

DITTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE **OPEN SPACES & AMENITIES** COMMITTEE HELD IN THE **COUNCIL CHAMBER** AT DITTON COMMUNITY CENTRE ON **MONDAY 18th NOVEMBER 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)
MRS L FITCHETT (ADMIN ASSISTANT)

287. **OPENING OF MEETING**

The meeting was opened by the Chair at 7.33pm.

288. **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. 564.

289. **DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interests.

290. **FINANCE**

(a) **Grounds equipment & Machinery Report.**

It was **NOTED** that the updating of the report was in progress

(b) **Disposal of Gang Mower (per decision agreed 27/02/2023)**

It was **NOTED** that an expression of interest had been received by a local cricket club for the gang mowers which the Council had previously resolved to sell.

RESOLVED to sell the gang mowers provided a reasonable offer is made for them

(c) **Draft estimates for 2025/26 - draft suggestions**

It was **NOTED** that although the general treatments had been overspent, the shortfall had been met by reserves.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to accept the draft estimates in principal, and for these estimates to be referred to the Finance and Administration Committee for scrutiny at its precept meeting in December.

291. ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

(a) Gatepost near to Grounds Staff Building [Page 99, Item 238(a)(ii)]

It was **NOTED** that this work was completed. It was suggested that the post should be a sufficient security measure and the gate would not need to be replaced at this point.

The Chair gave update on other previous issues:

- Playground repairs.
- NRRG fence damaged again and proposed repair.
- Blackthorn bushes on order.
- MR481 - no update
- Looking into Woodland Trust scheme for free trees
- Meeting regarding ownership of access path – letter re ownership of access road has been sent to the Planning Inspectorate.

292. TREES

(a) Quotation for essential tree works

Following on from the tree survey and review by the tree surgeon, quotes had been received and the necessary work prioritised into high, medium and low priorities.

RESOLVED to accept quote to undertake all the works, and any shortfall in the budget to be met from reserves,

(b) Suggestions for alternative species to replace memorial trees at NRRG

The Chairman displayed four varieties of tree as possibly being suitable to replace the dying memorial trees at NRRG. The Clerk also advised that the Grounds Supervisor had suggested an Irish Yew as a good alternative.

It was suggested that the families should be consulted before replacing the trees.

RESOLVED to contact families in first instance to explain the need for replacing the trees and gain their approval to do so.

(c) Request for memorial tree on Village Green

The Clerk advised that the Grounds Supervisor had formally asked if a tree could be planted on the Village Green in memory of his father. She advised she had spoken to the vicar and he had no objection to the proposed location of between the bench and church wall on the St Peter's Court side of the Village Green. It was **NOTED** that the preferred tree for this was the Irish Yew.

Concern was expressed about poisonous seed/fruit of the Yew.

RESOLVED to agree in principle to the planting of a memorial tree in this location but to find out more information on the toxicity of the preferred Yew.

The Chairman then referred to a tree on NRRG's boundary with one of the new properties behind the old Ditton Working Men's Club. It was included in the works quote agreed earlier in the meeting but he had concerns about the need to fell.

It was agreed more information be obtained on the recommendation to fell from the Grounds Supervisor and Tree Surgeon and this be reported back at the next Full Council Meeting when the quotation to fell would be ratified.

293. **ALLOTMENTS** [general update]

It was **NOTED** three plots had become vacant and these would be re-let. The Allotment rent review letters were due to go out and reminders about the upkeep of plots would be sent to those tenants concerned. The bags for non-compostable waste were being monitored.

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

(a) War Memorial Maintenance

Clerk has made contact with one stone mason and will contact another to visit and assess the condition and advise on the required maintenance. Once a quote for any works is received, funding will be looked into.

The Chairman asked that the Grounds Staff are thanked for the excellent job in getting the War Memorial ready for Remembrance and tidying up the whole area and Village Green.

295. **CORRESPONDENCE**

(a) Request to hold Carols on the Green

RESOLVED to accede to this request.

(b) Request to use Recreation Grounds/Car Park & Don Carman Room for Larkfield 10K Race

RESOLVED to approve in principle but to request more info re starting line.

(c) CPRE – Kent Countryside Voice [Autumn/Winter 2024/25 – for noting]

CIRCULATED and **NOTED**.

296. **CLOSURE**

The meeting closed at 8.31pm.

