

MINUTES of the Asset Management Committee of Melksham Without Parish Council held on Monday, 5th July 2021 at 7pm.

(DUE TO THE ON-GOING COVID 19 PUBLIC HEALTH RESTRICTIONS THIS MEETING WAS HELD FACE TO FACE WITH MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC BEING ENCOURAGED TO JOIN THE MEETING VIA ZOOM. THE MEETING WAS ALSO LIVE STREAMED VIA YOUTUBE FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO WATCH)

Present: Councillors David Pafford (Vice Chair of Council and Committee) Alan Baines and Shona Holt.

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

Also in Attendance: Councillor Robert Hoyle as an observer.

Housekeeping & Announcements:

Councillor Pafford welcomed all to the meeting and explained the evacuation procedure in the event of a fire.

115/21 Apologies

Apologies had been received from Councillor Glover who was on holiday; this reason for absence was accepted. Councillor Chivers was not present (*and subsequently got in touch to say he had flu and was not well enough to attend*).

It was noted that the meeting was quorate.

116/21 To receive Declarations of Interest

The Clerk subsequently declared an interest in agenda item 5b even though she was a non-voting member, as her husband had been contracted by the church to install a related fence.

117/21 To consider holding items in Closed Session due to confidential nature

Under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during consideration of business (5b, 6a, 6b, 6c), where publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

118/21 Public Participation

There were two members of the public in attendance via Zoom but only wished to observe the meeting.

Play Areas & Public Open Spaces**a) To consider Quarterly inspection reports and any action required:**

Members reviewed the recent quarterly inspection report, the Clerk advised members that there were notes on the report which highlighted whether this was a new issue or if it had come up in a report before and had been actioned. The Clerk explained that herself and the Finance & Amenities Officer had gone out to have a look at the play areas in the parish and view what works had been done and what still needed doing.

Councillor Baines queried when the quarterly inspection had been done as there were some items on the report that should have already been repaired. The Clerk reported that the inspection was done on 30th April and officers had already gone back to Vita Play about one of the items highlighted on the report that should have already been done.

It was also noted that some repairs for some of the items on the report were still waiting to be quoted for, but now the Caretaker was back to full capacity he would be able to repair some of these items.

The Clerk highlighted that the council would need to continue to keep a watch on the safety surfacing at Beanacre Play Area, as it was showing signs of coming to the end of its life. It was noted that the council had put in the budget to replace this safety surfacing in this financial year and members may wish to get quotes now for this. Members felt that the Caretaker should continue to monitor and inform the council when he felt it need attention.

The two benches at Beanacre play area were also near the end of their life so would need replacing shortly. These were the wooden benches with shorter legs and were beginning to rot at the bottom.

Members were happy that this was all in hand either by the Caretaker or the suitable contractors.

b) To note update regarding access to leased play area at St Barnabas Church, Beanacre

The Clerk explained that she had recently had a site meeting with the Church Warden at St Barnabas Church. She explained to members that the council's legal access was through the car park, through a gate across where the boules court was located and through a double gate across to the play area. Following the site visit with the Church Warden it was discovered that there was never any gate and therefore, the parish council have never used their legal access route. They have

instead gone through the car park area and across the community field and around through the double gate into the play area.

Due to the fact that there was also now a boules court installed right in the middle of the council's legal right of access, the council are unable to cross this. It was explained that the church solicitors haven't confirmed that this was the council's legal right of access, even though the council have proved that they have a right of access.

The Clerk reported to members that the double gate which the parish council had installed had dropped significantly and it was difficult to open and close. The Church Warden had raised a concern with the Clerk that it was not disabled access friendly. The Clerk explained that she was not sure how many people were using the pedestrian pathway to the play area to access the community field and highlighted to members that there was only a mown pathway around the edge of the field. She explained that members of the public who wished to access the field could use the pedestrian access on the church side to access the field.

The Clerk explained that the Church Warden had suggested that the parish council's right of access was re drawn and the council put in a maintenance gate to the right of the play area so that contractors could access the council's leased land. This would mean that the access would be redrawn so that the route went through the car park, into the community field around the mown edge and through a new double gate into the council's leased land

Councillor Baines highlighted that the land through the boules court area was still the council's legal right of access which has now been blocked even though it hasn't been used.

The Clerk explained that the church had cordoned off around the boules court and was shortly due to install a knee-high fence to stop cars from going back too far on to the boules court. Although not a voting member the Clerk declared an interested regarding the fence as her husband had been contracted by the church to install this.

Councillor Pafford queried how this could be moved on and the Clerk explained that the church felt that the legal access needed to be re drawn and a new maintenance gate put in at the cost of the parish council. The Clerk advised that it had also been suggested by the church that the parish council could also replace the existing double gate that had dropped.

Councillor Holt queried whether the council still needed access to the existing double gate if the council approved to re draw the suggested route. The Clerk advised that she didn't think so because residents could come up the pedestrian path into the field. It was also noted that this gate was currently padlocked as the Church did not want people walking over the boules court at this time.

It was noted by members that the suggested location to put a maintenance gate may be costly to the council as there was already metal fencing and a hedge there, so a space wide enough for machinery would need to be made for this. The Clerk wondered whether the existing double gate could be moved to the location as it would only be contractors who would need to use it. Members felt that this would be worth investigating.

Councillor Baines did not feel that it was acceptable that the council were not able to gain access to their legal access route and were now expected to pay for a new access to be made. It was noted that the parish council had informed the Church that they were blocking the access when they were installing the boules court.

Councillor Pafford felt that it was in the parish council's interest to come up with a solution, but this should come after consultation with the solicitors as he didn't want any misunderstandings of what the council were liable for.

The Clerk also wished to highlight to members that although it was possible for the grass cutting contractors to use the field to access the play area it may not be suitable for contractors in a van who were replacing play equipment to get around. Councillor Baines advised that this would need to be part of the discussion with the solicitors. Councillor Pafford also wished to highlight that at the last Asset Management meeting members had stated that if contractors were unable to access the play area to make repairs it would have to close due to health and safety.

Recommendation: The Council to seek advice from the solicitors regarding the way forward.

c) To note Wiltshire Councils grass cutting schedule for Amenity Land

Members noted Wiltshire Council's grass cutting schedule

120/21

QEII Diamond Jubilee Sports Field & Pavilion (known informally as Bowerhill Sports Field):

a) To approve quotation to service and replace faulty contact on the control panel (heating and hot water system)

Members reviewed the quotation of £630 + VAT received from the building control specialists. The Clerk explained that there was a problem with the control panel at the pavilion as the warning lights were not coming on correctly to inform council staff of any issues. It

was also explained that the isolator switch at the bottom of the control panel which can isolate an issue, had also been disconnected so needed to be investigated. The Clerk explained that the council did have a maintenance reserve that could be used to fund this unexpected expenditure.

Members felt that this quote did need to be accepted due to the health and safety risk. Councillor Pafford queried whether the asset committee could give approval for the Clerk to action this without going back to the full council due to its risk. The Clerk explained that she only has delegated powers for up to £500 and this quotation was over this amount, however due to this being considered unsafe this should be done. Councillor Pafford felt that this should be done as soon as possible and asked the Clerk whether she could get the approval by the full council via email

Recommendation: The Council accept the quotation of £630 + VAT from the building control specialists to investigate and repair the control panel. Due to the health and safety risk, the Clerk to seek approval by the full council via email for this quotation so this can be actioned as soon as possible.

b) To consider fire alarm options

The Clerk explained that there was a fault with the fire alarm sensor in the external toilet. Unfortunately, the council's local fire alarm contractors are not specialist Gent engineers which are required to replace the faulty sensor, as the system would need to be reprogrammed. The Clerk explained that there were other contractors in the area who were Gent engineers, however after investigating they were very expensive unless the parish council took out a service contract with them or could sub contract to the council's existing contractors. The Clerk explained that following conversations with the fire contractors it was felt by them that the current alarm system was over specified for the building. The Clerk had received an alternative quote for a new fire alarm system which was suitable for the pavilion building, however this has worked out more expensive than the original quotation previously received.

The Clerk advised that she had recently undertaken Fire Warden training and wondered whether it would be more suitable to do a fire risk assessment at the pavilion, to determine what was needed for the building rather than purchasing a new system which may be over specified.

It was noted that the fire alarm was still fully functional so would still work in the event of a fire, it was just that the sensor in the external toilet kept going off. The Clerk advised members that officers did go

and check when the sensor goes off to ensure that it was not coming from somewhere else; or to see if there was an actual fire.

Recommendation: The Clerk seek quotations for a fire risk assessment to be conducted at the Bowerhill Sports Pavilion.

c) To consider taking out annual service contract for cold water booster pumps and approve quotation

The Clerk explained that following the recent problem with the cold water pumps it was recommended to get them serviced annually. In the event that there was a problem with the water pumps the council would be able to get them repaired at a much cheaper price due to having a service contract. A quote of £344.52 + VAT had been received from Grundfos for this.

Recommendation: The council accept the quotation of £344.52 from Grundfos to service the cold-water booster pumps annually.

d) To consider football pitch capacity for next season

The Clerk explained that the council are currently in the situation that they have more users than capacity for the sports field. At the last Asset Management Committee meeting members recommended that they don't allow users to have any more pitches. The Clerk reported that there was a negative response by some of the current users of the field as the need for increased pitches was due to these organisations expanding. The Clerk had asked members at the Full Council meeting on 28th June if this recommendation could be deferred back to this committee, so that it gave officers time to investigate further with the contractors and organisations as to whether more pitches could fit in, bearing in mind the specifications for run off and also avoiding the man hole covers.

The Finance and Amenities Officer explained to members that she had spoken to the council's contractors to see whether there was any more room to fit anything additional on the sports field. She explained that if the council kept their pitch layout as it currently was, there was no capacity to mark out any additional pitches apart from an extra 5 aside which had been requested by Future of Football. It was explained that the contractor had measured out to see if an additional 9 aside could be marked out as Future of Football had requested this pitch as well. Although an extra one would fit, it was very tight against the vegetative boundary area of the field and the contractors would strongly advise against the council doing this.

Future of Football had also requested for an 11 aside pitch, however due to the number of pitches, it would not be able to fit in so this request was unable to be accommodated.

The Finance & Amenities Officer reported that currently there was one Saturday team and two Sunday teams who wished to book the sports field next season, who would require the use of 11 aside pitches. These teams were Staverton Rangers (Saturday team), AFC Melksham and Staverton Rangers (Sunday Team). It was noted that the Staverton Rangers Sunday Team was a new team, but had already put the sports field down as their home team on the affiliation form. This team is, however, part of the existing Staverton Rangers team who use the sports field on a Saturday afternoon. Due to the increased amount of youth pitches, the council are only able to fit in two 11 asides rather than the usual three. It was suggested to members by the Finance & Amenities Officer that the council could accommodate these bookings with careful pitch management, and advised that she could speak to the Chippenham & District League to see whether they would be able to schedule the Sunday fixtures as such that only one home team was playing at the sports field on a Sunday morning. This would enable the pitches to not be played on twice over a weekend and could even allow a pitch to be rested on a weekend if the Saturday home team were away from home.

The Finance & Amenities Officer advised members that there was a way to accommodate Future of Football's request for an additional 9 aside pitch, however this would come at a cost to the council as two of the 11 aside pitches (closest to Knorr Bremse and middle pitch) would need to be moved over due to the width required for an additional 9 aside as they would need to be laid out in a landscape, not portrait, arrangement. The quotation received from the contractors was £1,185.00, this was because the ground sockets would need to be moved and replaced and the pitches would need to be squared up in their new positions. It was highlighted to members that this would not accommodate all of Future of Football's requirements even if they accepted the quotation for the new pitch layout.

Councillor Pafford felt that it would expand the potential usage of the sports field and although would cost money to the council, it would also increase income. The Clerk explained that the council could use the Covid grant received to pay for this, if members wished to go ahead.

It was felt by Councillor Baines that this would be an investment for the future, because it gives the council additional pitches to hire out. He felt that with the arrangement that had already been suggested regarding officers talking to the Chippenham & District League to ensure that pitches were not played on twice per weekend. This would give them a chance to recover in between matches and allow the three adult booking requests without over using the pitches.

It was noted that the Full Council 28th June had given delegated powers to this Committee to make a decision on the sports field usage, however were not aware of a quotation. It was felt therefore, that the quotation element should go back to the Full Council meeting for approval.

Recommendation: The Council accept the quotation of £1,185.00 from JH Jones to move 2x 11 aside pitches so that it allows for an additional 9 aside to be marked out. The Covid-19 funding which had been transferred into the Sports Field maintenance reserve to be used to fund this.

Resolved: Officers to speak to the Chippenham and District league to ensure that a 11 aside pitch was not used twice per weekend to accommodate the three adult pitch bookings.

121/21 Allotments: To consider request from plot holder to erect fencing around plot

The Clerk explained that there had been a request from a plot holder to erect a fence around their plot and as she had not received a request like this before asked members whether they wished to allow this. The Clerk advised following a recent visit there was windbreak mesh fencing around some plots. It was highlighted to members that as per the rules, allotment holders were not allowed to erect any permanent structures on their plots as any structure would need to be easily removable. The Clerk reported that following a recent visit to the allotments, she did notice a few plots had fences around them but thought that this was historic as a request had not been received by officers.

Members felt that there would need to be a height limit and also a specification on materials used. Councillor Baines queried as to whether the plot holder had given any indication as to why they wished for this fence. The Clerk advised that they hadn't and had only asked for a small fence but had not given much more detail. Councillor Baines felt that the council needed more information as to why they wanted the fence and also felt that any fence should be a limited height.

Recommendation: Officers to go back to the plot holder to gather more information about why they wish to put up a fence and what type of fence they wish to put up.

122/21 Asset Management

a) To consider Report on condition of Council Assets

The Clerk reported that reports for the office, allotments and play areas had been carried out. Most items highlighted in the report were already being actioned. The Clerk explained that she, at a recent allotment visit, tried to exercise the council's right to access their land, however due to the amount of vegetation and stinging nettles blocking the access she was unable to but would return in more protective clothing.

b) To receive update on SID (Speed Indicator Device) insurance claim

The Clerk reported that unfortunately it had been confirmed that the SID was damaged beyond repair. Following a quotation sent to the insurance company, it had been confirmed that the insurance claim made by the council had been approved. The Clerk sought confirmation to go ahead and order the replacement SID as the cost was covered by the insurance reimbursement (less any excess charge).

Recommendation: The Clerk go ahead and order the replacement Speed Indicator Device from Solagen 1 x SAS300- SID Indication Device £2,000.00 excluding VAT, against an insurance reimbursement of £2,000.

Meeting closed at 20:04pm

Signed.....
Chairman, 26th July 2021