

# Environment and Allotments Committee



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## Minutes of the Environment and Allotments Committee Meeting held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 7:00pm, via Zoom

**EA/20-21/3/1**

**Present**

Cllr K Robinson, Cllr P Waring, Cllr J Waring, Cllr G Burnett, Cllr S Dymond and Mr D Plimbley (Swan Bank Allotments)

In attendance: Sue Davies, Town Clerk

**EA/20-21/3/2**

**To receive apologies for absence**

Cllr A Cooper, Cllr H Maxfield, Cllr C Dickens and Mr Steve Blaze had sent apologies of absence in advance to the Clerk.

**EA/20-21/3/3**

**To note declarations of Member's Interests**

None declared

**EA/20-21/3/4**

**To receive and confirm the minutes of the meeting held on the 29<sup>th</sup> September 2020.**

The minutes of the meeting of the 29<sup>th</sup> September 2020 were received and approved by the Committee with the addition of Cllr S Dymond who was present.

**EA/20-21/3/5**

**Public Participation – A period not exceeding 15 minutes for members of the public to ask questions or submit comments.**

No members of the public present.

**EA/20-21/3/6 Matters arising not covered elsewhere (updates only)**

None

**EA/20-21/3/7 Allotments update:**

**a) Crown Bank – To receive an update**

The Aspire lease is progressing and Aspire have visited to check the boundaries.

Cllr Robinson raised the fire damaged fencing and whether the site should be better secured with fencing. The site has many open sections and there have been two break-ins over the last year. Cllr P Waring suggested getting some quotes to have an idea of cost.

*Action: The Clerk was asked to progress quotes with Mr Blaze.*

**b) Lamb Street – To receive an update**

The Clerk informed that the work to remove the asbestos could take place on the Friday and Mr Plimbley and herself will pursue this.

Mr Plimbley raised about the planting of the willow tree opposite the Lidl site as he has been in receipt of the tree for the past month.

**EA/20-21/3/8 Environmental Issues**

**a) To receive feedback from those who attended the talk by Jane Smith of Alsager Town council and to discuss ideas raised which the committee could consider for Kidsgrove.**

Cllr Dymond reported that she found the ideas highly informative. Cllr J Waring suggested a summary and members were asked to read the notes which had already been circulated. Cllr P Waring suggested that the town council's strategy would also be considered during the budget setting.

Cllr J Waring suggested finding a tree champion from within the Community.

**b) To consider progression of a Single Use Plastic free drive (agreed as an agenda item at the last committee meeting).**

It was agreed that this could be considered during budget setting.

**c) To consider and agree a way forward with an Environmental Policy.**

The Clerk agreed to arrange an informal meeting for committee members to brain storm ideas to produce a draft policy to bring back to the committee.

**a) Newchapel Recreational Ground**

Cllr K Robinson opened the item by reminding members that the Town Council meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup> November had favourably received the report from Cllr J Waring asking for Town Council involvement and had agreed in principle to take responsibility for some environmental aspects on the development of the area around the proposed pump track. Cllr Robinson asked for members to forward ideas further to those already submitted which include a community orchard and wild flower garden along with pathways and bench provision.

Cllr J Waring commented that a plan of the whole area could be requested from the borough council once available as the position and scale of the pump track isn't currently known. She felt that until this is known, it is difficult for the Town Council to consider its various ideas.

The Town Council has also agreed to consider taking on some maintenance costs which may involve some grass cutting although some costs would need establishing. The ranger involvement was raised but this may be problematic due to the scale of machinery required. It was noted that the ranger could assist with some aspects of the plans. It was also raised that involving the community in the plans would be favourable.

Cllr K Robinson passed some comments that had been forwarded to him by Cllr Cooper who asked that in plans for an orchard, the potential height of trees be considered due to ariel problems and that when considering wild flower gardens, pathways should also be included in the plans.

**b) Other Green Spaces**

It was noted that the ranger is waiting for a payback team to help clear some areas in Clough Hall Park. Cllr J Waring reported that the work on the pavilion is due to start in January 2021.

Cllr Dymond reported about the rubble in the stream affecting Clough Hall Park and that she will take it up with the Borough as its causing flooding problems in the park. Cllr WJ waring reported that the Town Deal plans for the park is looking drainage issues so that this should be addressed.

The Clerk asked Cllr J Waring for clarification of extensive the work in the park would be as it could impact on other areas of Town Council business. Cllr J Waring noted that the plans are refurbishment of the changing rooms and showers.

Cllr P Waring noted that signage should be considered if any wild flower planting or similar are considered so that members of the public can appreciate the aim.

EA/20-21/3/10

**Parish Baskets and Planting: To discuss planting 2020-21**

**a) To receive on update on Boat Horse Lane proposals**

Cllr J Waring noted that she had written to Staffordshire County Council and that Cllr G Burnett is to speak to R Steel of the highways department at Staffordshire County Council on the issue. Cllr Robinson noted that a possibility was to use the county environmental funds. Cllr Robinson asked Cllr Burnett to copy him into any emails as this is in his county ward.

**b) To consider other planters**

The Clerk reminded that the Town Council have some planters for which it now takes responsibility.

Cllr Robinson raised about the two proposed locations for the railings planters and asked Cllr Burnett to discuss these with R Steel at her meeting and bring the discussion back to the next committee.

Members were asked to identify locations where planters may be beneficial for the parish. Cllr J Waring noted that the watering commitment on the ranger, even with self-watering planters, needs monitoring to remain manageable.

Cllr P Waring noted that fairness throughout the parish should be considered in the plans.

EA/20-21/3/11

**Parish bench provision: To discuss and agree if the Town Council should consider bench provision in areas currently lacking but where there is a need (subject to permissions). Cllr Cooper has identified one area and other members may be aware of others. To recommend to Full Council that bench provision is added to the responsibilities of the Environment and Allotment Committee.**

It was agreed that bench provision is something the Town Council could do to improve amenities for residents. Cllr Robinson noted that ongoing costs need considering.

The Clerk reported that Cllr Cooper has already contacted her with a couple of proposed locations.

Cllr G Burnett raised about the bench in the memorial garden, which is broken, and Cllr Dymond noted that the owner is planning to repair it.

Cllr J Waring raised an area of land on Pennyfields Road where a resident places chairs which do get used. The committee agreed that this could be a possible location but land ownership needs establishing.

The Clerk agreed to liaise with Cllr Cooper and Cllr J Waring to put a proposal to the next committee meeting.

Cllr Dymond suggested that bench sponsorship could be considered.

Cllr Robinson noted that the provision of benches was a good suggestion and the committee agreed in principle. The ongoing costs and permissions from nearby residents should also be considerations.

**EA/20-21/3/12 Kidsgrove Cemetery – To receive an update from Cllr Robinson.**

Cllr Robinson updated on a meeting at the cemetery with D Green from Newcastle Borough Council attended by himself and the Clerk. D Green reported that Newcastle Borough Council have work planned on the cemetery to remove overgrown trees to help to clear the area. D Green had agreed to contact the Town Council after this work is complete so that the situation can be reassessed.

Cllr Dymond commented that some ‘white graves’ are in the cemetery and that the British Legion are trying to locate such graves throughout the parish. Members were asked if they could help in this respect and pass information to the British Legion.

**EA/20-21/3/13 Ranger Report: To receive an update from the Clerk.**

The Clerk provided an update on the ranger activity. The Clerk is putting in place a system in place where the ranger records his tasks each day. She clarified that any significant tasks or anything out of his usual remit should be reported to the office for permission to go ahead.

Cllr Robinson commented that a list of jobs would be beneficial so the committee can overview his work. Cllr P Waring felt that more information would help. It was stated that his face book posts, whilst being good publicity, is not to be considered a formal record of his work.

The Clerk agreed to provide reports for the committee at future meetings.

**EA/20-21/3/14 Footpaths – To note that due to the lockdown, a first meeting of the working party has been delayed.**

The Clerk reported that she now has the definitive map of footpaths. The committee agreed the working party could meet once face to face meetings are permissible.

Cllr Dymond raised a footpath issue (Prow 217) that Cllr Robinson agreed to take to the County if Cllr Dymond could provide him with more information after the meeting.

**EA/20-21/3/15 Budget Review: To receive a budget update and to consider and agree budget requirements for 2021-22 to recommend to Finance and General Purposes Committee prior to progression to Full Council.**

The committee considered the budget for the committee for 2020-2021 to be forwarded to Finance and General Purposes. The following points were raised:

- Where projects are held up due to Covid-19, then monies could be earmarked for future use on that budget line rather than precepting for the same items again.
- The allotment legal costs will not be spent this year and can be earmarked.
- Residual money from the asbestos removal could be earmarked for use towards the fencing.
- It was noted that the waste costs on the allotment cost centre may go over budget due to the extra waste of the fires.

- It was noted that sufficient money needs budgeting for some of the projects such as baskets and environmental plans such as fruit trees to ensure that the projects can be properly completed. Supporting the plans at Newchapel Recreation Ground will also require funding. It was felt £10,000 would be suitable to put forward at this time if this can be accommodated in the overall budget.
- £5000 was considered adequate for the planters and hanging baskets.
- Cllr Robinson asked for any further ideas to be passed forward prior to the budget being considered by F&GP.

**EA/20-21/3/16 Chair and Clerk's Items**

None raised.

**EA/20-21/3/17 Future Agenda Items**

- Live stock policies for the allotments
- Environment Policy and various ideas and to consider ways of reducing single use plastics, wild flower garden and community orchards – next meeting.
- Play areas back onto the next agenda with a view to prioritising. It was felt this should be a standing item.
- Lighting in Bathpool Park.

**EA/20-21/3/18 Date of Next Meeting: 21<sup>st</sup> January 2021**

The meeting ended at 20:35pm.