

DITTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE **OPEN SPACES & AMENITIES** COMMITTEE HELD IN THE **COUNCIL CHAMBER** AT DITTON COMMUNITY CENTRE ON **MONDAY 20th JANUARY 2025**

PRESENT: CLLRs A WATERS (CHAIR), J COX (VICE-CHAIR), MRS L COX, MRS A THROSSELL, A R MULCUCK, MRS K NASH, MRS M NEWMAN
MRS N GREENAWAY (CLERK OF THE COUNCIL)
MRS L FITCHETT (ADMIN ASSISTANT)

361. **OPENING OF MEETING**

The meeting was opened by the Chair at 7.44pm.

362. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Newman, Adlington and Mrs Dearden. The previously notified reasons for absence were **ACCEPTED** and **APPROVED** and recorded in the absence book Ref. 569.

363. **DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interests.

364. **FINANCE**

(a) **Financial analysis – Month 9.**

READ and **NOTED**. Cllr Mrs Throssell asked why the General Treatments budget was overspent and it was explained that an amount had been slipped forward to an Earmarked Reserve to cover the balance of this cost. Cllr Mulcuck asked about the cost of the repairs at NRRG. It was **NOTED** this would be met by reduced expenditure within other budgets at the end of the year and if insufficient, it would come from reserves.

(b) **Sale of Gang Mower & other surplus equipment (Page 117, item 290(b)).**

It was **NOTED** that an offer of £2,000.00 had been made by a local cricket club and this had been accepted. It was further **NOTED** that the club may be interested in other items of cricket related equipment no longer used.

RESOLVED to approve the sale of the gang mower for £2,000.00 and to sell other surplus equipment if reasonable offers are made and the funds used towards the purchase of new grounds equipment required.

(c) **Open Spaces Society Subscription**

It was **NOTED** that the council had let its subscription to the OSS expire. The benefits of membership were discussed.

RESOLVED to re-join membership at cost of £45.00 per year.

365. **ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

(a) Machinery report update

It was **NOTED** that the machinery report had not been updated as yet but the Grounds Supervisor would work on this as time allowed. It was further **NOTED** that this was not urgent as the Grounds Supervisor had given a report of any items of new equipment that were required prior to the budget setting last year.

(b) Trees

(i) Update on tree works inc Ransom strip and local comments (Page 118, item 292(a))

It was **NOTED** that the TMBC Tree Officer had given approval for this work to go ahead and it was scheduled to commence on 10/02/25. Local residents who raised objections would be advised accordingly.

(ii) Follow up for suggestions for alternative species to replace memorial trees at NRRG and contact with families (Page 118, item 292(b))

It was **NOTED** that the family have been contacted but no response had yet been received.

(iii) Request for memorial tree on Village Green (Page 118, item 292(c))

It was **NOTED** that further to the request for a Yew tree, further research into its suitability in this location was required.

366. **TREES & PLANTING**

(a) Twinning 30th anniversary flowerbed

It was **NOTED** that a request from the Twinning Committee to plant one of the flower beds on the verge outside of the main Community Centre entrance to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of the Twinning with Rang du Fliers, had previously been agreed in principal. It was further **NOTED** that a meeting had been arranged for 06/02/25 to discuss this project further. The Chair offered to attend to represent the Council at this meeting. The proposal to have a memorial stone in the flower bed was also **NOTED** and it had been suggested to approach Gallagher's for assistance to see if they could donate a suitable piece of stone.

367. **ALLOTMENTS** [general update]

It was **NOTED** that three previously vacant plots had recently been re-let with a further one due this week. This leaves one plot vacant with a number of resident's currently still on the list.

368. **Quarry**

(a) Email regarding vehicle tracks in the quarry and replanting of residents non-native tree

A resident had made contact regarding tyre damage in the quarry and the management of such repairs. The resident also queried the planting of a non-native species 'Monkey

Puzzle' donated by another resident as not permitted in a local nature reserve. It was reported that the Medway Valley Countryside Partnership had been contacted for advice on this matter but no reply yet received. It was **NOTED** that the Grounds Staff had already undertaken repairs to the ruts and photos were shared.

RESOLVED resident to be updated regarding the repairs to the ruts and enquiries about the tree.

(b) Quarry Noticeboard

It was **NOTED** that the current notice board for displaying monthly information had deteriorated and required replacing. Discussion took place re type of board, weather proof material etc. It was agreed to research a suitable replacement and bring quotes to the next meeting.

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

(a) War Memorial Maintenance and quote

The Chairman advised he still had more work to do but he hoped to complete the Management strategies next month. He advised he had arranged to visit RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) Library and V&A Museum in London where he will be able to view and photograph the original drawings of the War Memorial's architect - Gilbert Scott. Cllr Mulcuck requested that information obtained be put in a file for the Heritage Centre. The Chair advised that photographs are made available for non-display purposes and he would have to check the copyright with RIBA re further use.

It was also **NOTED** a quote had been received from a stone mason to carry out maintenance to the War Memorial and contact is being made with another for an additional quote. This will be updated at the next meeting. Members discussed possible funding via the War Memorials Trust but this is not looking feasible as they do not fund general maintenance and cleaning projects. Further investigation will continue.

370. **CORRESPONDENCE**

An item of correspondence regarding the quarry was considered in item 368. No further items of correspondence were received.

Cllr Mulcuck raised a request for next month's agenda for an item to discuss the fenced off pond area of the quarry and to look into leasing this. A brief discussion took place and it was **NOTED** that this had previously being addressed and declined due to safety concerns and low interest in the other conservation facilities within the village.

371. **CLOSURE**

The meeting closed at 8.10pm.