

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
Environment & Leisure Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
20th September 2021 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: T McMahon Chairman
E Cooper
C Copleston Substitute
Y Farrell
R Morgan
A Slough
S Thorne

Officers: Clare Evans Town Clerk
Tony Luff Head of Grounds Operations
Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services

Public: 1

Apologies: Councillors: D Dixon-Wilkinson

11750 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr D Dixon-Wilkinson (Cllr C Copleston substituted).

11751 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

A member of the public raised concerns regarding agenda item 10.

Concerns highlighted were:

- The Annual Playground Inspection Report does not cover the recreation grounds themselves including any seating within them.
- The lack of benches within Parkside Recreation Ground.
- Benches were needed close to the play area in Parkside.
- There were only two bins which, due to their age and condition, were in need of replacement.

It was advised that budget availability would be looked at for 2022/23. The member of the public confirmed that they would send in the questions posed and requested a written response. This was agreed.

11752 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

11753 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 7th June 2021.

Members received a revised copy of the minutes held on 7th June 2021.

Resolved: To confirm the revised minutes of the Environment & Leisure Committee meeting held on 7th June 2021 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

11754 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING WORKING GROUPS AND CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED THEREIN

Allotments Working Group 6th July 2021

Resolved: To receive the Minutes detailed above.

11755 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT

Members received the income and expenditure report, highlighting significant variances, for Environment & Leisure Committee to date.

Members were advised that a number of football teams had cancelled their pitch hire which had resulted in a change to the predicted income for pitch hire.

11756 HOUGHTON REGIS RANGER UPDATE REPORT

Members were updated on the Town Ranger initiative.

Members were advised that the feedback received had been extremely positive and encouraging, the app could now be downloaded from the Houghton Regis Town Council website, the app was not available from android or Apple stores as this had proven cost prohibitive.

Members discussed the most appropriate committee or working group to receive update reports on the Town Ranger initiative, it was agreed that this would be discussed at a later date and confirmed accordingly.

11757 HOUGHTON REGIS CEMETERY UPDATE REPORT

Members were updated on the current interment capacity of the cemetery. It was advised that there were approximately 30 ashes plots remaining.

Members shared positive feedback on the Garden of Remembrance received from visitors to the area.

11758 TITHE FARM ALL WEATHER UPDATE

Members were updated on the Tithe Farm Recreation Ground Sports Project.

Members were advised that the planning application had been revised to exclude the alterations to the existing pavilion due to concerns that the additional information requested (elevation plans) would delay the consideration of the application and thus have a detrimental impact on the Football Foundation grant application timescale.

Members were invited to visit a similar project in Cranfield, which was being run by Beds F.A. on behalf of the Parish Council.

Members were advised that £25,000 Community Asset Grant had been received from Central Bedfordshire Council. This was very welcomed.

11759 ANNUAL PLAYGROUND INSPECTION

Members were updated on the outcomes of the annual play area inspection.

The report had indicated that there had been two moderate risks, with all other risks reported as low or very low.

It was requested that the report be sent to Cllr McMahon and Cllr Carroll.

It was suggested that visual improvements to the play areas could be achieved by painting the fences. It was requested that the gates be painted red in contrast to the fence to support the Dementia Friendly Strategy.

Members were advised that a concern had been raised that the pathways on Parkside Recreation ground were not DDA compliant. It was confirmed that the pathways were 1.75m wide and that the DDA width was 2m. This would be further investigated and a response provided to the resident.

Members considered the need for additional benches on Parkside Recreation area, it was highlighted that this was a lengthy pathway for people to walk without an opportunity to rest partway. Members were advised that this would be put forward during the budget setting process.

The suggestion of a 'chatting bench' was raised, a bench with a sign to say that if you sat here, you were happy to chat. This initiative was designed to help tackle mental health issues, enabling people to feel less isolated.

Resolved:

- 1. To note the remedial works to address the moderate risks;**
- 2. To accept the low risks as identified and to continue monitor.**

11760 ALLOTMENTS

Members were requested to consider the following:

1. The purchase of required grounds equipment and a noticeboard
2. To have additional bases installed so that the plots can be let at half plot sizes

Members were advised quotes had been requested for bases, a response was awaited.

- Resolved: To authorise the expenditure of up to £15,000 from EMR Allotments for**
- 1. The purchase of required grounds equipment and a noticeboard**
 - 2. To have additional bases installed so that the plots can be let at half plot sizes**

11761 MACHINERY RENEWALS PROGRAMME UPDATE

Members were presented with a machinery renewals programme to aid budget considerations.

Members were advised electric equipment was a more eco-friendly way of operating wherever possible, with petrol equipment only relied upon when heavier duty equipment was necessary.

- Resolved: To support the machinery renewals programme.**

11762 DOG WASTE BAG DISPENSERS

Members were advised that CBC were offering town and parish councils two dog waste bag dispensers free of charge. CBC were requesting that the town council then tops up the dispensers as required. The cost of bags was approximately £30 for 800 bags.

Members agreed to accept this offer and gave consideration to where they should be sited. It was agreed to site at Parkside recreation Ground and Tithe Farm recreation Ground.

11763 VISION UPDATE

Members received an extract from the approved Vision 2020/2024 as it related to the work of this committee.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.14pm

Dated this 15th day of November 2021

Chairman