

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 29TH NOVEMBER 2016**

PRESENT: Cllr. Rook (in the Chair), Cllrs. Fermor, Veitch (Part), Smith and Swann

APOLOGIES: Cllrs. Goodchild and Holmes

Declaration of Interests, Dispensations, Predetermination or Lobbying:

Members are required to declare any interests, dispensations, predetermination or lobbying on items on this agenda. Members are reminded that changes to the Register of Interests should be notified to the Clerk.

Cllr. Swann declared his interest in the discussion with regard to the allotment rent review as he was an allotment tenant.

18/16:

a) Play Equipment:

The Clerk brought forward an email from Wicksteed regarding replacement bearings for the swings in the Ball Field and Crane Valley. The cost for materials and labour is £2,664 plus VAT. She confirmed that this was not a job that the Parish Warden could undertake. After a full discussion, Cllr. Rook proposed that the quote be accepted. This was seconded by Cllr. Fermor and agreed.

b) Jubilee Field:

The Clerk tabled two proposals for a new piece of equipment for Jubilee Field. One from Outdoorsy Living which was a double tower frame, the preferred option from the residents group and a similar type of equipment from Ludus, which is part of the Lappsett Group. The cost for the Ludus equipment together with installation and surfacing was £10,447. The cost for the Outdoorsy Living equipment together with installation and surfacing was estimated at £9,000 with a 10% discount if ordered before the end of January 2017. The Clerk reminded Members that we had received a donation of £5,000 towards some new equipment specifically for the Jubilee Field. Cllr. Swann suggested that the residents group be contacted to see if they had undertaken any fundraising. It was proposed by Cllr. Rook, seconded by Cllr. Fermor and agreed to accept the estimate from Outdoorsy Living.

c) Cllr. Veitch informed Members that at a recent KALC meeting there had been a discussion on Multi User Games Area and she tabled an example. It is a playing zone which gives young people the chance to use for a range of ball sports. A brief discussion took place and it was generally agreed that at present we did not have a suitable flat site. We are not allowed to place structures on the Ball Field under the terms of the trust. The Crane Valley is not suitable. Cllr. Rook was concerned on the height of the fencing. Cllr. Veitch stated that this was an idea for perhaps the future.

19/16: Issues from Inspection of Grounds:-

a) Allotments:

In the absence of Cllr. Holmes, the Clerk read out a report from him following a recent inspection. There were some plots that needed attention, he had solved an issue with a boundary fence and posted advice on the noticeboard on dealing with rats, which had been reported by one allotment holder.

b) Ball Field:

In the absence of Cllr. Goodchild, it was generally felt that the Ball Field was in good order. The Clerk reported that there had been some issues with graffiti both on play equipment and on a bench but this had been dealt with by the Parish Warden.

c) Crane Valley:

Cllr. Swann reported that the Crane Valley was in good order. The boardwalk has been extended and he had walked round the Nature Reserve, he thought this might need a cut. He will speak to the Kent High Weald Project. The area behind the recycling centre needs tidying and the layed hedge need a cut as well as the banks. The contractors were concerned about the slow worms in this area. Cllr. Veitch explained that the slow work management plan had been submitted to TWBC and this needs to be included in the contractor's specification for the new grounds contract. Cllr. Swann stated the people appreciate the new steps but have requested a hand rail. After discussion, it was agreed that Cllr. Swann speak to the KHWP to see if they could come forward with a suitable option. Responding to Cllr. Rook, Cllr. Swann confirmed that the stream is clear of rubbish but the hedges and river bank towards the dentist need strimming both on our side and also the woodyard side. The skate ramp area needs to be swept and cleared more often. He had noted that the Russell bench had disappeared. The Clerk confirmed that this had suffered some vandalism and had been temporarily moved to the container at the Golford Cemetery and will be reinstalled in the spring.

d) Jubilee Field:

Cllr. Fermor reported that the Field is in good order, the hedges had been cut and there was no evidence of dog fouling. Cllr. Smith informed Members that St. George's Institute may come to the Parish Council in the future for consent to site a container in the copse are in the Jubilee Field to store equipment for the Institute. Currently it is stored in Collins Farm which is not ideal. There is also very limited storage in the Institute.

20/16: Issues from Inspection of Car Parks:

Cllr. Veitch stated that the Regal Car Park is in good order. She regularly collects sacks of litter. There is an issue with ventilation shaft to the interceptor tank. It is regularly damaged by vehicles and a more satisfactory solution is required. The trees between the car park and the Crane Valley were coppiced about three years ago and we need to decide whether these need to be done again. Cllr. Fermor, as Tree Warden, offered to inspect.

With regard to grit bins most are half full with grit but the lids had been left open and water had penetrated which might make the grit unusable. The Parish Warden is to be asked to refill the grit bins as soon as possible. The Winter Strategy was discussed and Members were reminded that this had been agreed and posted on the website and will be in the December Newsletter. The Clerk explained the position regarding insurance. Once we make the strategy public we cannot deviate from this as our insurance would be invalidated.

With regard to the gullies, Cllr. Swann suggested that there might not be a need to clean these this year. Members disagreed, Cllr. Veitch pointing out that the gulley at the top of Jockey Lane was a problem. The Clerk stated that when this was blocked, water cascaded down the churchyard path. After further discussion it was proposed by Cllr. Smith, seconded by Cllr. Veitch and agreed to contact our usual contractor to ask them to clear out the gullies as usual in early 2017.

Cllr. Smith brought forward the problem of the gullies from the roundabout to The Street in Sissinghurst which are always a problem. He would check them and report back to the Clerk who agreed to contact KCC.

During a discussion with Paul Shipley from TWBC, it appeared that there was an opportunity to have the cardboard banks removed from the Regal Car Park. He had confirmed this by email. Cllr. Rook reminded Members that when this was looked at during a site visit, it was apparent that some of the cardboard came from businesses outside of the Borough. The banks have suffered arson attacks in the past. He also stated that parishioners now all had boxes for recycling paper and cardboard. As a business he had to pay for his cardboard to be collected. After a full discussion it was proposed by Cllr. Rook, seconded by Cllr. Smith and agreed to ask TWBC to remove the cardboard bank. A further discussion took place on the siting of the current glass recycling banks and whether these could be resited further forward if the cardboard bank was removed.

With regard to the Jockey Lane Car Park, the Clerk confirmed that Cllr. Goodchild carried out regular inspections and emailed a report. There were no issues. Cllr. Swann stated that the oak bollards on the edge of the Ball Field had suffered damage to the padlock. The Clerk would speak to the Parish Warden.

The trees in the Tanyard Car Park were discussed. Cllr. Rook confirmed that we had asked for a survey to be undertaken of all the trees in the car park by the same person who had carried out the survey on St. Dunstan's. He is also carrying out a survey on the trees in Sissinghurst Cemetery. Cllr. Fermor agreed with this course of action, the report on St. Dunstan's was excellent. The Clerk reminded Members that as the Tanyard Car Park was in a Conservation Area that any tree works would need consent from TWBC. The Clerk flagged up that she regularly inspected the culvert on her way to work, as she is retiring at Christmas someone else needs to have this on their radar. Ideally it would be better to include it in the next specification for the Parish Warden contract, along with the culvert in the Allotments. Cllr. Rook agreed to raise this at the next full Council Meeting to see if a parish councillor would take on this responsibility in the meantime.

21/16: Highways Issues:

a) Speedwatch:

Clerk Lori Ham gave a brief overview of when the equipment was purchased and who were the original participating parishes – Cranbrook & Sissinghurst, Biddenden, Newenden, Hawkhurst and Benenden. Benenden have not used the equipment for some time and Hawkhurst now has their own. There has been damage to the equipment due to poor usage. She had sent a letter to all participants asking whether they wish to remain in the group, but to date she had not received any responses. Cllr. Rook explained the difficulty in recouping money due to damage, it was unfair to ask parishes who had not used the equipment to pay for damage caused by others.

The original contract wording was read out and the suggestion is now that if parishes wished to remain in the group then there should be an annual maintenance charge. A full discussion took place with most Members supporting Speedwatch which it was generally felt made a positive statement with regard to rural speeding. Cllr. Rook closed the meeting to enable the Sissinghurst Speedwatch Coordinator to add his views.

Mr. Bancroft suggested that we need to formalise and accept the Speedwatch initiative and adopt it parish wide and advertise it parish wide. The statistics from the police for Sissinghurst was that there had been 71 speeders, 2 were second offenders and 7 were high end speeders. Annually this amounted to 26,000 with 2,500 high end speeders. People in Cranbrook had told him that they would like Speedwatch in their area and he had advised them to get a group together and speak with the Parish Council. Like the “no cold calling” zone there should also be a “no speed zone”. He referred to the new speed limits in Angley Road and these needed to be supported by Speedwatch with also support from the police.

Cllr. Rook then re-opened the meeting and informed him that he would include Speedwatch in his article for the December Newsletter. Cllr. Rook then proposed that Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council remain in the Speedwatch Group. This was seconded by Cllr. Fermor and agreed.

b) Cllr. Rook referred to the recent works to the Wilsley Green junction. He noted that the build out has now been removed. There had been safety issues. Cllr. Smith confirmed that this is now to be replaced with lines in the road, a visual element.

22/16: Any Other Environmental Management Issues:

a) Electric Charge Points – Common Road, Sissinghurst

The Clerk read out a letter from TWBC regarding an obligation for the developer of the housing site in Common Road to provide electric hook up charge points for vehicles. A full discussion took place with many ideas put forward of where this could be sited. Cllr. Smith explained that you have to purchase a card which currently costs £20 but the electricity is free. There are already charge points in the car parks in Tunbridge Wells. It was generally felt that the charge point should be where it is easy to access and it was proposed by Cllr. Smith, seconded by Cllr. Swann that we would have no objection if it was situated in any of the car parks in the parish, along The Street, in the layby in Biddenden Road or in a designated bay near to the public toilets in Sissinghurst subject to clarification on who would be responsible for the payment of the electricity.

b) Litter and litter bins:

Cllr. Swann brought forward the issue of the bins at the Rugby Club which are not being emptied. He would like them to be removed from the schedule as the Club had made its own arrangements. The Clerk explained that Biffa had taken over from Cory. She suggested that we should wait until we have had an opportunity to discuss the entire schedule with them before we ask for two bins to be taken off. It appears that there may be some bins we are not being charged which needs to be clarified.

c) Street Lighting:

The Clerk informed Members that we had received our annual inspection report and there were several issues raised. She had provided Cllr. Swann with a copy. Cllr. Smith offered to help with this and agreed to look at the Sissinghurst issues. It was proposed by Cllr. Rook to delegate the issue to Cllr. Swann to decide which of the issues needed to be undertaken and arrange with the Clerk to instruct Streetlights to carry out the identified work. This was seconded by Cllr. Fermor and agreed. A discussion took place on LED lighting and its effect on wildlife. Cllr. Fermor offered to investigate.

d) Public Rights of Way:

No issues were raised.

23/16: Five Year Plan and Budget:

Members considered the Five Year Plan. There were no changes made. The Five Year Plan is filed with these Minutes.

Members reviewed the fees for allotments, recreations grounds and wayleaves. It was noted that the allotment rents had been put up last year. After a full discussion it was agreed not to increase any rents for the allotments or sports clubs this year. Cllr. Swann is in discussions with the Rugby Club to increase the rent in line with the terms of their lease. The lease for the Sissinghurst Tennis Club sets out the amount to be paid i.e. £2 per annum and therefore this cannot be increased.

The Members fully discussed the budget figures put forward and amendments were made where necessary. Cllr. Rook then proposed that the Environmental Management Committee Budget 2017/2018 as filed with these Minutes be agreed. This was seconded by Cllr. Smith and agreed.

24/16: Items for Information:

Cllr. Swann raised the issue of some overgrown land running from Wheatfield Way to Angley Road. The Clerk confirmed that although there is a public right of way running through the land that Jonathan Bibby KCC had clarified that they are responsible for the surfacing but do not own the land or have any responsibility for its upkeep. The land is owned by The Crown. It is not the responsibility of the Parish Council. Cllr. Smith agreed that the Parish Council should not take responsibility for privately owned land.

Cllr. Fermor referred to cars parking on the verge alongside Angley Woods. Cllr. Swann stated that this was nothing new, cars had historically parked on the verge.

Cllr. Swann reminded Members not to let the issue of coach parking fall off the agenda. Cllr. Rook stated that modern coaches can now use The Regal Car Park.