

Swaffham Town Council

Minutes of the **Open Spaces Committee Meeting** held on **Monday 14th May 2018** at **6.30pm** in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Swaffham.

Committee Members: Cllr J Skinner (in the chair)
Cllr's R Bartram, B Bowler, C Houghton, A Thorp, S Lister, W Bensley.

Councillors: Cllr S Matthews

Deputy Town Clerk: Mrs C Smith
SCALGA rep: Mr R Trowell

1. **Apologies for Absence.**

Mr G Edwards – prior commitment
Mrs S Palmer – work commitments

2. **Declarations of interest.**

There were no declarations of interest.

3. **Elect a Chairman and Vice Chairman for the forthcoming year 2018-19**

Committee members were asked to elect a Chairman and Vice Chairman for the forthcoming year, 2018/19.

It was unanimously agreed to elect Cllr Jill Skinner as Chairman and Cllr S Lister as Vice Chairman for the forthcoming year – 2018/19.

4. **Minutes of last meeting**

The minutes of 19th March 2018 were agreed by the Committee and signed as a true record by the Chairman.

5. **Reports and/ or issues relating to the following –**

a) Recreation Ground:

- **Under Eights playground** - the Deputy Clerk confirmed the area had now been improved with the wet pour surfacing renovations. There was some damage to the top of the slide, general wear and tear this was pointed out to the Council by Swaffham Play group who use the area. The parts have been ordered and the outside team will fit them as soon as possible.
- **Fitness Equipment** – it as confirmed the Council continue to chase this up; it is believed the equipment is now in the country and the Council await a date for fitting from Play Maintain. The Deputy Clerk had told the company of her disappointment with the customer service and the effect it could have on future work.
- **Trees** – following on from the concerns raised at the last meeting the Council had called the tree specialist to look again at the trees and he had confirmed in writing that the trees did not need to be felled. Some small works were completed but these were within the original specification.
- **Concrete Bin** - the bin was smashed a couple of months ago and a replacement would cost £200. The committee asked the Deputy Clerk to source a new bin, they did not require a concrete bin.

It was agreed that the Deputy Clerk would source a new bin to replace the concrete bin, the choice was left to the office.

- **email from Mr James** – the Town Clerk had some correspondence with this gentleman before and it was agreed to take the information to the SNAP meeting, Tuesday 15th May 2018.

Initials: _____

It was agreed to report Mr James' concerns to the SNAP meeting on 15th May.

- The antisocial behaviour of young people using the rec was discussed as well as an incident in the cemetery with school children playing music. Outside team members had also reported that the teachers came into the cemetery to smoke. It was agreed that the Deputy Clerk would write to the secondary school asking them to remind everyone to be respectful in the cemetery and mindful that the recreation ground is for all to use.

It was agreed that the Deputy Clerk would write to the Nicholas Hamond Academy and ask that all be reminded to be respectful in the cemetery and mindful that the recreation ground is for all to use.

b) Allotments

SCALGA – Mr Trowell had circulated his report with the agenda and minutes for the meeting. He reported that the tracks were the best he had ever seen and only one area between, Four Acres and Shouldham Lane, required further work. On his walk round all three gates were locked and there were less than 10 allotments in a poor state. It was agreed that the clean up campaign organised by Kerry had had a good affect, encouraging tidier allotments.

There had been complaints at the allotment forum that the rat control measures were not working and the Town Clerk had agreed to check with the contractor. The Deputy Clerk would check where this was up to and share the information with Mr Trowell.

The Committee considered the proposal from Mr Horn stating that 'when matters relating to the allotments are under consideration by the Council, a nominated representative of SCALGA is made aware of these considerations with a view to seeking the best way forward which could be of benefit to either party.'

It was agreed that continuing the systems in place, SCALGA attendance at the Open Spaces committee and the joint walk round inspecting the allotments, was the best way forward. SCALGA would endeavour to make sure that there was representation at each meeting.

The wish list for the future plans for the allotments were noted and these would be considered at a future meeting. Mr Trowell would report this back to the SCALGA AGM. The committee discussed a community shed and perhaps the siting of a container or concrete garage which would be secure. The deputy clerk confirmed that planning permission would probably be necessary.

Management of the allotments

The Deputy Clerk confirmed the first of the checks had been completed on 1st May with 8 letters being sent out.

Allotment Clean-up Campaign:

As it was seen to have been a successful campaign it was hoped to keep this ongoing as standard practise. It allows tenants a reasonable time scale to make improvements.

Vacancies:

Tumbler Hill	- No Vacancies
Shouldham Lane	- 3 x half plots
Four Acres	- 1 x full plot
Magazine Field	- 1 x half plot, 2 x full plots

Issues:

The Travellers have moved on, a few thefts were reported to the office and the Police.

c) Orford Road Playing Field

It was confirmed the Town Council had been accepted by both Breckland Council and the Charity Commission as the Managing Trustee of the Orford Road Playing Field Trust.

The Council now had the legal right to manage the area and need to adhere to the Trust Deed to ensure that they don't fall foul of the Charity Commission. There is no money attached to the Trust, and no means of paying for the grounds maintenance or repairs to the play equipment at the play area. The Town Council have budgeted for the grounds maintenance and for looking after the play area, this was done from 1st April 2018.

The Town Clerk understands that a ROSPA inspection of the play equipment is being passed to the Town Council, as there are defects to repair.

In order to resolve a final legal issue, the Town Council have to meet at least once a year as the Orford Road Playing Field Trust. This will be arranged for later this year, as a draft agreement needs to be drawn up to allow the Town Council to manage the day-to-day issues on behalf of the trust, through the Open Spaces Committee and incur cost on their behalf.

Looking ahead, the Play Equipment at Orford Road is very tired, similar to that at Merryweather Road and the Oaklands, and it could be that the Council look to an improvement scheme across all three locations and see if grant funding can be obtained to revitalise these areas. All three sites have similar equipment to what was installed when the play areas were originally constructed, most equipment is therefore at least 15 years old. A realistic scheme could be worked up this year, with the aim of installation sometime in 2019.

d) The Oaklands

The new football goal posts had not been put up.

e) Merryweather Road

The work to spruce up Merryweather has been completed by Brittons and the Council made the final grant claim for £2000 to Tesco. The Deputy Clerk confirmed receipt of an email from Tesco to say the return had been passed and a payment should be received soon.

f) Cemetery & Churchyard

The Council received a query from Mrs Cross who has said that the lower branches of the trees near the graves she looks after need to be removed. Lifting the crowns will make it easier to maintain the graves and hopefully discourage the birds. This work maybe done in the autumn if considered necessary when the outside team next prune. In response to her complaints about grass cutting, the outside team reported that the strimming had been done today and the programme of maintenance would continue as usual.

g) Campingland

The recently approved Community Garden project was taking shape. A meeting the RHS designer was planned shortly. A possible renovation of the Kissing Gates was something to be looked at in the future.

h) The Antingham's

It was reported that the dog mess on the Antingham's was excessive. Unfortunately, this area is in private ownership and a dog bin could not be installed.

i) Days Field

The Mayor reported that the Town Clerk was awaiting information before this could move forward.

j) Land adjacent to Green Britain Centre

Nothing available to report

k) The Shambles

The legal work to claim adverse possession was on-going.

l) Car Event & Family Fun Day

It was reported that the organising of the event for a second year was well underway. Toilets had been ordered and a mix of craft stalls, car boots stalls, auction and caterers had been booked.

6/800 people were hoped to attend. It was suggested that the 2019 event be fully sponsored by the Council through their events budget with any profit going towards future open spaces maintenance.

6. Next meeting

Monday 30th July 2018 at 6.30pm.

Meeting Closed at 7.55pm.

Chairman.....