

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 28TH NOVEMBER 2017

PRESENT: Cllr. Fairweather (in the Chair), Cllrs. Clifford, Fermor, Fletcher, Holmes, Smith and Swann.

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.

23/17: Play Equipment:

Cllr. Fairweather advised that we had received an invitation from TWBC to apply for a grant under the Community Capital Grants Programme. It is to help with funds for capital projects that provide new community, sports, recreation or arts facilities. The closing date for applications is 12th January 2018. The maximum that can be applied for is £4,000 and is limited to 50% of the total project costs. The total capital grants pot for the entire borough is only £20,000 so it is likely that smaller applications will be looked upon more favourably. Cllr. Fletcher tabled the idea of a weatherproof shelter in the Crane Valley as the current youth shelter is to open to the elements. He had completed some initial investigations into types of wooden and metal field shelters. Members agreed that more information was required so Cllr. Fletcher agreed to investigate further and report back on his findings. The Clerk reported that some of the safety surfaces under current play equipment were in need of replacement which had been highlighted in the ROSPA reports. It was agreed to delegate the submission of an application to Cllr. Fairweather and the Clerk.

24/17: Issues from Inspection of Grounds:

a) Allotments:

Cllr. Holmes reported that several of the plots had been placed under review and he would report back at the next meeting, any relevant actions taken.

b) Ball Field:

At the previous meeting it was resolved to spend £100 on three hardwood bollards. It had since transpired that was not sufficient to purchase the hardwood bollards. A quote had been received that detailed the cost of a softwood option costing £94.45 + VAT against a hardwood option costing £157.02 + VAT. It was proposed by Cllr. Fairweather, seconded by Cllr. Holmes and agreed to accept the quote for the hardwood option. It was also agreed that the Parish Warden be asked to install the bollards under his current contracted duties.

c) Crane Valley:

Cllr. Swann reported that 2 litterbins had gone missing and there was still a lot of litter accumulated on the north side of the valley. The Clerk agreed to report the disappearance of the bins to the police as a theft, and to obtain quotes for replacements if they are not recovered.

KHWP had advised Cllr. Swann of their concern that parts of the bank were slipping into the stream and that they would report back with possible solutions.

d) Jubilee:

Cllr. Fermor advised there were no issues to report.

25/17: Issues from Inspection of Car Parks:

a) Regal:

Cllr. Fairweather stated that the regular reports he receives from Cllr. Veitch had not raised any issues of concern. The Clerk agreed to contact the grounds contractors in regard to cutting back the pyracantha around the substation.

A request had been received from the local Lions Club to position a small lorry containing a Santa's grotto in the Regal car park from 5pm to 8pm on Monday 18th December. Cllr. Fairweather proposed permission is granted, this was seconded by Cllr. Fermor and agreed.

b) Jockey Lane:

Cllr. Swann mentioned the area adjacent to the pond where KCC contractors had recently removed some trees and shrubs, which he felt, left it very bare. Members agreed to look at the area in the spring to see if any additional planting was necessary.

c) Tanyard:

Cllr. Fletcher reported on the success of the recent tree surgery in the car park which had been great improvement.

d) Car Park Survey/Working Group:

Cllr. Fletcher advised that he had contacted five separate companies with a view of gathering data on usage. He had sent them a brief detailing the background and issues of concern. Three of the five had responded but were not prepared to undertake any survey unless we could guarantee they would be awarded a contract for enforcement. He was still awaiting a response from the remaining two companies. Concerns were raised that if charging was implemented, that it would shift the issue to the surrounding residential streets. It was suggested that a meeting of the working group be scheduled early next year to discuss all the options under consideration. It was agreed that additional spaces could be created if the layout of the existing car parks was improved.

The group were also looking into the provision of charging bays for electric vehicles. It was established there are currently 2% of electric vehicles in circulation. The nearest charging points to Cranbrook are located in Tenterden and Tunbridge Wells. Introducing them here would increase our desirability as a destination and could prove to be an excellent income source. Jockey Lane would be the most suitable location in Cranbrook as we are the sole trustees of the land. Cllr. Fletcher's offer to continue his investigations was gratefully accepted.

26/17: Consultations:

KCC Highways and Transportation Survey – This had been completed by Cllr. Fairweather and the Clerks, Members of the Committee had been sent the proposed submission for comment. Cllr. Veitch's suggestion of including the poor condition of the white lines and the need of signage cleaning in the parish had been added. A copy would be filed in the parish office.

TWBC Cycling Strategy – Cllr. Fairweather identified a parishioner who has a particular interest in this and was also part of the NDP steering group. He had offered to complete the questionnaire within the timescales. Cllr. Swann voiced his disappointment that the recommendation to introduce a cycle path from Cranbrook to Sissinghurst had not been included in the final draft of the strategy.

27/17: Highways Issues:

a) Speedwatch Equipment Service:

At the request of the Sissinghurst Speedwatch Group, the Clerk had obtained a quote of £220 for the servicing and calibration of the equipment plus an additional £28 each way for delivery and collection. The cost would be shared between all participating parishes. It was proposed by Cllr. Fairweather, seconded by Cllr. Swann and agreed to accept the quote.

b) Quote for replacement No Entry Sign in Regal Car Park:

It had been identified that one of the ‘No Entry’ signs in the Regal car park was heavily faded and no longer fit for purpose. Members discussed the safety implications of not taking any action to rectify this. It was proposed by Cllr. Holmes, seconded by Cllr. Fermor and agreed to accept the quote of £182.40 for replacement signage.

28/17: Any Other Environmental Management Issues:

Cllr. Fletcher referred to the recent vandalism of the disabled toilet in Crane Lane and proposed that we approach TWBC to close the toilets at 15:30 daily and fix vandal proof fittings for the toilet paper etc. This was seconded by Cllr. Smith and agreed.

29/17: Litter Picks and Litter Bins:

Cllr. Fairweather advised a litter pick for Sissinghurst would be scheduled for Saturday 17th February, meeting at 10.00am outside the Milk House. It was agreed to ask Cllr. Goodchild if he would be prepared to organise one for Cranbrook. Litter picking in the recreation grounds is undertaken within the Parish Warden’s contract. It was agreed to request that he report to the Clerks weekly on the levels of litter in these areas.

30/17: Street Lighting:

Cllr. Fairweather referred to the three streetlights in Golford Road that had suffered catapult damage earlier this year. Members agreed that due to the narrow pavement area in that location, the repairs should be undertaken for safety reasons. Cllr. Holmes proposed that subject to receipt of a reasonable quote, up to a maximum of £1,000 the repairs be authorised, this was seconded by Cllr. Swann and agreed.

The Clerk advised that we had received a request for an additional streetlight in Cleavers, Sissinghurst. Members discussed this fully, however due to budget constraints they decided to decline the request at this time.

Cllr. Holmes reported that the streetlight outside Lloyds Pharmacy was not working. The Clerk agreed to report this on the KCC portal.

31/17: Public Rights of Way:

Members agreed to request that the Planning Committee keep a watching brief on the public rights of way in the Parish through any planning applications received.

32/17: Five Year Plan & Budget:

Members considered the Five Year Plan. It was agreed to include a review of the trees in the car parks on a three year cycle. The Five Year Plan as agreed is filed with these Minutes.

Cllr. Fletcher declared an interest on the review of allotment fees being a tenant himself. Members reviewed the fees for allotments, recreations grounds and wayleaves. After a full discussion it was agreed not to increase any rents for the allotments or the Bowls Club this year, the Tennis Club rent is set within the terms of their lease and cannot be increased.

Cllr. Swann would undertake discussions with the Rugby Club with a view to increasing the rent in line with the terms of their lease. It was agreed that a representative from the Parish Council should be attending their Committee meetings; as sole trustees of the land we had a vested interest in the clubs plans.

The Members fully discussed the budget figures put forward. Cllr. Fairweather then proposed that the Environmental Management Committee Budget 2018/2019 as filed with these Minutes be agreed. This was seconded by Cllr. Fletcher and agreed. Members thanked Cllr. Swann for his diligence in preparing the budget for the Committee to approve.

33/17: Items for Information:

Cllr. Clifford reported that TWBC cabinet had approved the Civic Centre proposals, the final decision would be taken by Full Council on 6th December 2017.

He also reiterated his plea to Councillors to come up with suggestions for Parish Cake articles; he wants to ensure sufficient space is dedicated to council business ensuring that we meet any criteria for our Quality status.