

**MINUTES of the Asset Management Committee of Melksham Without Parish  
Council held on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at Melksham Without  
Parish Council Offices (First Floor), Melksham Community Campus, Market  
Place, SN12 6ES at 7:50pm**

**Present:** Councillors David Pafford (Council Vice- Chair), Alan Baines and Shona Holt and Andy Russell.

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

**270/23 Apologies & Housekeeping:**

Councillor Baines welcomed everyone to the meeting. It was agreed that as all attendees in the room regularly attended council meetings, the housekeeping messages did not need to be read out. Everyone present was aware that the meeting was being recorded and would be published on YouTube following the meeting and deleted once the minutes were approved.

Apologies were received from Councillor Glover, who was on holiday, and Councillor Chivers, who was in hospital; these reasons for apologies were accepted. It was noted that Councillor Hoyle was not present. The Clerk confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

**271/23 To receive Declarations of Interest:**

Councillor Holt declared an interest in agenda items 8 as Chair of the Berryfield Village Hall Trust.

**272/23 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 the consideration of the following items of business (Item **5b,5c, 6a & 6e**) as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

**Resolved:** Agenda items 5b, 5c and 6a, to be held in closed session for reason 3d (c) legal. Agenda item 6e to be held in closed session for reason 3d (b) terms of tenders and proposals and counter proposals in negotiations for contracts.

The committee agreed to suspend standing orders for a period of public participation.

**273/23 Public Participation:**

There was one member of the public present at the meeting who wished to speak on agenda item 7d as an allotment holder. He explained that the parish council had recently sought the views of allotment tenants on whether they would be interested in setting up an allotment association. He explained that whilst talking to tenants at the allotments, there was a feeling that some tenants may not have realised what they

were being asked. He felt that the council needed to relook at providing tenants with more information on setting up an association and what the benefits may be.

It was noted that tenants were also provided with a leaflet with information on the aspects involved in setting up an allotment association.

The committee reconvened.

**274/23 Play Areas, MUGAs (Multi Use Games Area) & Public Open Spaces:**

**a) To review and consider any actions required following receipt of ROSPA reports**

Councillor Baines advised that the council was now in receipt of the annual ROSPA play area inspection reports. He was pleased to report that there was nothing that was rated as high-risk or was in need of any urgent action. Most things in the report were either rated as very low or low risk, with a few items rated as low medium. The Clerk drew members attention to the fact that there were two ratings given in the reports: innate risk and actual risk level. The innate risk level is the lowest possible risk rating for that piece of equipment and is the rating given in its best condition without any faults. This means that although a medium rating may look like action is required, it may actually be the lowest rating that the equipment can have. That’s why both ratings need to be read in conjunction with each other to see whether any action is necessary to reduce the risk rating. For ease of reference, the below risk matrix is used by ROSPA:

Green = LOW risk, Amber = MEDIUM risk, Red = HIGH risk.

		Severity				
		1 Insignifi- cant	2 Minor	3 Moderate	4 Major	5 Catastro- phic
L i k e l i h o o d	1 = Rare	1 LOW	2 LOW	3 LOW	4 LOW	5 LOW
	2 = Unlikely	2 LOW	4 LOW	6 LOW	8 MEDIUM	10 MEDIUM
	3 = Moderate	3 LOW	6 LOW	9 MEDIUM	12 MEDIUM	15 HIGH
	4 = Likely	4 LOW	8 MEDIUM	12 MEDIUM	16 HIGH	20 HIGH
	5 = Certain	5 LOW	10 MEDIUM	15 HIGH	20 HIGH	25 HIGH

The Finance & Amenities Officer had put together a report for members with a summary of all of the play areas. At Beanacre Play Area, a lot of items identified just needed to be monitored by the Caretaker as part of his weekly inspections. Members noted that they have been keeping a watching brief on the equipment in this play area for some time, due to it being installed several years ago and its wooden construction with splinter cracks. One item of note was the overhead climber, as it relied on one post for its stability and had been rated as an 8, which

was a low medium in the report. The Caretaker continues to closely monitor this piece of equipment for signs of degradation. Another item that comes up each year and has been rated as a low medium is the accessible swing, as it should be taken apart on a regular basis so that the components can be inspected. The Caretaker has a special tool to do this and undertakes this check on a regular basis.

Most items at Berryfield Play Area had been rated as low, with the MUGA (Multi Use Games Area) being rated as medium, which was the lowest possible rating for this piece of equipment. Members attention was drawn to the fact that the Caretaker had fitted a gate stop on the entrance gate to the play area, as the post had bent over, leaving a large gap in between the gate post and the gate itself. This had been picked up by ROSPA, who advised that a correct gate buffer should be installed. The Caretaker had advised officers that he would have a look at this again with a view to fitting an appropriate buffer to the gate and reporting back if he was unable to. Another thing identified was a trip point around the manhole cover outside of the play area. Although this had been rated as a low risk, it had come up in the report for a few years now and had progressively gotten worse over time. When this was first identified, officers did contact Wessex Water, who came out to inspect the manhole; however, they advised that there was not an issue with the drain, so it was not their responsibility. The Clerk advised that, although this was outside of the play area, the trip point was on land the council currently leased from Wiltshire Council and was looking to take over the freehold of. Members agreed that this was something that needed to be actioned; therefore, quotations should be sought for the surfacing repair.

There were no matters to note at the Bowerhill Sports Field, with all items rated as low. It was noted that there were some items that had been picked up that related to FOF FC and had been sent to them for action.

Most of the items highlighted in the report for Hornchurch Road Play Area were missing fixtures, which the Caretaker could address as part of his regular maintenance regime. Members were reminded that a lot of areas of surfacing were cracking at the play area, which either needed repairing or the Caretaker was monitoring. It was noted that members had previously discussed the surfacing at this play area and had agreed to purchase the play area repair kit to see whether this was a suitable alternative to the council contracting the repair work out, in particular for small repairs. The Caretaker has been using the kit to repair some areas of surfacing, and it appears to be working well as an alternative option.

There was nothing to note at Kestrel Court Play Area, with anything highlighted put on the list for the Caretaker to action, such as the replacement of missing bolts and caps.

At Shaw Play Area, nothing significant had been highlighted, and anything that had been picked up was all things the Caretaker could action. It was highlighted that the plane rocker base plate needed tightening. This had been discussed with the Caretaker, who advised that the base plate was underneath the surfacing, so in order for this to be tightened, he would need to cut some of the surfacing to access the plate. He suggested to the officers that he should continue to monitor this item,

and if the movement got any worse, he would take the necessary action. The Finance & Amenities Officer confirmed that the report for the playing field had been sent to the Shaw Village Hall Committee for action, as this was their responsibility. It was noted that some items around the field, such as the fitness equipment, basket swing, and cone climber, were the parish council's responsibility. It was noted that the instruction sign was missing from the Warrior Pod 3 fitness equipment, which was currently being actioned by officers. The only other thing of note in this area was that the surfacing under the basket swing needed to be repaired. Officers had discussed this with the Caretaker who believes this may have been caused by the mower going over the matting at a time when there wasn't a lot of grass coverage. He has suggested putting grass seed down in the area to help with grass coverage.

It was noted that Shurnhold Fields was jointly owned by Melksham Without Parish Council and Melksham Town Council. The report had been sent to the Melksham Town Council amenities team to undertake the remedial action required, as they were the ones who attend the field on a weekly basis to undertake caretaking duties. Members noted that nothing had been highlighted as requiring urgent action.

There was nothing of particular note at Whitworth Play Area; one thing that was highlighted was that there was no socket for the drop-down bolt on the maintenance gate, which was causing some damage to the tarmac. This may need to be looked at in the future.

**Recommendation:** Officers to obtain quotations for the footpath repair around the manhole cover outside of Berryfield Play Area and bring back to a future meeting.

- b) To receive update on progress with the freehold of both Berryfield and Kestrel Court play areas and note that a public open space notice has been published with the deadline for objections being 20th October**

Held in closed session.

The Clerk advised that the public open space notice had been published and the deadline for objections had passed. She explained that she had contacted Wiltshire Council with regard to whether there had been any objections received, and they were currently checking. She explained that at the last meeting, the council asked for the old village hall to be removed from the red line plan and included in the proposed Wilts & Berks canal. Wiltshire Council had come back to say that, unfortunately, they were unable to take the hall out of the plan due to it being a physical layer on the map. With regard to the canal, as there was no defined route for the canal, they would be unable to add the proposed route. The Clerk had sent the freehold template to the solicitors, explain that the council would like to instruct them on these transfers, but to date had not come back.

- c) To approve the legal transfer of the Davey Play Area (Pathfinder) to the parish council from Taylor Wimpey if outstanding vehicular access query is resolved (and to review ROSPA report as independent assessment before transfer).**

Held in closed session.

The Clerk advised that she had received no answer back on this, but she had chased the solicitors on this matter.

**d) Berryfield Play Area**

- I. To consider securing the play area fencing to stop access to the brook at the back of the play area.**

The Clerk explained that the wire mesh fence at Berryfield Play Area was broken and needed repair to stop people from accessing the brook at the back of the play area. The Clerk explained that this had been put on the agenda for members to consider, as the council was looking to take over the freehold of the play area. The council had only previously undertaken work at this play area for safety and not to refresh the aesthetics of the area due to only having a lease and the potential for the Wilts & Berks Canal to go through. She wondered whether now that the council was looking to take on the freehold, they might wish to take a longer-term view of this play area. Members felt that as there was an agenda item under 5b regarding the freehold of this play, which was due to be discussed later on in the meeting, this discussion should be deferred until then.

- II. To consider painting the play area equipment once the freehold has been completed.**

The Clerk advised that when officers had undertaken a site visit of all of the play areas, they noted that a lot of the paint work on the equipment had flaked off. Members noted that it was only the surface paint that had come off, not the undercoat. It was felt that this item should be discussed later on in the agenda under 5b when looking at the freehold.

**e) To consider repainting the gates at Shaw Play Area**

The Clerk explained that this had arisen following the officer's site visit to all of the play areas. She advised that the gate looked a bit tired and wondered whether members wished for it to be painted due to the fact that the paint had worn off. It was queried whether the Caretaker could paint the gate or whether it would need a contractor to do if the council were to approve for the gate to be painted. The Clerk advised that, although the Caretaker could paint the gate, due to the time involved in a job like this, it would need a contractor to undertake the work. As this did not pose a safety risk, members did not feel that the gate needed to be painted unless the work not being done was likely to lead to corrosion of the gate. Members felt that this wasn't an issue; therefore, the gate should not be repainted.

**Recommendation:** The council do not repaint the gate at Shaw Play Area.

- f) **To consider removing covid signage from all play areas now that no restrictions are in place.**

The Clerk explained that during covid, the council purchased signage for all of the play areas detailing the restrictions that were in place at that time. Now that there were no restrictions in place, queried whether members wished for the signs to be removed. The committee agreed that the signs were no longer applicable; therefore, they should be removed from all play areas.

**Recommendation:** The council remove the covid signage from all of the parish play areas.

- g) **To consider whether the basketball hoops require nets bearing in mind that the Caretaker has to use a ladder to access the hoop.**

The Clerk advised that in order for the basketball nets to be replaced at all of the MUGAs (Multi Use Games Area), the Caretaker has to get on a ladder to access the hoop. As the Caretaker worked on his own, this posed a safety risk, plus the logistics of taking a ladder to remote sites and the Clerk queried whether it was really necessary for the nets to be replaced. She explained that people could still play basketball as the hoop was there, so having no nets wouldn't affect the use of the equipment. Members agreed that the nets were not necessary for people to use the equipment and felt that, due to the health and safety concerns raised, they should not be replaced.

**Recommendation:** The council no longer replace the nets on the basketball hoops at all parish MUGA's.

- h) **Grass cutting: To consider adding the grass opposite Berryfield Play Area on the grass cutting schedule following complaints that it is not being cut**

The Clerk advised that complaints had been received from residents regarding the overgrown grass opposite Berryfield Play Area. While the parish council was responsible for the grass cutting inside and around the play area, they were not responsible for the area residents were complaining about. Officers had contacted both Wiltshire Council and Selwood Housing, who had both come back to say that it was not their responsibility. Members considered that as the council's contractors were at the play area undertaking grass cutting, this could be added to the parish council's grass cutting contract as it wouldn't take much time for them to cut that area.

**Recommendation:** The council add the grassed area opposite Berryfield Play Area to the grass cutting contract.

- i) **Wessex Water positive footprint: To consider offer of community benefit for gate relocation at St Barnabas play area access and potential materials for Shurnhold Field car park project and agree way forward**

Councillor Baines explained that Wessex Water had offered some community benefits to mitigate the impact of the Westlands Lane main drainage scheme on the residents of Beanacre. Last year, they contacted the parish council, asking for ideas for a suitable community benefit. They were also keen to offset some of the biodiversity disruption caused by the scheme and asked for ideas in and around Beanacre. The parish council had put together a list of ideas for Wessex Water to consider. One of the ideas put forward was to replace and relocate the five-bar metal gate, which was currently located between Beanacre Play Area and the boules court, giving access to the community field. This was because the gate was very heavy and often dropped on its hinges, making it very difficult for the community to open. The idea would be for the gate to be relocated to the hedgerow to the rear of the community field, which would be on the other side of the play area and could be used for maintenance access into the play area. This gate could then be replaced with a more user-friendly gate for the community to use. It was considered that this would not only benefit the community by providing them with better access but also provide the parish council with better maintenance access to the play area. For clarity, the new council maintenance access, if this went ahead, would be through the car park, which leads to a gate accessing the community field. The contractors would then be able to access the five-bar gate from the community field to access the play area. It was noted that the legal agreement would have to be changed to show the parish council's amended right of access. Wessex Water had come back to say that they would like to offer their assistance with this initiative, but had now advised that they would be out of Beanacre by the end of the month, so the council would have to confirm that they required assistance on this before then. Members felt that this offer should be accepted as it had been on the parish council list for some time.

Wessex Water had contacted the council some time ago with an offer of an additional wildflower meadow at Shurnhold Fields as biodiversity offset, and this was particularly welcome as a part of the existing wildflower meadow will be lost as part of the car park and entrance improvement works that were due to take place.. Wessex Water, despite their instigation, site visits, and offer of the wildflower meadow; had just got in touch to say that due to the weather, it would be too wet to do, and has instead offered to plant some trees in the area. The Clerk advised that when this was initially offered, there was no mention that it would be weather dependent or had to be done before they left the site. Members felt that there had already been a lot of trees planted at Shurnhold Fields; therefore, this was not a suitable alternative to the wildflower meadow that had previously been promised. It was felt that as this was something they had promised to do, this should be honoured by them, and they should come back to do it once the weather conditions allowed.

Wessex Water had also just offered to donate type 1 sub base for the car park and entrance project and confirmed that they were due to demobilise their compound on Westlands Lane on 20th November. They had asked whether they could stock pile the material at Shurnhold Fields in the meantime until the car park works commence. The Clerk advised that some due diligence needed to be taken to ensure that there was not a situation where more stone was left than required, and

then the councils would be left with the costs of disposing of it. She advised that she had looked at the spec for the project, and confirmed that the entrance and access off of the highway did require a subbase. She advised that the car park does not require this material as the surfacing is going to be geomesh. She suggested that it may be worth asking a suitable contractor to advise on how much type 1 stone was required for the project.

**Recommendation 1:** To confirm to Wessex Water that the council would like Wessex Water to go ahead with relocating and replacing the five-bar gate at Beanacre as discussed above.

**Recommendation 2:** Officers to contact a suitable contractor to ascertain how much type 1 stone is required for the Shurnhold Fields car park and entrance improvement project.

**Recommendation 3:** Officers to go back to Wessex Water and ask them to go ahead with the wildflower meadow at Shurnhold Fields when the weather allows as originally promised.

### **275/23C QEII Diamond Jubilee Sports Field & Pavilion (known informally as Bowerhill Sports Field):**

#### **a) To receive update on current bookings**

Held in closed session.

The Finance & Amenities Officer gave an update on the current bookings at the sports field. It was noted that since the last meeting, Hourglass FC had joined the sports field as one of the home teams for the season. This means that there are now four adult home teams using the sports field this season, which is mostly going well. The Finance & Amenities Officer has had to chase up a few payments from some teams, but on the whole, there haven't been any significant issues with any of them so far this season.

**Recommendation:** The council to go back to the organisation and advise that if they are found to be undertaking activities that have not been booked beforehand, they will be retrospectively charged double the normal rate for the booking.

#### **b) To consider updated information from youth organisation regarding the installation of advertising hoarding at the sports field and approve location**

The Clerk advised that the council last looked at this request for advertising hoarding in September 2021 (min.234/21c). At the time, the council wished for more information from the organisation about where they were proposing to locate the fencing as well as the proposed height. Officers were also asked to contact Fields in Trust to seek permission from them for this type of structure, as well as put in a planning enquiry to see whether this would be subject to planning. The Clerk explained that officers had contacted Fields in Trust, who advised that



they did not have a problem with fencing being installed for this purpose as it facilitated football and was not a permanent structure. Officers have been unable to put in a planning enquiry yet due to requiring more information from the organisation. It was noted that they were asked some time ago for more details; however, this had not been received until a recent request by them for a site visit. It was confirmed that the organisation would be paying for the fencing and hoarding and would be receiving sponsorship income from it.

The Clerk explained that the organisation had contacted officers a few weeks ago requesting a site visit as they wanted to install the fencing the following weekend. Officers had gone back to them to explain that it wasn't as easy as having a site visit and then approving for it to be installed as it still needed approval by the council. Officer met with the organisation on Friday 27th October at the sports field, to discuss the proposed location. It was explained that they wished for the fencing to be located down the side of the field closest to Portal Road, the Clerk reminded members that trees had been planted down this side of the field. This had been explained to the organisation during the site visit, but they felt that it would not affect the trees as the fencing would be installed in front of them. The Clerk explained that there needed to be some thought to this because there needed to be enough room given to access the trees to maintain them. The grass cutting between the fencing and trees also needed to be a consideration, as there needed to be adequate room to ensure contractors were able to do this.

The Clerk explained that the fencing style was going to be the same as the organisation had installed around their goal post compound. It was noted that the advertising hoarding would be facing the field, as it was unable to go on the fence around the sports field facing Portal Road as it would be covered up by vegetation. The Clerk drew members attention to the fact that there needed to be adequate runoff around pitches, so if members were minded to approve this request, the distance would need to be measured first to ensure that any fencing did not impact this area. The Clerk explained that officers did have concerns with regard to health and safety, especially if the fencing was close to the pitches. It was also noted that a Bath City player had sustained serious head injuries from colliding with advertising hoarding at a football match a few years ago, which was also in the back of the officers' mind. It was understood that the type of hoarding was a more solid barrier than the type of fencing this organisation was looking to use. Members wished to make clear that it was imperative that there was sufficient runoff around pitches, and this needed to be made clear to the organisation.

Following the site visit, officers asked the organisation to provide more information ready for this evening's meeting, and after chasing, they only received the details from a quotation for the fence panels and posts.

After a detailed discussion, members did not feel that they had enough information to consider this request at this time, and officers needed to request more information from the organisation on the following:

- Proposed height of the fencing.

- Where on the fence the advertising would be installed.
- Distance between pitches and proposed fencing.

Members wished to make clear that until the council had received the requested information and had a chance to consider the request in more detail, the organisation must not go ahead and install the fencing in the meantime. The Finance & Amenities Officer also suggested that if this is approved, an agreement should be set up between the organisation and the parish council similar to the one that was already in place for their storage container. Members agreed that this would be a good idea and should be signed prior to them installing any fencing on the field.

**Recommendation:** Officers to go back to the youth organisation and request for more details on the fencing as discussed above.

**c) To consider request from sports field hirer to use the moveable goal posts for their training sessions as part of the facility being their home venue.**

The Clerk advised that officers had received a request from one of the adult teams to use the moveable goal posts for training as part of their match day bookings. The Clerk explained that officers were aware that this team was using the field to train, but as it was a public open space, they were unable to charge for this use as they were only using the field and not any other part of the facilities that would be chargeable. One of the issues that the council had been having with the standalone goal posts was teams turning for training sessions and causing wear in the goal areas. This was why the council invested in some moveable posts to mitigate this issue. It was considered that people turning up on the field to have a kick around didn't need goal posts to do this, so the removal of standalone goals would not affect this. It was always the idea that if teams wished to use the moveable goal posts, they would have to book them and be charged for their usage. While the council appreciated that this team had been a home team for some time, they felt that if they required the use of the goal posts for training, they must book them in advance and pay the fee for training sessions.

**Recommendation:** The council refuse the request from the team to allow them to use the moveable goal posts for their training sessions free of charge. Officers to inform the team that if they do wish to use them for training, they must book and pay the hire fee for training sessions.

**d) To review results from the Bowerhill Sports Field outdoor equipment consultation and decide**

The council had recently consulted with residents on what type of equipment they wished to see installed at the Bowerhill Sports Field as part of the sports field improvement project. The results of the survey are now available for members to review. The total number of valid responses received from the survey was 41 out of a total of 131 survey results. It was noted that the reason some results received were invalid was due to people giving the same numbered response for each piece of equipment in the survey. The survey asked everyone to rank the

pieces of equipment from 1 to 4, with 1 being the type of equipment they would most like to see and 4 being the piece of equipment they would least like to see, with some answers being duplicated, making the response invalid. It was noted that the highest number of people who responded were in the age range of 26–44 years. The below results of the survey were as follows:

1st Place. Gym and physical development

2nd Place. Calisthenic/ strength

3rd Place. Climbing and balancing

4th Place. Teen Shelter and seating

Members agreed that the council should aim to provide first- and second-place equipment (gym and physical development, & calisthenic/ strength), as these items were the most popular. The Clerk asked whether members wished to purchase items with moveable parts, bearing in mind the level of maintenance such items may need. She went on to explain that at Shaw Playing Fields, items were purchased for people to do things on, such as strength training, rather than having items that moved. Members agreed that it would be much better to purchase items that had no moving parts so that less maintenance was required.

It was noted that the next step for the council was to apply for grant funding for the project.

The Clerk advised that she had received an email from a member of the public who had missed the survey but had asked whether the council could consider installing a gravel pathway around the perimeter of the field. In their correspondence, they explained that they walked around the field during their lunch break as a form of exercise, but this could only be done in the summer when it was dry. They have requested this pathway so that they could walk around the field all year round. They had also requested more benches be installed. Members noted that when they installed part of the footpath at Hornchurch Road Public Open Space to complete the circular route, it cost around c£32,000 to do some years ago. Members discussed this request; however, bearing in mind the cost to the council when they installed part of the pathway around Hornchurch Road Public Open Space, this request could not be approved. It was considered that the cost of installing a footpath around such a large field would not be something the council could fund. It was felt that if someone was going to walk on the field, they needed to be aware that there may be areas that are wet, and they should wear appropriate footwear. It was also noted that there were other green areas around Bowerhill where members of the public could walk if they didn't want to walk on a muddy field, such as the residential estate and Hornchurch Road Public Open Space, where there was a footpath around the perimeter. Members also felt that having a footpath around the field would also encourage people to walk their dogs on the field, which in turn could increase the likelihood of dog fouling.

**Recommendation 1:** Officers to go ahead with applying for grant funding for the sports field enhancement project.

**Recommendation 2:** If the application for grant funding is successful, officers to obtain quotations for gym and physical development and calisthenic and strength equipment. All quotations should be sought for items that have no moving parts.

**Recommendation 3:** Officers to refuse the request to install a pathway around the perimeter of the sports field due to the reasons discussed above.

**e) To receive update on new commercial bin emptying schedule and consider way forward.**

Held in closed session

The Clerk reported that there were still issues with the waste collections at Bowerhill Sports Field. Members were reminded as background information that the contractor was having difficulty emptying the large waste bins due to the wheels digging into the gravel surface during collections. Their solution was to take away the big capacity bins and provide the council with smaller bins with the same equivalent capacity and weight, which would be more manageable for them. They agreed that they would empty the bins on a weekly basis rather than fortnightly. Unfortunately, when the Clerk looked into the contract, it appeared that the council would not be receiving like for like; therefore, the contract was not signed. The smaller bins then appeared in the car park without the contract being signed, but it appeared that more bins had been supplied than originally offered. As these bins had arrived without the contract being signed, the council agreed to trial this to see whether it would work. Recently, there have been increasing issues with waste bags that have been left outside of the bins not being taken away by the contractor. Officers had contacted the waste contractor at the start of September, requesting a full site clearance to be undertaken, which had been scheduled for the next waste collection. While the bins were emptied, the bags outside of the bins had been left at the site. Officers have continuously contacted the waste company about this, with the same bags of rubbish still on site. The Clerk explained that the waste company will not empty the bins on a weekly basis until the contract is signed; however, she is concerned about signing this as she doesn't want the council tied into the contract for another two years.

Discussions took place around whether the council should terminate the contract; however, it was understood that if the council did this before the end of the initial contract term, they would have to pay 43% of the charges that would have been payable during the remainder of the term. It was noted that the council had signed the initial contract in December 2022 for a two-year term; this would mean that there was roughly a year left on the contract. Members felt that the contractors were not fulfilling their contract, and a formal complaint should be made to the company in the first instance. The outcome of this should be brought to a future meeting for further consideration on the way forward.

**Recommendation:** Officers to put in a formal complaint to the waste contractor about the poor service the council has been receiving, and the outcome of this should be brought back to a future meeting for consideration.

**f) To receive update on progress with replacing Pavilion water tank base under delegated powers following site survey on 11th October**

The Clerk advised that she had delegated powers to go ahead with the replacement water tank base and had now received a quote for the work from Aquasafe Environmental. It was noted that the replacement base works will be undertaken by a specialist contractor arranged by Aquasafe Environmental, who will be managing the works on the day. Members noted that the cost to replace the base was £2,750 + VAT. This was to do the following:

- Attend the site to disconnect and remove the tank, then supply and install a new base. To replace the existing Re-connect the tank onto the new base.

Once the tank has been removed, Aquasafe Environmental will be able to check the tank for any hairline cracks and undertake the annual clean and chlorination. This will be charged on top of the base replacement; however, as it was something that was done annually, the council had already budgeted for the chlorination.

The Clerk explained that she hadn't gone ahead with the works yet as the contractors had queried whether we would like a quotation for the installation of the drinking water fountain as this could be done on the same day. This was due to be considered under the next agenda item.

**g) To approve quotation for the installation of the drinking water fountain following the site survey undertaken on 11th October.**

The Clerk reminded members that the council had already approved a quotation for the installation of the drinking water fountain from the manufacturer. Following a site survey by the manufacturer, it also came to light that the council would need an electrician to install a socket in order for a pump to be installed for the water waste. Due to there being water in the pump room, this project had been put on hold until the base could be taken out and looked at, as there were concerns there may be a leak. Following a site visit from the specialist contractor who was measuring up for the new base, they advised that they could provide a quote for the works and that they could be undertaken at the same time as the works for the base. They have come up with a way where the council does not require a pump; therefore, an electrician would not be required.

The quotation obtained by Aquasafe Environmental was £875 + VAT for the specialist contractor to undertake the works on the same day as the replacement water tank base. The Clerk confirmed that this quote was lower than the one by the manufacturer, which the council had approved, and queried whether members were happy to approve this quotation to do the work instead. Members agreed that this was a good way forward; therefore, this quote should be accepted.

**Recommendation:** The council approve the quotation of £875 + VAT from Aquasafe Environmental to install the drinking water fountain on the same day as the tank base replacement.

**h) To approve quotation for control panel service and repair following issues identified (if received).**

The Clerk explained that when there had recently been an issue in the pump room, she and the specialist contractor thought that she had isolated the electricity that had been indicated on the control panel. It was subsequently discovered that the water heaters were still live. She advised that the council had previously been made aware of an issue with the control panel and had put a sign on there until it was due for its service. As this issue has recently arisen again, she feels that it has become dangerous and needs to be addressed, as the heating engineer and herself thought that all electricity supply was off and it wasn't. Officers had obtained an up-to-date quotation of £730 + VAT from Building Controls Specialists Ltd, which was based on the following:

- Service the BMS System at the above site.
- Supply and install 1no replacement HWS Secondary Pump Contactor
- Investigate and resolver the other reported issue where possible.

The quotation also noted that they would endeavour to resolve any faults on the day of attendance; however, if further work is required, they will provide another quotation. Members agreed that due to health and safety concerns, this needed to be actioned as soon as possible and felt that the quote should be accepted.

**Recommendation:** The council approve the quotation of £730 + VAT from Building Controls Specialists Ltd to undertake the control panel service and repair.

**i) To note volunteers from Herman Miller will be undertaking some volunteering activities at the Bowerhill Sports Field on Tuesday 7th November for their annual 'day of purpose'**

The Clerk explained that last year she was made aware that Herman Miller was undertaking a day of purpose where their employees volunteer to undertake volunteering opportunities in the community. She did put forward some ideas around the sports field last year, but it was too late in the process. She had contacted them earlier this year to see whether they would be interested in doing some work around the sports field. The council had previously purchased biodegradable hessian mats to go around the trees to keep the weeds away from them. This was still something that needed to be done, so had suggested this opportunity to Herman Miller. They had responded to say that they had 19 volunteers ready to undertake this task and were going to undertake litter picking around the estate beforehand.

Members welcomed this and were pleased to hear that the volunteering opportunity was taken up.

**j) To note breakdown of discount received from Energy Bill Relief Scheme for pavilion gas.**

The Clerk had recently received a letter detailing the total amount of discount the council received from their gas bills under the government's energy relief scheme. Members noted that the total amount discounted under this scheme was £1,061.88 which had already been taken into account when the council was billed.

While the committee was discussing items under the sports field heading, the Clerk wanted to make members aware of a few issues that had arisen since the agenda had been issued. The Clerk wanted to make members aware that Great Bear was having some issues with their car park flooding and had been in contact with her because they had been advised by their own contractors that the drain comes under the local authority's remit rather than Great Bear. She explained that this was referring to a ditch in between the sports field and Great Bear. Wiltshire Council Highways have attended the site, and confirmed its Great Bear's responsibility under riparian ownership. She explained that until the water has gone down, it is unknown whether the parish council may need to do something as part of their riparian ownership. She wanted to make members aware of it in case future action was required by the council.

Separately, she had been contacted by Gompels, who are concerned about getting their lorries through Westinghouse Way when Future of Football is undertaking evening training sessions. One of the concerns that had been highlighted was that children were opening car doors in front of the lorries, without looking first. Due to cars being parked on both sides of the road, it was becoming increasingly narrow for the lorries to get through. Future of Football had responded to say that they would ask the parents to park more considerately. It was noted that these two issues had come through since the agenda had been issued, so they were not something that could be discussed at this meeting.

**276/23 Allotments**

**a) To receive report on waiting list**

The Finance & Amenities Officer had compiled a report on the current waiting list. It was noted that there were currently four vacancies, one on Berryfield and three on Briansfield. There are fifteen people on the waiting list, and the Allotment Warden is currently in the process of showing the next four people around the vacant plots.

Members noted that the new allotment year had now started, and there were still a few tenants that the council was waiting for payment from. The Finance & Amenities Officer confirmed that she was going to contact these tenants with a second rent notice letter shortly.

**b) To note delegated decisions made by Clerk relating to letting of plots and permissions given for greenhouses/sheds**

The Clerk has not approved any shed or greenhouse requests under her delegated powers since the last meeting.

**c) To consider request from allotment tenant for plot refund following notice being given that they are unable to carry on tending to the plot.**

The Finance & Amenities Officer had received some correspondence from an allotment holder who had paid their allotment rent for the new year but now feels that they are unable to tend to the plot. It was explained that they had two plots at the allotments and wished to give up one of the plots. They have requested a refund as it was only a few weeks into the allotment year. Members were reminded that it was their policy not to give anyone discounts if they relinquished their plot during the year, regardless of when the plot was given up. Similarly, if someone took on a plot during the year, they would not receive a discount and would have to pay the full year's rent regardless of when they took it on. Due to the fact that the plot holder had two plots at the allotments and, after reassessing, felt that they were unable to tend to both, this had been put on the agenda so that members could consider it as a special case. It was noted that there was a waiting list on the allotments, so there would be no issue in finding another tenant. It was felt that as this tenant had been upfront about the fact that they were unable to tend to the plot and had not left it for months for the plot to become overgrown, the refund should be granted and the plot let out to someone on the waiting list. Members wished to be clear that this was granted on the basis that there were people on the waiting list for plots. If there were vacant plots that the council was unable to let, such requests would have to be carefully considered.

**Recommendation:** The council to approve the request from the allotment tenant to refund their rent for one of their plots.

**d) To receive update on responses received from allotment tenants following request for their views on setting up an Allotment Association and consider way forward.**

It was noted that all tenants were written to with their rent renewal letters, and provided a leaflet about setting up an allotment association. So far, the council have received eight responses from tenants saying that they would be in favour of this way forward. Members were informed from an allotment holder under public participation that there may well be more interest from tenants if more information was sent out about it. The Finance & Amenities Officer had queried with members whether officers went back to the allotment tenants by email with more information on an allotment association, and could also tie in an action from the last asset management meeting to go back to the tenants of Briansfield informing them about the council's investigations into water troughs. Members felt



that this would be a suitable way forward, and they should be given until the end of the year to respond.

The Clerk suggested that more information could be given to tenants on their responsibilities, such as grass cutting, repairs and maintenance, weekly health and safety checks and showing tenants around plots.

**Recommendation:** Officers to write to all allotment tenants again providing more information to tenant on what an allotment association involves. Responses should be received from them by the end of the calendar year.

## **277/23 Berryfield Village Hall:**

### **a) To consider any parish council action as a result of site visit with acoustic engineer to mitigate issue with acoustic performance at the village hall.**

The Clerk explained that the village hall was having issues around sound and its acoustic performance, and a quote had been sought by the Management Committee to solve this issue. She queried whether this was the responsibility of the Trust that had taken over the running of the hall or whether it should be something the council should be taking on to help the Trust as they had only been going for a short time and would not have built up enough reserves yet. It was noted that to comply with planning conditions, the hall was so isolated that the sound was unable to be let out. Members acknowledged that they were aware of this and that the hall was designed in a way to comply with planning conditions, but in hindsight, they wonder whether absorption should have been designed into the building.

Councillor Holt as Chair of the Trust, updated members on what the Trust had agreed at their last meeting. She explained that they had agreed to go ahead with the acoustic panelling as a project themselves and are looking to apply for the Suez Community Fund for some grant funding to pay for 50% of the project. In order for them to apply to the grant fund, they need to obtain two quotations for the works. They had received one but had contacted another contractor, who advised that in order for them to provide a quote, they would need to undertake a site survey at a cost of between £300-£500. Members agreed that the parish council should fund the site survey in order for the Trust to obtain the second quote required for them to apply for grant funding. Members wished to clarify that this request was separate from any grant funding the Trust may apply for from the parish council in the future and should not prejudice any application made.

**Recommendation:** The parish council fund the cost of the site survey required for the Berryfield Village Hall Trust to obtain a second quote in order for them to apply for grant funding towards the improvement of the village halls acoustic performance.

**b) To note correspondence received from Berryfield Village Hall Management Trust advising that they no longer required additional patio space.**

The Clerk explained that she had received some correspondence from the Village Hall Trust advising that they no longer required the patio space outside of the hall. Councillor Holt explained that the Trust felt that it was no longer necessary to have a patio due to the fact that the shrubs had been replaced with grass, so there was no difficulty in accessing the public open space outside of the hall. On behalf of the Trust, she wanted to thank the parish council for their kind offer to install a patio.

Members noted this update.

**278/23 Shurnhold Fields: To review Shurnhold Fields Working Party notes held on 28th September 2023 and approve recommendations.**

The Clerk advised that the Shurnhold Fields working party does not have any delegated powers; therefore, any decisions made have to go back to both councils to be approved. It was noted that the parish council held the s106 maintenance fund in reserve for the maintenance of the field. The Clerk explained that the car park and improvement project was a capital expense and was being funded 50/50 by both councils. There was also a £5,000 grant received from the Area Board to go towards the project.

During the summer, the mower that the Friends were using was broken beyond repair. As a short-term solution, the Clerk approved for JH Jones to cut the pathways until a more permanent solution could be agreed upon with the expenditure coming out of the maintenance contribution. The Clerk reported that the Friends were now looking to investigate purchasing a mower themselves to continue mowing the pathway.

The management plan for Shurnhold Fields was still outstanding and was an action that had been taken away by the town council. Members felt that the Clerk needed to chase this up and that the mayor should be copied in any correspondence.

**Recommendation:** The council approve the recommendations in the Shurnhold Fields Working Party notes.

**Recommendation:** The Clerk to contact the town council to ascertain where they are with the management plan.

**279/23 Noticeboards: To consider whether the noticeboard outside of the old fish and chip shop at Kestrel Court should be re-located now that it is no longer a shop:**

The Clerk explained that the noticeboard at Kestrel Court was located on the side of a house and queried with members whether they wished to move it. She explained that when the noticeboard was installed on the building, it was a shop, but now that it

was a house, she wondered whether it was an appropriate place for it to be located. It was explained that the council did have a set of spare legs and wondered whether the noticeboard could be installed on the open space land next to the play area where the parish council bench was located.

Members felt that it was important that the noticeboard was not removed from the Kestrel Court area because there was a community in that area that looked at the noticeboard for information. It was agreed that the noticeboard should be located so that residents could read the notices without coming off the pathway.

**Recommendation:** The council move the noticeboard on the side of the old fish and chip shop at Kestrel Court to public open space next to the play area.

**280/23 Bus shelters: To review Beanacre bus shelter location assessment and approve bus shelter style to move forward with obtaining quotations.**

At the last asset meeting, the committee deferred the discussion on the replacement of the wooden bus shelter near Westlands Lane in Beanacre until more investigations could be undertaken to determine whether it would be feasible to install a new bus shelter at this location. Members were reminded that there were concerns that any new shelter purchased for this location may not fit due to there being a lamp post, bin, and right of way next to the shelter. Officers had also highlighted to members that there was a large fir tree behind the shelter and had concerns about where the roots might be. Following the meeting, a site survey was undertaken by a bus shelter contractor, who confirmed that it would be feasible for a new bus shelter to be installed at this location. The contractor had confirmed that a new shelter could be bolted to the existing concrete base due to the base being in good condition. They confirmed that the current shelter was bolted to the base and were confident that the base would not be compromised by the removal of the shelter. In terms of an appropriate shelter that would fit in with the location, the contractor had suggested that a pitched roof shelter would be appropriate.

The Clerk informed members that she had queried with Wiltshire Council Highways whether it would be of benefit to purchase a bus shelter style that stood out more as a visual clue that people were in a village to combat speeding. They confirmed that they did not feel that this mattered due to where it was sited, and the replacement shelter did not need to go through LHFIFG (Local Highway and Footway Improvement Group). Councillor Baines felt that a pitched roof shelter would be the best style as it replicated the existing shelter. He explained that by having transparent panels, the adjacent street lamp will illuminate the inside of the shelter. Following a detailed discussion, it was agreed that a two-bay pitched roof shelter would be the most suitable for this location, which included sides on both ends of the shelter. Members considered whether there needed to be a panel installed on the front of the shelter; however, it was felt that this was not necessary and, in particular, may restrict people in wheelchairs and mobility scooters from coming in and out of the shelter. Members noted that the cost estimation for this type of shelter was around c£5,000 + VAT, and the council would now need to go out for some alternative quotes now that a style had been agreed.

Councillor Baines advised that he queried with officers prior to the meeting about the cost of making a provision for the new bus shelter to have real-time information in case the council wished for this shelter to have it in the future. Officers had received a cost estimate for this of £850 + VAT which would include the following:

- Internal cut out box mounted under the seat.
- Internal cables within the shelter structure.
- Aluminium conduit to allow the cables to get to the approach end of the shelter.
- RTI bracket for the sign to be mounted to.

The contractor did advise that the council would need to arrange to get mains power to the shelter and into the cut-out box, which may be problematic, especially due to the tree behind the shelter. It was noted that in order to get electricity to the shelter, it would involve excavation around and into the base, which would be an additional cost. Councillor Baines advised that it was £6,000 to put real-time information into each bus shelter, which was more than the shelter. Members discussed whether this was necessary for this shelter, bearing in mind that it wasn't very well used. Councillor Holt suggested that the council should undertake an overview of all the bus shelters in the parish and create a criterion to determine which shelters would be suitable for RTI rather than doing one bus shelter at a time. The bus shelters could be assessed on their usage and suitability for RTI to be installed, for example. Members agreed that this is an exercise that should be undertaken.

The Clerk confirmed to members that the existing shelter had an asbestos roof, so it would need to be removed and appropriately disposed of.

**Recommendation 1:** Officers to obtain quotations for a replacement bus shelter on the A350 at Beanacre near Westlands Lane. Quotations should be sought for a two-bay pitched roof shelter with sides, and should be brought back to a future meeting.

**Recommendation 2:** The council to undertake an audit exercise on all bus shelters in the parish to determine if they are suitable for real time information.

21.37pm Councillor Pafford briefly left the meeting.

## **281/23      Bins:**

### **a) To consider request from resident to move one of the bins opposite Tesco Express in Bowerhill to Westlands Lane, Beanacre.**

The Clerk advised that there were two bins opposite Tesco in Bowerhill, a litter bin and a dog bin, which had been discussed at the last meeting. Following the last meeting, she had been contacted by a resident requesting that a bin be located in the layby at Westlands Lane, and after reading the minutes, she suggested that one of the bins opposite Tesco could be relocated there. The Clerk had checked with Wiltshire Council whether the dog bin could be taken away from this location, which they confirmed they were happy with. The Clerk suggested that the dog bin could be taken away,

but instead of relocating it to Westlands Lane, a litter bin could be purchased, which would have a larger capacity. Members agreed that a bin could be installed at this location; however, Wiltshire Council would need to be contacted first to confirm whether the bin could be added to their bin emptying schedule. It was noted that Wiltshire Council would not empty any additional bins installed; however, they have previously advised that if a bin was to be moved to another location, they would still empty it. Members felt that clarification was required to ensure that Wiltshire Council would empty the bin if the parish council installed a new one at this location.

21.40pm Councillor Pafford returned to the meeting.

**Recommendation:** The council agree in principle to replace the dog bin opposite Tesco Express in Bowerhill with a new litter bin to be relocated to Westlands Lane, on the proviso that Wiltshire Council confirm that they will still empty it on their bin emptying schedule.

**b) To consider request from St Barnabas Church to install bin in the church cricket field**

The Clerk explained that a request had been received from St Barnabas Church asking whether the council could install a bin inside the church cricket field. In further correspondence from them, they suggested that the council could install a dog bin inside the play area. It was noted that there was already a bin in the play area; however, the Clerk had responded at the time to say that she did not feel that it was appropriate to encourage dog waste into the play area, especially as owners would have the dogs with them when they were disposing of it. Dogs are prohibited from being inside play areas, so this was not a suitable solution.

Members discussed who would empty the bin if they were to approve this request, as the parish council had a policy of only emptying bins inside play areas; additionally, Wiltshire Council would not empty any additional bins installed. The Clerk advised that the parish council's contractors were on site once every fortnight to empty the bins inside the play area, but even if the council did agree to install a bin inside the cricket field, she felt that it would need much more emptying than once every two weeks. She went on to explain that the bins are emptied three times per week at Shurnhold Fields due to the amount of dog waste in the bins, for example. Given everything that had been discussed, members felt that the field was the responsibility of the church to maintain themselves; therefore, this request should not be approved.

**Recommendation:** The council refuse the request of installing a new bin inside of the cricket field at St Barnabas Church based on the fact that it is the responsibility of the church to maintain.

- c) **To note bins purchased to replace missing or damaged Wiltshire Council bins under the Clerk’s delegated powers.**

None.

**282/23 Benches:**

- a) **To review location and approve installation of outstanding BRAG benches (originally destined for Hornchurch Road Public Open Space)**

As background information, the Clerk explained that as part of the BRAG (Bowerhill Residents Action Group) seating project, the council purchased two picnic benches to go inside the Hornchurch Road Public Open Space. Following complaints by residents in the area of anti-social behaviour, the council decided not to install the benches at this location, and as a consequence, they are still in storage at the council's contractors. In addition, Wiltshire Council had some picnic tables for Wildflower areas that were spare and had offered them to the parish council, which were also at the contractors. Officers had looked through correspondence with BRAG, and below are the suggested areas where the benches could go:

- On the green area behind Bowerhill Primary School - Wildflower bench
- Behind Wellington Drive - Wildflower bench
- On the green opposite Tesco Express in Bowerhill - BRAG Bench
- Next to the humped grass area on Falcon Way on the same side of the road as the Pilot Pub- BRAG Bench

Members agreed that the above locations would be suitable for the benches, and the Clerk advised that the residents in these areas would need to be consulted first as benches can be perceived as attracting anti-social behaviour.

**Recommendation:** The council approve the locations as detailed above for both the BRAG and wildflower benches pending consultation with the residents in the vicinity of the proposed locations.

- b) **To review location and approve installation of benches for Bowerhill wildflower areas, donated by Wiltshire Council**

This item was discussed as part of agenda item 13a.

- c) **To agree which parish council benches are to be “Happy to Chat” benches**

The Clerk explained that this had been an action for some time, and officers had picked it back up again. She explained that the idea of this project was to have designated benches where people who wanted to have a chat could sit to help combat loneliness and improve people’s wellbeing. It was queried whether the council had enough benches so that if people just wanted to have

a rest rather than a chat, they could still do this. Members felt that Melksham Town Council should be contacted to see whether they had gotten any further with this project, as if it were a Melksham-wide scheme, the parish should also get involved. Members felt that they needed more information on the project before making a decision. The Clerk advised that she could contact Salisbury City Council to find out how they undertook the project.

**Recommendation:** Officers to obtain more information on this project and bring back to a future meeting.

Meeting closed at 22:08 pm

Chairman, 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023