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Minutes of Open Spaces Committee Meeting Agenda 30rd April 2024 at 7pm in the Village Hall Lounge

- 1. Present:** Cllr J Graham. Cllr Courtenay, Cllr Steel, Cllr Finch, Cllr Petheram, Cllr Smith
In attendance: The Clerk and Frazer Cooke Footpath Warden. No other members of the public were present.
Apologies: Cllr Howlett, Cllr Scard. In the absence of Cllr Scard, Cllr J Graham chaired the meeting.
Declaration of interests. None declared.
Public Open Session: No members of the public present.
- 2. To receive Cllr Scard's report:** Cllrs had received Cllr Scard's report prior to the meeting. This is attached to the minutes in Appendix A.
- 3. Southwest in Bloom Entry 2024 (Cllr Steel).** Cllr Steel reported that she is engaging with volunteers from the Gardening Club. Work is anticipated to start in May. This opportunity has been positively received by residents of the Parish.
- 4. Jubilee Border progress update (Cllr Steel).** Cllr Steel reported that work has commenced on the Jubilee Border to rectify the problem with weeds overcrowding the border and stunting shrub and tree maturity. Work has been extensive to remove brambles, dead trees, and shrubs. The contractor has fitted a wooden edging strip to the length of the Border and a membrane has been put in position. This has been topped with bark to enable weeds to be easily lifted. Cllrs noted that will also protect the fencing from wet hall grass and weeds rotting lower panels. The budget allocated and agreed by the full PC was £3,000. Cost for the work is estimated to increase by £153.66. This cost will be presented at the PC meeting in June. The Committee collectively agreed that the contractor has enhanced the work with the addition of edging to ensure bark does not spill and to ensure overall protection of the border. The protection rectifies the issues of heavy maintenance previously incurred and represents value for money. It also provides a cutting edge for maintenance staff which will enable the border to be contained, neat keep and tidy. Many residents have complemented the work that has been undertaken so far. Additional plants will be purchased using the credit note issued by Castle Gardens. **All matters proposed by Cllr Steel, seconded by Cllr J Graham and unanimously agreed ACTION Cllr Steel to advise RFO and main PC of finalised cost against plan.**
- 5. Oak Vale wood scheme of works, progress and quotes (Cllr Thompson).** Cllr Thompson was not present. Cllrs concluded that it was important to have a plan and quotes to ensure the project maintains momentum and winter flooding does not ensue. It was noted that over the last 18 months work has been slow; the challenge of weather and lack of interest from prospective contractors has not helped but Cllrs wish to see the project reach a positive conclusion as soon as possible. Cllr J Graham agreed to contact Cllr Thompson to establish what next steps are needed and to produce a site sketch so that interested parties can

appreciate the scale of the project. Once the plan is in place Cllrs will approach the landowner.

6. **Allotments - Cllrs Scard & Howlett:** In the absence of Cllrs Scard and Howlett, committee members decided to defer the discussion until both parties were present. Frazer Cooke asked that paths could be cut in the allotment for tenants. Cllrs will include the following items for discussion in their next agenda:
 - a. **allocations and maintenance plan for 2024 including mowing of pathways**
 - b. **annual meeting date schedule with allotment tenants**
 - c. **Response to email from Mrs Helen Howlett:**
 - i. **Set up allotment owners' society.**
 - ii. **Collection and disposal of rubbish and waste.**
7. **Litter pick dates and marketing (Cllr Finch)** Cllr Finch reported that the next litter pick is scheduled for the 13 July 2024. Ongoing support to undertaken litter picking has been generously offer by the Football Club team. **ACTION: Cllr Finch to actively advertise in Wot's On and using social media in advance of the event.**
8. **Drinking Fountain installation (Cllr Howlett)** Cllr J Graham indicated that the drinking fountain needs installation. Wessex Water need to provide approval. There needs to be a copper no return value for reasons of hygiene. Cllr J Graham will liaise with the Village Hall Committee in the absence of Cllr Howlett to progress this. Apparently, consultation with Wessex Water is via telephone consultation. If no reply is given, and agreed by the Village Hall, the installation can apparently proceed. An approved plumber is needed. **ACTION: Cllr J Graham to keep Committee informed of progress with a view to installation for the summer.**
9. **Ranger Duties (Cllrs Scard & Steel)** Cllr Steel reported that the Unitary Council have cut the verges for the second time this calendar year. The ranger cost had increased to £45.67 per hour from April. The contract had not been renewed at this inflated price and a suitable alternative has been found. Cllrs resolved to use a collective approach to manage parish responsibilities in line with the budget and use Somerset Landscapes to supplement this. Cllrs do not want to let grass cutting deteriorate and will offer a contract to Somerset Landscapes on Mondays and take any other remedial action if other needs arise. **Cllr Steel proposed to arrange a 6-month contract with Somerset Landscapes to do a 7-hour day at £220 - £31.42 an hour opposed to £342 - £45.60 (which included dead travel time and rest breaks). Residual saving will be used to address extraneous needs. Seconded by Cllr Courtenay, unanimously agreed,**
10. **Footpaths Cllr Scard & PPLO Cooke**
 - a. **Mtg with Somerset Warden (Eve Wynn)**
 - b. **Maintenance of stiles, gates and clearing throughways**

The challenge of keeping footpaths safety open with clear access remains difficult despite all the effort undertaken by Frazer Cooke. Frazer had a meeting with the Unitary Authority on the 11 March. He was advised that the reason act has not been taken to rectify the issues raised going back as far as 2018 relates to the Councils financial position. Concern was expressed about lack of access for North Dorset Ramblers in August as two paths are unpassable. **ACTION: Clerk to contact LCN and ask for insurance liability relating to maintenance and access to be included as a main item for their agenda and to establish what powers the PC can take to enforce landowners to repair and maintain footpath routes. (lcn@somerset.gov.uk)**

ACTION: PC to pay for Frazer Cooke to attend a strimming safety course.

11. Groundsman duties in Recreation Ground (Cllrs J Graham & Scard)

- a. **White lining of pitches**
- b. **Cutting of main grass area**

Cllr J Graham reported that white lining continued under the direction of Jeremy Pratt and Will Eden managed towards the end of the season. There will be no cricket this season. Jeremy continues to cut the recreation ground.

12. Football pitch hire/use for season 2024/25 Cllrs J Graham & Steel

Cllr J Graham reported that the goal posts are extremely heavy/cumbersome and are not designed to be dismantled on a weekly basis. At the last meeting with Gryphon Football Club it was agreed to move the goal posts further into the field away from the Jubilee Border and your fence. The nets can then use the original goal post holes to secure the safety netting. This should prove much more effective in containing any errant footballs.

13. Dog mess on the Recreation Ground. Cllr J Graham reported that picking of dog excrement occurred prior to matches. An article for Wot's On concerning risks with a plea to the public has been written by the Clerk and approved by the dog warden.

14. Fallen wall in Church Street Cllr J Graham reported that the dry stone wall is not an asset of the PC. It was recommended that the resident who raised this, should check her property deeds. The wall concerned is low in height and providing stones are removed is not considered a current risk to the public.

15. Fencing ingress on recreation ground border. Cllrs reported that newly erect fencing at the rear of the football nets has egressed onto the PCs land. Cllrs are considering further action.

Ann Lee
Parish Clerk

Appendix A

Open Spaces Working Group Report April 2024

**1. Jubilee Border progress / quotes /references /start date publication Greenways Cllr Steel
Greenways pulled out at the last minute due to unavoidable family health problems. Two quotes obtained by Cllr Steel:**

**AR Landscapes, Wincanton, quote Q092 for £3,110 - an increase of £153.66 on Greenways;
Somerset Landscapes Ltd, Yeovil , quote 0859 for £ 3,918.00 + VAT (which is reclaimable) - an increase of £961.66 on Greenways.**

To be decided at the meeting on 30th April but the initial feelings are to use AR Landscapes to minimise cost and complete the task such that future maintenance is minimal and these borders do not require significant ongoing funding every year.

Anticipated start date likely to be in May, additional funding to be agreed.

Cllr Steel and Clerk will arrange posters denoting anticipated start dates once Contractor is confirmed and start dates agreed.

Action: OSWG to decide on contractor at meeting on 30/04/2024

2. Drinking Fountain installation

Water fountain located, need to establish if it meets regulations (Wessex Water) and Mr Nichols will be advised of installation in November

Action Cllr J Graham to instruct installation: Ongoing

3. Oak Vale wood progress and quotes for work Cllr Thompson
**Cllr Thompson to submit a scheme of works and pursue meaningful quotes.
Cllr Courtenay was going to approach the farmer of neighbouring land.**
ACTION Cllr Thompson. Ongoing.
4. Memorial cleaning programme Cllr J Graham
Cllr Cowles to lead on the ongoing management of maintaining and cleaning the War Memorial.
ACTION Closed .
5. Play Park report and associated action to repair Cllr Finch and J Graham
Provision in next year's budget for a new bench to replace the broken wooden near the basketball court costing c£800 plus concrete base requested for budget inclusion totalling an estimated £1000.
ACTION: Cllrs Finch, J Graham and Howlett. Ongoing

6. Ranger costs for budget planning Cllr Scard
Discussions on whether to reduce Ranger duties to those of specialised or specific safety restrictions, dispersing the rest with current or new handymen Ranger could then to be employed to fortnightly instead of weekly sharing his employment with Milborne Port PC for the unused week. Alternatively, replace Ranger with new sub-contractor – Somerset Landscapes have proposed doing so to SDC – could be more expensive.
Paul Porter, of South Petherton, who has down the hedge trimming in the Rec and around the village, has also said he would be happy to quote for further trimming around the village that the Ranger previously undertook.
Action Cllr Scard
ACTION Cllr Scard - determine whether taking on some of the Ranger duties would increase hours of existing handyman/men and how many. Ongoing
7. Verges and hedge cutting – Blackmore Lane ABRI.
The complaint was discussed by the PC and Cllr Smith wrote to ABRI on behalf of resident and other areas.
CLOSED
8. Allotment allocations, maintenance and annual meeting with allotment tenants Cllr Howlett.
Email received from Mrs Helen Howlett to OS Chair regarding setting up an Allotment owners group and arranging for a skip (one-off) to remove excessive build up of waste at the allotments.
ACTION OSWG to discuss at OSWG meeting 30/04/2024.
Cllr Howlett proposed that there should be an annual allotment meeting and at this meeting he proposes to recommend that allotment tenants form a Henstridge Allotment Association.
ACTION Cllr Howlett to arrange an allotment meeting for tenants
9. Outcome of Litter pick including Yenston
Cllr Finch will advertise in Wots On and Next door to encourage more resident participation.
ONGOING
10. Unitary Authority decision to suspend new bins Clerk
Three new rubbish bins were purchased and have been installed in the recreation ground.
Note: Les Peters has informed Cllr Scard that the SDC collector had told him officially he could not collect waste from the new bins as they are not provided by the SDC and additional to those established in the rec (unofficially he still will). We need to communicate to SDC (informally via Les at first) that these bins replace existing inadequate or deteriorated bins in the rec and the SDC would not provide them. Additionally, we need to remove the old bin outside the children's play area and the square iron bin beside the skate park shelter, so that the new bins are not considered as 'additional'.
ACTION Cllrs Scard & Graham
11. Grit bin winter provision Cllr Scard
Cllr Graham confirmed the Ranger fills the grit bins and the PC Clerk is invoiced for payment via normal SDC process.
CLOSED
12. Post box Village Hall Cllr Courtenay.
The new post box for the PC is installed at the village hall.
CLOSED

13. New/Additional Items to be discussed at OSWG quarterly meeting 30th April 2024

- a. Footpaths;
- b. Groundsman duties in Recreation Ground;
- c. Football pitch hire/use for season 2024/25;
- d. Increase of dog mess on the Recreation Ground;
- e. Fallen wall in Church Street;
- f. Fencing ingress on recreation ground border.

Andy Scard 29/04/2024
OSC Chair