

Balderton Parish Council

Minutes of the Amenities Committee meeting held in the Village Centre on Wednesday September 1st 2021 at 6.30pm

PRESENT Councillors Mrs Brooks (Chairman), Allen (Vice Chairman), Green, Mrs Hurst, Mrs Lee, Lynch, Mallard, Mayall B.E.M., Mrs Newstead, Newstead and Scott
with Head Groundsman Mr Brown and the Clerk.

3316 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Ms White.

3317 Declarations of Interest

Cllrs Mrs Brooks and Mrs Hurst, as serving members of Newark & Sherwood District Council, declared a personal interest to any issue relating to the District Council.

3318 Public Participation

No members of the public were present.

3319 Clerk/Chairman's Update

A printed update of ongoing issues was circulated and noted; the update is published with the minutes. The following issues were discussed from the update:

- 1. Re Minute 3308.1 Play Area Gate** The company installing the self-closing gate is now in discussion with the manufacturer as it was found to be faulty on the day it was fitted.
- 2. Re Minute 3308.2 Cemetery Issues** A notice has been drafted advising visitors that the Council reserves the right to remove any unauthorised memorial items if they are deemed to be inappropriate, or if they hinder grounds maintenance work. This will be circulated to members of the Cemetery Sub Committee for approval before permanent signage is ordered.
- 3. Re Church Wall Repairs** The Southwell Diocese has informed the Church Warden in writing, that it is assumed all boundary walls to the Churchyard belong to the Church. The Council is therefore liable for any repairs to a Church Lane property boundary wall which collapsed some years ago and has been vandalised since. Enquiries will be made with a local builder to get an idea of cost before the issue is given further discussion; members undertook to resolve this long-standing issue as quickly as possible.

3320 Playing Field Flooding

The County Council's Drainage Manager for this area has advised that he has scheduled September 15th to deploy the unit's CCTV camera to inspect the drains on Macaulay Drive adjacent to the top of the field. This may prove beneficial in identifying a possible drainage blockage on the field

3321 **Police Update**

Members gave discussion to any recent anti-social behaviour and crime issues in the village. The number of known reported incidents on the playing field seems to be down this summer when compared to last year's school holiday period; this may be due to the on-site Police monitored CCTV camera. Newark Police Inspector Charlotte Allardice has accepted an invitation to address members at the Full Council meeting on September 15th 2021.

3322 **St. Giles Churchyard**

Further discussion was given to the Church's suggestion to extend the wild flower area, to encourage flowers and insects, eventually covering much of the Churchyard. A substantial area within the Churchyard has always been left by the groundstaff to protect and encourage wildflowers in the Springtime, so this is essentially an already established practice but the Church is looking to expand on this. Some concern was expressed that other Churchyards that have done this are left looking very unkept once the flowers and grasses have gone to seed, and there is also a fire risk during dry weather. In addition, the Churchyard is sadly a target for anti-social behaviour where young people leave empty bottles and drugs paraphernalia. These items would get hidden in very long grass and create safety concerns for Council staff, along with the potential to damage machinery once deployed to cut the area back. The Clerk and Head Groundsman are scheduled to meet with the Church warden on site in a couple of weeks where these concerns will be raised.

3323 **Churchyard Tree**

The Church has asked the Council to cut back a Lime tree in the Churchyard on the corner of Church Lane and Main Street, which has caused problems with the telephone line connection to the building. The branches are too high for the Council's own staff to cut back and a local tree surgeon estimates that the cost will be in the region of £150 + VAT to lift part of the canopy to allow the phone line to be raised. Members agreed to this work in principle but clarification will be sought that the planned work will solve the problem.

3324 **Outdoor Gym Equipment**

County Councillors Lee and Smith have kindly offered to contribute to funding the cost of providing outdoor adult gym equipment on the playing field. Clarification will be sought as to the exact amount that the Councillors can contribute to help the committee decide how many pieces of equipment to initially proceed with. Installation costs will also be obtained and enquiries made to ascertain whether Council staff could install the pieces instead.

3325 **Cemetery Fees**

Members reviewed the Cemetery fees which have not been increased since April 2019. It was,

RECOMMENDED that the burial fees be increased by 25% and memorial fees rates will be increased by 10%. The burial fees for non-residents will be tripled and all of these new rates will come into effect from October 1st 2021. This will bring the Council's fees more in-line with neighbouring and similarly sized parishes.

Cllrs Mrs Newstead and Newstead left the meeting at approximately 7.45pm

3326 **Dog Fouling**

Members discussed ways to try and target those who do not clear up after their dogs. The vast majority of dog walkers are responsible, but a minority is spoiling the playing field for everyone. In many cases some owners are simply not paying attention to their pets, rather than deliberately leaving the waste. This is a long-standing problem which has been discussed many times. Some years ago, the Council considered making the field a 'Dogs on Leads' area if the problem did not improve, and this seemed to have a positive effect for quite some time. Whilst members have no real appetite to undertake this again, it may prove necessary if the situation doesn't improve. Notices will be installed to encourage more self-policing among fellow dog owners to prevent a Dogs on Leads Order being deemed necessary.

3327 **Highway Faults**

Members were invited to raise any new issues or faults to pass onto relevant authorities: No new issues were raised.

3328 **Correspondence and Information**

The following items of information/correspondence have been received and were noted:

- a) A request from a resident for additional litter bins in the Lowfield Lane and London Road areas. This falls under the jurisdiction of the District Council and it is understood that the requester has also contacted the Ward members directly.
- b) The latest Stakeholder Update from Police Inspector Allardice, advising that local priority targets set in July were to tackle anti-social behaviour, auto-crime and rogue traders.
- c) Details of funding opportunities from the District Council. The Parish and Town Council Initiative Award invites applications for their 'Safer' theme. Provision of a CCTV camera at the far end of the playing field, close to the top of the 'cinder track' could be a possible project for this scheme. Further enquiries will be made to ascertain if this project meets the funding criteria. The closing date for applications is October 15th 2021.

3329 **Future Agenda Items**

No new future agenda items were raised.

The meeting closed at approximately 7.55pm.