

DITTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OPEN SPACES & AMENITIES COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AT DITTON COMMUNITY CENTRE ON MONDAY 22ND JANUARY 2007

PRESENT: CLLRS R G W BAKER (CHAIRMAN), MRS THWAITES (VICE-CHAIR) R ANGEL, MULCUCK, MRS MULCUCK, STONE AND MRS THROSSELL
MR NIGEL SAUNDERS (GROUNDS SUPERVISOR)
MRS NICOLA GREENAWAY (ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT)

441. **OPENING OF MEETING**

The meeting was opened by the Chairman at 8.07pm.

442. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

443. **DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Cllr Angel declared a personal interest in item 445(c) Property Boundaries in Ragstone Court as he lives in Ragstone Court.

444. **FINANCE**

(a) Financial Analysis

The Financial Analysis, which had previously been CIRCULATED, was **READ** and **NOTED**. Members asked that where budgets are shown as being overspent because of items paid for from Central Funds, could the amounts from Central Funds be shown on the income sheet. The Administrative Assistant will ask the Accounts Clerk if this is possible.

(b) Repairs to Track

The Grounds Supervisor REPORTED that the top track had deteriorated further, in particular in the entrance to the bowls club car park. He advised that he had obtained a quotation for 4 tonnes of stone chips to fill the pot holes at a cost of £96.00.

RESOLVED to proceed with purchasing the road stone and the Grounds Staff will do the repairs.

(c) Security Lighting for Compound

The Grounds Supervisor REPORTED that the compound area is very dark and poorly lit with only one light and security would be much improved if an additional more powerful light with a PIR could be installed.

RESOLVED to obtain quotations for the installation of a security light.

445. **ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD FROM LAST MEETING**(a) Ditton Court Quarry [Page 202, Item 364(a)]

It was **NOTED** that a meeting had been held the previous Thursday to discuss the process of having the quarry designated as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR). It was also **NOTED** that the steering group was formed informally to look at the process but now needs to be formally recognised as an established group that will oversee the application for LNR and the implementation of the management plan and funding. It was FURTHER **NOTED** that the Council needs to formally agree that it is happy for TMBC to delegate the power to Ditton Parish Council to proceed with the application for LNR status.

RESOLVED to recognise the Ditton Court Quarry LNR Steering Group as being formally instructed by this Council to continue with overseeing the application for LNR status, and the implementation of the management plan and where necessary funding.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND that this Council would be happy to accept the delegated power from TMBC to proceed with application for LNR status for the quarry.

(b) School Clock (Page 202, Item 364(c))

It was **NOTED** that all the funding had been received for the clock and a date was awaited (hopefully by the end of this month) when the new clock is to be installed. Cllr Mulcuck asked if there is to be a plaque and a ceremony when the new clock is installed. The Administrative Assistant advised that a plaque would be ordered with appropriate wording, thanking the various contributors to the new clock.

(c) Property Boundaries Ragstone Court (Page 202, Item 364(d))

It was **NOTED** that there was no further information.

(d) Dog Loo (Page 203, Item 364(e)(i))

It was **NOTED** that no response about the provision of additional dog bins had been received.

446. **CHRISTMAS LIGHTS COMPETITION**

The Chairman and Cllr Mrs Mulcuck **REPORTED** that again this year there had been many excellent displays. Previous winners had again put a lot of effort into their

displays. However this year the winner was a resident new to the village who they thought had entered into the spirit of the competition. It was **NOTED** that the winner had been awarded a £25.00 B&Q voucher.

Cllr Stone advised that he had received several comments about whether the Council should be promoting something that would encourage people to use unnecessary energy when we are all being told to conserve energy because of the effect on the environment etc.

RESOLVED to review this item later in the year, before deciding whether to hold the competition again.

447. **ALLOCATION OF FOOTBALL PITCHES FOR NEXT SEASON**

(a) Letter from Ditton Vets

A letter from Ditton Veterans Football Club was **READ** and it was **NOTED** that they have stopped playing due to a lack of regular players and would therefore no longer require the use of the pitch, except for one charity game to be played on 18th February 2007.

RESOLVED to reply to the letter stating that the Council is sorry to hear that the team has had to stop playing but unfortunately there will not be a refund of pitch fees because it is too far into the season and the pitch cannot be re-let.

(b) Requests from Holtwood Rangers, Ditton Minors & Maidstone Utd

Requests for pitches for next season from Holtwood Rangers, Ditton Minors and Maidstone Utd youth teams were **READ**. It was **NOTED** that the pitch next to the multi-sports court which has always been used by Ditton Minors in the past, has been used by Holtwood on a Sunday morning and Maidstone Utd on Sunday afternoons as the Minors did not have a team this year. Next season however the Minors will have two teams playing on this pitch on alternate weeks. If it were played in the afternoons as well it would be over use of the pitch.

Holtwood could be given the use of the other pitch (previously used by the Vets team) as they are prepared to use and pay for the changing rooms. This means that unfortunately there would be no availability for Holtwood to have a second team or Maidstone Utd to play on Sundays.

RESOLVED the Chairman, and Administrative Assistant decide on the allocation of the pitches in consultation with the Grounds Supervisor to ensure that they are allocated fairly to local teams first, and that they are not 'over-played'.

448. **ALLOTMENT MATTERS**

Notes of a meeting between Allotment Managers and DATs were CIRCULATED and **READ**. Various matters arising from these notes were then discussed:-

(a) Waiting List

It was **NOTED** that a tenant that had been on the waiting list for some time was aggrieved that he had not been offered an additional half plot as all plots that had become available recently had been offered to those that had no-plot. It was **FURTHER NOTED** that this tenant accepted this had been done in fairness to those with no plot as there was a long waiting list but he felt particularly disappointed because he had been on the list for a long time and had never been officially informed that he could not have an additional half-plot unless everyone else on the waiting list with no plot could be accommodated first.

RESOLVED no one household to be allocated more than one full allotment plot and this is to be made clear on the Tenancy Agreement and Waiting List in future. Also to write to the tenant concerned apologising that this was not made clear before, but advising he would not be able to have an additional half-plot. All non-Ditton Residents to be advised that in view of the long waiting list of Ditton Residents their names will be removed as it is unlikely they could ever be accommodated.

In view of the long waiting list the Administrative Assistant suggested that a Tenancy Application form could be completed before details are entered onto the waiting list. This form would set out the rules of being on the waiting list.

RESOLVED any one asking for an allotment be asked to complete a Tenancy Application Form before being added to the waiting list.

(b) ½ Plots

Members agreed it was good to have some half-plots as this gave more people opportunity to have a plot and discussion took place on whether those with a half-plot should go on the waiting list for an additional half-plot if required or if they should be offered the other half of their plot if it becomes available, therefore overriding the waiting list.

RESOLVED tenants with a half-plot must go on the waiting list for an additional half-plot and will only be offered the other half of their plot if they are the next on the list when it becomes available.

(c) New Plots

Discussion took place on the feasibility of providing additional plots to meet the demand. The Grounds Supervisor estimated that up to an additional six plots could be made to the South of the existing site but this would require a lot of groundwork.

RESOLVED the only area to extend would be to the South of the existing site. The Grounds Supervisor will measure the area and DATs to be informed that the Council is looking into the possibility of increasing the allotments but they will be kept informed and consulted where necessary.

(d) Allotment Managers

Cllr Muluck raised a matter that he had READ that the Allotment Managers should not be wholly made up of all Councillors.

RESOLVED to invite a member of DATs to become an Allotment Manager in addition to the existing three Allotment Managers.

(e) Inspection of Plots

It was **NOTED** that regular inspections had not been carried out but following the meeting a rota had been organized and it was **FURTHER NOTED** that the allotments would be inspected on the last Friday of each month by one of the Parish Council's Allotment Managers accompanied by a member of DATs.

(f) Tenancy Agreements

The existing Tenancy Agreements were **READ** and the suggested amendments **NOTED**.

RESOLVED the Administrative Assistant to re-draft the Tenancy Agreement to incorporate the amendments and then bring it back to this Committee for approval before it is sent to the Allotment Holders for their comments.

(g) Rubbish

It was **NOTED** that concern was expressed about mis-use of the rubbish bags and it was suggested that this service be removed. Discussion took place and it was **NOTED** that it would be difficult for some of the elderly tenants to dispose of their rubbish.

RESOLVED to write to all allotment holders and remind them what can be put in the bags and that continued mis-use will result in the service being removed.

(h) Payment of Fees to the Parish Council

It was **NOTED** that payment of fees was discussed at the meeting. It was also **NOTED** that the Parish Council only had to give one year's notice to quit if the allotment tenants did not accept the proposed increase.

RESOLVED to advise the allotment holders of the proposed increase of £2.00 per full plot and £1.00 per half plot intended at 1st November this year and invite them to accept the increase.

FURTHER RESOLVED to add a notice on the tenancy agreement that rents will be increased annually in line with inflation.

(i) Paths and 5 Year Plan

It was **NOTED** that members of DATs were keen to know which of their earlier requests are being considered on the Council's 5 year plan and made suggestions of what they would like included:

- Better paths
- More allotment plots
- Secure fencing
- Better access to site
- Toilets
- Storage facilities

It was also **NOTED** that the matter was raised at the meeting with DATs about how the capital and interest from the sale of the old allotments was to be spent. It was **FURTHER NOTED** that a brief explanation had been given to the person in question but that the Clerk had asked for clarification from NALC and would write to the tenant when a reply was received.

Discussion took place and Cllrs Mrs Mulcuck and Stone said they felt it would be an appropriate gesture if the Council could use some of the money to contribute towards some of the items on their “wish list”.

RESOLVED to obtain up-to-date quotations and more information on their requests to be re-considered by this Committee for inclusion in the 5 Year Plan next year.

449. **VILLAGE GREEN**

The Grounds Supervisor **REPORTED** that since yellow lines were introduced opposite the Junior School, it has meant more cars park on the small road that runs between the areas of Village Green in front of the Church. This has meant that they are parking on the edge of the verges as close to the wooden posts and this is eroding the verges.

RESOLVED to REPORT this matter to KCC Highways to see if they can offer a solution.

The Administrative Assistant advised on another item concerning the area of the village green. It has been **REPORTED** to the office by a concerned resident that a large ash tree and some hawthorn trees are becoming over-grown and hazardous. The Administrative Assistant has contacted the TMBC Tree Officer and the Management Company responsible for the new development in this area to try ascertain who is responsible for the trees, as they should only be trimmed with the owners permission. It would seem that this area of land is not owned by anyone. The Clerk has consulted the Borough Council’s Solicitor on this matter, and he has suggested that this Council could apply to have the trees trimmed in the interest of safety and at some point could consider invoking a compulsory purchase order to claim ownership of the land, to enable it to be maintained in the future.

RESOLVED the Grounds Staff to trim back the Hawthorn trees and to obtain a quotation to have the Ash tree made safe.

450. **ITEMS FOR DECISION**

Holtwood Rangers

- Request to hold funday

A request to hold a mini-funday on Saturday 16th June with a 5 a-side football tournament and BBQ, in conjunction with a presentation already booked in the Oaken Hall, was **READ**.

RESOLVED TO ACCEDE TO THIS REQUEST SUBJECT TO THE USUAL CONDITIONS APPLYING TO USE OF THE RECREATION GROUND AND THAT THEY WOULD ONLY BE ABLE TO HOLD A BBQ IN THE AREA

SPECIFIED BY THE GROUNDS SUPERVISOR. ALSO TO ADVISE THAT A CHARGE WOULD BE MADE FOR ANY PITCHES THAT THEY REQUIRED TO BE MARKED OUT.

Nigel Saunders

- Request to host Seminar for GBS Loams on pitch care

The Grounds Supervisor advised that he has been asked if the Parish Council could host a Seminar for GBS Loams on pitch care. This would involve 40 delegates, having a seminar in the Community Centre and then a demonstration on the recreation ground.

RESOLVED TO ACCEDE TO THIS REQUEST.

451. **CORRESPONDENCE FOR NOTING**

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

KCC ENVIRONMENT & WASTE - Redesignation of Roads used as a public path to restricted byway status

CPRE - Fieldwork – December 2006

452. **CLOSURE**

The meeting was closed at 9.57pm

Chairman
5th February 2007

