

Minutes of an Open Spaces Committee Meeting held on Thursday 18th February 2018 at 6pm in the Civic Centre Eckington

Attendance

Councillors: - C. Gare; A Dye; K Deffley and L. Kirton

Others: - Clerk R. Bullimore; Assistant Clerk R. Hill

OS 1/18 Apologies

RESOLVED to note apologies received from Councillor J Ridgway (injury)
John Green (Illness)

OS 2/18 Minutes

Minutes 79/17 – 88/17 of an Open Spaces Committee Meeting held 19th October 2017 were agreed as a true and accurate record subject to Minute 85/17 Marsh Lane Memorial not to be cleaned. Clerk to place an item on the next Council meeting agenda to discuss a policy and procedure for the UFI Blue Grit Bin initiative.

The Chair signed the Minutes.

OS 3/18 Finance Working Party

RESOLVED to appoint Councillors Gare and Dye as representatives from the Open Spaces Committee onto the Parish Council Finance Working party.

OS 4/18 Cemetery

Clerk reported on the Cemetery: The cemetery is looking tidier since notices have been placed on unkempt graves. Simplified cemetery rules are being issued to every new grave/memorial owner. A quotation to move the soil surround will be available for the next Council meeting.

The Clerk asked the Committee to consider replacing the waste bins at the cemetery and suggested sponsors were sought to assist with the cost RECOMMEND the purchase of two bins every year until all the bins have been replaced. Clerk to contact local businesses to ask if they will sponsor them.

Committee Members considered a letter of complaint about a grave being blocked off with soil. The Clerk met with the complainant to hear her objections and with the staff at the cemetery to find out what had happened. Staff had reopened a grave before the Christmas break for an interment which was to take place in the new year. The soil from the grave was placed onto the adjacent grave. When the relative came to visit the cemetery on New Years' day she was shocked and upset to see that her parents grave was totally obstructed with soil and boards. RESOLVED to note the complainant was very pleased with the way the Clerk had dealt with complaint. However, she still went to the local press and placed comments and photos on social media about her unfortunate experience. An apology from the Chair of the Parish Council was included in the press statement and a letter of apology is to be sent to the complainant RESOLVED a new policy has been implemented by the Clerk, when a reopening is due to take place letters are to be sent to all grave owners who may be affected informing them of the situation and advising them not to visit the site until the area has been put back to normality.

The Committee considered the viability of part exchanging some of the grass cutting equipment stored at the cemetery for a mower that can be used in all weathers. Councillor Dye agreed to look at the equipment to see if they would be worth selling or retaining RECOMMEND the purchase one new mower and retain one as a spare and subject to Councillor Dyes' assessment, sell the remaining three mowers.

Clerk informed the Committee that burials have started on the top section. Work has started on the building of the concrete plinth for the siting of headstones to keep the rows uniformed on this new section. The owner of the grave in this section has been notified of the works to be carried out and has raised no objection. Members were surprised to hear that burials were taking place on the top section they thought that the section beyond the beech hedge would be used first.

Discussion took place about Councillors volunteering to work on the flower beds at the cemetery and offering to share their gardening knowledge with the staff. It was suggested that professional gardening training be offered to the cemetery staff. RECOMMEND if Councillors want to visit the cemetery they must notify the Clerk first. Any findings to be offered to the Clerk to deal with. Advice only to be given if the staff ask for it.

OS 5/18 Allotments

There are three people on the allotment waiting list and three vacancies which will be filled shortly. Fourteen plots on Ducksett Lane previously used for grazing are to be brought back into allotment use within the next couple of months. Clerk to contact 28 people on the waiting list who have previously been offered a plot to ask if they want to remain on the waiting list. An article to be placed on the website, social media and newsletter about the allotment vacancies.

Renishaw Day Care Centre has taken School Street allotment plot 18A as a community allotment.

The water supply for Marsh Lane allotments will be connected before April 2018.

OS 6/18 Play Areas

Clerk informed Members of the recent improvements to the play areas using the grant awarded from Awards for All. Two new cradle swings and a springer have been installed at Ridgeway. Unfortunately, the flat swings were removed in error, these are to be replaced at the company's own expense. A seesaw and a spinner have been installed at Darcy Road.

The wet pour at Ducksett Lane has been repaired and new cradle swings are to be purchased and installed shortly.

New cradle swings are to be installed at Ash Crescent to replace the ones that had been stolen a number of years ago.

RECOMMEND signs to be placed in the play areas adverting the Parish Councils contact details and to inform people that dogs are not to be exercised in these areas.

Members thanked the Assistant Clerk for the creation of a play area leaflet which is to help promote the play areas within the parish. RECOMMEND that the leaflets are distributed to the Junior Schools, Nurseries, at the Summer Festival and within the community halls.

Councillor Hunt and Kirton raised concerns around flooding issues at Lansbury play area RESOLVED Clerk to arrange for the handyman to meet with Councillor Hunt to try and find a solution to resolve the problem.

RESOLVED to note volunteers have started work on the hedge laying at Ida's Road play area. Notices have been installed to ask members of the public to refrain from making a short cut through the play area and to request that they use the public footpath.

OS 7/18 Tree Inspection Report

Members considered a tree inspection report RECOMMEND a second opinion is sought.

OS 8/18 Partnership Working

Clerk reported on a meeting with representatives from Eckington Town Team regarding partnership working. One project, the installation of welcome planters at the gateways to the villages within the parish RESOLVED Clerk to ask for feedback on any consultations where the residents have been asked what they would like to see. The second project advertising boards, Clerk to ask for this to be placed on hold until it has been confirmed what the District Council are planning on doing with land near the bus station when the public toilet block has been demolished.

OS 9/18 Grant Funding

Members were asked to suggest Open Spaces funding projects.

OS 10/18 Help in the Community Project

Clerk asked Members if they could suggest any activities for an eleven year old student wanting to help in the community RECOMMEND Clerk to ask one of the organisers at Green Lawns lunch club to see if they need any help.