

Detling Parish Council
Minutes of the Open Spaces Committee Meeting
held on 26th January 2021 @ 6pm by Zoom.

All present: **Cllr Finn**
 Cllr Clayton
 Cllr Bowie
 Cllr Baker-Anderson
 Tony Taylor
 Sherrie Babington – Parish Clerk

The meeting was chaired by Councillor Finn.

1. Apologies.

No apologies were received.

2. Declaration of Interests.

No interests were declared.

3. Approval of the Minutes from the previous meeting.

The minutes from the previous Open Spaces Committee meeting were circulated and approved by members. (Bowie/Clayton).

4. Matters Arising.

Maintenance of PC Gardening Equipment – Cllr Finn confirmed that the Parish Council Equipment had been serviced as agreed by the PC and the invoice had been paid.

Tree work at Old School Playing Field – Cllr Finn confirmed that the tree work in the Old School Playing Field had been completed to a satisfactory standard.

Signs – Cllr Finn stated that the signage had been ordered as agreed, with the exception of the ‘at risk’ signage, as the Insurance advice was that the PC should not display such signage.

5. Horish Wood.

a. RPP Grant

Cllr Finn confirmed that the paperwork for the grant had been processed, and the first instalment of the grant was due to be paid to the PC in January 2021.

The Clerk stated that she would look into the process for claiming the grant.

Action: Clerk to action.

b. Forest School

Cllr Finn referred members to an update report received from MVC. He stated that the Parish Council had submitted an invoice to MVC to claim its first instalment of income from the Forest School.

Members discussed how the income would be spent, it was agreed that this matter should be referred to the PC meeting to seek approval to have the income earmarked to be spent and reinvested in Horish Wood.

Recommendation: PC asked to agree to earmarking the income from Forest School to spend and reinvest in Horish Wood.

c. Maintenance Contract

Cllr Finn reported that the maintenance contract for Horish Wood was progressing well and to a satisfactory standard.

He asked for members opinions on extending the current contract for a further two-year period.

Tony Taylor stated that he was monitoring the contract on behalf of the PC and felt that the work was being undertaken to an excellent standard, he stated that he would support a two-year extension to the current contract, with a review after 2022/2023.

This was agreed by all present.

The Clerk was asked to put forward this recommendation to the next PC meeting.

Recommendation: Approval sought from the PC to extend the current contract with Medway Valley Conservation Partnership for a further two years.

Cllr Finn reported on an issue with the access trackway into the woodland. He stated that this was flooding, making it difficult for vehicles and walkers to use. Authority had been given by the PC for £200 to be spent to reinstate the track, however this had not worked, and he felt that further investment was needed to reinstate the trackway to a good standard.

This was discussed by members.

Tony Taylor spoke regarding the woodland and stated that there was a natural drainage system in the woodland that had successfully worked in the past. He suggested that this should be looked at in the first instance, he stated that MVC were due to inspect this and dig some ditches to try to assist the problem in the coming week.

Cllr Clayton agreed that the natural drainage should be explored before any further work was considered.

This was discussed and agreed by all present.

Cllr Finn stated that the slope near to the gate was slippery and he suggested that the PC should consider purchasing a large bag of wood clippings to alleviate this issue.

Cllr Bowie suggested that advice was sought from MVC regarding the correct type of wood clippings. This was agreed.

This was discussed further, and it was agreed that the Open Spaces Committee would recommend that the Parish Council agreed expenditure of £180 to purchase a large bag of wood clippings for the woodland entrance.

Recommendation: approval of expenditure up to £180 for wood clippings.

6. Old School Playing Field.

Memorial Benches – The Clerk updated members on this matter. She stated that approval had been given for the replacement of the memorial benches, these would be ordered when the delivery and installation arrangements had been finalised, and the Memorial Policy approved at the next PC meeting.

Cllr Clayton reported that the fencing had now been installed at the Old School Playing Field as approved, this had now highlighted an issue regarding the access from the main gate to the playing field gate, and he felt that a tarmaced pathway was needed. He stated that the bike rack

could also be installed on a small tarmaced area. He said that he was in the process of gathering the cost of this and would forward the details onto the Clerk.

This was discussed and it was agreed that Cllr Clayton should forward the costings to the Clerk, who would then draft a report for consideration at the next Parish Council meeting.

Action: Clerk to draft report for PC Meeting.

Cllr Finn informed the meeting that he had purchased gate springs for installation on the gates at the Playing Field to ensure that these remained closed.

Dog Fouling Signage – The Clerk confirmed that the signage had been ordered from MBC as agreed at a PC meeting.

Cllr Bowie stated that some signage was also needed in the Scragged Oak Road area of the parish, she would raise this at the next PC meeting.

7. Parish Maintenance.

Contract – Cllr Finn reported that the contract was progressing well, and he and Tony Taylor were meeting with the contractor on a monthly basis. He stated that the PC needed to consider what action it should take with the 2021/2022 contract.

This was discussed and it was agreed that Tony Taylor would liaise with Summerfields and the contract would be reviewed at the next Open Spaces Committee meeting.

Action: Agenda item for next Open Spaces Committee Meeting.

The Clerk stated that she had not yet received the signed contract from Summerfields. This was discussed and it was agreed that Cllr Finn and Tony Taylor would liaise with Jackie Summerfield regarding this matter.

Action: Cllr Finn and Tony Taylor to action.

Volunteer Update – The Clerk reported that the 2021/2022 Volunteer Agreement and Risk Assessments had been sent out to the PC Volunteers.

8. General Maintenance in the Parish.

Tony Taylor gave his maintenance report to the meeting.

9. AOB

Cllr Finn asked about the Open Spaces Budget for 2021/2022, the Clerk confirmed the budget allocations for Horish Wood and parish maintenance.

10. Date of next meeting.

23rd March 2021 @ 6pm.

Meeting closed at 7.15pm