

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE **OPEN SPACES & AMENITIES** COMMITTEE HELD IN THE **COUNCIL CHAMBER** AT DITTON COMMUNITY CENTRE ON **MONDAY 16TH FEBRUARY 2026**

PRESENT: CLLRS A WATERS (CHAIR), J COX (VICE CHAIR) N NEWMAN,
D ADLINGTON, MRS M NEWMAN, MRS L COX, MRS A THROSSELL,
A MULCUCK
MRS L FITCHETT (ADMIN ASSISTANT)

404. **OPENING OF MEETING**

The meeting was opened by the Chair at 7.35pm.

405. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None.

406. **DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Cllr Mulcuck – Special item 414 – Personal interest as he is a member of the Bowls Club.

407. **FINANCE**

(a) Financial analysis – Month 10

READ and **NOTED**.

(b) Infant School – Grounds Contract Review

RESOLVED to increase by 4%.

408. **ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD**

(a) Wild Flower Meadow for Spring (page 156 item 373c)

The Chairman summarised discussions held with the Grounds Supervisor regarding the work involved in creating a wild flower meadow. It was **NOTED** that a high powered rotavator would be required to remove the ragwort as this is toxic to animals, labour would be intensive. It would then require mowing and leaving in bales and cannot sell for animal feed due to the ragwort. It was **NOTED** that this is far harder to action than was possibly imagined. Cllr Adlington **NOTED** that there had only been a 50% success rate in the past. Cllr Mulcuck suggested another area but this has very little soil coverage. The Chairman suggested to defer this matter.

RESOLVED to defer until Novembers budget meeting.

409. **TREES & PLANTING**

(a) An update on the Bare Leaf Tree Survey

This has been completed. All the trees have been tagged and these are on the south face of each trunk.

(i) Identified tree work

The Chairman has provided an updated spreadsheet easily identifying tree work required and current tree status.

(ii) Other identified work and progress to date

It was **NOTED** that the grounds team have commenced work on those identified for maintenance. In particular it was identified that the conservation area needed a good winter clear up of brambles to allow for clear growth in spring.

(b) Memorial Tree Damage at the NRRG

It was **NOTED** that there had been serious damage to the Memorial trees in NRRG. Cllrs asked if the families had been made aware. It was **NOTED** that only one family now have contacts in the village. Cllr Cox asked if the local police had been informed. The admin assistant advised that she believed this had been shared as part of other quarry damage provided to the Police by the Clerk.

RESOLVED to investigate the 'Chairman's Allowance' to possibly purchase replacements and adequate secure surrounds to protect the trees from further damage.

(c) Conservation Area Tree's/Telegraph Cables

Two trees were identified no's 1463/1464 in the Conservation area. These are rubbing against the cables and will potentially need cutting back using a Cherry Picker. **RESOLVED** to schedule this in next year's forthcoming budget.

410. **ALLOTMENTS**Waiting list update

It was **NOTED** that the current available plots have all been filled with the final one being viewed on Thursday. There is currently now a short waiting list. It was **RESOLVED** that inspections would begin again once growing season commences April/May.

411. **QUARRY**(a) Discussion on how to initiate interest and increase visibility of the nature reserve.

The Chairman asked the committee for ideas. It was **NOTED** that Cllr Mulcuck suggested a guided walk or contacting the school. Cllr Cox suggested a nature trail or a short video to be put on the council's website. It was also suggested that KALC could be engaged to promote this.

412. **PLAYGROUNDS**

Review of 2025 Playground Equipment reports

(i) Identified work

It was **NOTED** that issues such as leaning fence posts and missing parts from outdoor gym and alerts to possible finger entrapment in gates etc have been identified and have or are being addressed.

(ii) Common themes since 2023

It was **NOTED** that the Chairman has collated a spreadsheet of common faults that repeat annually, cable ties, staples etc. This has been addressed.

RESOLVED to follow up regularly with grounds team on improvements carried out against spreadsheet.

413. **NRRG PITCH CONDITION**

It was **NOTED** that this pitch has been full of water. It was **NOTED** that this pitch has historically always had this issue. The Chairman advised that a solution would be to use a 'Slitter' however this would be expensive and due to the terms of the rental arrangement DPC would not recoup this expenditure. It was **NOTED** that Cllr Adlington suggested a grant from the Football Foundation.

RESOLVED for the Chairman to provide links for suitable grants that Ditton Minors may be able to pursue in their own right to provide pitch improvements as they have sole use of these pitches.

414. **CORRESPONDENCE**

Request for hirer to place bouncy castle on Recreation Ground by private hirers – Policy to be agreed for future hire

It was **NOTED** that occasionally this is requested and a policy would now be required going forward. It was **NOTED** that there are significant obstacles such as electricity connection, no clear power supply and access over public paths and use of public land. **RESOLVED** to decline requests in future due to there being enough suitable alternatives.

Magazine's for noting – ALLOTMENT & LEISURE GARDENER (NAS)

415. **SPECIAL ITEM**

Correspondence has been received regarding a complaint about contractor work carried out on behalf of the Bowls Club. Significant damage had been made to the ground surrounding the clubs perimeter when using a tractor and flail as the ground was extremely wet. It was **NOTED** that the tractor had churned up the quarry grass and entrance to the allotment area. Leaving hedge cuttings in piles and not removing the waste. There was also damage to the fence post in the car park and the hedge itself (which belongs to the bowls club) had been sheered back into the wood. The Chairman pointed out that the wrong tyres had been used for the work, they should have applied turf tyres.

RESOLVED to bring this to the Bowls Club committee's attention, ensure prior permission is sought in future.

It was also **NOTED** that agriculture laws prevent mechanical hedge cutting between March and August. Therefore, any such work going forward should be carried out in October in future.

In addition, it was **RESOLVED** to change the padlock to the quarry gate with immediate effect.

416. **CLOSURE**

The meeting closed at 8.17pm.

Chairman
16th March 2026

