

HAYDON WICK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Amenities & Leisure Committee of Haydon Wick Parish Council held on Tuesday 13th October 2020 at 7.30pm remotely via Teams.

ATTENDENCE

MEMBERS: Councillors R Hailstone (Chairman), E Baker Lee, L Brown, S Heyes, J Jackson, A John and R Ross.

OFFICERS: Clerk, Georgina Morgan-Denn
Deputy Clerk, Laura Cutter

ATTENDANCE IN THE OFFICE: Councillors R Hailstone, Clerk and Deputy Clerk

AL 001

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors K Naik and V Manro (Work Commitments). Councillor R Venkatesh joined late due to technical difficulties.

AL 002

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

AL 003

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were three members of the public present. One resident had concerns about the flail cutting which the Deputy Clerk had sent a response to earlier. Resident queried further about the flail cutting approach and the Chairman explained the grounds maintenance schedule.

Q) I don't know much about trees and bushes, but I do know that trees and bushes do not 'heal & repair' the cuts to branches in the same way that animals repair cuts/wounds. When a cell is damaged, a tree cannot go back and fix or replace it. But it can limit the damage from any given injury by containing it and excommunicating it from the rest of the still-growing tree. The trick is in sealing, not healing. The focus is on resisting the spread of damage – especially infections of bacteria and fungi and the decay they cause – by isolating the wound and then growing beyond it.

Trees close wounds in two separate processes that create both chemical and physical boundaries around the damaged cells. First, they produce what is sometimes called a reaction zone, altering the chemistry of the existing wood surrounding a wound and making it inhospitable to decay organisms. Then, they build a barrier zone to compartmentalize the injured tissue with new tissue called “callus” or “wound wood” growing outward. If all goes according to plan, the callus growth covers and seals the wound and allows new uncontaminated wood to grow over and beyond it.

I think that the bushes and trees in the area are being butchered by the maintenance company (and the work is done as quickly as possible as opposed to correctly) and I can imagine that very soon a large percentage of the vegetation will be diseased and die due to how the vegetation is being cut-back.

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I think that the maintenance needs to be done with more care and using an appropriate method i.e. cutting or sawing as opposed to using a rotating blade.

As a separate issue I wonder if there is a reason why the grass outside Catherine Wayte has been cut so short?

I think that the work was performed by Countrywide Grounds and I have CC'd them into this email in case they would like to provide any feedback.

A) I have checked with the contractor and we believe that you are primarily talking about the trees and the only ones that are flailed as part of the hedge programme are self-seeded trees growing within the hedges that haven't been planted nor on the parish plan and therefore need to be reduced in line with the hedge height as they provide very limited value (and will become costly to maintain if allowed to grow to maturity). Flailing is a normal approach for the hard autumn/winter schedule to keep the shrubs under control and the significant growth this year shows that the shrubs flailed do heal and continue to grow healthily – this is why all farmers and local councils do a hard flail every autumn/winter, to maintain the hedgerows, hedges and shrubs.

In fact, if you look at the DEFRA website you will see the following question answered in their Q&A section on hedge management and cutting:

Q: Isn't flailing a mature hedge bad for it because there are so many bashed and broken stems?

On balance it is better for wildlife, and better for the hedge itself, to cut once every few years rather than every year. The cut ends may look unpleasant for a while, but this is more than outweighed by the benefits to wildlife.

Unfortunately, the parish are not in the position to cut less than annually as this is required for health and safety reason to keep traffic ways visible and also to keep the pathways clear. However, as you have noted above, whilst the initial cuts look harsh, they do recover and allow better management of the hedge and wildlife in the long term.

With regards to the grass cutting opposite Catherine Wayte School, this is a trial wildflower area, so the area has been box mowed and scarified ready for reseeding.

AL 004

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Reminder this is a formal meetings and normal meeting procedures, and etiquette will apply. The Chairman advised that a letter has been received from Justin Tomlinson MP with regards to a charity called Benjamin's Smile which is aimed at making play areas all inclusive for disabled persons.

AL 005

MINUTES

Members received and approved the minutes of the Amenities & Leisure Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 10th March 2020.

Proposed: Councillor L Brown Seconded: Councillor J Jackson

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

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RESOLVED: The minutes of the Amenities & Leisure Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 10th March 2020 be agreed and signed as a correct record when physical meetings resume.

AL 006

COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Councillor L Brown

Two poppy wreaths purchased and if anyone would like to donate towards them, leave contributions at Parish Council office.

Councillor J Jackson

Recent issues with regards to Abbey Meads refuse collection. Spoken to Ward Councillor V Manro who agreed to progress the matters with the relevant departments at SBC. This is a shame as the plastic was blown all over the place and there was a litter pick at the weekend.

AL 007

CLERK'S REPORT

Thames Avenue – Traffic Calming Measures

Councillor D Renard has advised that a sign warning of the speed bump travelling uphill from Thames Avenue to Whitworth Road has been ordered and will be installed as soon as possible.

Gaynor Close Play Area

A wasp nest has been reported in the hedges closest to Gaynor Close play area, the Contractors were unable to cut in line with their schedule and will return to check later in the autumn. Due to this being close to a play area, I contacted Swindon Borough Council to ask for advice, they confirmed that if the wasp nest is not causing any issues to the public then no need to remove the wasp nest but gave a contact if the nest becomes a nuisance.

Haydonleigh School

Contacted us as they are interested in adopting the land which is currently hedgerow between the school and Morrisons' footpath, as they would like to remove part of the hedgerow and install an extra pathway for parents to use when walking around the school to drop off their children. After checking the grounds maintenance map, I confirmed that this particular area belongs to Morrisons' so they should contact them directly.

Maida Vale

Request from Tidy Up Team for the office to send letters to houses that back on to the green space at Maida Vale by Havisham Drive asking them to refrain from dumping rubbish and hedge cuttings, prior to us passing on to SBC Waste Enforcement if problem persists.

Heaton Close Litter Bin

Reports of the birds getting the rubbish out of the litter bin at Heaton, have requested Tidy Up Team keep on their busy bin rounds (to be emptied daily) and litter picked until we check stock to see if there are any closed lid bins.

Countrywide Loyalty Programme

Countrywide have offered one day's work as part of their customer loyalty scheme. This is for one day during the winter period for hedge cutting/ grounds maintenance issues for a team of two (supervisor and operative).

AL 008 GRASS & HEDGE CUTTING

The Committee noted the Officers' report. There were no recommendations for the Committee to consider.

AL 009 PARKS & PROJECTS

The Committee noted the Officers' report. There were no recommendations for the Committee to consider. Query raised with regards to the condition of the Heaton Close shelter and whether it would be repainted, the Clerk confirmed this does feature on the teams work list.

AL 010 LEISURE GARDENS

The Deputy Clerk updated the meeting that the rent letters have been sent to the plot holders using the new allotment package. There have been a few teething issues with the new package, most issues can be rectified by installing the updated version of the allotment package and some queries still under review. Cashless method seems to be working well.

Inspection was postponed due to bad weather, if Councillors wish to attend please email the office to receive details of next inspection.

There are currently 71 people on the waiting list for a plot, up 52 people since March 2020 so the lockdown period obviously had an effect and people had more time to take on a plot.

Some positive news to share, 'Country Living' magazine recognises Swindon as the number one most thoughtful community when it comes to community gardening initiatives.

AL 011 HAYDONLEIGH SKATE PARK

The Council's current security provider Crocsec, is kindly attending to any security breaches whilst the skatepark is closed. Graffiti artists have been booked, design on the outside perimeter of the skate park. Design concept has been signed off and waiting for a few dry days for that to commence. Sadly changes with pandemic mean the closure will be extended for longer however, we are continuing to progress the Youth Worker temporary role as their help to open to the park (if risk assessments allow) will be crucial.

AL 012 WINTER PROJECTS

A list of winter projects was circulated prior to the meeting with a call out for Councillors to report any items for the Parks & Open Spaces Team to attend over the winter months (Nov-Feb) to tidyup@haydonwick.gov.uk

AL 013 WILDFLOWER CREATION UPDATE & BULB PLANTING

The Committee noted the following locations received for bulb planting:

- Rex Barnet Walk, near to Fessey House
- The Street, Moredon
- Purton Road, Moredon
- Orchid Vale Care Home
- Torun Way verges near Mazurek Way
- Akers Way steep banks
- Garsington Drive/ Callington Road Junctions

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- Hyssop Close near to the trees
- Torun Way verges near Casterbridge
- Medway near the planter and boundary sign

Councillor K Naik has offered to purchase more bulbs out of his own money to enhance the open spaces within the parish and will attend bulb planting sessions with Councillor J Jackson. The Grass Team will also assist with the project and give operational advice as to where works best with their grass cutting schedule, around tree bases and street signs works well or within clusters. Councillors are encouraged to assist volunteers with the bulb planting sessions.

AL 014

TREE WORKS

Councillors noted the Tree Report and the trees identified within the Tree Survey 2020 that are next on the list for remediation work. Quotations will be available at November's meeting.

AL 015

SEVEN FIELDS UPDATE

Councillor E Baker Lee gave a verbal update on Seven Fields. Nothing major to report. Seven Fields is looking beautiful now with the autumn colours and Mr Phil Jefferies (*Haydon Wick Hero: Volunteer of the Year and Parkrun Seven Fields Event Co-Ordinator*), has captured some great images that are circulating on Facebook. Conservation Group to identify a suitable area for the 'Covid Oak Tree' that has been donated by a local resident. The Parish Council has offered to assist with the planting and maintenance. A site visit may be beneficial. Conservation Group and Councillors should identify a list of questions for Swindon Borough Council so that the grounds maintenance in Seven Fields goes smoothly next year and is not cut too early again.

AL 016

OPEN SPACES CONSULTATION 2020 ANALYSIS

The Committee noted the report on the Open Spaces Consultation 2020 Analysis. Due to extensive 'other comments' received during the consultation it was agreed that the Play Area Working Party would look at the comments in more detail and look to feed this into future projects and aspirations for next year's budget.

AL 017

PLAY AREA WORKING PARTY

Councillor S Heyes gave a verbal update following a recent meeting to investigate the current status of our 24 play parks. The meeting heard how as a rule of thumb there is a 20-year cycle of maintenance, therefore it would be beneficial to draw up a 20 year maintenance plan, with a 10 year plan to extend the life span of some parks. The list will be reviewed annually and be flexible to meet the needs of the community. This list will enable the Parks & Projects Team to update annually on the play areas' usage, the items received from the RoSPA inspection and whether the users have changed.

The Play Area Working Party will be inviting a campaigner (who wrote to the local MPs) to a future working party meeting to discuss the provision of play areas for disabled children and to give us suggestions of the items for inclusion.

During a recent site visit, members of the Play Area Working Party selected a Gaynor Close as the next play park to benefit from a refurbishment. During the site visit it was felt that the play area does not need a full refurbishment and a half-life cosmetic uplift would be sufficient. A proposal would come forward from the working party before any financial impact is committed to.

Voyager Drive is ear-marked for wet pour resurfacing in 2021/2022. And Luna Close could use some minor refurbishment to enhance the play area and could be a future budget aspiration for a complete refurbishment. It was suggested that an external grant funding application could be applied for in 2022 to help offset the costs.

AL 018

OPERATIONAL BUDGET MONITORING

Members received and noted Month 6 income and expenditure report for Parks & Open Spaces cost centres.

AL 019

BUDGET ASPIRATIONS

The following two items were identified in the budget aspiration discussion:

1. Depot Feasibility
2. Play Areas to include CCTV installations

Officers raised the potential to develop land usage at Trent Road with local girls' football club, Allstarz FC. It was acknowledged in that in short-term there may be some financial implications that needed further research and brought back to Council for their consideration. However, it was noted that there were significant benefits to developing a longer term partnership with the group and therefore the meeting agreed in principal for Officers to continue discussions.

Proposed: Councillor S Heyes

Seconded: Councillor J Jackson

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: To agree to Officers continuing to establish the partnership with Allstarz and for further costs the short term plans to be brought to a future meeting.

AL 020

ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

To be sent to the Clerk in advance of the next meeting.

AL 021

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC & PRESS

RESOLVED: In accordance with Standing Order 3 (d) that 'in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted and in the public interest, that the press and public be temporarily excluded, and they be instructed to withdraw'. Reason: Commercially sensitive.

AL 023

TREE ON THAMES AVENUE

The Deputy Clerk informed the meeting that Swindon Borough Council has agreed to prune the tree by 40% in December. This will form a structural removal, to take the moisture out of the tree and to help mitigate against complete removal which may cause heave. Once the work has been completed the Borough Council will send us insurance files, as the tree is on land that we lease from them but they have agreed to carry out this time as

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they are aware of the previous history. It will be the Parish Council's responsibility for future maintenance.

AL 024 TREE IN CORFE CLOSE

The Deputy Clerk informed the meeting that Swindon Borough Council is unable to carry out the works on this tree as the tree is on land that we lease from them. A quote and recommendation has been received to prune the tree and crown lift by 20%, as the quote exceeds £500.00 two comparison quotes are required which will be brought to Full Council at the end of October.

AL 025 PARKS & OPEN SPACES TEAM (POST) DEPOT FEASIBILITY

The meeting heard how the first recommendation from the recent Full Council meeting has been completed and interviews for the POST Manager are taking place this week. The next recommendation required an additional working party meeting before a decision can be made at a dedicated meeting of the council. The Extraordinary Ordinary meeting of the Council will be on Tuesday 3rd November 2020. This will cover the size of depot and ongoing financial impact for the Council. The meeting acknowledged this was a significant decision and members needed sufficient time to fully consider the meeting papers. It was agreed the Clerk will circulate the confidential papers prior to the meeting and Councillors were asked to forward their questions prior to the meeting (by 10am on Monday 2nd November) in order to make a decision on the 3rd.

AL 026 INSURANCE MATTER

A recent insurance claim whereby a stone went through a passing van's window has not been upheld because we were able to prove that we had sufficient risk assessments and method statements in place for the case not to be progressed further.

AL 027 HAYDONLEIGH SKATE PARK FENCING COSTS

The meeting received four quotations to erect fencing at Haydonleigh Skate Park. The costs were similar. Queries whether the fence panels will be replaced or extended were raised, which the Deputy Clerk confirmed she would investigate with the Technical Officers who conducted the site visits and obtained the quotes. The colour suggested will match the existing colour of the skate park fencing to match the existing gate, however, the Committee suggested the fence is green to match the new fencing that splits Haydonleigh School and the Skatepark.

Due to the fencing height being increased to 3m it is possible that the Council will require planning permission. Enquiries to be made to the Planning Department and to SBC Ward Councillor, David Renard. Due to the implications of planning this may delay the project, but it was agreed to accept the quotation now for this to progress smoothly once concerns investigated.

Councillor K Naik joined the meeting at 8.30pm

Councillor R Venkatesh joined the meeting at 8.37pm

Proposed: Councillor A John

Seconded: Councillor E Baker Lee

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: To accept a quotation for £8,300 for the 3m high fencing at Haydonleigh Skatepark once planning permission received and confirmation of whether new or existing fence panels will be used.

The meeting closed at 20.45

Chairman:

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