

MINUTES of the Asset Management Committee of Melksham Without Parish Council held on Monday 2nd October 2017 at Crown Chambers at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Cllrs. Richard Wood (Council Chair), Alan Baines, Mike Mills (Committee Chair), Mary Pile, Stephen Petty and Terry Chivers.

Officers: Teresa Strange (Clerk) and Justina Barber (Finance Assistant).

248/17 **Apologies:** Cllrs Paul Carter & John Glover were on holiday, it was noted that this was a recently arranged meeting. These apologies were accepted.

249/17 **Welcome:** Cllr. Mills welcomed all to the meeting.

250/17 **a) Declarations of Interest:** Cllr. Pile declared an interest in the items regarding the telephone kiosk adoptions as a member of CAWS (Community Action: Whitley & Shaw). Cllr Mills declared an interest in items relating to BRAG (Bowerhill Residents Action Group) as a member.

b) Dispensation Requests: None.

251/17 **Public Participation:** There were no members of the public present.

252/17 **Minutes of the last Asset Management Committee meeting (5th June 2017)**
The Committee noted the Minutes of the last meeting as background information

Cllr Petty advised that BASRAG (Berryfield & Semington Road Action Group) had agreed that the replacement noticeboard for Berryfield Village Hall should be installed at the entrance to Berryfield Park from the Semington Road, level, but opposite, the Rights of Way board.

253/17 **Play Area Inspections:**

a) ROSPA (Royal Society Prevention of Accidents) Code of Good Practice for Play Areas: The ROSPA Code of Good Practice for Play Areas was noted. It was agreed that the Parish Council undertook the items listed under "Management" namely:

- Appropriate insurance shall be taken out to protect users and staff
- The play area shall be inspected weekly by a competent person, preferably with some basic training
- An annual inspection by an independent specialist shall be undertaken
- Appropriate maintenance and repairs shall be carried out and records kept

The Clerk advised that following her recent IOSH Health & Safety training, there were some actions relating to risk assessments that will need to be conducted for a variety of tasks and sites.

b) To consider independent ROSPA reports on Play Areas: Members reviewed the reports for the play areas owned and/or maintained by the Council. It was noted that an Inspection had also been undertaken for Hornchurch Road play area which the parish council will be taking legal transfer of at some point in the near future. There were no items that needed

urgent attention (indicated by a “High” risk advice note). In addition, the members reviewed the quotation received from Ministry of Play which gave a resolution for the items mentioned as requiring action as Low or Medium risk. The members worked through the quotation and indicated which items were to be recommended for being undertaken by Ministry of Play and which were for the Caretaker to undertake. **Recommended:** 1. *The Council approve the revised quotation from Ministry of Play for the indicated works to be undertaken.* 2. *The Council purchase a “standardised” bin from Glasdon with “fire expire”, to replace the one at Hornchurch Road play area that has been damaged by fire, when they own the play area.*

- c) **Reported Incident at Kestrel Court Play Area:** The Clerk reported that she had been contacted by a grandfather who’s 3-year-old grandson had hurt himself on the Multiplay piece of equipment at Kestrel Court. The Clerk met the resident at the play area to understand clearly what had happened. The report of the incident and photographs of the equipment were subsequently sent to Playsafely Ltd for an independent ROSPA Inspector to advise. The resulting report was that “there does not appear to be anything wrong with the bridge net fittings, these are standard industry connectors as found on many items across playgrounds nationwide. Minor abrasions and bruising occur regularly in outdoor areas and are not normally considered an issue”. The Clerk had obtained budget figures for a toddler multiplay unit to be installed, which varied from £12,000 to £19,000. **Recommended:** 1. *The Council do not take any further action and pass on the comments of the ROSPA Inspector to the resident.* 2. *The Council consider “age suitability” signage for the play areas that they own and maintain.*
- d) **Current Play Area Inspection regimes (arising from Min 059/17b):** The members noted that the following inspections were undertaken. Weekly visual inspections by the Caretaker, or Allotment Warden in his absence; these are recorded with the date and time on a weekly sheet. More detailed inspections are conducted by the Caretaker on a quarterly basis, with written reports provided. An annual independent inspection is undertaken by ROSPA Playsafely Ltd who provide written reports. The caretaker is considered competent as is ROSPA trained and qualified. The new Allotment Warden was undertaking a DBS check as per Council policy for staff working in play areas.
- e) **Bin Emptying Regimes:** The Clerk reported that the bins were very full or overflowing during the school holidays, and that it may be worth considering increasing the bin emptying to weekly (not fortnightly when the grass was cut). Cllr Mills advised that BRAG were not allowed to deposit litter they had collected at the Recycling Centre and so were taking home and putting in their own household bins. **Recommended:** 1. *The Council include in the 2018/19 Budget for an increase in the bin emptying frequency in the play areas and Bowerhill sports field to weekly during the school holidays at Easter, May Half Term and Summer.* 2. *The parish council make an offer to BRAG that they can deposit litter from community litter picks in the commercial waste bins at Bowerhill Sports Pavilion if desired.*
- f) **Hornchurch Road Play Area:** The members noted the latest update from the council’s solicitors, that they were ready to proceed with the legal transfer of Hornchurch Road Play Area as soon as Bloor sent them the draft agreement.

The Clerk reported that the contractor who will be undertaking the safety surfacing replacement at Hornchurch Road play area had raised serious concerns about the ground conditions at the surrounding public open space for an Autumn/Winter installation. One of their vans had already got stuck in the wet ground at an open space that had better drainage than that at Hornchurch Road. He recommended that the replacement safety surfacing was delayed until the spring weather as all the work to be done is very heavy. Although it might be dry when the colder Winter weather comes, it is still not advisable to pour and set the new surfacing when it is very cold and icy. It was noted that it was not in the contractor's interest to delay works, and so his advice was based on sound judgement and not commercial interest. It was noted that the ROSPA report for Hornchurch Road did not highlight any "high" risk areas. **Recommended:** *The Council defer the safety surfacing installation until the desired weather conditions were in place. 2. The Council run a story in the local press and social media sites to advise on any potential delay and the reasons behind it.*

254/17 **Bowerhill Diamond Jubilee Sports Field & Pavilion:**

- a) **2017/18 Football Season:** The Clerk reported that the only bookings now were for two Chippenham & District League Sunday football teams, White Hart FC and Foresters Arms FC. The Ability Counts team had been at the Sports Field for the last few Wednesday evenings but had now moved indoors for the Autumn/Winter and the Parish Council had provided the use of the external toilet to the team free of charge. As there were 3no. 11 vs 11 pitches, the groundmen were now only line marking and had erected goals for 2 of the 3 pitches so that the good condition of the pitches can be maintained by rotating between them. There was still the room and capacity to erect a junior pitch if there was a requirement. **Recommended:** *The Council erect posters on the outside of the Pavilion advertising its availability for meetings, training etc as well as advertising on local social media sites.*
- b) **Fee Structure:** The Clerk reported that the Foresters Arms FC had already been given a discount from £80 to £60 per match. The White Hart FC team had made contact after their first match to say they were moving to another venue as they could not afford the £80 match fee, so the Clerk had also discounted this to £60 and they were now staying. **Recommended:** *1. The Council reduce their fee for use of the football pitch and Pavilion from £80 to £60 per session for adult teams, from £60 to £50 for junior teams, and to adjust the season prices accordingly. 2. The Council offer a discounted price for a season booking for the Pavilion.*
- c) **Small Paddock:** The owner of the small paddock adjoining the Sports Field had now been identified as Cereal Partners, and the General Manager at Great Bear Distribution had passed on the tentative enquiries of the Parish Council for a potential dog walking area.
- d) **Tree Planting:** It was noted that 402 trees were now on order (free of charge) with the Woodland Trust, for delivery in Spring. The trees were chosen for their wildlife qualities and were five different native varieties. It was noted that the last trees planted were being swamped by the surrounding grass and undergrowth. **Recommended:** *The Council approach the local community (including the ATC and Young Melksham who initially planted the*

trees) to arrange a working party to tidy the undergrowth; to be advertised in the local press and social media.

255/17 **Requests for facilities at Bowerhill:**

- a) The members noted the positive response on social media following the requests for residents' views on the requests for teen facilities; namely a BMX track, teen shelter and MUGA (Multi Use Games Area). There had also been a response from Melksham Oak Community School who favoured the BMX track and Teen Shelter. A response was still expected from Bowerhill Scouts and Young Melksham. Members discussed seeking further views on firmer plans via a local drop in session/exhibition in the future but first had to establish if this was feasible. **Recommended:** *In the first instance, the Council seek the feasibility of putting these types of facilities on the public open space land behind Wellington Drive and Hornchurch Road with the owners Wiltshire Council and with Fields in Trust related to Bowerhill Jubilee Sports Field.*
- b) The members noted indicative costs of £7,000 to £11,000 for the installation of a teen shelter. The Committee particularly liked the Box Playing Field case study which involved the young people in both the design and construction of the BMX track.
- c) A request had been received for a walking/running track around Bowerhill Jubilee Sports Field, primarily for dog walking. **Recommended:** *The Council do not take this idea forward due to the initial costs and ongoing maintenance costs, and respond to the resident accordingly.*

Cllr Mills reminded the members of the previous plan to complete the footpath around Hornchurch Road public open space through the PIGS (Parish Improvement Grant Scheme) which had now been closed. The Clerk offered to investigate further any footpaths funding that may now be available through CATG (Community Area Transport Group).

256/17 **Allotments:**

- a) **Allotment Report:** The members noted the report produced by the Parish Officer. Invoices for the new allotment year commencing 1st October had been sent out and monies were being received. Invoices were for the new rent value of £27 per plot (5 perches). The start of a new year always leads to some tenants giving up their plots and there were now 6 vacancies (3 at Berryfield and 3 at Briansfield) and no waiting list.

It was noted that residents that do not live in the parish are charged double the standard rent (as the parish residents already contribute through their precept) and the new rule (3d.) states that "Any new non -resident tenant may only take out a one-year tenancy, that will be reviewed annually in conjunction with the allotment waiting list". There was a current request for a tenant to transfer their plot to their parents, who were town residents and a parish resident who had advised that they had now moved house and lived in the town. **Recommended:** *The Council remove rule 3d. from the Tenancy Agreement.*

In addition, two of the tenants who lived in the East of Melksham housing development who were now classed as town residents following the Community Governance (Boundary) review effective from 1st April 2017 were still very unhappy. One had now given up their plot and the other had informed

that they had contacted their MP to complain about the unfairness. It was noted that these affected tenants had been given 18 months written notice and that not all of those affected had complained. **Recommended:** 1. The Council review their policy that the x 2 rent charge applied to non-parish residents applies to those that have recently been affected by the Community Governance Review. This to be an agenda item at the next Full Council meeting and both tenants to be invited to attend the meeting to speak to this. 2. The Clerk investigate the Town Council rules.

- b) **Overgrown Plots:** Two of the plots at Berryfield (6A & 7A) had been vacant for some time and were proving difficult to let as very overgrown, with brambles and more invasive growth. The members considered a quotation of £660.80 excl of VAT to clear the plots, cut back brambles and weeds, cover with 1200-gauge black plastic sheeting and secure, and remove all arisings from site. This was considered too expensive and that brambles were easier to clear and contain than a pernicious weed such as couch grass. **Recommended:** The Council advertise and offer Berryfield Plots 6A & 7A free of charge for two years to a tenant prepared to take them on in their current condition; and review in two months.
- c) **Communal area:** The Clerk advised that there were very large piles of mulch and composting material in the communal composting areas which were encroaching onto the car park, encouraging weeds and had obliterated the original bays. The Allotment Warden had reported that this was the time of year that tenants maintained paths with mulch etc, now the growing season was over, but we not aware of who had arranged the deliveries: **Recommended:** The Council erect a sign in the communal area and on the Allotment noticeboards advising tenants to not dump lots of material in the composting bays if overflowing and to not dump very large piles of mulching material in the car park area.
- d) **Security issues:** It was noted that a couple of tenants had reported that their crops had been stolen, however despite discussing this the members did not find any viable solution to solve this issue. **Recommended:** No action to be taken.

257/17 Shaw Village Hall & Playing Fields

- a) **Minutes of the Shaw Hill Playing Field and Village Hall Committee meetings, 23rd June and 15th Sept. 2017:** The minutes were noted, and considered to have a very positive tone. The Committee noted item 10 (Sept Minutes) regarding the potential change of Deeds of Trust (1962) with the removal of the Ministry of Education from the deeds.
- b) **Boundary wall:** Correspondence from a resident had been received with a concern over the condition of the top surface of the boundary wall. It was noted that this was already being addressed by the Shaw Hill Playing Field & Village Hall Committee and no further action was required.

258/17 Crown Chambers

- a) **New screen for Finance Assistant:** **Recommended:** A new screen to be purchased for the Finance Assistant's computer to allow dual screens to be used when undertaking multi financial tasks such as payroll.
- b) **Replacement photocopier:** The members reviewed the three quotations received for a new photocopier, with options for purchase, 3-year lease and 5-year lease. The speed and capabilities of the copiers quoted for were

discussed. Service costs were analysed based on the council's usage of 40,000 copies per quarter. It was noted that the existing supplier Condor had always provided good service. The Clerk advised that £2,000 had been put into Reserves for 2017/18 for a replacement photocopier. The existing copier had been purchased second hand in 2008 for £1,987.

Recommended: 1. The Council approve the quotation from Condor to purchase a new Canon iRC3580Ne (without a booklet maker) photocopier at £2,250.00 excl VAT. 2. The Council agree the Condor Service Agreement of 0.47 pence per copy (mono) and 4.7pence per copy (colour) which includes all toners, maintenance, labour, parts and support throughout the life of the contract. 3. The Council request Condor to remove the existing copier at no cost.

- c) **PAT testing:** The members noted that PAT testing had been undertaken at Crown Chambers in September.
- d) **Fire Extinguisher testing:** The members noted that the Fire Extinguishers at Crown Chambers had been tested in September, with one being replaced as its expiration date fell before the next annual inspection.

258/17 **Community Access Defibrillators:** The members noted that the annual service visit had been booked for the community access defibrillators (7no.) in October, this included the different donated model inside Bowerhill Village Hall but excluded the one at the Water Meadow pub as now transferred to Melksham Town Council under the recent Community Governance Review.

259/17 **Telephone Box Adoption:** The Clerk reported that BT and Wiltshire Council had been informed of the intention of the Parish Council to adopt the two telephone boxes at Top Lane, Whitley and Corsham Road, Shaw and that CAWS (Community Action: Whitley & Shaw) had put the necessary posters in the phone boxes advising users that they phone will be removed. Wiltshire Council had confirmed that they were happy for the parish council to adopt the boxes, and that no planning permission was required. Andy Cadwallader, Highways Engineer at Wiltshire Council was happy with the intended uses of the phone boxes and happy for them to be adopted by the Parish Council and used by CAWS as a library (Top Lane) and history/information point (Corsham Road) on the public highway, as long as the parish council covered them from public liability point of view.

Recommended: The Council formally approve the legal agreement for signature for the sale and purchase of Telephone Kiosks from BT to Melksham Without Parish Council (Top Lane, Whitley & Corsham Road, Shaw).

The Clerk had drafted an agreement between the Parish Council and CAWS for the maintenance of the Telephone Kiosks. **Recommended:** The Council approve the draft agreement between Melksham Without Parish Council and CAWS for the maintenance of the Telephone Kiosks (Top Lane, Whitley & Corsham Road, Shaw) and send to CAWS for their agreement and signature.

Meeting closed at 9.20 pm

Chairman, 9th October, 2017