

**MINUTES of the Asset Management Committee of Melksham Without Parish  
Council held on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at Melksham Without  
Parish Council Offices (First Floor), Melksham Community Campus, Market  
Place, SN12 6ES at 7:00pm**

**Present:** Councillors John Glover (Council Chair), David Pafford (Council Vice-Chair), Alan Baines (Committee Chair) and Shona Holt.

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

**407/23 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.

The Clerk advised that she understood that Councillor Chivers may still be in hospital but had not received any apologies from him prior to this meeting. Councillor Russell had a leave of absence. It was confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

**408/23 To receive Declarations of Interest:**

Councillor Holt declared an interest in agenda item 11a as Chair of the Berryfield Village Hall Trust. Councillor Glover subsequently declared an interest in agenda items 6a and 6d as his grandson worked for the youth organisation being discussed.

**409/23 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 **5a, 5b, 5c, 6a, 6b, 6f, 7e & 8**) as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

The Clerk advised that items 5d, 6e and 9a were quotations and could be discussed as long as the contractors who had provided them were not named in the public domain.

**Resolved:** Agenda items 5a, 5b, 5c, 6a, 6b, 6f, 7e and 8 to be held in closed session for reason 3d (c) legal.

**410/23 Public Participation:**

There was one member of the public on Zoom who wished to listen to discussions on agenda items 6f and 6g relating to St Barnabas Church. Councillor Franks was

present at the meeting; however, was not a member of the Asset Management Committee and was at the meeting as an observer.

#### **411/23 Play Areas, MUGAs (Multi Use Games Area) & Public Open Spaces:**

##### **a) To consider way forward with quarterly play area inspections**

This item was held in closed session.

The Clerk explained that the contractor who undertakes quarterly play area inspections for the parish council had not provided them, or any communication, despite being given a deadline to come back and advise when this will be undertaken. She queried what members wished to do. It was noted that the last inspection was done in September, so it was now overdue.

The Clerk advised that there was no requirement for the person undertaking the quarterly inspections to be ROSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) qualified, as an independent inspection was undertaken annually. It was noted that a visual inspection of the play areas was undertaken each week but the quarterly inspection was a more in depth one and had to be written on a report. It was noted that pre covid, the parish Caretaker, who is ROSPA trained, was undertaking these inspections and could do them again. The Clerk wanted to make members aware that, although the Caretaker has been ROSPA trained, his certification has now expired but as already explained, there is no requirement for anyone undertaking this task to have this qualification. It was noted that officers found the reports useful when the contractor was undertaking this task because they would provide photos of any issues, which could then be sent to contractors if quotes were required. The report could also be sorted and tasks distributed depending on what remedial work was required. The Clerk explained that the Caretaker used to write his report on a handwritten form, which was sufficient; therefore, it was not necessarily considered that a report with photos was required. It was noted that the Allotment Warden had also undertaken the qualification, which was still valid.

Concerns were raised around whether the Caretaker would have the capacity to undertake this additional task within his contracted hours, bearing in mind that the council has taken over an additional play area since he last did this task. The Clerk advised that the Caretaker is visiting each play area every week anyway, so the additional work would only be the report, but maybe this could be more of a tick box exercise rather than a detailed written report. Members felt that the Parish Caretaker should be asked whether he would be happy to undertake the quarterly play area inspections again. If he is not happy to do this, the council will have to consider their options at a future meeting.

**Recommendation:** The council ask the Caretaker whether he would be happy to undertake the play area quarterly written inspections.

**b) To consider way forward with play area safety surfacing cleaning**

This item was held in closed session.

The parish council had agreed a quotation for the safety surfacing clean on all of its play areas and MUGA's (Multi Use Games Area) which was intended to be undertaken in the autumn of last year, ready for the winter usage, which had not been done. This is still required, as some play areas have a lot of algae on their surfaces. Members agreed that some more quotations should be obtained for this.

**Recommendation:** Officers to obtain quotations for safety surfacing cleaning on all parish play areas and MUGA's and bring back to a future meeting for consideration.

**c) To note correspondence from the Council's solicitor regarding vehicular access to Pathfinder Way Play Area and consider a way forward.**

This item was held in closed session.

The Clerk explained that the council had asked Taylor Wimpey for vehicular access to the Davey Play Area for maintenance. Taylor Wimpey's solicitors had come back to ask what size vehicles would require access and whether it would be wider than the footpath. The Clerk had gone back to say that given it was a footpath, all vehicles would be bigger, and had asked how they would access the site to do any maintenance and equipment replacement in the future if it was still their asset (as raised at a recent meeting). The parish council's solicitor is still waiting for a reply on this point. Members noted this update.

**d) To approve quotation for footpath repair around manhole cover outside of Berryfield Play Area (arising from min. 274/23a).**

It was noted that at the last Asset Management meeting in November, members tasked officers with obtaining some quotations for the footpath repair around the manhole cover outside of the play area. This was following the trip point being identified in the ROSPA play area inspection reports over the past few years, which has progressively gotten worse over time. Following the most recent report, members felt that some action now needed to be taken.

Councillor Glover highlighted that the council only currently leased the play area and queried whether the council should be asking for approval from Wiltshire Council to undertake any works of this nature. Councillor Baines felt that the parish council had an obligation as leaseholders of the play area to keep it safe, and as a trip hazard had been identified, this should be remedied. The Clerk advised that when the parish council undertakes work on leased play areas, they do let Wiltshire Council know out of courtesy anyway, so this would be no different. It was also noted that the parish council was currently in the process of taking over the freehold of the play area.

The following quotations had been received for the footpath repair:

**Quotation A:**

- To provide Method Statement/Risk Assessment, welfare unit and temporary fencing. Area approximately 6 x 8m<sup>2</sup>.
- Break out and remove existing tarmac, kerbs, and sub-base around cover to a depth of 300- 350mm. Set on new path edging kerbs on substantial concrete base.
- Top up area with Type 1.
- Supply and lay 100mm of 20mm dense base and 30mm 6mm wear course tarmac.
- Bring in screen topsoil to make edges good and seed.
- Remove waste, fencing and welfare unit.

**Total £3,360 +VAT**

**Quotation A also provided an alternative option which was as follows:**

- Replace with a concrete path around 200mm reinforced on 200mm of Type 1 and make edges good with topsoil:

**Total £2,990 + VAT**

**Quotation B**

- To remove old tarmac around manhole and back to gate
- To remove kerb edging where required and re-set to correct levels
- To supply and install cold tarmac to level and compact as required
- To remove all arisings

**Total £925 + VAT**

**Quotation C**

- Setup chapter 8 signage and guarding for safe work environment
- Excavate area and remove spoils
- Install new concrete edgings and reset inspection chamber
- Reinstate with 6mm Surface course asphalt

**Total £1,780 + VAT**

Members noted that all quotations received provided different solutions to resolve the issue with the trip point. Quotation A for example, has quoted to rebuild the whole area around the manhole cover again, whereas quotation B has quoted to make the area good. Quotation C appeared to be a mixture between the two other quotations received. Members felt that they only needed to make the area safe; therefore, the whole area around the trip point did not need to be rebuilt again. Quotation B was for a footpath repair, which members felt was the most suitable solution for this issue.

**Recommendation:** The council approve the quotation from JH Jones (quotation B) to undertake the footpath repair outside of Berryfield Play Area at a cost of £925 + VAT.

**e) To note tree limb clearance undertaken under delegated powers at Kestrel Court Play Area following storm.**

The Finance & Amenities Officer advised that, following storm Isha, some tree limbs had fallen down inside of Kestrel Court Play Area. One area of concern was that a tree branch was hanging down from one of the trees and therefore posed a safety risk. Due to the risk involved, the Caretaker cordoned off the area around the tree until any work could be undertaken. Under the Clerk's delegated powers, due to the health and safety risk to the public, approved a quotation from JH Jones of £360 + VAT to undertake the necessary works, which were undertaken the following day. It was noted that officers had contacted another tree contractor; however, they were unable to attend the site for several days to undertake the works.

Members noted this.

**f) To consider correspondence received from St Barnabas Church regarding Beanacre Play Area annual rent payments**

Councillor Baines reported that officers had received some correspondence from St Barnabas Church advising that the rent for the play area has not been increased over the years in line with the lease agreement. As per the agreement, the rent is reviewed every 5 years and should be increased. The total underpayment to the end of 2023 is £78.64, and the church have asked whether the council would be able to make payment for the shortfall. Members agreed that, as it was part of the agreement, this should be paid. It also means that in 2024, the rent for the play area will be £23.93.

**Recommendation:** The council agree to pay St Barnabas the £78.64 owed for Beanacre Play Area as per the lease agreement; and the new amount £23.93 for 2024, moving forward.

**g) To consider correspondence from St Barnabas Church requesting that the parish council cut back the play area hedge on the cricket field side**

The Clerk advised that the council had received some correspondence from St Barnabas Church requesting that the council cut back the hedge in between the play area and cricket field. They asked for the hedge to be cut back on the cricket field side as it was causing some difficulty for the cricket club. The Clerk explained that initially officers went back to the church to advise that it was their responsibility to cut back as it was on their side; however, the Church Warden had come back to say that the parish council had planted the hedge. The Clerk advised that she was not aware that the council had planted the hedge; however, this would have been before her time at the council. She explained that there was nothing in the lease about the hedge, so she would need to have a look at the paperwork around when the council took over the play area. Members agreed

that if it was the parish council who installed the hedge, it would be the council's responsibility to maintain it.

The Finance & Amenities Officer advised that the correspondence relating to the hedge come up following the recent tree works undertaken by the parish council, as the Church Warden was under the impression that the council had the play area side of the hedge trimmed. She explained that she had looked back at the schedule of works and found that no work had been undertaken on the hedge. The Clerk explained that at times the Caretaker would cut back the hedge on the play area side if the brambles were overgrowing due to it being a safety hazard inside the play area.

Members agreed to suspend standing orders so the treasurer of the church could speak on this item.

He explained that the church now has an agreement with Corsham Cricket Club to use the cricket pitch. Concerns had been raised by the church with regards to brambles from the hedge growing into the field. This is why this issue has been raised now. Councillor Glover wished to ask for clarification from the treasurer as to whether the hedge was located in the cricket field or whether it was on land leased by the parish council and was growing through to the field. The treasurer confirmed that the hedge was located in the play area, growing through the field.

The committee reconvened.

Members agreed that a suitable way forward would be to have a site visit to have a look at the hedge to better understand what the issue was. It was agreed that members of St Barnabas Church should also be invited to the site visit.

The Clerk advised that, as part of the Wessex Water community benefit to offset the interruption caused by the mains drainage scheme, they agreed to move the 5-bar gate and replace it with a pedestrian gate. The 5-bar gate is located between the boules court and play area and is used by the parish council to access the play area for maintenance. For some time, the church warden has had concerns with regard to the 5-bar gate due to its heaviness when trying to open it, as it wasn't very accessible. The idea is for the gate to be moved to the back fence, where the hedge is, which would then give parish council contractors access to the play area via the cricket field. She suggested that this could also be something that could be discussed at the site meeting. Members agreed with this and also felt that Wessex Water could be asked to pay to maintain the hedge.

Members felt that if the 5-bar gate is moved, an agreement needs to be put into place to confirm the council's maintenance access to the play area. It was felt that any correspondence sent to the church relating to the lease should also be copied to the Salisbury Diocese, as this was who the parish council's lease was with.

**Recommendation:** The council arrange a site visit at Beanacre Play Area with the church to discuss the hedge and the scheme to move the 5-bar gate.

**412/23 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 reported that there has been an issue with one of the adult teams with regards to payments. In November, they had not made payment for two of their fixtures in October, resulting in them being informed that their next match would be cancelled if payment wasn't made. The league had to be contacted, and payment was made prior to their next match. The Amenities Officer is keeping a close eye on this team as this issue seems to be a regular one, and has warned them that if payments have to be continuously chased, the council will have no choice but to request payment up front. There are no other issues to report with the other two adult teams who are making payments on time.

The Amenities Officer reported that the middle 11 aside pitch has been unplayable for most of the season due to water constantly sitting on it. This is an agenda item later on at the meeting under 6e with solutions being received to remediate this issue. This means that only one pitch is available for all hirers to use at the field. At the start of the season, to reduce the level of wear on pitches, officers asked both the Trowbridge and Chippenham leagues to not arrange two matches on the same day, which was agreed; however, cup matches are scheduled in a different way. This means that there may on some occasions be two home matches scheduled at the same time. With only one pitch available, some league matches have had to be cancelled or reversed to the away venue as cup matches take priority. This is causing some problems now, especially at this stage of the season, as some matches are being scheduled on the same day. There is also concern over the pitch due to the amount of wear being caused by the number of games that need to be played on it.

It was reported that the new moveable goal posts are working well on the field and are making a difference to the goal areas. Officers have been made aware that when teams are moving the posts to the pitch, only two people seem to be doing it, which will cause pressure on the crossbar, particularly if the ground is uneven. The Finance & Amenities Officer had contacted the contractors for some advice on this, and they have said that at a minimum, four people should be moving them at all times. An email has been sent to all teams about this, stating that at least four people must be moving the posts at one time to keep them in good working order as well as ensuring their own safety. She has also suggested that this be added to the terms and conditions which members agreed.

The Finance & Amenities Officer advised that the youth organisation had gone through a recent personnel transition. Officers had been made aware that this organisation had used one of the 11 aside adult pitches to hold an under 13s match. As per the terms of their booking, they only have access to the youth pitches and not the adult pitches. When the organisation was questioned on this, they were honest and explained that due to the transition, they were not aware that the adult pitches were not part of their booking. The council had made a decision in July last year not to allow this organisation to use the stand-alone adult 11 aside pitches as an adult team had to be turned away. Instead, the council had offered to mark an 11 aside around their 9 asides, which would be part of their booking, but no response had ever been received. As two of the fixtures for use of the 11 aside were scheduled before this meeting, they had been confirmed.

The Finance & Amenities Officer had provisionally booked the other fixtures but wanted to wait on what members thoughts were at this meeting before confirming anything else. She drew members attention to the fact that there was only one 11-aside currently available due to issues with the middle pitch. The Clerk explained that due to the bad weather, many matches have had to be postponed and are now backing up, so this needs to be considered. Discussions took place around whether an 11 aside pitch could be marked around the 9 asides which would also alleviate the issue of only having one pitch. The Finance & Amenities Officer explained that due to the fact that this organisation has a weekend blanket booking, they could well be using the 9 asides when the 11 aside is required; however, for this organisation's 11 aside matches, it is understood that this is undertaken on Sunday afternoon, so it wouldn't affect youth matches. Members felt that the adult teams should have priority over the use of the stand-alone adult 11 aside pitch, and this organisation should only be allowed to use this if the other fixtures allow.

**Recommendation:** Officers to manage the usage of the stand-alone 11 aside pitch and only allow the youth organisation to use it if other fixtures allow giving priority to the adult bookings. Costs associated with marking an additional 11 aside pitch around the two 9 asides to alleviate the pressure on the stand-alone pitch should be investigated.

#### **b) To note current debtor and consider next steps**

The Finance & Amenities Officer reported that one of the adult teams in the Chippenham and District League had withdrawn from the league. They had not paid for their final fixture or returned the changing room keys back to the council office. Officers had tried emailing and phoning the organisation without getting any response. They have sent letters to both contacts on the booking form by recorded delivery, giving a deadline for payment and keys to be returned, but this hasn't been responded to either. It was noted that the amount owed was £66 for their last fixture, and the council did hold a £50 deposit from the team. As the team had not returned the keys, the council would now have to get some more cut, which is what the deposit is for. It was queried whether the locks needed to be changed to the changing rooms if the



team still had the keys. The Clerk confirmed that they wouldn't because the pavilion had an internal door to the changing room, which was coded, so they would only be able to access the lobby area where there may be a few flags etc. She suggested that the internal door codes should be changed to ensure that the team cannot access the changing rooms. Discussions took place around recovering the debt; however, due to the costs associated with a small claims court, it was considered that it would not be beneficial to the council to go down this route to claim this money. It was felt that the league should be made aware that this team has left a bad debt.

**Recommendation 1:** The council do not go to the small claims court to recover the bad debt but inform the league that this team had not paid for their final fixture or returned changing room keys.

**Recommendation 2:** The council to purchase some replacement keys using the deposit left by the team and change the code on the internal changing room doors.

**c) To consider hire charges for moveable goal posts for training sessions.**

The Finance & Amenities Officer explained that a request had come in from an existing adult home team to use the moveable goal posts for training. They queried how much this would be, as they did not require the use of the car park or pavilion facilities. When she had looked at the schedule of charges for the sports field, while there was a schedule for the hire of the car park and toilet for training, there did not appear to be a charge set for just the hire of the goal posts. It was queried whether the team would be using a pitch to undertake their training sessions. The Finance & Amenities Officer explained that the idea was for them to keep off of the pitches to protect them for matches, and as they were movable posts, they could move to a different area each time. Members felt that a nominal charge of £10 for the hire of the goal posts would be fair. This is on the condition that the team is just using the goal posts and not the pavilion car park or pavilion facilities, as this would be a separate charge. This charge is effectively for the hire of the equipment only. Members also felt that it needed to be made clear to the team that they must keep off of the pitches for training sessions to ensure that no wear is caused to them.

**Recommendation:** The council charge £10 per session for the hire of goal posts for training on the proviso that no other pavilion facility is used and the team must keep off of the football pitches.

**d) To consider updated information obtained regarding the installation of advertising hoarding at the sports field and approve location**

At the December Full Council meeting, the council reviewed a request from Future of Football to install some advertising hoarding at the sports field, on the side closest to Portal Road. The council had some safety concerns with regard to the hoarding, in particular around the run off distance between pitch

and fencing. Prior to the Full Council meeting, officers had obtained some guidance from the FA (Football Association) website, which stated that the runoff distance should be around 5.5m (6 yards). Future of Football had measured the distance between pitch and fencing, which was 4.5m. As this was less than what the FA guidance had detailed, the council did not approve the location and suggested the organisation come up with an alternative location for consideration. When this was communicated to Future of Football, they disputed this, as no other venues had a distance of 5.5m around their pitches. It was confirmed that the intended fencing was the same as the fencing around the organisation's goal post compound, with an intended height for the hoarding of 3ft.

The Finance & Amenities Officer investigated this further and contacted the Wiltshire FA for their clarification, who advised that the 5.5m distance is the distance between touchlines for pitches that are side by side of each other. For pitches that are not next to another pitch, which would be the case in this instance, the recommended distance is a minimum of 2 m, but the Wiltshire FA has said that 3m is ideal. They advised that with things such as advertising hoarding, it is at the discretion of the council as to how much distance is felt to be safe, as the information from the FA is only guidance. Councillor Glover confirmed that at both Melksham Rugby Club and Melksham Town Football Club, the distance between the pitch and advertising was less than 5.5m. After a detailed discussion, members felt that the fence should be as close as possible to the tree line to give the maximum amount of runoff distance from the pitch.

Another action that came out of the last meeting was for officers to check with the contractors how much room they would need between the fencing and trees to be able to cut the grass. They have confirmed that they can strim the area, so the hoarding location will not cause an issue for them.

The Clerk suggested that, as the field was owned by the parish council, it may be wise to have a policy around what type of advertising is acceptable to be displayed. She explained, for example, that anything political would not be appropriate. Members felt that rather than a policy, the council should have the final say on what is appropriate to be displayed around the field. It was felt this would be much easier than trying to define at this meeting what is appropriate to be advertised at the field. It was felt that it should be made clear to Future of Football that the parish council reserves the right to control what is appropriate advertising.

The Finance & Amenities Officer had suggested in her report that members needed to think about the health and safety of any fencing being installed on the field as it was a public open space. She suggested that the council may wish to request details of the contractor who is going to install the hoarding as well as asking for a risk assessment and public liability insurance. It was confirmed that Future of Football would be arranging for the fencing to be installed at their expense; therefore, members agreed that officers should ask the questions as detailed above.

Councillor Glover queried who would be responsible if the fencing got damaged and was causing a safety risk. Members felt that, as it was the organisation that was installing the fencing, they should be responsible for maintaining it. Councillor Baines highlighted that the council does not have anything in place with this organisation for their fencing around the goal post compound. Discussions ensued around what would happen to the fencing if the organisation left the sports field or folded. The Finance & Amenities Officer explained that the council had previously agreed to put an agreement in place detailing expectations around what happens to the hoarding if the organisation no longer uses the sports field, similar to what is in place for the storage container.

Members discussed whether it would be a problem if the fencing was left at the field in the instance that the organisation folded. The committee considered that this may not be an issue because the council could use the fencing for their own advertising to generate some income for the field. Questions were also raised as to whether the council should be requesting a share of the sponsorship as it was on a field that the parish council owned. Members agreed that as the organisation was paying all of the costs associated with the fencing and it is the council's expectation that they maintain it in good order, they should be able to keep all of the income generated from the sponsorship to put back into the club. This is of the understanding that if the organisation leaves the facility, the parish council will take over the ownership of the fencing and any income generated from any advertising.

**Recommendation 1:** The council approve the location of the advertising hoarding to be installed on the portal road side of the sports field. To give the maximum amount of runoff distance between pitch and fencing it should be installed as close to the tree line as possible.

**Recommendation 2:** Officers to make clear to Future of Football that the council reserve the right to decide on what type of advertising is appropriate to be displayed around the field.

**Recommendation 3:** The council have an agreement in place with the organisation detailing that they are responsible for maintaining the fencing in good working order. In exchange the council will not request any share of the sponsorship income generated from the advertising which can be put back into the club.

**e) To approve quotation to improve the drainage on the middle football pitch**

The Finance & Amenities Officer explained that there was an issue with the middle 11 aside pitch being waterlogged for most of the season, therefore making it unplayable. She advised that the water is sitting on the pitch and is not draining away, and the recent weather hasn't helped matters. There have

been some instances where both home teams have been scheduled to play on the same day. This has caused an issue as the sports field only currently has two 11 asides marked out, one being the middle pitch, meaning that one of the home matches has either had to be cancelled or reversed. There are also concerns that, due to the amount of usage the remaining pitch has had to endure during the season, this may become worn, risking future fixtures. The Finance & Amenities Officer had contacted the ground contractors to provide a quotation for suitable solutions to the drainage problem. It was explained that the contractors had quoted for four solutions in order to find the best possible solution. The Clerk explained that officers were looking at applying for some grant money for the work, either from the Suez Community Fund or the Football Foundation.

The quotations are as follows:

**Option 1:**

- To remove bank in front of hedge approx. 60m and remove arisings from site, approx. 80 tons of material
- To mole plough at 1.8m centres from ditch into sports field approx. 50m

**£3,750.00 + VAT**

**Option 2:**

- To remove bank to allow access to ditch every 1.8m
- To mole plough at 1.8m approx. 50m into sports field
- Reinstate bank

**£ 960.00 + VAT**

**Option 3:**

- To mole plough from base of bank approx. 50m into sports field at 1.8m intervals 60m in length along hedge line

**£ 480.00 + VAT**

**Option 4:**

- To clean ditch manually and remove leaves and sediment approx. 300 deep between hedge and fence approx. 60m in length
- Place material in hedge line

**£ 960.00 + VAT**

Following queries regarding mole ploughing, Councillor Baines explained that it was a round plough on a blade that was dropped into the ground. He explained that the blade would break the soil, and the mole at the end of the blade would create a drain tunnel underground, effectively making a natural drain. It was confirmed that the tunnel would not be visible above the surface.

Queries were raised as to whether option 4 was intended to be combined with one of the other three options that had been quoted for. It was felt that if any work was undertaken, the ditch would need to be cleared as well; therefore, this needed to be clarified. Members agreed that option 2 would be the most suitable solution, and pending clarification from the contractors, if this did not include ditch clearance, option 4 to clear the ditch should also be approved as part of the works.

**Recommendation 1:** Officers to clarify with the contractors whether the first three options included ditch clearance or whether they needed to be combined with option 4 and bring back to Full Council.

**Recommendation 2:** The council approve option 2 at a cost of £960 + VAT for JH Jones to undertake the drainage work at the sports field. Pending clarification from the contractors, if this quotation does not include ditch clearance, both options (2&4) should be approved as a combined solution at a total cost of £1,920 + VAT.

**f) To note drinking water fountain leak and action taken**

The Finance & Amenities Officer advised that around three weeks ago, the Caretaker reported that there may be a leak with the water fountain. At the time, there had been a hard frost; therefore, he was not sure whether it was from this or whether there was a leak. He turned the water off to the fountain and returned the following week to investigate again, and he has confirmed that there is an internal leak. She advised members that the plumber was due to attend the site to investigate and repair the issue on Tuesday 13th February.

Members noted this.

**413/23 Allotments**

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

The Finance & Amenities Officer had compiled a report on the current allotment waiting list. It was noted that there were currently four vacancies at the allotments across both sites, and the Allotment Warden was currently in the process of contacting the next people on the waiting list. It was confirmed that all rent had now been paid for the current allotment year, and the quarterly plot inspection was due to be undertaken shortly. The report drew members' attention to an anonymous complaint that had been received about a resident of Berryfield Lane using the allotment car park for their own personal use. The Finance & Amenities Officer had spoken to the Allotment Warden, who confirmed that he had not seen or heard anything about this and would keep an eye on it. It was suggested that when the council writes to the allotment tenants, they could remind tenants about the tenancy rules around the car park use.

**Recommendation:** Officers remind tenants of the rules around the uses of the allotment car park when they are next written to.

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

The Clerk has approved one shed request on plot 16 at Briansfield under her delegated powers since the last meeting.

**c) To consider a request from an allotment holder for assistance in clearing rubbish from their allotment left from the previous tenant.**

It was reported that an allotment tenant of Berryfield has requested some help clearing their plot following rubbish left by the previous tenant. The Finance & Amenities Officer confirmed that the Allotment Warden had shown the tenant around the allotments prior to them taking on the plot, so they were aware of the rubbish on the plot before they took it on. She advised that the tenant took on the plot very late in the 2022/23 allotment year, meaning that they paid the rent in late August and paid again for the 2023/24 allotment year; however, this request came after the tenant made both payments.

While Councillor Franks was not a member of the committee, he suggested to members that the council could set a bond of £250 for when people take on plots, which would safeguard the council in the instance that they have to clear rubbish from the plot when the tenant vacates. The Clerk explained that while a bond may be a good idea, requesting £250 up front may discourage people from taking on the plot. Members discussed this in detail and did not feel that a decision on this needed to be made at this time. Members felt that if the council paid to clear the rubbish from the plot, it would set a precedent for the future so this was not an option.

The Clerk suggested that some of the items in the photo provided by the tenant were not rubbish, such as the compost bins, which could be reused by another tenant. There was also blue piping that could be used to create polytunnels, for example. Members suggested that the tenant could hold a bonfire for the wood items. This would then leave a few other items, which could be disposed of at the recycling centre. The council could also offer to help the tenant offer these items to allotment holders as the council held the contact details of all tenants so could send an email around.

**Recommendation:** The council go back to the tenant and advise that some items as identified above are not waste and could be used at the allotments by other tenants. It should be suggested that they could hold a bonfire for wood items which would only leave a minimal amount of rubbish which could be fitted in a car and taken to the recycling centre by them.

**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.**

Last year, some allotment tenants contacted the parish council to request more water troughs at Briansfield allotments. At the time, officers did obtain a cost estimate of £2,000 + VAT for the installation of two new troughs at the site; however, the council does not have any reserve funds for the allotments. It was considered by this committee that if the allotment tenants set up an association, they would be in a better position to apply for grant funding for the project. The council has gone out to consult with allotment tenants on two occasions, providing information on what an association is, etc., but there doesn't appear to be much appetite to set one up. Members felt that if the council were to agree to undertake this project, they would have to increase the allotment rent for the Briansfield tenants to cover the cost. This should be communicated to the tenants when they are written to give them an opportunity to come back to the council if they do wish for troughs to be installed.

**Recommendation:** The council to write to the allotment tenants informing them of the outcome of the consultation and explaining that if they wish for additional troughs to be installed at Briansfield allotments the rent will have to be increased to cover the cost.

**e) To note the Internal Auditors observations around the allotments farm business tenancy agreement and consider seeking formal legal advice**

Held in closed session.

The Clerk explained that the allotment farm business tenancies expired in 2016, and at the time, the council took legal advice on whether these should be renewed. The advice given was that the tenancy, if not renewed, would continue as a periodic tenancy from year to year, meaning that 12 months of written notice would have to be served by either party to end the tenancy. This was something that had come up in the latest auditor's report, which recommended that the council take some legal advice on this, as it had been some time since this advice had been received. Members did not feel that this was necessary as nothing had changed; therefore, no legal advice should be sought.

**Recommendation:** The council do not seek legal advice regarding the allotment farm business tenancies.

**f) To consider allotment rent charges for 2024/25**

The Clerk made members aware that the council had recently received a high-water bill for Briansfield allotments, which indicates that there may be a leak. This is much higher than the bill received for Berryfield and when looking back at the usage last year, it was much higher. The water supply is currently turned off for the winter, so officers are unable to determine whether there is a leak at this time. The Finance & Amenities Officer confirmed that the meter can be read and a reading was taken by the Allotment Warden when he turned the water off. She has matched this up with the reading on the bill; therefore, there's not an issue between the readings taken by the water company and the readings showing on

the meter. The Clerk confirmed that the bills are only received every six months but are something to keep an eye on.

The Clerk advised that the reason members were looking at the allotment rent for the next allotment year now was because tenants required 6 month's notice if the rent was being increased. The allotment rent was currently £35 per 5 perches plot for residents of the parish, with non parish residents paying double the residential rate. It is always difficult to estimate how much rent the council would receive during the allotment year, as it depends on how many tenants gave up plots and, in turn, how many relets there would be. Equally, it was difficult to determine how many non-residents would take over the plots, as they would be required to pay double the rent. It was also noted that the allotment year ran in two different financial years.

At budget setting, it was estimated that the total amount of income for 2024/25 would be £2,882 and the expenditure would be £2,191. The expenditure is for things such as water, grass cutting, repairs and maintenance, and the Allotment Warden's salary. The Clerk made members aware that although the council was allowed to use allotment income to reinvest in the allotments, they were not allowed to make a profit under allotment law. Members noted that the difference between the income and expenditure on the allotment account for the forthcoming financial year was a surplus of £691.00. As already discussed at this meeting, there are concerns that there may be a leak due to a recent high bill that needs to be investigated and repaired. Additionally, the cost of water charges is due to increase, as are things such as grass cutting. Bearing in mind the discussion detailed above, members felt that the allotment rent should be increased for the next allotment year, starting from 1st October 2024. The schedule of charges should be as follows:

<b>Plot sizes</b>	<b>New Rates Residents</b>	<b>New Rates Non-Residents</b>
5 perches	£40.00	£ 80.00
2.5 perches	£20.00	£ 40.00
10 perches	£80.00	£160.00
3.75 perches	£30.00	£ 60.00

Members wished for the allotment tenants to be informed that the rent increase is to cover costs associated with site maintenance and an increase in water charges. It was felt that it should be specified to tenants what their allotment rent covers so they have a better understanding of why the rent needs to be increased.

**Recommendation:** The Allotment rates should be increased to the rates detailed above as of 1st October 2024.



414/23

**Grass cutting and bin emptying: To consider grass cutting and bin emptying contract specification and approve quotation from current contractors for three-year contract.**

Held in closed session.

The Clerk advised that the three-year grass cutting and bin emptying contract had expired in the last financial year. Due to the cost of inflation at the time, the council agreed to renew the contract for another year and increase it by 10%, which was the rate of inflation. This committee had discussed the new contract from 1st April 2024 at a previous meeting and felt that, as the council received good service, they should ask for a quotation to review and decide whether to go out to tender. The Clerk advised that officers had an informal conversation with the contractor before budget setting to ascertain a budgeted figure for this service. She was advised that the increase would be around 5%; however, the quotation that has come back is more than this percentage increase. The Finance & Amenities Officer had put together a spreadsheet of comparisons between the old contracted price and the new quoted cost to determine the percentage increase, and some items, such as bin emptying, had a much higher increase. She had spoken to the contractor, and they advised that bin emptying costs had increased as well as paint for pitch marking. The Clerk queried whether the council wished to go out to tender, bearing in mind that the contracted cost for a year was getting near the tender threshold. Members felt that officers should obtain another quotation based on the current specification to compare costs.

**Recommendation:** Officers to obtain another quotation for the grass cutting and bin emptying contract.

415/23 **Bus shelters:**

**a) To approve quotation for replacement Beanacre bus shelter including the removal and disposal of asbestos roof.**

At the last Asset Management meeting, members agreed upon a specification to replace the wooden bus shelter near Westlands Lane, Beanacre. Officers were asked to obtain some quotations based on the specification and bring them back to the next asset meeting for consideration. The wooden bus shelter also has an asbestos roof; therefore, it would require removal prior to any works being undertaken. Officers had obtained some independent quotes for this element of the work from specialist asbestos contractors. In addition, two of the quotes provided for the bus shelter installation also included the removal of the asbestos roof in their quotes, as they worked closely with a company that can undertake the work. The quotations received were as follows, based on a Two-bay pitched roof shelter to include sides on both ends of the shelter:

**Quotation A:**

2 Bay 2.1mtr x 1.3mtr Full End Bus Shelter  
(includes installation)

£3,095.00 + VAT

**Extras:**

Removal & Disposal of Existing Shelter	£ 350.00 + VAT
Perch Seating per metre	£ 80.00 + VAT
Bench Seating per metre	£ 240.00 + VAT
Standard Timetable Case	£ 170.00 + VAT

**Quotation B:**

2m (2 bay) long x 1.38m long Full End Bus Shelter (includes installation)	£5,113.00 + VAT
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**Extras:**

Removal & Disposal of Existing Shelter	£ 250.00 + VAT
2m aluminium perch seat	£ 299.00 + VAT
To remove and dispose of asbestos roof from the existing wooden shelter	£1,143.00 + VAT

**Quotation C:**

2 bay full end panel shelter 2.498 x 1.417m	£4,218.08 + VAT
Shelter installation	£1,250.00 + VAT

**Total      £5,468.08 + VAT**

**Extras:**

Removal & Disposal of Existing Shelter	£ 495.00 + VAT
Asbestos roof removal	£1,680.00 + VAT

**Asbestos roof removal and disposal quotations:**

Quotation 1	£ 450.00 + VAT
Quotation 2	£ 550.00 + VAT

**Quotation 3:**

To remove and dispose of asbestos roof	£ 395.00 + VAT
To remove existing shelter	£ 125.00 + VAT

Members acknowledged that quotation C would require the council to extend the existing base as the shelter they provided a quote for was too big. It was, therefore, felt that this quotation could no longer be considered as there wasn't enough room to extend the base further.

Members discussed quotes for the removal and disposal of the shelter roof. Councillor Glover queried whether the quotation provided from quote A for the removal and disposal of the existing shelter included the removal of the asbestos roof. The Finance & Amenities Officer advised that she didn't think this included this element of the work. While the bus shelter contractors were aware of the asbestos roof, they were not asked to quote for this work themselves as it was thought that it would require a specialist contractor to do it. Some bus shelter contractors had provided quotations for this service, but

this was because they worked alongside a separate contractor who could do this rather than the bus shelter company doing this element themselves. It was felt that clarification needed to be sought from the supply of quotation A to ascertain whether the quote did include the removal of the asbestos roof.

A further concern was raised by Councillor Glover regarding separate contractors undertaking different elements of the work, especially around the removal of the existing shelter. He went on to explain that if one contractor is tasked with just removing the shell of the shelter, they may not unbolt it from the base when doing it, which could cause damage. It was felt that if the council did decide to employ two separate contractors to undertake different elements of the work, they could specify that the existing shelter must be unbolted from the base so that no damage is caused. Members looked at quotations for the new bus shelters and noted that there was a significant cost difference between quotations A and B. While there were some slight differences between the two quotations provided, there didn't appear to be anything that quotation A had omitted from their quote over what quotation B had quoted to explain this difference. Both appeared to have quoted for the same style of bus shelter and had included installation in their quotations. It was also noted that the extras on quotation B only included a perched seat, whereas quotation A provided an option for a bench seat as well.

After a robust discussion, members agreed that for the supply and installation of the bus shelter, quotation A should be approved. This should include 2m bench seating at an additional cost of £480 + VAT. It was also discussed whether a timetable was required, the Clerk explained that she would double check with Wiltshire Council to see if they supplied it. If this company has not included the removal of the asbestos roof as discussed above, quotation 3 should be approved to remove the asbestos roof as well as the existing shelter. If this is the way forward, the contractor in quotation 3 should be asked to ensure that the existing base is left in good condition so that the new shelter can be installed on.

**Recommendation 1:** The Council approve the quotation from Ace Shelters (quotation A) to supply and install a new bus shelter to also include a 2m bench seat at a total cost of £3,575.00 + VAT.

**Recommendation 2:** Officers to clarify with the contractor of quotation A whether their quote included for the removal of the asbestos roof and bring back to the Full Council meeting.

**Recommendation 3:** If quotation A does include for the removal of the asbestos roof as well as the existing shelter this should be approved at a total cost of £350 + VAT. If this quotation does not include for the asbestos roof quotation 3 should be approved to remove and dispose of the asbestos roof as well as remove the existing shelter at a total cost of £520 + VAT.

**Recommendation 4:** Officers to check with Wiltshire Council whether they provided a bus timetable case. If not, this should also be ordered with the bus shelter at an additional cost of £170 + VAT.

**b) Real time information: To note latest update following recent meeting regarding real time information and consider next steps**

It was reported that Councillors Glover and Baines, as well as the Clerk, recently attended a meeting with Wiltshire Council regarding real time information (RTI). Councillor Baines advised that Wiltshire Council's passenger transport unit has agreed to fund 50% of the cost of the installation of RTI inside bus shelters. He explained that this was also discussed at LHFIG (Local Highway and Footpath Improvement Group) and while Mitchell Drive has the available power supply, there was a new battery powered solution that may be more suitable. The new battery powered unit on the market is cheaper than the main power unit and has additional user functions. He explained that it was felt at the LHFIG meeting that the battery powered option was a much better option as it could also be fitted on bus shelters that do not have a power supply, meaning that all installations in the area would be the same. If it were decided that a bus shelter at a certain location was not required, this could be removed and put on a different shelter, for example.

The Clerk reported that there was a function on the new system where it could play audio to inform passengers when the next bus was due. She went on to explain that the unit is just clamped to the shelter or bus stop, so it is easy to install. The Clerk explained that one of the tasks for officers to do was to create a matrix listing all of the bus stops in the parish to determine which one to prioritise first for RTI. She had asked Wiltshire Council to send through the prioritisation criteria they used and the data about how many passengers are at each bus stop, which she is waiting for.

The Clerk confirmed that the council had already agreed to put RTI at the Mitchell Drive bus shelter first and will then look at all of the bus shelters to decide which others to do based on the data supplied. She advised that this is a joint project with Melksham Town Council, which is to be paid for from the 10% CIL sharing pot reserves. The other bus stop that has been agreed upon is the Market Place one. It was noted that there were two different size screens that could be purchased, which would be decided for each bus stop based on the matrix. Wiltshire Council had also queried whether the parish council wished to put RTI at Kestrel Court in the first round of this project. The clerk explained that this had come about because all shelters had to be assessed as to whether they would be suitable for RTI. This was before the new battery powered unit was put forward. In case the first option wasn't suitable, Wiltshire Council asked the council to put forward a second option to assess. Members felt that this would form part of the matrix; therefore, the shelter at Kestrel Court did not need to be done at this stage.

In terms of costs for this new unit, the supplier is Papercast, and the cost for a 23" E-Paper battery display, including audio, is £7,076.00. The Clerk queried

with members whether they would like to do both sides of Mitchell Drive. Members did not feel that it was required on both sides at this stage.

**416/23 Weed spraying: To approve quotation to undertake weed spraying around the parish**

Members reviewed a quotation provided from Complete Weed Control to undertake the first weed spraying application of the year based on the parish council's current specification. This was as follows:

- To supply and apply chemical control to paths etc Shaw Whitley Beanacre Berryfield. \*\*Exclude the stretch from the police station to the canal bridge on the old Semington Road as this is a bee route.
- To spray off linking footpaths in the residential areas of Bowerhill
- To spray the footway on the A365 past Melksham Oak Community School until you reach the turning of Redstocks
- To spot weed spray amongst planted shrubs Bowerhill Sports Pavillion & spray carpark area
- To spray in and around the bus shelters in the Parish (19no)
- To spray Allotment Carpark Berryfield- **(Spring spray only)**
- To include Bowerhill Roads **(additional cost detailed below)**
- To include industrial estate **(additional cost detailed below)**
- To spray inside of play areas Berryfield, Kestrel Court (in Bowerhill) Shaw, Hornchurch Road (in Bowerhill) and Beanacre **(additional cost detailed below)**

All areas as described above	£1,023.00
Bowerhill Roads	£ 361.00
Bowerhill industrial estate	£ 235.00
Weed control to inside of 5x play areas	£ 100.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,719.00 + VAT</b>

The Clerk explained that Councillor Keates had contacted officers to say that a resident had commented to say that the weeds were sprayed but then not removed, which is unsightly. She advised that she would imagine that if the council did wish for the weeds to be removed, the cost would be similar to the cost of spraying them, as someone would have to go back again a few weeks later to remove them. Members did not feel that it was necessary to remove the weeds because they disappeared on their own once they had been killed.

Members were happy with the quotation provided for this service and; therefore, agreed that this should be approved.

**Recommendation:** The council approve the quotation of £1,719.00 + VAT from Complete Weed Control to undertake one weed spraying application in the parish in Spring.

## 417/23 Village Halls

- a) **Berryfield Village Hall: To note Village Hall applying to the Area Board for funding towards air conditioning and consider any parish council actions.**

The Clerk advised that this was on the agenda in case the council was being asked to match fund the application. Councillor Holt confirmed that the council will not be asked to match fund the application. She explained that the trust had put in an application through the parish council's normal grant process for funds towards the acoustic panelling. They had also put applications into the Area Board and Suez Community Fund for funding towards the project.

Councillor Glover queried whether the council, as owners, had been asked permission from the Trust to install air conditioning and acoustic panelling in the hall. Councillor Holt explained that councillors as well as officers had attended a site meeting where both of these projects were being discussed, so took it as read that permission had been granted. Members agreed that the Trust should be granted permission to undertake these projects.

**Recommendation:** The parish council grant Berryfield Village Hall Trust permission to undertake air conditioning and acoustic panelling works at the village hall.

- b) **Whitley Reading Rooms: To note upcoming AGM and potential requirement for the council to insure building if a new committee is unable to be formed.**

The Clerk explained that Councillor Doel, the council's rep on the Whitley Reading Rooms committee, had reported that two out of the three officers would be stepping down in July. There is a concern that a new committee may not be formed. She explained that if a committee is unable to be formed, the building is not insured because it's the management trust that insures the building. She explained that this happened some years ago, and the parish council agreed for the Clerk to attend the AGM in the instance that a trust was unable to be formed. The council's insurers at the time agreed to underwrite the building as long as the Clerk was in attendance at the meeting. She explained that officers would help advertise the AGM to try and gain some interest in becoming members of the committee. As the council was now with another insurance provider, this would need to be double checked to ensure they would be happy to insure the building in this instance.

**Recommendation:** The council insure the Whitley Reading Room building if a committee is unable to be formed at the next AGM meeting.

**c) To note meeting arranged with local village halls.**

The Clerk explained that a meeting had been arranged with all the village halls in the area on Thursday 22nd February. An officer from the Village Hall Association has been invited to attend, as well as Richard Rogers on behalf of the area board, to talk about grant funding. The police had recently dropped into the office, so they had also been invited to come. This meeting had been set up as a one-off meeting to facilitate members from village halls meeting each other and sharing information and ideas with each other. The other aim was to potentially set up a WhatsApp group with members so that there was a means of contact if they ever had a question that another village hall could answer, etc.

**418/23 Shurnhold Fields: To receive update on the car park enhancement project**

The Clerk advised that Wiltshire Council had appointed a project manager to do the environmental agency grant to put in the bund. She was also trying to set up a meeting with the town council, Friends of Shurnhold Fields, and project manager to discuss the proposals so everyone was on the same page. The Clerk has made the town council aware that the flood prevention works are to benefit the residents of the town, so their attendance at the meeting is important as these residents will need to be written to. She did not feel that it was up to the parish council to write to them, as they weren't parish residents.

**419/23 Signage: To approve quotation for signage required in various locations around the parish.**

There were a number of signs that were required to be ordered for various locations around the parish. Officers had obtained a quotation of £300 + VAT from Kennet Signs and Display for all of the signs, including art work. Members agreed that this quotation should be approved.

**Recommendation:** The council approve the quotation of £300 + VAT from Kennet Signs and Display for signage required in various locations around the parish.

**420/23 Trees: To consider request from resident for tree planting on the copse between the road and the pedestrian/cycle way at the Spa.**

The Clerk explained that a resident had requested for some trees to be planted on the copse at the Spa to replace the ash trees that had been removed. Councillor Glover queried whether the council had some trees that needed to be planted. The Clerk advised that the council could apply to the Woodland Trust for some trees, or there are some trees that may need moving at Beverley Close, which could be moved to the copse. Wiltshire Council had agreed in principle for some trees to be planted on the copse, but the details on species and exact location would need to be confirmed. Members agreed that they would need some more information on the exact location as well as what species of trees would be required before they could make a final decision.

**Recommendation:** The council request more information from the resident on the exact location they wish for the trees to be planted and what species are required before a final decision can be made.

**421/23 To consider request from Councillor Terry Chivers for stabbing and bleed kits to be provided in the Parish**

The Clerk explained that she had contacted the police about this and asked what their view was on whether there was a need for them in rural areas like the parish or whether they were more suitable for towns and cities. They had come back to say that they would investigate and come back. Members agreed that they would wait for a reply from the police on this before making a decision.

**Recommendation:** Officers to wait for the reply from the police on whether there was a benefit to supply stabbing and bleed kits around the parish and bring back to a future meeting for discussion.

**422/23 Defibrillator: To note that the Pathfinder Way defibrillator cabinet has now been installed and receive update on the defibrillator going live with the ambulance service.**

The Finance & Amenities Officer explained that the Pathfinder Way defibrillator cabinet had now been installed and had received an update from Community Heartbeat this morning to say that the defibrillator was live on the ambulance service system. There had been some issue with the address given due to the cabinet being located on a post, which meant that it didn't have its own postcode. Instead, officers had to provide the closest postcode to the cabinet, which was for the Pathfinder Place estate behind the cabinet; however, this had now been sorted out.

**423/23 To consider uses for patio slabs now that they are not required by the Berryfield Village Hall Trust.**

The Clerk explained now that the Berryfield Village Hall Trust did not require the patio slabs; she wondered what members wished to do with them. They were currently stored outside of the Briansfield allotment shed. Members felt that they should be left at this location until they are required for things such as areas of wear inside of gateways to play areas, etc.

**Recommendation:** The council leave the patio slabs at their current location until they are required for repairs and maintenance.

**424/23 To note bins purchased to replace missing or damaged Wiltshire Council bins under the Clerk's delegated powers.**

The Clerk advised that at the last Asset Management meeting, there had been a request from a resident of Westlands Lane, Beanacre, for a bin to be installed in the layby near the substation. The request came in following it being identified that there were two bins quite close to each other opposite Tesco in Bowerhill and queries



raised as to whether one of the bins could be relocated to another area. At the Asset meeting in November, the council had agreed to this in principle as long as Wiltshire Council agreed that they would still empty the bin in a new location as part of their schedule, which had been confirmed. It was agreed that instead of moving a small dog bin, the council could purchase a new, bigger bin to install at Westlands Lane, which has now been ordered and delivered to the contractor's yard, waiting for installation. No other bins have been ordered since the last Asset Management meeting under the Clerks delegated powers.

Meeting closed at 22:06 pm

Chairman, 19<sup>th</sup> February 2024