

Notes from the Shurnhold Fields Recreation Development working party held on Wed, 17 April 2019 at 2.00 PM at Melksham Town Council

Present:

Cllr Richard Wood	Melksham Without Parish Council
Cllr Paul Carter	Melksham Without Parish Council
Cllr David Pafford	Melksham Without Parish Council
Cllr Adrienne Westbrook	Melksham Town Council

One member of the "Friends of Shurnhold Fields" was in attendance as observer:
Phil Mason

Officers: Teresa Strange (Clerk) Melksham Without Parish Council
Jeff Mills (Assistant to the Clerk) Melksham Town Council

46. Chair of Meeting: RESOLVED: Cllr Richard Wood took the chair of the working party.

47. Minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 21 March 2019: The previous minutes were noted, with TS advising that the date at the top of the circulated document is erroneous

48. Matters Arising

(a) Inspection regime – TS explained that MWPC had conducted weekly visual inspections from 26 March, 2019. After some discussion it was agreed that the inspection of the fields will be shared by MTC and MWPC in the following way, based on MWPC's current green space approach, which was agreeable to MTC, who will send invoices to MWPC for these hours, to be paid out of the shared fund as a maintenance expense.

- Weekly inspections done on a visual basis once per week (with MTC/MWPC sharing this responsibility on a week on/week off basis)
- Quarterly inspections to be done in writing, with a caretaker from each council pairing up to do this together
- Annual inspections to be completed by ROSPA, organised by MWPC and invoiced as upkeep/maintenance (I forget what we're calling this charge)

ACTION: JM to draw up schedule for weekly inspections

(b) Grass cutting regime – First priority is to cut the grass soon so the fields can be accessible. Discussion focussed on the frequency of the cut, choice of contractor (as heavy-duty cutters required) to complete the work, and whether it is necessary to have the cut grass collected or not. Phil, from the Friends of Shurnhold Fields advised that in the short-term, it would be best if the grass could be cut and collected. It was agreed that MWPC would arrange this imminently. Previous invoice of contractor's charge was £160 for a partial cut. TS to meet with grass-cutter and Roy to get quote for full cut of the fields and will report back to the group.

ACTION: TS to book contract grass-cutter

Going forward, the view from the Friends of Shurnhold Fields (FOSF) is that while work is being done and the site is being developed, cuts 2 to 3 x annually would be ideal to ease the accessibility

of the site, but that this would change (especially in the lower part of the field slated for meadow development) as the project progresses.

(c) Future bins emptying regime and disposal of waste - Agreed to be a bin at both entrances, with a dog poo bag dispenser nearby. The group looked over several different bin designs and agreed that the one with the biggest volume should be chosen. This bin to be emblazoned with FOSF logo and both council phone numbers.

ACTION: Officers to order bins

Agreed that MTC will take on responsibility for emptying the bins as we are already responsibly for Dunch lane play area. Agreed that MTC will invoice this separately.

ACTION: JM to discuss with caretaking team about scheduling a bin emptying schedule

There was also a chat about the noticeboards and the group agreed that the MWPC's style noticeboards would work well at roughly £600 (+ delivery/concreting in). Again, with the FOSF logo and both phone numbers.

(d) Insurance cover – Premium is split 50/50. Question from PM as to whether the Motorized Allen Scythe is 'insurance-safe'. Based on its design and mower-like setup, this seems very likely, but worth double-checking insurance policy.

ACTION: Officers to refer to the policy

Fence – the fence running between the fields is in disrepair and will require repairs. This will be investigated further by caretakers from both councils at the upcoming monthly inspection

(e) Working funds for FOSF - Agreed to transfer £250 to FOSF to help with basic expenses/petrol etc.

ACTION: TS to transfer cash electronically

49. Group received latest update on Land Transfer and payment of Open Space Maintenance Contribution

50. Group received update from parish and town council reps on FOSD community group activities -Group discussed the £9K funds in highways budget to improve Dunch lane. After TS discussion with Mark Stansby (Cat G), it was suggested this must fall under highways to be used. Group felt it is still worth looking into whether the entrance to SF could be altered to improve flow/visibility to park from the corner of the road. AW asserted that the 2016 survey showed no hunger for such changes.

ACTION: JM/TS to liaise on how to proceed

51. To agree way forward for the following operational and management items as a result of email from FOSF – Group agreed that a bonfire is a sensible way to dispose of hedge cuttings as long as it is done at a sensible time and in the appropriate corner of the fields

-Quotes for picnic tables and benches were passed around and the group agreed that they are a sturdy long-term option. It was suggested that we could have a chance at gaining some funds by applying through the Tesco Bags for Life scheme. As the benches/tables are manufactured with 100% recycled plastic, this could tie in well

ACTION: Officers to proceed to order equip – TS/JM to liaise

52. To consider next steps and future plans for project to develop into “mini country park”

-Group felt this could be left – as much already covered, but TS did raise the Q of the car park and whether we are able to retain the original planning permission from the Rugby Park lot.

ACTION: Officers to research - TS/JM to liaise

-There was a discussion about the ditches and it was agreed that TS would be meeting with a drainage engineer to agree a plan going forward on whether/where to clear the ditches.

-Wild flower planting delayed till Autumn as this the correct time of year for wild flower planting, and also to adjust location of meadow based on attenuation ditch location.

53. Date of next meeting – Wed 18 September at Melksham Town Hall, 2 PM