

## DITTON PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE **OPEN SPACES & AMENITIES** COMMITTEE HELD IN THE **COUNCIL CHAMBER** AT DITTON COMMUNITY CENTRE ON **MONDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER 2024**

PRESENT: CLLRS A WATERS (CHAIR), J COX (VICE-CHAIR), L COX, N NEWMAN, MRS A THROSSELL, A MULCUCK, MRS K NASH, D ADLINGTON & MRS M NEWMAN  
MRS N GREENAWAY (CLERK OF THE COUNCIL)

#### 234. **OPENING OF MEETING**

The meeting was opened by the Chair at 7.40pm.

#### 235. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs Dearden. The previously notified reason for absence was **ACCEPTED** and **APPROVED** and recorded in the absence book Ref. 559.

#### 236. **DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interests.

#### 237. **FINANCE**

**READ** and **NOTED** that the repairs and replacements budget was at 78% which was higher than expected at month 6. The Clerk advised that unbudgeted work at NRRG had been included under this heading. There were also other items of expenditure included under this heading that might be better placed under another heading. The budget headings would be reviewed when the budget's are looked at for the following financial year.

#### 238. **ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD FROM LAST MEETING**

##### (a) Update on outstanding actions

- (i) NRRG changing rooms [Page 78, Item 188]

It was **NOTED** that the work in this area was complete and the problem caused by the water draining towards the Scout Hut had been resolved.

- (ii) Gatepost near to Grounds Staff Building [Page 78, Item 189(c)]

The Clerk reported that a quote to place a sturdy "drop down" security bollard [like the one recently installed near to the community centre] in this location to prevent large vehicles accessing the track without permission had been obtained. The cost would be £730.00 plus VAT. Discussion took place and it was agreed it was important to preserve the security of the track and recreation ground and that this would be the best option.

**RESOLVED** to accept the quotation from Dowles to install the drop down bollard for £730.00 plus VAT.

- (iii) Waste bin at junction of Bradbourne Lane and A20 [Page 78, Item (187)]

The Clerk advised she had asked Borough Councillor Cannon if he could assist with this request and he had agreed to look into it.

The following outstanding issues were to be covered under their individual headings:

- Fence repairs
- Location of Beech Tree / Request for a memorial tree.
- Maintenance strategies including hedgerow cutting schedule

## 239. **PLAY GROUNDS**

### (a) Annual Play Inspection Report

It was **NOTED** that the Annual Inspections carried out by an independent RPII Inspector had been undertaken and there were only low risk issues raised for both recreation grounds. The Grounds Staff will review the report and identify the maintenance/repairs that they are able to do and those which will require a specialist play equipment contractor.

## 240. **GROUND'S EQUIPMENT**

It was **NOTED** that the machinery report would be looked at and updated in November. The Chair advised that he had discussed using a "self-mulching" brushcutter with the Grounds Supervisor as this would make it much easier for clearing paths etc in the quarry and could also be used in other areas. It was **NOTED** that this would probably only be required for a week or so per year so it would be more cost effective to hire than purchase. Members agreed that the cost of hire for this machine should be looked into.

## 241. **TREES**

### (a) Tree Inspections

It was **NOTED** that the tree inspections had been completed and some work had been identified including six trees adjacent to the track to the bowls club. There were also trees in the Bradbourne Lane Conservation Area that required work.

It was also reported that the memorial trees on New Road Recreation Ground had been affected by "fire blight" and required replacing with a suitable specimen that would be less susceptible to this disease.

### (b) Location of Beech Tree

A possible location on the Kilnbarn Recreation Ground was suggested.

### (c) Request for Memorial Tree

**NOTED** until a formal request is received, the location and specimen cannot be agreed.

## 242. **MUGA**

(a) Review of Hire Fees

A draft of suggested increases to the rates for different users, which had previously been **CIRCULATED**, was considered. It was **NOTED** that the hire fees had not been increased for several years but now that the surface and lights had been replaced an increase was necessary.

**RESOLVED** to accept the proposed increases [shown below] and that the new hire rates be applied from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025 to allow hirers sufficient notice. It was also agreed that the next review be undertaken in the summer and any future increases applied in September in line with other service increases.

SPORTS FACILITIES		HOURLY RATE (per hour)	
		SENIOR	JUNIOR
<b>TENNIS</b>	(per court)	£12.00	£10.00
	(both courts)	£20.00	£18.00
<b>NETBALL</b>	(per court)	£10.00	£8.00
	(both courts)	£18.00	£16.00
<b>FOOTBALL</b>	(5 aside/training)	£18.00	£16.00
	(Ditton Clubs)	£13.00	£11.00

(b) Surface

It as **NOTED** the fungus that had appeared on the new surface had been treated and it now seemed fine. The Grounds Staff were following the recommended maintenance.

243. **FENCES**

It was **NOTED** that the Grounds Staff had had to straighten the bracing strut on the fence bordering Streamside after it had been damaged and also that the Blackthorn Bush for this area would need to be ordered and planted in November.

There were no further updates on proposed fence work and the Grounds Staff had not had time to start work on the fence alongside footpath MR481 due to other priorities.

244. **ALLOTMENT MATTERS**(a) Annual Rent Review

The current rents were reviewed and options of increases discussed. It was also **NOTED** that it had previously been suggested about removing the senior citizen rate for future tenants. It was acknowledged that it is not appropriate to ask people their age and the difference in rates is minimal.

**RESOLVED** to apply the following increases from 1<sup>st</sup> November [approximately 5%]:

		Proposed (approx. % rise + rounding)	
	Current	New	5% increase

Full Plot	£28.60	£31.00	£2.40
Half Plot	£14.30	£15.50	£1.20
Senior Citizen Full Plot	£26.90	£29.00	£2.10
Senior Citizen Half Plot	£13.45	£14.50	£1.05

Further **RESOLVED** to not offer the Senior Citizen rate going forward but current tenants who pay that rate would continue to do so until their tenancy ended.

(b) Report of Allotment Inspection 04/10/2024

The Chair advised that he and Cllr Cox had carried out an inspection of the allotments recently and there were no real issues. A few plots had been noted as requiring attention and this will be highlighted to the tenants when the rent letters are sent out. The Chair said he felt some tenants seemed confused about what they could put in the waste bags. The Clerk said it clearly states in the tenancy agreement that it is “non-compostable” materials only. It was suggested new signs be made to make this clear and a reminder be given to tenants and DATs about what can and cannot be placed in the bags. The service will be monitored and if it is abused in the future, consideration would be given to removing the service.

245. **DRAFT STRATEGIES FOR RECREATION GROUNDS AND WAR MEMORIAL**

It was **NOTED** the War Memorial would require some maintenance work in the near future. It was agreed to obtain a quote for what is required and look into Grant's for this work. The Clerk advised that grants had previously been given from the KCC Member's Grant and also that the War Memorials Trust offer funding but have a strict criteria.

**NOTED** no further update on the other strategies.

246. **CORRESPONDENCE**

Cllr Newman advised that a further communication from the Planning Inspectorate regarding the proposed public right of way from New Road to the recreation ground had been received outlining KCC's case for approval of the footpath. Information regarding ownership of the access land relating to this path, from former councillor, David Stevens had also been received. It was agreed that Cllr Newman should meet with David Stevens to discuss this issue further.

247. **CLOSURE**

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Chairman  
4<sup>th</sup> November 2024