

Meadow Group Meeting (via Zoom) – June 05, 2020

Attendees: Jim Forrest (chair), Kathy Lyon, Beryl Harrison, Pat Searle.

The purpose of the meeting was to agree the options for the Meadow going forward. The aim was to identify the high-level options available for presentation to the Parish Council at the June meeting.

The following options were identified:

1. Stay as we are; continue to maintain the meadow (grass cutting, hedge cutting, essential tree maintenance and re-fresh of bark chips at the bases of the memorial trees). Annual cost is estimated to be £3,500 - £4,000 per annum.
2. Initiate discussions with potential contractors, including existing contractor, with a view to identifying ways of reducing current costs e.g. less frequent cutting of grass.
3. Initiate discussions on ways to develop the meadow, come up with ideas and look at how these could be delivered at a pace driven by available funding.
4. Hand the meadow back to the owner.

Option 1 requires no action on the part of the Working Group or the Parish Council. It is, however, not an option the Working Group recommends.

Option 2 makes sense. If the Meadow is in 'maintenance' mode, then the focus has to be on managing the costs. Also, should we decide to pursue option 3, costs saved could be used for further development. Options are (i) less frequent cutting (e.g. every 4 weeks), 'meadow' cut in designated areas (3-4 cuts per annum), (iii) continue with bark around trees?

Option 3 - the Meadow is a great feature of the village and enjoyed by many of our residents, young and not-so-young. It is a large space and there are a number of ways in which it could be developed. Suggestions include an area of natural meadow (as opposed to cut grass), additional tree planting in support of the environment (e.g. fruit trees, mini forest). Key considerations are development costs and ongoing maintenance. These would be key considerations for any development initiatives, including protecting whatever is put in place. We would suggest the inclusion of additional residents on the Working Group and contact with organisations (community and environmental) who might be willing to work with the Parish Council on developing the meadow.

Option 4 merits further discussion between the Parish Council (not the Working Group) and the landowner. It was not felt that the land should be returned without watertight conditions, including at minimum (i) a significant section of the meadow being maintained for the use of residents and (ii) a footpath around the existing perimeter for use by residents.

The Working Group does not recommend that Option 1 as a way forward.

The Working Group believes that options 2, 3 and 4 should be considered by the Parish Council and that there is no reason that work cannot start on each of these options immediately on approval by the Parish Council.