

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 15th SEPTEMBER 2015**

PRESENT: Cllr. Rook (in the Chair), Cllrs. Fermor, Holmes and Veitch

APOLOGIES: Cllrs. Goodchild, Franks, 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.

11/15: Play Equipment – Jubilee Field:

The Clerk informed Members that TWBC had confirmed that there are no grants available until late November and they will contact me when the funding can be applied for.

The Clerk tabled the RoSPA Report where she had highlighted issues which needed attention. There were two urgent issues – one on the slide at Jubilee Field and one on the slide in the Crane Valley. She would ask Geelan Fabrications to weld the metal. She would discuss the other issues with the Parish Warden.

12/15: Issues from Inspection of Grounds:-

a) Allotments:

Cllr. Holmes stated that the allotments were generally in very good order. There were some plots which require attention and he had given a list to the Clerk. He reminded Members that Plot 5 had been reallocated at a recent Policy & Resources. Helen Silver had again carried out the allotment judging for this year and the results are with the Clerk.

Responding to a question from Cllr. Fermor, Cllr. Holmes confirmed that the allotments at Sissinghurst Castle are no longer in existence, however the Trust vegetable garden is still in existence and supplies the restaurant with any surplus being sold at the Farmers Market.

b) Ball Field:

No problems had been reported on the Ball Field.

c) Crane Valley:

Cllr. Swann had not reported any issues in the Crane Valley. The Chairman referred to his report at the last Council meeting where there is a problem with spring water at the skate ramp. The Clerk informed Members that the RoSPA Report also highlighted a problem with spring water at the base of the slide. After discussion it was agreed to ask Mackeldens Civil Engineers to inspect and give advice. Cllr. Rook gave an update on the works to be undertaken by the Kent High Weald Partnership which entailed extending the boardwalk, improvements to the steps leading down from the Regal Car Park and rebuilding one of the bridges near to the skate park. We will be applying for grant funding and Nita Chandler, Susan Laing and the Rainbow Play Group will be providing letters of support from the community aspect. The Clerk reminded Members that part of the Crane Valley is a registered Nature Reserve.

d) Jubilee Field:

Cllr. Fermor informed Members that she had carried out a recent inspection and she had been impressed with the appearance of the Field and there was not a problem with dog fouling. Cllr. Rook mentioned that the entrance into the Field was very worn when we had carried out the site visit. Various options were discussed and Members agreed to revisit this issue in the spring.

13/15: Car Parks – Winter Strategy:

Cllr. Veitch reminded Members that we had made the decision last winter not to carry out gritting in the car parks. We did however put extra grit bins into the Regal Car Park. The criteria which KCC use for gritting meant a cost of approximately £3,000 when we did undertake gritting. Our winter strategy has to be publicised on the website and in our December newsletter. Once we make a decision this has to be adhered to. Mrs Marley had contacted us to support winter gritting. Cllr. Holmes explained the position with regard to insurance.

After a full discussion Members agreed that the Winter Strategy 2015 – 2016 would state that we have no contract for spreading salt and grit within the three car parks this winter.

14/15: Issues from Inspection of Car Parks:

a) With regard to the inspections Cllr. Veitch stated that she usually inspected the Regal Car Park every two weeks. The Clerk confirmed that she regularly got a report from Cllr. Goodchild on the Jockey Lane Car Park. Cllr. Fermor agreed to take over from Cllr. Rook on the Tanyard Car Park. The Clerk agreed to forward an electronic version of the checklist to Cllr. Fermor.

b) Cllr. Veitch raised the issue of the broken and missing slabs and cobbles in the Regal Car Park. After discussion it was proposed by Cllr. Rook, seconded by Cllr. Holmes and agreed to ask a contractor to attend to the slates and cobbles.

c) Cllr. Veitch reminded Members that the gulleys had been cleared last year. Did Members think they should be cleaned this year? After a full discussion, Cllr. Holmes thought it was good housekeeping and proposed that the gulleys should be cleared. This was seconded by Cllr. Rook and agreed. Cllr. Veitch asked the Clerk to ensure that the gulleys in the slip road running up from the car park past Stoneydale be included.

15/15: Parking Order and Enforcement:

Cllr. Veitch stated that there had been no enforcement carried out in the car parks for the last eighteen months. The contract has expired. She had been trying for the last two years to sort out the enforcement for Jockey Lane. She had attended several meetings and taken legal advice and the current information is that we do not need a parking order, we can enforce under the standard regulations for private car parks. TWBC have now agreed that they can enforce on the Regal and Tanyard and they are going to prepare a new contract. A general discussion took place on what could be enforced on private car parks. It was noted that the traffic wardens did not appear to be visiting Cranbrook very often and Cllr. Rook stated that the team are moving from the building next to Tunbridge Wells Police Station into the basement of the Town Hall.

16/15: Highways Issues:

The Chairman informed Members that there was an action group who were very active with regard to the priority change at Wilsley Green. KCC Cllr. Sean Holden has spoken about reducing the speed limit to 40mph. This was welcomed by Members. Cllr. Veitch informed Members that the Kent Messenger reporter Alan Smith had contacted her. There had been a suggestion of a parish meeting to discuss the issue but she pointed out that we have no powers to make any decisions or resolutions on Kent Highway matters. If Cllr. Holden wished to call a meeting we could of course facilitate the meeting in the Vestry Hall.

17/15: Any Other Environmental Management Issues:

a) Litter and litter bins:

The Chairman reported that these were now all in situ. The Clerk stated that she had provided both TWBC and Cory Environmental with maps and photographs.

b) Street Lighting:

Cllr. Swann had inspected the lighting columns in Wheatfield Drive and Wheatfield Way and the column No. 43 in Wheatfield Drive needed replacement and No. 46 Wheatfield Way needed a sleeve on the top. It was proposed by Cllr. Rook, seconded by Cllr. Fermor and agreed to ask Streetlights to undertake these works.

Cllr. Veitch drew Member's attention to the double globe standard in the Regal Car Park which had been vandalised. She suggested that this should be replaced with a single standard to match the other lights. There is a complication in that the light is linked to the Store but the post is on TWBC land leased to us. After discussion it was proposed by Cllr. Rook, seconded by Cllr. Holmes and agreed to replace with a single standard. For information Cllr. Veitch mentioned that another one of the lamp standards is now laying horizontal in the far corner of the Co-Op part of the car park.

c) Public Rights of Way:

The Chairman mentioned that we had a presentation by Bartholomew Wren at the last Policy & Resources meeting when a proposal for a cycle route was shown to Members, but this route, from the Primary School running through Carriers Road to the High Street, was considered inappropriate. The suggestion had been made for a cycle route from Cranbrook to Sissinghurst. Cllr. Rook had felt that the public rights of way network could be used but he was advised that you are not allowed to cycle on these footpaths. A further meeting with Mr. Wren was being arranged. Cllr. Holmes stated that you can actually cycle on bridleways.

Cllr. Fermor mentioned a notice near to Breach Farm relating to a public right of way. She agreed to send a photograph of the notice to the Clerk.

10/15: Items for Information:

Cllr. Rook handed out information titled "Guide to effective use of enforcement powers – Part 1: Unauthorised encampments" which was particularly relevant in view of the recent encampment on the Regal Car Park and Pear Tree Close.