

**MINUTES of the Asset Management Committee of Melksham Without Parish
Council held on Monday, 16th November 2020 at 7pm.**

**(DUE TO THE ON-GOING COVID 19 PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS THIS WAS A
VIRTUAL MEETING, WITH MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC BEING ABLE TO ACCESS
THE MEETING VIA THE PUBLISHED ZOOM INVITATION, THIS MEETING WAS
DUE TO BE STREAMED LIVE STREAMED VIA YOUTUBE HOWEVER THERE WAS
A TECHNICAL ISSUE AND IT WAS SUBSEQUENTLY UPLOADED)**

Present: Councillors Richard Wood (Council Chair), John Glover (Council Vice Chair), Alan Baines and Paul Carter.

Officers: Teresa Strange (Clerk) and Marianne Rossi (Finance & Amenities Officer)

Housekeeping & Announcements:

Councillor Glover welcomed all to the meeting

171/20 Apologies

There were no apologies received. Councillor Chivers and Taylor were not present.

172/20 To receive Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

173/20 Public Participation

There were no members of the public present

174/20 To note minutes of previous meetings:

Members noted the minutes of the previous Asset Management Meeting on 12th October for background information.

175/20 Play Areas & Public Open Spaces

a) To consider RoSPA independent annual reports:

Members considered the RoSPA annual inspections reports which took place on the 12th October 2020. Most of the items that had been highlighted were missing nuts and bolts which could be addressed by the Parish Caretaker. Another common theme that came up in most of the play areas was shrinkage/ separation of the surface which may cause a trip hazard.

There were no items which were categorised as high risk, with the majority of items rated at the lowest score as possible for that piece of equipment. It was acknowledged that there were some items that needed attention, especially at Beanacre Play Area.

Councillor Carter explained that the Wiltshire Council's Right of Way volunteer team had been at Shurnhold Fields and cleared the overgrown vegetation either side of the kissing gate. He explained that one of the items that was picked up by RoSPA, was uneven surfacing on the approach to the bridge over the Southbrook, which could cause a trip hazard. He explained that the maintenance team had levelled this off and reinstated some concrete so this item had already been addressed.

Members were impressed with the general condition of the play areas and felt that this was due to the robust inspection and maintenance regime that the council have in place.

b) To note accident reports (October 2020) and consider future action:

Members considered the Clerk's report on recent accident reports in council play areas and open spaces. The Clerk had received a report on 16th October from a resident whose child had been hurt at Hornchurch Road Play Area. This incident had occurred on 13th October. It was explained that the child had run through the gate to enter the play area and then again to leave, which then swung back and hit them in the face. This resulted in them losing half of their adult tooth.

The Clerk explained that the parent had mentioned this at the "school gate" and was made aware that a similar incident had occurred before, and mentioned that she understood this had happened 4 or 5 times. The Clerk confirmed that she had only received one other report regarding this issue around 2 years ago, where the gate swung back and caught a child on their cheek.

The Clerk explained that the play area had been inspected by RoSPA on the 12th October, who had confirmed that there were no issues with the gate. The Clerk explained that she had highlighted the incident with the independent RoSPA inspector but there is an element that "accidents happen". The Clerk explained to members that there are safety standards which require the gate to self-close automatically within a set time frame, which was checked regularly by the Caretaker.

The Clerk queried whether there was a clear desire line where children were running through one gate to the other which was causing this issue. She queried whether another piece of equipment could be added to slow the children down through the gate. However, after

looking at a satellite image of the play area, this does not seem to be the case.

The second reported accident was at Shurnhold Fields, a volunteer with the Friends of Shurnhold Fields reported on 18th October that the bank side, on the right-hand side to the approach to the bridge over the Southbrook was crumbling. They had been working in this position and had unfortunately missed the path which resulted in them going over the edge, fortunately, they were able to miss falling into the stream.

The Clerk followed this up with the volunteer the following day to make sure that they were ok, fortunately they were. Following the incident, a temporary repair was made by the Melksham Town Council's Amenities team, with any future work on this to be considered at the next Shurnhold Fields meeting on Thursday 19th November. It was noted that RoSPA had also inspected the open space and this item was marked as a medium risk with a risk score of 8.

Members noted the reported incidents.

c) To note safety surfacing cleaned w/c 9th November and consider quotation for repairs to safety surfacing:

The Clerk explained that Ministry of Play were cleaning the algae off of the safety surfacing at the play areas in the week commencing 9th and 16th November. A quote had not yet been provided for the repairs to the safety surfacing, as the same contractor had been asked to provide a quote when they were cleaning the safety surfacing as they would be able to see what needed repairing.

d) To approve quotations for maintenance to play area equipment and note those undertaken due to urgency

Following the receipt of the RoSPA inspections Officers had obtained some quotations for works that need to be carried out. It had been identified that shrinkage/ separation of the surface was a common theme in most of the play areas, a quote was being sought for this.

The basketball backboard at the Bowerhill Sports Field was damaged and there had previously been a request by a resident to replace it.

A quote of £80 including delivery had been obtained to replace the cradle swing at Beanacre Play Area. The Clerk explained that due to the corrosion of the cradle seat this item would be ordered as soon as possible.

It was highlighted to members that the overhead climber at Beanacre Play area needed to be monitored, the Clerk suggested that this could be an item on the Caretakers weekly checklist so that he could tick to confirm that he had inspected.

A quote had been received for the basketball backboard at the Sports Field, however it was explained that the cost would be determined by the measurements of the board therefore two quotes had been received. A quote of £217.50 was received for a 1200x1050 board and £160 for a 1200x800 board.

Members queried whether the damaged board was a health and safety issue or cosmetic. The Clerk explained that although this had been mentioned in the RoSPA report, it was not a health and safety issue and was rated as low as it could be for that piece of equipment. She highlighted that there had previously been a request to replace it by residents and wondered whether the damaged board affected their play.

Councillor Wood queried whether the council needed to replace the board if it was just a cosmetic. Councillor Carter queried whether the board was inside of a frame and if it had come out of the frame supporting it. Councillor Baines advised that there was no frame around the board and looks like the top of the board has deteriorated in the weather. After a discussion, members felt that the board should be monitored and if significant deterioration occurs it should then be replaced.

The Clerk reported that there had been some reports that a bench at Hornchurch Road Public Open Space had been moved. Officers had asked JH Jones to anchor it back down onto the concrete base, unfortunately when the contractors went to retrieve the bench it was damaged beyond repair so was removed. The Clerk advised that the bench was one that had been put in by BRAG some time ago.

Recommendation 1: The council do not purchase a replacement basketball backboard at this current time but closely monitor the board and if the damage increases significantly it should then be replaced. The Caretaker to be asked to review the condition and size of the basketball board and report back.

Recommendation 2: To replace the damaged bench at Hornchurch Road Public Open Space with the council's standard bench.

e) To consider information from local wooden bench supplier re potential to repair

The Clerk explained that Officers were currently in discussions with the local bench supplier but no information had been received. This was partly due to the current lockdown restrictions as the supplier was unable to go out to look at the benches.

The Clerk explained that these were the benches with short legs, which are located around Bowerhill that had been donated to the

council by BRAG; there were also a couple at Beanacre Play Area that were deteriorating too.

f) To approve quotation for replacement of Wiltshire Council bin/s outside Kestrel Court play area

The Clerk explained that she had reported two broken bins outside of Kestrel Court play area to Wiltshire Council. One of the bins reported had significant corrosion to the base and was now unstable, this had been highlighted in the RoSPA report, although any bins outside of the play area were the responsibility of Wiltshire Council. The other bin reported was a small dog bin outside of the other entrance of the play area, opposite Robinsons Fish & Chip shop, the Clerk reported that she had noticed that the bin had fallen off of its post onto the pavement.

The Clerk advised that she had received a response from Wiltshire Council on both of these bins stating that they don't replace bins and consideration should go to whether the council could either identify an area where there was low footfall so that the bin could be moved or the parish council replace the bins themselves. The Clerk queried with Wiltshire Council whether they would still empty the bins if the parish council replaced them. She had received a response from the bin officer to say that they would as it was only a replacement and not an additional bin.

Councillor Glover queried where the smaller bin was as he had walked past the play area this afternoon and could not see any bin on the pavement. He had looked at the bin on the post opposite Robinsons Fish & Chip shop and it did not seem like it needed replacing. It was suggested that Wiltshire Council may have repaired the bin and therefore the Parish Council would not need to replace it.

Recommendation: The Council purchase a new bin to replace the corroded bin outside of Kestrel Court Play Area but do not replace the smaller dog bin as it has already been fixed by Wiltshire Council.

g) To consider resident's request for fencing surrounding MUGA (multi use games area) at Hornchurch Road Public Open Space now in receipt of indication of budget costs

Members reviewed the budget indication costs for the recent resident's request for a fence surrounding the MUGA (multi use games area) at Hornchurch Road public open space. This was due to the area being very wet because of bad drainage, which made it very difficult to retrieve balls especially in the winter months.

Officers had obtained two budget indications prices for both a 2m and 3m high fence. The budget price received for a 3m high fence was £20,000 to supply the fencing and £5,000 for installation, with

additional costs of around £6,000 for preliminaries and carriage. For a 2m high fence it was estimated that there would be a £4,000 reduction.

Members were disappointed in the reduction from a 3m fence to a 2m one and due to the high costs, which would result in costing more than the installation of the MUGA, felt reluctant to go ahead with the fencing. It was acknowledged that a fence would make a difference to the usage of the MUGA especially in the winter. Councillor Glover queried whether there would be funding available to contribute towards the fencing. The Clerk explained that in order to apply for grant funding the council would need to prove that there was a need for the item. It was agreed that the need was that there were lots of children who were unable to play due to the poor drainage in the area. The Clerk advised that there were a number of funding sources such as the Lottery fund for improving areas, there was also the Tesco carrier bag scheme for developing open spaces. Councillor Wood was in favour of investigating the possibility of applying for grant funding to contribute towards the purchase of fencing.

Councillor Carter suggested that an alternative could be erecting a stock fence around the MUGA.

Councillor Glover suggested that Officers could get another quote for a MUGA fence before the council move forward with any alternatives. Councillor Wood agreed with this as he felt although a stock fence was a much cheaper alternative the longevity of it would not be very long. The Clerk also advised that wooden fencing being installed into a wet area would not be a good option.

The Clerk advised that there were particular standards with regards to putting fencing around MUGAs, which would need to comply with the EN1176 standard. MUGA fencing is specifically designed to be anti-climb as well as ensuring that there were no entrapments within the fencing.

Recommendation: Officers to obtain an alternative quote for MUGA fencing at Hornchurch Road and investigate the possibility of grant funding. Officers to investigate whether stock fencing would meet the required RoSPA standards.

h) To note positive remarks about Beanacre play area on social media

Members noted the positive remarks that had been received on social media about Beanacre Play Area.

i) To consider report on Beanacre Church Cricket Field as parish council lease part of grounds

The committee considered the report on the future use of the Beanacre Church Cricket Field. There are plans to install a boules court and also install the “Massey” stone between the end of the boules court and the cricket field.

The Clerk raised some concerns about this proposal with regards to maintaining access to the Parish Council leased land. She explained that the council held a 99-year lease and highlighted that around the area of the proposed wildflower meadow and Massey stone location was the access to get into parish council owned land. The Clerk explained that council contractors access the land by going through the Church car park and through the Wildflower area. She had concerns regarding the proposed location of the Massey stone as although she did not know the sizing of the stone, on the plans it is shown to be in the middle of the access route to the play area. The Clerk highlighted that there was no other way for the contractors to access the play area, and felt that it could be difficult for maintenance vehicles to get around, especially if they had trailers.

Members felt that the council needed to go back to St Barnabas Church and explain that they have concerns regarding the parish council contractors’ access to the play area for maintenance purposes.

Recommendation: The council thank St Barnabas Church for their report but raise concerns about council access to the play area with large vehicles in the future and request that access must be maintained at all times. To provide St Barnabas Church with an annotated map of the council access route.

j) To note update on Pathfinder Place play area installation and naming

The Clerk reported that she had spoken to the Taylor Wimpey play area adoptions manager this afternoon who explained that the play area was progressing well and should be ready for parish council inspection on week commencing 30th November. She advised that Taylor Wimpey were happy for members to visit the site (as long as a minimum number) as well as agree on an appropriate location for the new noticeboard and information board.

The Clerk explained that Taylor Wimpey pay a post play area installation inspection fee to Proludic, the play area installers to facilitate an independent inspection. She explained that the parish council had already resolved to pay for an independent inspection by RoSPA and queried whether the council still wished to do this.

The Clerk advised that she had also been in contact with Proludic, who were happy to use RoSPA for the independent inspection of the new play area.

Members felt that as the new area was going to be independently inspected there was no need for another independent inspection.

The Clerk explained that she had previously been tasked with exploring the possibility of naming the new play area 'Davey' after Flt Lt Davey however there was still some checks that needed to be done before confirming the name. She advised that she would need to contact the family of Flt Lt Davey to make sure that they were happy that the name was used for the new play area.

Recommendation: As the new play area on Pathfinder Place was already having an independent post installation inspection scheduled by the play area installers, the council do not ask for another inspection to be done.

176/20

QEII Diamond Jubilee Sports Field & Pavilion:

a) To note changing room and football pitches closed under current government lockdown restrictions:

Members noted that the changing rooms and football pitches had been closed under current government lockdown restriction measures, and the goal posts removed for storage.

b) To note drain/culvert clearance to be undertaken under delegated decision

The Clerk had received correspondence from Great Bear to say that the drain on the boundary with them and the Sports Field was blocked and was causing a concern that water was going to run into their car park. The Clerk explained that she had walked the perimeter with the contractors, after the hedges had been recently cut back, which not only exposed the blocked drain but also the other end of the culvert on the boundary with Knorr Bremse which was also blocked.

Following advice from the contractors, the Clerk felt that this work should be commenced straight away, as both ends of the culvert were overflowing onto the Sports Field grass. There was a concern that this could encroach onto the football pitches and waterlog them.

The Clerk in conjunction with Councillor Glover, as Chair of the Asset Management and Finance Committee had agreed for this work to be instructed under Financial Regulation 4.

c) To note budget indication for reinstating Right of Way footpath and to consider further action

The Clerk had received a budget indication of £650 + VAT from the contractors to reinstate the Right of Way footpath. This included scraping the access path from the entrance of Portal Road South to the metal gate (along boundary with Great Bear), to clear vegetation as required and to clean channels to the ditch to allow for water to run from the Sports Field.

The Clerk queried whether the parish council could contact Wiltshire Council for some plainings to make a surface for the footpath which would possibly need to be wheel barrowed across the Sports Field due to the weight of the vehicle. Councillor Glover queried whether a barrier would be required to stop the plaining from encroaching onto the Sports Field. Councillor Wood agreed that a barrier would be required to stop the plainings from encroaching and felt that it wouldn't be a good surface for dog walking. After discussion, members felt that they should review this after the work had been done to clear the Right of Way.

Recommendation: To approve the quote of £650 + VAT from JH Jones to reinstate the footpath and review the surfacing after the work has been done.

d) To consider any actions required further to Fire Contractor Inspection (11th Nov) and Alarm Contractor Inspection (3rd Nov)

The Clerk was pleased to report that there were no actions required following the fire and security alarm inspections.

177/20

Tree Work

a) To note tree work to be undertaken by 3rd parties

The Clerk reported that the Shaw Management Committee were due to review the tree report for the playing fields on 13th November, but had not heard anything from them. Last time the council tied the Shaw playing fields tree works into the works order for the parish and charged the Shaw Management Committee for these trees after the works were done.

The Friends of Shurnhold Fields had already confirmed which works they were undertaking and there were only two trees which required to be undertaken by a contractor.

The Clerk had also contacted the Wiltshire Council tree officer who was looking through the tree inspection reports, to seek permission to conduct tree works on their land. The Clerk explained that these were only for trees that had an impact on parish council assets. Although,

Hornchurch Road public open space was owned by Wiltshire Council, there are trees around the play area, footpath and MUGA. The council currently lease Kestrel Court and Berryfield play area from Wiltshire Council so need to request permission before conducting any tree works.

b) To consider quotations for tree work to be undertaken as identified by recent Tree Inspection

Officers had received three quotations from contractors to undertake tree works on high and medium categorised trees as identified in the tree inspection reports.

Councillor Baines queried the tree works for the Bowerhill Sports Field as council contractors had recently cut back hedges and wished to receive clarification on whether some of the works quoted for had already been done. The Clerk explained, due to the time frame given to contractors to submit their quotations some contractors were unable to view the trees and therefore had quoted from reviewing the tree inspection report only.

It was felt by members that due to the short time frame given to contractors, they should be given an opportunity to view the trees and therefore felt that this item should be deferred to Full Council.

Recommendation: To defer this agenda item to the next Full Council meeting on 23rd November to give contractors an opportunity to view the trees and revise their quotations if they wish.

178/20 Berryfield Village Hall: To consider any new queries raised regarding the planning application for the new village hall

The Clerk reported that there were no new queries and was pleased to report that planning permission for the new village hall had been approved.

179/20 To approve quotation for additional perspex screens for office desking where 2m distance not achievable, as Covid mitigation measure

Officers had received a quotation of £250.55 from Office Right for an additional perspex screen. The Clerk explained that although there was a Perspex screen that divided Officers who were facing each other there was no screens between herself and the Finance & Amenities Officer, as they were unable to keep a 2m distance when both in the office together this required further mitigating measures

The Clerk also had a concern that if someone lent on the existing Perspex screens they may become unstable and felt that an additional

screen that met at the middle, with a fixing bracket for the cruciform would provide stability.

Recommendation: The Council to approve the quotation of £250.55 + VAT from Office Right for additional perspex screens to divide the office desks down the middle, and stabilising bracket.

179/20 To note agreed compensation from Wessex Water following sewage works on parish council land:

Members noted the agreed compensation of £230 from Wessex Water following sewage works on Parish Council land at Berryfield Allotments.

180/20 To consider request to swap noticeboard from outside Robinsons Fish & Chip Shop, Kestrel Court to outside the Pilot, Falcon Way

The Clerk explained that Councillor Shea-Simonds had previously requested for a new noticeboard to be positioned outside of the Pilot Pub, it was understood by the Clerk at the time that he was requesting for it to be located by the picnic benches. This request was considered at the last Asset Management Committee on 12th October where this was not approved.

The Clerk had received correspondence from Councillor Shea Simonds requesting for the noticeboard outside of Robinsons Fish and Chip shop in Bowerhill to be moved to a new location outside of the Pilot pub. The Clerk had then received further correspondence requesting for a new noticeboard to go outside of the Pilot but in a different location as previously stated. The Clerk raised concerns that members may now be looking at the same item within a 6-month period, however was unsure on how much members based their decision on the proposed location as she may have misunderstood the location initially.

Members felt that they made their decision last time on the basis that a free-standing noticeboard on legs was much more expensive than a board mounted on the wall, therefore felt this request had been raised again in a 6-month period and therefore could not consider this again at this time.

Recommendation: Members felt that they had previously discussed this item within the 6-month period permitted and therefore could not consider this request at this time.

181/20 To consider suitability of defibrillator location at the New Inn, and possibility of relocating to adopted 'phone box

Councillor Wood explained that he understood that the New Inn pub had closed down permanently, there was also the issue of the access gate into the pub garden where the defibrillator currently is located being

locked. He felt that the council should investigate the cost implications of relocating the defibrillator into the adopted phone box in Berryfield.

The Clerk also explained that the issue was not just that the access gate to the defibrillator but also that the pads need electricity supply to stop them from freezing.

Members felt that the possibility of relocating the defibrillator to the adopted phone box should be explored.

Recommendation: To explore the possibility of the costs associated with relocating the defibrillator from the New Inn pub, Berryfield to the adopted phone box in Berryfield.

Meeting closed at 8.17pm

Signed.....
Chairman, 23rd November 2020