS CLEARED FROM THE SITE. TO ADVISE THAT A CHARGE WILL HAVE TO BE MADE FOR THE MARKING OUT OF THE PITCHES.

497. **CORRESPONDENCE FOR NOTING**

The Chairman will **READ** the following items of correspondence and **REPORT** on any items of interest:

- (a) Kent County Playing Fields Association - The Playing Field

- (b) Playwork South East Regional Play Association - Winter 2005 Issue 6

498. **CLOSURE**

The meeting closed at 9.00pm

Chairman
6th February 2005