

HAYDON WICK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parks & Open Spaces Committee meeting of Haydon Wick Parish Council held on Tuesday 8th November 2022 at 7.30pm.

ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS: Councillors: R Hailstone (Chairman), S Heyes (Vice Chair), J Jackson, V Manro, S McDermott and A John.

OFFICERS: Deputy Clerk & Services Manager, Laura Cutter
Head of Parks & Open Spaces, Dave Hunt

POS 147 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and noted from Councillors D Rodgers, E Baker Lee, and K T Naik (Personal Commitments).

POS 148 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP RESIGNATION

Members noted that Councillor L Brown has resigned from the Parks & Open Spaces Committee.

POS 149 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

The Chairman advised that the meeting was being recorded by a Member of Public.

POS 150 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were two members of the public present. One was there to listen to the discussion regarding Cliffords Meadow. The other member of public submitted some financial questions in advance of the meeting:

1. Has the agreement been signed by the parish and leasing company yet? *Yes, the agreement was signed following Full Council on the 22nd November 2022.*
2. The five year deal with the leasing company isn't that set in stone? *Yes, the Council has committed to a five year lease.*
3. Is there a cooling off period attached to this agreement? *Yes, 14 days from the date of signing the agreement.*
4. What are the terms of a possible buy out from the lease? How much would it cost? *The Council can buy out from the lease at any time within the five year agreement, but the amount it would cost is dependent on the value and age of the asset.*
5. Would the allocated contingency amount of £5,000.00 per year, £25,000.00 at the end of the agreement, be sufficient bearing in mind you talked about a three year term before a possible buy out? *The contingency is there in case of a rise in costs of maintenance in Years 4 & 5, which is what has been experienced previously with the Grass Cutting Machines.*
6. Besides the £5,000.00 per year set aside for maintenance, explain what a maintenance agreement means, is it just a service or will it cover a breakdown? If so, will you have a replacement sweeper? *The cost of the maintenance agreement includes services, breakdowns and maintenance. Consumables are outside of this agreement. There is a replacement sweeper available within 24 hours of the hired machine breaking down.*

7. I find it strange to agree a five year deal and now we are talking about a % rise. When will you disclose the name of the company? *The percentage rise is not from the supplier, it is from the third party finance company. The order was delayed due to ratification via the democratic process, the costs, if excessive would have been renegotiated but as they are minimal, and contingency has been built into the agreed costs it makes no difference to the overall end totals. The name of the supplier is within the public domain as the contracts have already been agreed, the supplier is Hako.*

The member of public queried why the discussion regarding Agenda 23 – Hedges and Shrub Bed Maintenance was in the exempt session. *The Deputy Clerk explained that there were some budgetary, resourcing and contractual elements to discuss. Keeping this in exempt allows the Councillors to express their thoughts more freely and gives the Officers time to finalise the plan prior to publicising. The item will be taken to Full Council at the end of the month when the decisions have been made, this can then be disclosed within the public session. A section is included tonight under the public session to be transparent and update residents on the current situation.*

The member of public enquired when the report detailing Highways issues at Haydon View and Whitworth Road would be escalated to Swindon Borough Council? *The Head of Parks & Open Spaces confirmed the report is ready to be submitted.*

POS 151

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Nothing to report.

POS 152

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Members approved the minutes of the Parks & Open Spaces Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 11th October 2022.

Proposed: Councillor V Manro Seconded: Councillor A John

Vote: Agreed with two (2) abstentions.

RESOLVED: Members confirmed as a true record the minutes of meetings held on Tuesday 11th October 2022 and signed by the Chairman.

Members agreed to suspend Standing Order 3e to allow the Members of Public to be actively involved with the discussion.

POS 153

CLIFFORDS MEADOW SSSI

Members received a Tier One response from Natural England with regards to a recent complaint about the lack of maintenance and failure to protect the SSSI status at Cliffords Meadow. Members heard that calves are escaping the field as the barbwire placed by the tenant farmer, to close the gaps in the stock fencing, keeps being cut. Residents have formed a WhatsApp group with the local tenant farmer included, so if the calves do escape there is someone on site to assist within a few minutes. The communications with the tenant farmer are welcomed, residents appreciate the farmer has limited funds for remedial actions and that most of the issues need to be raised with the Land Agents. Residents felt that the response was less than satisfactory and have further questions to ask Natural England. The Parish Council will inform Justin Tomlinson MP of the situation at Cliffords Meadow. Questions to include within the Tier Two response, include:

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- Is funding available to maintain the meadow?
- If so, who receives the funding, the land agent, or the tenant farmer?
- What should the funding be spent on?
- Could volunteer residents assist with the Orchid count if an organised event is put on by Natural England and Wiltshire Wildlife Trust?

19:49 One member of the public left the meeting.

POS 154

COUNCILLORS REPORTS

Councillor V Manro:

1. City Fiber has informed that a local company called Ziber, is knocking on residents' doors locally. Ziber is not related to City Fiber. Ziber is a legitimate company, but City Fiber suggests being cautious of handing over information on the doorsteps and in some cases direct debit details have been requested.
2. Thames Water is marking yellow crosses on utility boxes to identify which ones have a fault and to identify which properties they serve. There is currently a five year program to replace all the current meters with smart meters which will identify a sufficient flow of water indicating a flood or small household leak. The smart meters will run on long life batteries and be maintained or replaced yearly. The smart meters will be included within the public utility boxes so will be secure.
3. Burst water pipe at Shaw Forest last evening, as this is close to the railway line Network Rail has been called in to assist. Explained the history of the issues with this pipeline, in 2019 in the same location but more recently at Mouldon Hill. Tankers are on Thamesdown Drive again to resolve the issue.
4. Has been invited as the Chairman of Haydon Wick Parish Council to attend a Haydonleigh School in February to listen to a debate from students across the local schools on improvements to their schools. Judges are the teachers from the local schools and Councillors from neighbouring parishes.

Councillor S McDermott:

Nothing to report but has some items to pass to the Head of Parks & Open Spaces for the daily work sheets and winter projects.

Councillor R Ross:

Recently attended the Seven Fields Conservation Group presentation held at the Council Offices, the presentation was informative and gave an overview of the history and why the Local Nature Reserve needs to be maintained in specific ways.

Councillor S Heyes:

City Fiber is currently looking at options to deliver fiberoptic broadband through unadopted roads by using different techniques and less digging to promote minimal disruption. If the trial areas work, these may be able to be rolled out to other unadopted roads within North Swindon.

Councillor A John:

Acknowledged the importance of adding the recent issues with the burst water pipes on to the Planning & Highways agenda to progress with a complaint letter for Thames Water. The tankers on Thamesdown Drive cause disruption to residents and the effects of the burst water mains are damaging to the environment, especially as this pipe has burst several times in the past. Justin

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Tomlinson MP should be actively involved in the discussions with Thames Water.

Councillor J Jackson:

Nothing to report.

Councillor R Hailstone:

Noticed surface water flooding recently due to the heavy rainfall. The gully cleaning is still with Swindon Borough Council to progress, there is one gully cleaner for the whole of the Borough, so areas are being prioritised and currently gully cleaning takes place once per year.

Members agreed to suspend Standing Order 3e to allow the Members of Public to be actively involved with the discussion.

The member of public updated that Swindon Borough Council is currently measuring the silt levels to assess the priorities and planned works. Once the gully has been cleaned, a dot is spray painted on the kerb edge, as previously only one in four gullies were cleaned within the streets.

POS 155

DEPUTY CLERK AND SERVICE MANAGER'S REPORT

Nothing to report.

POS 156

HEAD OF PARKS & OPEN SPACES' REPORT

Members noted the report and noted items on the Daily Work Sheets were reducing each month. The Head of Parks & Open Spaces confirmed it has been a good year for grass cutting, this has been helped with the dry weather. Members acknowledged that the grass cutting service has improved with the implementation of the backup strimming and sweeping schedule.

POS 157

AUTUMN/WINTER SHRUB AND HEDGE MAINTENANCE

Members noted the report regarding the current hedge cutting schedule and progress to date. The contractor has subsequently pulled out of the contract, further details operationally will be discussed later under the exempt session. Social media pages are being updated with some before/after pictures of jobs completed by the Parks & Open Spaces Team, inclusive of a description detailing the works. Despite changes to the contract, the schedule remains on track.

POS 158

ANNUAL PLOT HOLDERS MEETING

Members received a report in advance of comments arising from the plot holders meeting held on Monday 10th October 2022. A summary of findings and next steps will be sent to the plot holders in due course. It was acknowledged that there were still some items to be investigated and some amendments to the Leisure Garden Terms & Conditions which will be taken to Finance & Policy Committee next week.

POS 159

WILDFLOWERS, BULBS AND TREES

Members noted that the community bulbs had been distributed to schools and the Council has 200 daffodils and 100 snowdrops left over to plant. Suitable locations for consideration should be passed to the Head of Parks & Open Spaces within the next few days as planting needs to take place by the end of November 2022.

POS 160

PARKS & PROJECTS REPORT

Members noted the report and after discussion agreed to the Officers recommendations.

Proposed: Councillor R Ross

Seconded: Councillor J Jackson

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED:

1. **To purchase spare swing seats and chains at a cost of £1,150.00 + VAT inclusive of delivery [4305/302]**
2. **To repair the see saw at Village Green Play Area up to the value of £750.00 [4305/302]**

POS 161

PLAY AREA WORKING PARTY BUDGET ASPIRATIONS

Members received an update from Councillor S Heyes detailing the projects still complete within this financial year and budget aspirations for play areas in 2023/2024 and 2024/2025.

2023/2024:

- Enhancements Carry forward existing £23,000.00 and add £2,000.00 to keep at £25,000.00 – only planned enhancements Build steps alongside KGV slide £2,000.00
- Repairs Reduce from £15,000.00 to £10,000.00
- Wet pour resurfacing at large areas where the surface has dipped in the middle in the region of £70,000.00* (quotations being received, further information to follow)
- Wet pour in house small repairs reduce to £2,500.00

2024/2025:

- Consider deferring Trent Road Play Area again from 2023/2024 to 2024/2025; have a bigger refurbishment with resurfacing and extension to include accessible play.

In the current financial year, within existing budgets painting and repairs can take place.

Proposed: Councillor S Heyes

Seconded: Councillor A John

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: To submit the above budget aspirations to the Budget Setting Working Party. Further information needed on the large wet pour resurfacing areas.

POS 162

OPERATIONAL BUDGET MONITORING

Members received and noted the Income and Expenditure for Month 6 (October 22). Members requested more information on projected spends, as some items less than 50% spent halfway through this financial year.

POS 163

BUDGET SETTING

Members received a verbal report about 23/24's budget setting process. It was acknowledged that the current timescales of the Grounds Maintenance Facility may affect next year's projects again as it had this financial year, which will have an impact on the budget. The Budget Setting Working Party will have to review the priorities. Discussions need to be had on whether to defer Trent Road Field Play Area again or whether to progress with this, as there are more young people enjoying the facility since the Playing Field has been leased for

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grassroots football. Members discussed other budget aspirations submitted by the Parks & Open Spaces such as a new lease of an electric vehicle and the play area aspirations discussed earlier in the meeting.

POS 164 ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

To be sent to the Chief Officer in advance of the next meeting on 13th December 2022.

POS 165 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC & PRESS

RESOLVED: To resolve 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: Contractual.

POS 166 AUTUMN/WINTER SHRUB AND HEDGE MAINTENANCE WORKS

Members received an update that the contractor has pulled out of the autumn/winter shrub and hedge maintenance contract due to under-pricing the contract and downscaling its operations. Members discussed the Officers' recommendations within the report on how the service could run adequately this year by the internal Parks & Open Spaces Team and any costs associated with this. Members subsequently agreed to the recommendations within the report which will be reported to Full Council on the 22nd November 2022.

Proposed: Councillor J Jackson Seconded: Councillor S McDermott

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the operational and budgetary contents within the report.
2. To employ two temporary seasonal staff (5th December 2022 – 31st March 2023) to assist with the hedge cutting schedule, the cost of this is £16,381.00 inclusive of on costs.
3. To hire a temporary vehicle for the two seasonal staff at a cost of £5,000.00 for the duration.
4. To instruct Countrywide to carry out at £650.00 per day, for a 10 day work schedule with the large tractor and flail at the end of January, at a cost of £6,500.00 + VAT (£650.00 per day).
5. To purchase additional tools up to the value of £2,000.00.

POS 167 COMPACT MINI STREET SWEEPER

Members noted an update regarding the interest rates for the finance on the lease agreement which has increased since the original quotation. The increase is £13.00 per week. A contingency of £5,000.00 per annum has been approved, this will now be reduced to £4,324.00 per annum to cover the increased interest charges. There will be no further impact on the annual budget previously agreed at Full Council. It was acknowledged that the process of ordering the sweeper was delayed due to the democratic process and adhering to meeting dates. However, whilst the delivery times remained on track there was no mention that the interest rates would be changed in line with inflation - this will be a learning point for future negotiations and checking if the prices will change as we take decisions to council meetings.

Proposed: Councillor J Jackson Seconded: Councillor A John

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: To approve the increased payment on the pre-agreed lease will be paid for out of the contingency funds, which will now be reduced from £5,000.00 per annum to 4,324.00 per annum.

The meeting closed at 21.09

Chairman_____

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