

IVYBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

The Minutes of the Parks and Open Spaces Committee held in the Town Hall on Monday 12 June 2023 at 6.45pm

Present: Cllr V Abbott
Cllr L Austen
Cllr T Lannin
Cllr S Murphy
Cllr L Rea
Cllr S Weeks
Cllr M Weeks

In attendance: Cllr A Spencer (Mayor)
Mr J Parsons (Town Clerk)
Mrs J Gilbert (Assistant Town Clerk)

PA23/001 **ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON:** Cllr L Rea was nominated and seconded as Chairperson for 2023-2024.

PA23/002 **ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRPERSON:** Cllr T Lannin was nominated and seconded as Vice-Chairperson for 2023-2024.

Public Participation took place from 6.45pm to 6.58pm

PA23/003 **APOLOGIES:** No apologies were received.

PA23/004 **INTERESTS TO BE DECLARED:** No interests were declared.

PA23/005 **WORK PLAN UPDATE:** The work plan was received (copy previously circulated).

The Chair informed the meeting that the work plan was put together a couple of years ago, and is used to progress items. It is a standing item on the agenda and a great method to generally track progress. Some items are completed and some have budgetary implications. Cllr Lannin advised that this was a fresh work plan for the new Council year and the completed tasks from the previous year have been removed. The Town Clerk stated that the ad-hoc activity from the parks team is also added in. A new battery blower and diesel pressure washer has been purchased, funded by the DCC P3 Footpaths and will also be used to maintain P3 footpaths.

The Chair informed the committee that site visits have been performed in the past which helped form part of the work plan, however these were difficult to schedule.

The Chair referred to the tree stump lodged in Kings Gutter blocking the path. It has been 18 months since it fell and people are making

their way around it and it is not feasible to remove it. The Town Clerk confirmed that although the Town Council is legally obliged to clear the path no-one can find a solution, including Dartmoor National Park and the PROW Officer. It could potentially be a job for say a team of Marines as that is the level of the challenge.

Cllr Abbott raised the issue of the overgrown bench on the corner of Exeter Road and Brook Road. He suggested that the bank with the retaining wall behind needed digging out and probably a new bench required. The Town Clerk advised that it was not within the Town Council's remit to dig out walls but would liaise with the parks team regarding maintenance of the bench. Cllr S Weeks suggested that the bench on the new bridge next to the war memorial was in a state and could do with a clean down and painting. The Assistant Town Clerk advised that the officers would need to check for lead paint first but would raise this with the parks team.

Cllr Lannin queried the planting around the memorial bench in Longtimber Woods. The Town Clerk responded that native woodland plants will be spread out but would avoid the footfall area where they could become damaged.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) receive and note the information;
- (ii) arrange site visits with the Parks Committee;
- (iii) liaise with the Parks officers regarding maintenance of benches on Exeter Road/Brook Road and the new bridge by the war memorial.

PA23/006 **UPDATES AND INFORMATION:** Updates and information were received (copy previously circulated).

DCC Visibility Splay Contract

The second visibility verge cut of the year had been completed, however the Town Clerk did not feel the quality was as good as the first cut, and is planning to do some site inspections. He was growing frustrated with Devon County Council referring any public who complain about overgrown vegetation to Ivybridge Town Council. They are misleading the public by advising them to contact the Town Council as they give money to them. This is in response to complaints outside of the visibility splay agreement and not the Town Council's responsibility.

Cllr Abbott referred to a problem where the visibility splay cut is negated by the rise in the road beyond the splay on the junction of Berkeley Way and Woolcombe Lane, and the Highways engineer needs to make a safety assessment. The Town Clerk confirmed that he had already raised this with the Highways Officer. The Town Council could not act by cutting the verge beyond the splay as this would then set a precedent for other verges in the town. Cllr Lannin proposed the committee writes a letter to Devon County Council

Highways requesting a review of the assessment due to it being an issue.

Cllr Abbott had been contacted by a groundworks company interested in doing the grounds maintenance in the future. The Town Clerk confirmed that Cllr Abbott could inform the company that there would be an opportunity to tender for this work. The tender will go out around Christmas time and the contract will commence in April next year.

Play Areas

There had been seven contractors initially interested in tendering for the play area contract. One contractor had declined to proceed any further. Minutes were taken of each site visit so everyone was able to see the same questions and answers. There were a lot of positive responses and the play area working group were complimented on the detail of the tender document. The contractors strongly advised against two zip wires due to the noise that would be created. The bid deadline is 30 June with the working group doing the initial scoring, and an expected start date of August 2023.

Woodlands Cemetery

Following a previous site visit by the Parks Committee it was agreed to write to deedholders whose plots contained items that did not comply with the Council's cemetery policy. A small number of deedholders contacted the Town Council upon receipt of the letter, the majority of these being very accepting of the letter and just seeking clarification. BBC Spotlight had since contacted the Town Clerk regarding the letters. The Town Clerk issued a statement to Spotlight advising that anyone with concerns or questions can raise these with the Town Council. The committee all agreed that Spotlight's request to film in the cemetery be refused as this is a quiet, reflective space where people come to visit loved ones, and they did not feel it was appropriate for cameras to be present.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) receive and note the information;
- (ii) write a letter to the Devon County Council Neighbourhood Traffic Officer and Cllr Roger Croad requesting a review to the visibility splay cut at the junction of Berkeley Way and Woolcombe Lane.
- (iii) inform BBC Spotlight of the Parks Committee's refusal to permit filming in the cemetery due to this being inappropriate.

The Committee are recommended to resolve to exclude the public and press for the next item as publicity could prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be discussed.

PA23/007 **FILHAM TRACK:** The Committee considered the Town Council owned track between Filham Park and Wadland Lodge (copy previously circulated).

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk visits and liaises with the owners of Wadland Lodge.

Meeting ended at 7.47pm

Signed.....

Date: 26 June 2023

DRAFT

Public Participation 6.45pm to 6.58pm

Gill Hodge, member of the Allotments Association, informed the meeting that she had been nominated to attend and speak on behalf of the Association.

The Allotments Association had been involved in a meeting with the Town Council and the skate group to discuss the plans for the new skate park. The plans were impressive, however the Allotments Association has concerns about the vehicular gate access to the allotments.

The Town Clerk advised that the Allotments Association have been reassured several times that their current access track will not be affected other than the addition of access for the Town Council and bike park operations eg accessing new Council workshop and coffee deliveries. He has taken great efforts to ensure this, and advised the architect that the plans will need to accommodate the manoeuvring of the vehicle carrying the donkey manure which would be the largest vehicle requiring access.

Gill Hodge commented that this was not how it had come across and just wanted to ensure that the allotment holders would still be able to use the access for the disabled and heavy goods etc.

Cllr Abbott enquired if there could be problems during construction. The Town Clerk responded that he would be unable to guarantee 24-hour access but would find a compromise when the contractors undertake the works.

Gill Hodge also highlighted her concerns regarding people double parking. The Town Clerk responded that the car park is going to be re-lined. Cllr L Rea enquired if this was going to be herringbone. He confirmed that this layout was not going to work, however the bike people are going to have to demonstrate how they will deter people driving by car, and there are plans underway to improve walking and cycling links.

Cllr Abbott enquired whether the old BMX site could be used as access, however the Town Clerk confirmed that this had previously been suggested but the Allotments Association had found the height difference between the two sites insurmountable.

Cllr L Rea queried with Gill Hodge if she was present to have this confirmation documented. She confirmed this to be the case requesting in writing that arrangements will stay as they currently are. Cllr Lannin commented that the Town Council has always been supportive of the allotment holders.

It was confirmed that there were to be no changes to the current vehicle access arrangements to the Filham Park allotments other than those already highlighted above by the Town Clerk. This confirmation was to be documented in the public participation session of the Parks and Open Spaces Committee minutes of 12 June 2023, and Gill Hodge, member of the Allotment Association, agreed that this written format would be acceptable.