

IVYBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

The Minutes of the Parks and Open Spaces Committee held in the Town Hall on Tuesday 29 November at 6.45pm

Present: Cllr A Spencer (Chair)
Cllr A Rea* *departed 8pm*
Cllr T Lannin
Cllr L Budd* *arrived 7pm*

In attendance: Mr J Parsons (Town Clerk)
Mrs J Gilbert (Assistant Town Clerk)

Public participation session took place from 6.45pm to 6.55pm

PA22/027 **APOLOGIES:** Apologies were received from Cllr L Rea.

PA22/028 **INTERESTS TO BE DECLARED:** No interests were declared.

PA22/029 **PLAY AREAS:** A plan and timeline was considered for the procurement and delivery of the play area improvements now funding has been approved by Full Council.

The Town Clerk invited the committee to form a working group to facilitate the development of the play areas tender with councillor input at all stages. The Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk would be key to the working group, which could also be extended out to other councillors to assist in driving the play areas tender forwards. Cllr Hladkij had also requested to be included. The total project is over £25k therefore a full procurement process would be required. The working group did not need to be a formal group, and meetings could be held online and they would not take financial decisions. The Town Clerk advised that the South Hams Assets Officer had offered to assist with the procurement process and is very knowledgeable in this field. In addition, the Town Clerk had liaised with other parish clerks who had shared their play projects.

The aim would be for the first meeting to take place before Christmas with the officers putting together the information they had so far. The working group would gather brochures, obtain costings and work to provide a specification for the procurement process agreed by either the January or March Committee meeting. Due to elections in May the aim would be to get tender advertised by the end of April. The process could take 3-4 months with a target for works to commence in August.

It was **RESOLVED** that a working group be formed to develop the play areas tender, and to include the Town Clerk, Assistant Town Clerk, Cllr Hladkij, Cllr L Rea, Cllr Budd and Cllr Lannin who would take the

lead as Vice Chair of the Parks Committee. The working group will be opened up to any other councillors that may be interested in being involved.

PA22/030 **CYCLING IN FILHAM PARK:** Members considered allowing cycling only between the bridleway in Filham Park and the Filham Park main entrance (copy previously circulated).

The Town Clerk had been approached by the Active Travel representative for PL21 regarding the prohibition of cycling between the bridleway in Filham Park and the main entrance. This exclusion was in accordance with the Council's byelaws. However, the Town Clerk advised that this could be adjusted, as the byelaw allows the Town Council under Byelaw 5(i) to expressly permit certain classes of vehicles to or along specified areas, which can include bicycles. He suggested that a sign could be erected permitting bicycles on the stretch of path between the Filham Park main entrance and the bridleway which would link up St Peters Way to Middle Filham.

Councillors were invited to consider approval for the Town Clerk to put together a detailed resolution for Full Council to consider. There would be certain conditions imposed, and it would be permitted on a temporary basis and kept under review. The PL21 representative has indicated that linking up the cycle route would be an extremely welcome move.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk put together a detailed resolution to permit bicycles to or along the route between the bridleway track in Filham Park and the main entrance to Filham Park as marked in orange on the map in agenda item PA22/030.

PA22/031 **DRAFT BUDGET 2023-2024:** The proposed draft budget was considered for recommendation to Policy and Resources Committee (copy previously circulated).

Cllr Lannin queried the Silvermine Suite loan repayments not being included. The Town Clerk explained that this was an asset of the Council rather than an operational cost. Loans are costs within the central Council financial budget whereas most items in the revenue budget are running costs.

The play area equipment maintenance had an allocation of £4k for 2023-24 but had been included under General Maintenance. Cllr Lannin requested if the play equipment maintenance could be included on a separate line. She wished for it to be ringfenced and go into a reserve. The Town Clerk confirmed that this could be done, and that the Senior Finance Officer also recommends long-term planning and would welcome this addition. He added, however, that if there is a deficit at the end of the year and no surplus, then no money will go into reserves.

Cllr Lannin queried why there was no budget for signage. The Town Clerk advised that S106 would cover the signage for Filham Park. He could look at including this for elsewhere. A discussion took place on the types of signage for parks, for example di-bond material in wooden frames estimated cost of £350. This could be added onto the precept or change something else in the budget, which has been assumed on a similar level of activity as the current year. Costs have been kept level with grass cutting, however staff costs have risen and it is difficult to shave much off. Cllr Budd suggested securing sponsorship. The Town Clerk reminded the meeting that there had been reservations raised with respect to longevity of signs and companies' ethical backgrounds. She also suggested crowd funding. The Town Clerk responded that this needs to be for attractive projects but that signage could become an art project that would possibly attract funding.

Cllr Budd queried the rent paid by the cricket club. The Town Clerk responded that he believed the lease income for the cricket club is fixed long term. On liaising with other town and parish councils they often let their sports facilities on low and peppercorn rents for community benefit. She queried whether the building could also be used by other groups when it is empty, and be used as a community café. The Town Clerk responded that any arrangements would need to be with the Cricket Club as they hold the long-term. Cllr Budd requested to view the lease, and that the club had increased membership and their charges were not cheap. The Town Clerk confirmed that he could give Cllr Budd access to the lease. Cllr Spencer confirmed that there would be no need to involve a solicitor at this stage but this could be a next step. Cllr Lannin suggested that it would be helpful to know when leases are coming up for renewal and have an end date on the budget sheet.

Cllr Lannin noted an increase in tree surgery and queried if this was due to the ash dieback. The Town Clerk confirmed that there had been an increase in work following the tree inspection.

Cllr Budd queried if there was a contingency fund. The Town Clerk explained about the reserves.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) include a separate budget heading for play equipment maintenance;
- (ii) look at including signage in the budget;
- (iii) arrange for Cllr Budd to view the cricket club lease;
- (iv) recommend the draft budget to Policy and Resources Committee.

PA22/032 **CEMETERY FEES 2023-2024:** The proposed increase in charges were considered (copy previously circulated)

The Town Clerk advised that cremations are becoming more common than burials, and are more affordable. Unfortunately he had to

recommend to the committee the increase in cemetery fees in line with CPI September 2022. Cllr Lannin queried the possibility of hiring out the chapel. The Town Clerk responded that it was not suitable for hiring out due to its poor condition and there being no toilet facilities, however it could be promoted for uses connected with the cemetery. Cllr Budd queried if there are concessions. The Town Clerk advised that under 5's are free of charge, and all rates are concessionary to South Hams residents. The space is limited, and Plymouth residents are charged more.

It was **RESOLVED** to increase the cemetery charges in line with CPI September 2022.

PA22/033 **DWT REPORT:** The Devon Wildlife trust report, commissioned to look at habitat management on Council sites, was considered (copy previously circulated).

Cllr Lannin queried how much of the work recommended in the DWT report could be done in-house. The Town Clerk confirmed that it was a very good report which picked up a lot of key things, and a lot of the work identified was maintenance. He advised that the invasive species in Longtimber Wood does need volunteer effort, and suggested buying in support, eg from ParkLife, and they could do a volunteer session for the removal of pheasant berry. Some of the proposals are based on a 10-year cycle, and could be undertaken by the parks officers. This could be factored into the work plan with a new section on biodiversity improvements rather than under the general operation of parks.

Cllr Budd stated that the report should be publicised to make people aware that it has been done and call for volunteers to help, and would make a great feature in the iMag. The Town Clerk confirmed that there are enthusiastic groups such as the bird group, and Park Life's list of groups could be updated. Cllr A Rea suggested the recommendation for bird boxes could be a project for youth groups and Makers Mews. The Town Clerk recommended publicising extracts from the report at intervals rather than wholesale to avoid public expectation.

The Town Clerk confirmed that the scrape creation would already be covered by s106 in the masterplan and did not think it would cost a lot of money to do.

It was **RESOLVED:**

- (i) to receive and note the report;
- (ii) to publicise extracts of the report at intervals;
- (iii) for recommendations to be scheduled into the work plan.

PA22/034 **UPDATES AND INFORMATION:** Updates on parks activity and works were received (copy previously circulated).

Work Plan

The recent workloads of the parks team was reviewed. The Town Clerk informed the meeting how fortunate the Town Council is to have such an enthusiastic and hard-working team, who do a fantastic job and take pride in their work.

Masterplan

The access track had fallen behind but the Town Clerk is aiming to get this back on schedule, and is asking John Grimes to proceed with the tender. The work is covered by S106 money with the Donkey Centre contributing 25% of the cost.

Cllr Budd raised the issue of no lighting on the footpath alongside the access track, stating that the signage directs the public onto a dark, unlit path. In view of the recent reported attacks on Godwell Lane she wished to raise her concerns regarding this. The Town Clerk stated that he would investigate with the Donkey Sanctuary about power supplies. He highlighted that the remainder of the track and car park does not have lighting so a lit path would still lead to a dark place. Cllr Budd confirmed that the car park is not as dark but that the lane hedge is very high and she finds it intimidating. The Town Clerk commented that by providing lighting it can worth the other way and encourage people to loiter.

Kings Gutter

The Town Clerk has met separately with both the DNP Ranger and the PROW officer, however no solution has been found to resolve the issue with the tree stump blocking the Kings Gutter footpath. Cutting steps into the tree could create other problems as the wood could become slippery. Cllr Lannin had observed that people tend not to see it as an issue and have found another route around it. It was suggested to try Devon Rural Skills or Dartmoor Horse Loggers who may be able to assist in the removal of the stump.

It was **RESOLVED** to receive and note the above information.

Meeting ended at 8.15pm

Signed.....

Date: 12 December 2022

Public Participation Session 6.45pm – 6.55pm

Just prior to the Parks Committee meeting, the Chair and Town Clerk had held a very positive meeting with the Plymouth and District Freshwater Angling Association (PDFAA). They will be developing the proposal to facilitate using the fishing rights in Longtimber Woods by the club on a three-year lease. The club will be funding an independent survey, and three years was considered a fair amount of time to recoup the benefit of that. The club would be willing to pay for fishing rights. Cllr Lannin raised concerns over the issue of health and safety when casting as Longtimber Woods is a high usage area. The Town Clerk advised that they are an established club and have fishing rights in Plymbridge Woods which is also a busy area.

The club focus on preservation and conservation and could undertake a bank restoration project and river cleans and are not for profit, therefore any money goes into the sites and they also offer a youth pass. The survey would investigate the quality of the water, insect life and species of fish. The Town Clerk will obtain a quote for the legal costs and they can scope out what the survey will encompass.