



Bearsted Parish Council

Minutes of the Environment Committee meeting of Bearsted Parish Council held at the King George V Memorial Hall, Manor Rise on Tuesday 23rd January 2024 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr Carolyn Smith Cllr Frank Jagger
 Cllr Richard Ash Cllr Denis Spooner

Also, in attendance was the Clerk Joanne Upton, and one member of the Church Allotment Association and one member of the Cricket Club.

Reports from members of the public

One member of the public advised there is a fence panel blown down blocking the footpath between Manor Rise and the Church Lane car park.

1. **Declarations of intention to record.**

The Clerk declared that the meeting would be recorded for minuting purposes.

2. **Apologies and absences**

Apologies and reasons were duly noted for Cllr M Harris & Cllr P Catt.

3. **Declaration of Interests, Dispensations, Predetermination or Lobbying**

There were none declared.

4. **Signing of the Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes from 21st November 2023 were agreed as a true record and duly signed.

5. **Clerk report**

Re-seeding the Elizabeth Harvie Field – the Clerk reported Warings has advised to leave until spring as the whole field would probably need to be reseeded due to heavy rain.

Medway Valley Partnership – the Clerk reported that the previous contact was off long-term sick so another site visit is being arranged to confirm our requirements and work days are likely to start from Autumn this year.

Pond repairs – the Clerk reported the office is still investigating quotes and should be able to report back to the next meeting.

Grounds maintenance – the Clerk advised that further work to improve the schedule of works and rates is being undertaken in consultation with Warings.

Barrier for the Church Lane car park – The Clerk advised the office is still investigating options and quotes and will report back to the next meeting.

Steps between Ware Street and Hill Brow – the Clerk reported a request has been sent to KCC to ask the owner to cut back their tree and Cllr Springett is enquiring if MBC can repaint the white lines or if BPC can, this could potentially be done by the CPS.

Cricket Covers – the Clerk advised BPC are still waiting on the requested information from the Cricket Club, the Cricket Club member in attendance confirmed the covers are no longer being stored there.

Streetlamps for Church Landway – the Clerk advised there was an 8 week lead time for delivery from the supplier and then subsequent issues with storage and getting approval for closing the footpath has meant we have been unable to confirm an installation date. This should be confirmed in the next couple of weeks.

Tennis Club, new courts – the Clerk requested that all members need to review the planning application and the conditions.

ACTION: ALL CLLR's

Additional Environment Committee meetings – the Clerk apologised but is now unable to attend the Wednesday night meetings due to family commitments. The Committee agreed to the last Thursday of each month, providing this is suitable for the absent members and if the hall booking can be changed.

ACTION: CLERK

6. Church Landway/Church Lane Car Park (Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 s57(1)(a) and LGA 1972s126)

- a) Car park drainage: The Clerk advised that Evans & Langford have now confirmed their previous quote is still valid and the report including specification for tender will take 3-4 weeks.
- b) Removal of old steps at car park: Cllr Jagger proposed to remove the old steps and leave as a mud bank, this was seconded by Cllr Ash and resolved with all in favour.

ACTION: OFFICE

7. General Maintenance (Open Spaces Act 1906 ss9-10 and Highways Act 1980 s96)

- a) Annual Tree Inspection: Cllr Jagger proposed to accept the Landscape Services quote at £995.50, this was seconded by Cllr Ash and resolved with all in favour. It was agreed that an initial walk around to ensure all Parish owned land is included and a contract is signed for the works.

ACTION: CLERK

- b) Litter bin for Yeoman car park: The Clerk reported that MBC will provide the bin with no charge and will empty it.
- c) Community Payback Scheme: Cllr Ash reported that the CPS undertook work to clear the path behind the Cricket pavilion, cleaned up the memorial, cleared leaves on the steps from Hill Brow, opposite the train station on Ware Street and from the play area on the Green. 8 people attended and worked from 8.30am to 3pm. It was agreed all Cllr's will submit suggestions for other works around the village.

ACTION: ALL CLLR's

- d) Play area repairs: Cllr Jagger proposed to accept the Safeplay quote for the repairs at both play areas, this was seconded by Cllr Smith and resolved with all in favour.

ACTION: CLERK

- e) Retaining wall inspection: Cllr Jagger voiced concern for the wall opposite the stations being covered in weeds which could cause damage to the wood. Bearsted CAN are still working on this area but it will take time, Cllr Smith advised they recently had a meeting with KCC. Cllr Jagger confirmed no work is needed on the walls at this time.

8. Bearsted Green (Open Spaces Act 1906 ss9-10)

- a) Wooden posts: The Committee thought the quotes were very expensive and it was agreed the office will look for alternatives. Cllr Jagger suggested getting a price for the metal spikes only, as the existing posts could be reused and would not need to be concreted in.
The Clerk mentioned that Cllr Hall had requested the Committee consider additional posts to the South side of the Green, Cllr Ash advised this could be a trip hazard to cricketers. It was agreed not to install additional posts at this time.

ACTION: OFFICE

- b) Additional tree on Green: The Cricket Club member advised that there is only one native evergreen, Holly tree, and would the Committee consider an alternative. Cllr Jagger proposed to accept a larch tree, the same as the one

removed, as a replacement, this was seconded by Cllr Ash and resolved with all favour.

- c) Cricket Club 275 year celebrations: Cllr Jagger advised there were issues before with professional batsmen hitting the balls and doing damage. The Cricket Club member confirmed there are no professional batsmen playing. The Committee accepted the schedule of celebrations.
- d) Crown lift tree on the Green: Cllr Jagger proposed to accept the Tantons quote at £220 plus VAT, this was seconded by Cllr Smith and resolved with all in favour.

ACTION: OFFICE

- e) Christmas tree on the Green: Cllr Springett originally suggested shaping the tree, this would ultimately mean that it would need to be reshaped annually, since the Christmas lights were up the Committee decided that it does not need shaping as it looked good with its natural shape.
- f) Road drain gullies: Cllr Jagger raised concerns that the drainage system around the village does not have sufficient capacity. No one appears to have a map or drawing. The only way to help is to keep debris from entering through the drain gullies. CPS are unable to assist with this as not allowed to work in the roads. Cllr Jagger suggested replacing the drain covers with grid like covers to help prevent debris entering the drainage system, neither Southern Water nor BPC can install these, it would need to be KCC. Cllr Hall was due to make contact with KCC to discuss. The office will also request a road sweep with MBC.

ACTION: CLLR HALL / OFFICE

9. Allotments (Small Holding and Allotment Act 1908 ss23,25)

Items a) and b) Cllr Jagger raised the issue of fencing along the car park side. The allotments have grown as a high bank which now rests on the fencing. This would make it impossible to replace the fencing and new fencing would continually be damaged due to the earth resting against it. This will need to be discussed with the CLAA as a large amount of earth would need to be removed to replace that fencing. Cllr Jagger proposed to defer the request by the CLAA for dipping troughs and any other works until a meeting can be arranged with the CLAA and BPC to discuss all issues. This was resolved with all in favour.

ACTION: CLLR JAGGER / OFFICE

- c) The Clerk advised that the CLAA and the office staff feel the allotment tenancy contracts needs to be rewritten and are waiting on legal advice and training. There is a great deal of work on procedures and standards to be written alongside the contract. Cllr Smith proposed the contract be rewritten after herself and the Deputy Clerk had attended the relevant training and legal advice had been sought. This was seconded by Cllr Ash and resolved with all in favour.

ACTION: CLLR SMITH / DEPUTY CLERK

The Clerk asked the Committee to start thinking about the deposit amount charged to new tenants, it is currently £30 which does not cover the cost to clear a plot should it be left in a bad state. This will be considered at a future meeting.

10. Open Spaces (Open Spaces Act 1906 ss9-10)

- a) Planting & Maintaining three large planters: The Clerk advised the revised quotes had not been received and requested this item be deferred. Cllr Jagger stated that the cost per year to plant and maintain only three planters in the village is excessive and will provide little benefit to the community, it will not help towards the beautification of the village. The Clerk advised that Cllr Harris was asking for revised quotes and once received this can be reviewed again.

ACTION: CLLR HARRIS

- b) Fees for green space use: Cllr Jagger suggested that the fees should be increased as the costs for maintenance of the Green and Elizabeth Harvie field have increased. The Clerk explained that currently only Footy for Tots and Bearsted FC pay for use. The various fitness clubs currently pay nothing, providing they offer a free taster session to residents. Cllr Jagger proposed to increase the football season license from £120 per year to £150 per year and remove the cost for A-Side teams as the Committee had previously agreed to only allow U11 teams and younger. The fee for a circus and other events to be raised from £500 to £600. To change the session cost for activity groups from £15 per session to £80 per year, and remove the option not to pay, for providing free taster sessions. This was seconded by Cllr Ash and resolved with all in favour.

ACTION: CLERK

11. General Correspondence

Grass around play area: A resident had requested leaving the grass around the Green play area long and uncut until late summer. The Committee agreed this was not the right location, due to child allergies and potential for dog waste. It was agreed the Committee would consider other locations for a wildflower meadow.

12. Future Agenda Items

- Planters
- Allotments
- Church Lane car park security barriers
- Wooden bollards at the Green
- Pond repairs
- Community Pay Back Scheme
- Church Lane car park drainage
- Removal of old steps at car park
- Ground maintenance contract
- Road drain gullies
- Wild meadow location
- Tennis Club planning application

13. Date of next Meeting, to be confirmed.

There being no further business to transact, the meeting ended at 21:05pm

Signed.....Date.....