

IVYBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

The Minutes of the Parks and Open Spaces Committee held in the Town Hall on Tuesday 27 September 2022 at 6.45pm

Present: Cllr A Spencer (Chair)
Cllr A Rea
Cllr L Rea
Cllr T Lannin

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

There was no public participation session

PA22/017 **APOLOGIES:** Apologies were received from Cllr Wilson and Cllr Budd

PA22/018 **INTERESTS TO BE DECLARED:** No interests were declared.

PA22/019 **WORK PLAN UPDATE:** The work plan was reviewed to consider any urgent or necessary changes.

The estimate of £2,500 for the painting of Woodlands Cemetery railings is not covered in the current budget however could be done in-house by the Parks team and they are keen to do this work. The committee remarked on the good job the team had done painting the bins in Fore Street. This task could be earmarked for Spring 2023.

A quote of £1900 plus VAT has been received to repair the chapel windows and replace 17 panes. The Assistant Town Clerk had sought many quotes unsuccessfully, and advised that this quote was for both chapels and also included easing the windows which are currently seized shut, and considered necessary to air the damp buildings. Cllr L Rea stated that as the Town Council is tasked to look after the chapels they ought to spend money on them, and especially if the chapel becomes used more. The Town Clerk advised that there has been no further use of the chapels since the funeral service in May. The committee confirmed they were happy to proceed with the work to the windows but would like to ensure that the replacement windows would match the existing, and also establish the length of time the work would take.

The Town Clerk confirmed that the cemetery signage had stalled, but suggested getting together with Cllr A Rea and Colourbridge to produce a design.

There is root destruction of the cemetery paths and these are checked weekly by the parks team. There has been a complaint from a member of the public where the ground is deteriorating next to their parents' grave. This is being monitored.

A tile has slipped on the chapel roof. The Town Clerk will investigate. Cllr L Rea remarked that the work plan was an excellent document, but made a suggestion that dates are provided next to updates.

The new gate to the Victoria Park play area has been installed and the parks team have repaired the damage to the fence.

The Town Clerk expressed a wish for signage in Filham Park to be consistent throughout the parks. Cllr Spencer advised that the QR code on the Longtimber Woods interpretation board directs to an out of date website.

There are sufficient benches in Filham Park and the Town Clerk would not wish to clutter the park, but suggested there is space in Victoria Park and the cemetery.

The Town Clerk had met with the DNP Ranger at Kings Gutter to try to solve the issue of the fallen tree blocking the public right of way. DNP had hoped the solution of dragging the tree by accessing farmland above however this was not possible. It has to be removed to make it a useable public footpath, and cannot be chain-sawed and would take too long to decay. The Town Council will need to pay for its removal, and DNP would be responsible for reinstating the surface of the path. DNP are going to liaise with contractors to see if a solution can be found.

MacAndrews field play area is on hold pending the results of the consultation.

Filham Park access track has fallen behind due to John Grimes consultancy change of staff and workloads at Parklife and Town Hall, but this needs to be moved on.

The new bridleway route has been surfaced and the entrance way is being worked on and hoped to be finished by the end of next week.

Cllr L Rea enquired if Orchid Avenue was being used. The Town Clerk advised that not many people know it is there. Possibly signage and reducing the hedges might help. The Parks team were going to cut down the hedge in autumn but there is resistance from some neighbours, so will try again in spring. Cllr L Rea suggested that if it is costly to maintain then is there an option to sell it? The Town Clerk was unsure if there is a covenant on the land but would investigate.

Cllr Lannin suggested that there may be an opportunity for biodiversity projects if the committee approve the ecological survey.

The Town Clerk advised that he had been unable to find plastic free signs and are still using laminated although it would be nice to have permanent signs. Cllr Lannin suggested that permanent signage could be re-used.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) receive and note the information;
- (ii) incorporate the painting of the cemetery railings in Spring 2023;
- (iii) order the chapel window repairs pending enquiries about matching glazing and labour;
- (iv) The Town Clerk and Cllr A Rea to pursue signage for the cemetery;

- (v) add revision dates into the workplan;
- (vi) investigate slipped tiles on the chapel roof;
- (vii) investigate out of date QR code on interpretation board in Longtimber Woods;
- (viii) investigate covenants on land at Orchid Avenue.

PA22/020 **VICTORIA PARK PLAY AREA:** Members considered the works to resolve the issues highlighted at the Allianz Inspection (copy previously circulated).

The Town Clerk advised that the Victoria Park play area has an annual engineering inspection. There are a number of B defects highlighted each time and these are becoming a health and safety concern. B defects indicate rectification is required, and the feedback from South Hams and the Allianz engineer is that they are dragging on.

The multi-activity unit seat rotator was recently repaired but is still not up to standard, and has excessive play. The roundabout has various issues including insufficient safety clearance and depth underneath due to the sloping surface. The cost of replacement of the roundabout was obtained from HAGS, the current supplier. A quotation of £14,500 was provided for an inclusive roundabout and rectification of the uneven ground surface. Cllr Lannin suggested that removal of these pieces of equipment may prompt responses to the play area survey. Cllr L Rea stated that if they are dangerous they should be removed. The Town Clerk proposed that they could either decide in another few months once the results of the survey are known, or opt to remove the equipment now and then wait for the results. Cllr L Rea suggested benchmarking how much it would cost to fix the equipment. The Town Clerk responded that this had been tried with the spinning seat, however the engineers replacing the bearings were not play area specialists and the standards are very specific.

The Town Clerk queried whether this is brought to the November meeting to consider the consultation, agree the budget and provide quotes for play equipment. However, it was considered not sufficient time to do all this. It was suggested that another interim official Parks Committee meeting was needed in October to look at all the quantified data from the consultation, currently there have been around 60 responses. The meeting could properly consider the way forward by narrowing down the wish list, identifying what to do regarding the roundabout and spinning unit and then obtain quotes once things have been prioritised. Cllr Spencer suggested speaking with South Hams District Council who are working on a play area project in Kingsbridge. The Town Clerk confirmed he would speak to the Assets Manager at South Hams.

Cllr L Rea enquired if there is a budget for play area equipment maintenance. The Town Clerk responded that there is only £1k allocated for Victoria Park maintenance but is not specific for play equipment. Cllr L Rea recommended that money is allocated to play

equipment maintenance when it comes to budget setting. The Town Clerk stated that there is potential to borrow money for new play equipment plus there is £70k of capital money which was earmarked for the toilets at Filham but could be used for the park.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- (i) to receive and note the Allianz inspection;
- (ii) that the Town Clerk liaises with the South Hams Assets Manager regarding play equipment provision;
- (iii) to schedule an additional Parks Committee meeting on Wednesday 19 October to review the data from the play area consultation, consider priorities for expenditure on Town Council play areas and identify any quotes that may be required for play equipment;
- (iv) to include a play area maintenance code in the forthcoming budget.

PA22/021 **TREES ON COUNCIL LAND:** Members considered the tree report and the management of trees with regard to neighbouring properties (copy previously circulated).

Cllr A Rea stated that this was a very thorough report which brought up other issues as well as trees, for example land access.

The Town Clerk advised that approximately fifteen trees needed to be felled, and the same quantity again required deadwood removal. For health and safety reasons this work needed to be done. There was £4184 in Reserves, £2k in the revenue budget and £1.5k in the Longtimber Woods budget, therefore a total of £3.5k in the revenue budget which would hopefully be enough to cover these works. The committee were happy to delegate to the Town Clerk to organise these works using the revenue budget and if necessary using Reserves.

Cllr Spencer noted the property on St Peters Way installing a gate and queried if any action was required. The Town Clerk advised that this could result in expensive legal costs and with very little outcome. Cllr Rea suggested this issue should be deferred to a future meeting and the triangular piece of land on the Penquit Road. The Town Clerk agreed suggesting a future site visit. The Assistant Town Clerk suggested that this is added into the parks team check list to maintain a record that it is regularly visited.

The Town Clerk raised the issue of oaks on Council land without TPOs. This is not an issue for most parks and open spaces however this is a concern where significant trees border property, namely MacAndrews Field and Holman Way. A neighbouring property in Rivers Close adjacent to MacAndrews Field wishes to undertake some work to a mature oak tree, however the Council's arboricultural consultant has advised that the tree is sound and healthy and not actionable. The Town Clerk has spoken with the South Hams Tree Officer who has

confirmed that councils don't normally have TPOs on trees as it is expected that they will manage them appropriately, however it would be advisable to apply for TPOs where trees neighbour private land. The TPOs are not to prevent works but to ensure that the tree management is controlled by the Local Authority, and any works to protected trees are carried out properly.

It was **RESOLVED** to

- (i) receive and note the tree report;
- (ii) delegate to the Town Clerk to arrange for recommended tree works following the tree inspection be carried out using the revenue budget and if necessary using Reserves;
- (iii) apply for Tree Protection Orders for MacAndrews Field and Holman Way where significant trees border private property;
- (iv) inform the neighbouring applicant to MacAndrews Field that the Council's arboricultural consultant has advised against any tree works to the oak due to the tree being sound and healthy, and the committee support his recommendation and object to any works being carried out.

PA22/022 **HEIGHT BARRIER AT FILHAM PARK:** Members considered an earlier decision to replace the height barrier based on the current state of the existing one.

The current height barrier is not user friendly and has health and safety implications when opened. A revised quotation was received from the best value supplier following a previous quotation provided in 2021. There was a price increase of £300 which is considered minimal, the revised quotation being £2698 plus VAT to include installation. It is not clear if this can come out of the 106 allocation but it needs to be installed as soon as possible. It will therefore be installed before the new access track is in place, but can be removed easily and reinstated when the new track is laid.

It was **RESOLVED** to proceed with the order supply and installation of the height barrier from the best value supplier at a cost of £2698 plus VAT to be taken from the Parks and Open Spaces woods reserve.

PA22/023 **HABITAT MANAGEMENT:** Members considered the proposal obtained from Devon Wildlife Consultants (copy previously circulated)

The Town Clerk stated that the consultants had been provided with maps of the Council's land and he had been pleasantly surprised at the quotation provided. He was happy to seek further quotes if the committee required him to do so. He had made enquiries through the clerks' network but was not aware of any recommendations. He also considered Devon Wildlife to be a reputable organisation. Cllr Lannin agreed that it appeared good value and suspected that the ecological quotations provided for the budget superstore would have been

considerably higher. She stated that it would be helpful to have advice on what can be done next to enhance the habitats.

The Town Clerk confirmed that the management plan would be very helpful for the parks team to create their own calendar, for example tree pruning. Cllr A Rea proposed that if the plan goes well it could be promoted to other councils in a year's time.

The committee were keen to promote climate action initiatives in addition to the steps recently taken to reduce carbon reduction in Town Council buildings through purchase of LED lighting, and this would add to the biodiversity of the parks and open spaces. The management plan would give a baseline, and the Council could base events linking into this and hold volunteering days.

It was **RESOLVED** to request Devon Wildlife Trust to produce a Habitat Management Plan at a cost of £990, and the consultancy fee to be taken out of the Parks Contractors budget.

Meeting ended at 8.25pm

Signed.....

Date: 31 October 2022