

HAYDON WICK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parks & Open Spaces Committee meeting of Haydon Wick Parish Council held on Tuesday 3rd September 2024.

ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS: Councillors R Hailstone (Chair), S Heyes (Vice Chair), J Ali, J Jackson, A John, V Manro, R Ross, L Stevenson and R Worman

OFFICERS: Georgina Morgan-Denn, Chief Officer
Dave Hunt, Head of Parks & Open Spaces Manager
Julie McMorrow, Meetings Administrator

POS 035 APOLOGIES
Councillors E Baker-Walker and O Munagala (Personal Commitments).

POS 036 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
Councillor J Jackson declared an interest in Agenda Item 10B as he is Leisure Garden Plot Holder. He took no part in the debate or vote.

POS 037 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
There were none.

POS 038 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS
There were none.

POS 039 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING
Members reviewed the minutes of the Parks and Opens Spaces Committee meeting held on Tuesday 2nd July 2024 as a true record.
Proposed: Councillor A John Seconded: Councillor J Jackson
Vote: Agreed with one (1) Abstention.
RESOLVED: Members confirmed as a true record the minutes held on Tuesday 2nd July 2024 and they were signed by the Chairman with one amendment.

POS 040 SEVEN FIELDS
Kings Bridge remains in need of repair. needs SBC (Swindon Borough Council) have claimed previously that there is no funding, as the bridge is not a danger it is not a current priority.

POS 041 HEAD OF PARK & OPEN SPACES REPORT
The Committee noted the report which included an update to the Tidy Up Team, Vehicle maintenance, Cycle Way in Pond Street.

Dog Waste issues were discussed and a request for a dog bin to be installed at the junction of Cagney Drive and Cooper Fields was granted, subject to a public consultation of thirty-two (32) properties. It was noted that previously there had been a problem in this area with antisocial behaviour and throwing the contents of the bin in residents' garden. *Head of Parks & Open Spaces (POS) to commence the new bin consultation to 32 homes near Cagney Drive and Cooper Fields.*

A team member who has been with the Council since 2017 will retire this month. A card will be circulated to send fond farewell to this well-liked team member.

Councillor Hailstone mentioned a resident request to install an extra bin in the car park at Mouldon Hill – *to be actioned by the Head of POS.*

POS 042 CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT

Recently met with Highworth Town Council Clerk to discuss the practicalities of weed spraying. A proposal will be brought to a future committee meeting. *Deputy Clerk to provide a Weed Spraying report to F&P or Full Council in September.*

POS 043 COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Councillor J Jackson – Still getting residents mentioning the Elstree roundabout. The Chief Officer requested their names and details in future when raising issues so that we can log it on to our daily spreadsheet and if necessary, contact them.

Councillor R Worman – Continues to have serious concerns about an overgrown tree on Whitworth Road which is on private land belonging to Claremont Court. This is not the Parish Council's responsibility however the Chief Officer will take the matter up with the private company and SBC Ward Councillors. Enquired about a strip of land on Thames Avenue/ Whitworth Road that is unkempt. It was confirmed that this will be added to the schedule. Behind Asda the road alongside the Toby Carvery, the bushes have been cut back and left in a mess, confirmation that this is SBC's remit.

Cllr R Hailstone – Asked the question around income from advertisement from our maintained roundabouts? The Chief Officer advised that yes, some depending on where the adverts sit on the boundary and may be shared with other parishes. Also mentioned that parishes have asked if this income could be passed to them as part of the Transfer of Services, because the parishes maintain the roundabout and have the means to organise the advertising themselves, but the information has not been forthcoming from SBC.

No representation at parish activities meetings or events this month:

Councillor S Heyes

Councillor A John

Councillor R Ross

Councillor L Stevenson

Councillor J Ali

Councillor V Manro

POS 044 LEISURE GARDENS

POS 044A

Received and noted the report. So far there have been three inspections, no current vacancies and a waiting list remains in place. *Head of POS to confirm if the waiting list at Tadpole is comprised of parish residents.*

The annual Leisure Gardens competition has been judged and will be awarded at the Annual Plot Holders Meeting on 7th October 2024. It was suggested to revisit last year's minutes to check if any outstanding tasks have been actioned and to circulate the updates to Councillors before the meeting. *Head of POS to send the plot holder action list with updates.*

The new monthly communication to plot holders is being well received and any tenants without an email will get it delivered by hand.

Tenants have raised the unsuitability of the current car parking area at Ventnor. It was suggested remodelling this, in conjunction with the completion of the sheltered housing works, utilising budget available in the Leisure Gardens EMR accrued from previous years' rental incomes. *Deputy Clerk/Head of POS to consider the site of the parking at either the existing location or at the bottom of the site and bring a proposal with costings to the November meeting.*

Rubbish at Goodearl by the GMF is to be removed as it is becoming unsightly and quite a substantial pile that is only attracting further items to be dumped there. *Head of POS to action the removal.*

A plot holder has enquired about displaying promotional posters to purchase seeds. This is a private company offering discounted seeds to tenants and passersby. Councillors suggested, although not being profitable for the plot holder, it does not want to advertise the supplier on their noticeboards because it may infer an endorsement or relationship with the business. *Head of POS/Administrator to inform the plot holder of the Committee's decision.*

POS 044B

The meeting noted the report and the Officer's recommendations. Historically the increases are in line with the RPI, however for the past two years it has been frozen at 4% due to the high levels of inflation and cost of living crisis. The RPI is currently at 3.1% so the increase proposed is 3% this year. A counter proposal was put forward to reject the recommendation to include a £2 administration fee for tenants who have not supplied an email address for correspondence. Members would like the RBS Allotment Software to be re-evaluated as part of the budget setting exercise. It was acknowledged that the cost of the plots are bench marked against other parishes and Haydon Wick is currently offering good value.

Deputy Clerk to re-evaluate the RBS Allotment Software as part of the budget setting exercise and report in the November meeting.

Councillor J John abstained from the vote and did not take part in any of the discussions due to being a plot holder.

Proposed: Councillor V Manro

Seconded: Councillor S Heyes

Vote: Agreed with two (2) Abstentions.

RESOLVED: To increase the Leisure Garden rents by 3% (rounded to the nearest pound), as presented. To reject the recommendation to include a £2 administration fee for tenants who have not supplied an email address for correspondence.

POS 045

PARKS & OPEN SPACES MAINTENANCE SCHEDULES

POS 045A

Planned Maintenance Schedules and Services – schedules have been updated and the tractor and side arm will hire will be extended for another three (3) months along with the extension of two (2) temporary staff members who have proved an asset to the team. The Trent Road flats hedge maintenance will commence on 9th September 2024.

POS 045B

Shrub Bed Regeneration at Elstree Way/Ealing Way Junction in Abbey Meads – a verbal update was received. This shrub bed is recovering well therefore Head of Parks and Open Spaces suggested it will continue to regenerate and could then be maintained at a lower level. *Head of POS to provide an update at the next committee meeting.*

POS 045C

Suggestions for Hedge and Shrub Bed Removal - areas suggested to go to a public consultation in Autumn 2024 are:

- Rose beds on Shepperton Way
- Shrub beds next to play areas at Brookfield, Capesthorpe, Galloway, Gaynor, Heaton, Mazurek, Queen Elizabeth. Near St Francis School. Francomes – subject to any agreement from SBC.

It was noted it will either be a harsh reduction or a complete removal. For example up against the fences and gates or near the play areas as they attract litter and anti-social behaviour. The letter with either full removal or a hard cut back specification will be explicitly detailed in the consultation.

Head of POS/Deputy Clerk to draft letter to include the safety of children being a priority to the parish with clearly marked maps for the consultation to commence in the Autumn to Chair, Vice Chair and Chairman of Council for sign off.

Head of POS to confirm if the parish is responsible for the maintenance on the walkways at Seven Fields.

Initials _____

POS 046 MEADOWSWEET CLOSE SHRUB BED AREA MAINTENANCE

Deferred until Full Council as the Officer was unable to attend the meeting.

POS 047 WILDFLOWERS TREES & BULBS

An update was received and last year only fritillaries were planted due to resourcing levels and Grounds Maintenance priorities. It was suggested that there should be a Working Party asap to discuss forward their ideas to Community Development Committee to commence public events from October onwards. It was acknowledged that these events must be Councillor-led and should not impact on the resources of the Office or POST. It was proposed that one member of the team can assist with the organisation, but it will be mainly down to the Councillors to lead.

Deputy Clerk to arrange the Wildflowers, Trees & Bulbs Working Party meeting and circulate the previous Big Bulb Planting information to possibly build upon for 2024. Bring ideas to the October Community Development Committee.

POS 048 PARKS & PROJECTS TEAM UPDATE

Committee noted the report. Shrub bed maintenance of play areas is about to commence along with 3-weekly Leisure Garden maintenance. The bus shelter that has just been refurbished has been (sadly) vandalised already. The team will look at other materials. It was suggested to possibly remove the shelter, but this would be subject to a public consultation. Parks and Projects are looking to streamline the play inspection process with an electronic system – costs will be updated at the next committee meeting.

POS 049 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE FACILITY

Correspondence received from the contractor on the PV/Solar Panel specification are waiting final costs before a final decision can be given by the GMF Working Party. Other specifications such as the Intruder Alarm have been confirmed as compliant with our insurers. Awaiting the final CCTV and Wash Bay details. This week there is a meeting with POST to agree the plant room and kitchen layout.

POS 050 OPERATIONAL BUDGET MONITORING

Expenditure was noted for month 4. Budget setting period commences this month and audits are being prepared to assist Councillors with future decisions.

SMT to have financial audits on: Vehicles, Machinery, Contractor Delivery, Lease vs Purchase ready for budget setting discussions.

POS 051 ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

Pass to Chief Officer in advance of the next meeting in November.

POS 052 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC & PRESS

There were none present.

POS 053 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE FACILITY

Nothing more to add.

POS 054 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE COMPLAINT

A complaint was received on the 20th August from a member of the public highlighting the footpath between Gaynor Close and Baxter Close. It was confirmed that these shrub beds are not maintained by the parish council and to direct the resident to SBC.

Meeting Closed at: 9.00pm

Signed by Chairman: _____

Initials _____