

Churchill Parish Council

Open Spaces & Allotments Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 21st September 2015
at Churchill Community Club at 7.30 pm.

Present: Councillors Valerie Langley, Sue List and Brenden Hill, Field 2 Key User Rep Sharon Shroeder 1 allotment plot holder and Clerk Aleana Baird.

0.20. To receive apologies for absence.

Apologies had been received from Parish Tree Wardens John Simpson & Kate Johns, Cllr Trudy Silverton and Claire France (Field 1 Key User Representative)

0.21. To receive Councillors declarations of interest.

NONE.

0.22. To confirm and sign the minutes of the Open Spaces & Allotments Committee meeting held on 22nd June 2015.

RESOLVED: that the minutes from the Open Spaces & Allotments Committee meeting held on 22nd June 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed.

0.23 Public Participation

NONE.

0.24. To receive a Tree Wardens update.

Kate Johns had applied for tree packs from the Woodland Trust and would hear at the end of the month if she has been successful. They can be used to infill losses along the allotment hedge and much can be arranged when a working party is ready to plant. Councillor Sue List would contact Kate Johns to make arrangements for this.

John Simpson was close to securing the publication of a walk (more of a general walk rather than one linked to trees of interest in Churchill) in the North Somerset Life magazine which would form the basis of a Parish Tree Walk which could be promoted in a future edition of the Tower.

0.25 To review the Terms of Reference for this now amalgamated Committee to be referred to October Full Council for agreement.

Members were satisfied with the redrafted Terms of reference and referred it to the next Full Council Meeting for approval.

0.26 To discuss the progress of communal compost/manure areas for each field.

No progress had been made to date as although some pallets had been obtained they had been used by tenants so more were now needed to create the compost areas. This had also been the case with weed suppressing material that had been obtained for covering vacant plots, left in the car park in readiness but had subsequently disappeared.

To consider if any additional cuts are required for the allotments paths before winter. One more cut mid-October was requested.

To discuss any winter work required especially to Field 2.

Councillor Sue List had drafted a list of work she was to email a copy to the Clerk.

There was a good weather forecast for the next few weeks so it was decided that the weekend of 10th & 11th October starting at 9.30 a.m. lunch provided by Councillor Sue List; it would be a working weekend at the allotments. The Clerk was to contact all tenants and remind them that under the 'Landlord' section of the tenancy it does state that 'tenants may be required to attend a site maintenance working party' and that as many people should help not just the same people. Cllr Sue List and Field 2 Rep Sharon Shroeder would organise pallets, screws etc and weed suppressing material with helpers bringing cordless drills. The Tree Wardens tools held at Cllr Valerie Langley's could also be utilised. The Clerk was to ask the Tree Wardens to carry out the removal of the trees on the back hedge of field 1 as they had the expertise to do this.

The need was highlighted that it was imperative that Field 2 was brought back into good order as in its present state people would be put off renting and this was having a significant impact on allotment income (see 0.27).

To discuss progress with the hedges within the fields (not the road fronting hedge).

No work had been carried out to date, the Clerk was to approach the Tree Wardens about the tree removal and work (see previous minuted items). There was some further work required to the field 2 side hedges but this was to be carried out in February.

0.27 To review the 2015-16 budget and to discuss and make recommendations for the allotment budget requirements for 2016-17. These recommendations will be discussed by the Finance & Personnel Committee in November before being taken to Full Council in Dec/Jan for approval.

2015-16 Budget Review. The present position, based on the 31st Aug bank balance, was after the PWLB payment at the end of September the balance in the account was £1,574.51. There were outstanding rents due of £146.25 giving a total of £1,720.76. There was an Ear Marked Reserve of £2,000 for water provision and this would mostly cover the work required by Bristol Water to connect to the mains supply in Jubilee Lane (the last quote was Oct 2014 and was £2,239.60). It was highlighted that unlike last year's rents (£3,038) the rents this year were not covering the loan payments (£896 + £146.25 = £1,042.25 – Loan payment £1,289 = shortfall £246.75 – note there are 2 loan payments per year each for the same amount).

This was due to there being quite a high number of vacant plots in field 2 (3 full plots & 5 half plots this would generate £495 per year), note Field 1 was full. There had been little expenditure over the last 18 months, £473 in 2014-15 and £395 so far this year.

The bank account for the allotments was set up with the PWLB loan money which was used for the purchase and setting up of the land for allotment use. Since then it had been functioning on rent income only with no additional funds being used from general reserves, although the Council agreed it could have an expenditure budget each year, it had not requested any funds to cover that budget.

At July Full Council it was agreed that water was installed in the allotment fields using the earmarked reserve £2,000 and this year's budget.

If the final last big project of installing water was to be achieved the Committee would need to request some funds from general reserves to cover its budget expenditure from the bank account. Members discussed what would be required and concluded that in order to cover water supply and connection and rent shortfall

and taking account of using the ear marked reserve they would request £1,200 from general reserves at the next Full Council meeting as this was still well within the funds still available under the agreed budget. It should also be noted that this took into account payments including vat which would be claimed back into the income bank account not back into the allotments account from which it will be paid unless Council agreed that it should be.

Recommendations for the allotment budget requirements for 2016-17.

Members considered that as hopefully water provision was resolved that it was in order to reduce the budget for 2016-17 as follows

5011 - Allotment Improvements - £750
 5012 - Allotment Maintenance - £750
 5010 - Allotment Loan Repayments - £2,600

1124 – Allotment Rent Income –based on the present level of tenancy £2085.00

**** Note this item was for competitive quotes and therefore confidential, the members of the public present had left the meeting by this point.**

0.28 To consider quotes for the installation of water pipes and troughs to the fields up to the water connection in Jubilee Lane by Bristol Water.

RESOLVED: that subject to Full Council agreement for the £1,200 transfer from general reserves that the quote from B2F be accepted for £1,700 ex vat (£2,040 inc vat).

0.29 Matters for information.

NONE

Open Spaces.

0.30 To discuss the specifications of the tenders for the hedge cutting and grass cutting three year contracts due for renewal 2016-17.

The Clerk advised that under financial regulations it was not necessary to use the tender process for the hedge cutting when the annual expenditure for this was only £540. Members were very satisfied with the service provided by the contractor over the past three years would instruct him in the future on presentation of a quote.

The specifications for the general grass cutting contract did not need amending. The field cutting specification was to be taken to the next Leisure Committee meeting for approval. The Clerk would have the tenders ready for the next meeting of OP & A in January 2016.

**** Note this item contained competitive quotes and therefore confidential, the members of the public present had left the meeting by this point.**

0.31 To consider quotes for work instructed from the site walkabout in August.

i) Memorial Garden hedge, silver birch crown reduction & tree on Turnpike Area.

RESOLVED: to accept the quote from Churchill Tree Care of £400

ii) Repairs to the lights bus shelter, clearance of drain at the Clock Tower and

reinstate the bench at the Budgens bus stop.

RESOLVED: to accept the quote from Back 2 Front Landscaping of £180.

iii) To renew gravel area including new edging stone around the perimeter at the War Memorial, Langford.

RESOLVED: to accept the quote from Back 2 Front Landscaping of £340.

iv) To level out and redistribute the gravel at the burial ground car park caused by flooding and usage.

RESOLVED: to accept the quote by Back 2 Front Landscaping of £180.

v) To consider competitive quotes for the resurfacing of the entrance to the burial ground – **confidential item.**

RESOLVED: to accept the quote by Back 2 Front Landscaping of £1,800

vi) To consider the options for the repair of the burial ground gates.

The Clerk had spoken to Charlie Ware regarding the gates, he had been to look at them and advised that extending the latch was one option cost £40 or to straighten the gates it would cost between £150 - £200. Members asked the Clerk to gain a quote for straightening them and providing a new latch that was easier for people to use. This was to be taken to the next meeting after the quote had been received.

0.32 Floral planting

To consider any autumn/winter planting. To receive an update on the barrels supplied for planting at Blackmoor.

The small barrels at Blackmoor were still with the resident but were to be retrieved and installed properly at the play areas in replacement of those stolen (install tarmac side). Councillor Valerie Langley asked the Committee for 4 larger barrels and new bulbs for the autumn planting of the barrels and some new bulbs for the Hand area. She was also to look into ideas for a shrub border along the fence at the Hand area.

RESOLVED: that 4 new barrels (2 for Blackmoor & 2 for Field 2) and bulbs for planting be purchased. Councillor Langley agreed to go to Rocky Mountain or Middlecombe if at all possible as they could invoice the Parish Council.

0.33 State of bins and signs

To discuss parish fingerposts and consider quotes if available for the repair of the Hilliers Lane and Lower Langford posts.

Councillor Brenden Hill was working on obtaining quotes for the replacement of the broken fingers at the Lower Langford (1) and (3) at Hilliers Lane. The Clerk was arranging to get the post at Hilliers Lane retrieved to Cllr Hill's house. If quotes were obtained before the next meeting they may be taken to next suitable Council meeting. The Clerk had spoken to a NSC officer who had advised that should we wish to put a new finger post at the lights it would have to be sited on the Bath Road grass area and he also stressed that all fingerposts should have locking bolts on the arms.

0.34 Bus Shelters

To consider any maintenance required.

There was no maintenance required other than the cast sign on the Budgens shelter was to be removed by Cllr Hill in order that the Parish Orderly can paint it easily.

0.35 To review the 2015-16 budget and discuss and make recommendations for the Open Spaces budget requirements for 2016-17. Review of how the budget is coded in the accounts. These recommendations will be discussed by the

Finance & Personnel Committee in November before being taken to Full Council in Dec/Jan for approval.

Review of Budget Coding.

Members had for some time felt the budget was set up with lots of small amounts of budget allocated to very specific items with there being no way of knowing if work would come forward under those heading during the year. The accounts package allowed for reports to be generated that would show details of precise expenditure under any given code so if a more general code was created with a larger budget members would still be able to see easily how the budget was spent under that general heading.

Members agreed that the following expenditure code headings would be retained

4200 Grass Cutting

4201 Hedge Cutting

4204 Burial Ground

4221 Dog Waste

4223 Tree Wardens.

All other existing codes expenditure would be brought under one new code titled Open Spaces Maintenance & Improvement. The Clerk would action this with accounts support at RBS (Rialtas Business Solutions provide the Council's accounts package).

Review of 2015-16 Budgets.

The Open Spaces budget after the evening's expenditure (£2,900), other committed expenditure (£565) and the remaining two quarters of grass cutting invoices (£2,398) had £4,000 remaining to spend and an Ear Marked Reserve of £1,200 for use to finish work at the Hand area. It was envisaged that with the finger post work, further work to the Hand area and a quote still to be received for completing the Clock Tower path in Breedon gravel that they would be able use most of their budget, but still retain a buffer for acting on unforeseen events.

Recommendations for Open Spaces Budget Requirements 2016-17

The Committee wished to recommend a budget as follows

4200 Grass Cutting £6,500

4201 Hedge Cutting £650

4204 Burial Ground £300

4221 Dog Waste £2880

4223 Tree Wardens £500

New general code Open Spaces Maintenance & Improvements £5,670

Budget Total £16,500

The Committee planned to progress with footpath/way improvements in 2016-17 as well as to continue to maintain and improve areas under their responsibility to a high standard.

0.36 Matters for information.

NONE.

The meeting closed at 9.25 pm

