

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RECREATION & AMENITIES COMMITTEE OF
MARTLESHAM PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 10th MARCH 2021 virtually via Zoom.**

Present: Mr C Blundell (Committee), Mr L Burrows (ex officio), Mrs H Davey (Committee), Mr M Irwin (Committee), Mr I O'Brien Baker (Chairman), Mr R Staines (Committee), Mr E Thompson (Committee), Mr M Williamson (ex officio).

There were four members of the public. They were:

Prue Denton & Andrea Wedgwood, Pavilion Play Area Sub-Committee. Aldwyn Jones, Chairman of the Pavilion Management Committee (Contributors to item 7.1 Harry Higgins Play Area refurbishments) Zita Kingsbury, Volunteer Inspector for the bike trails (Contributor to item 7.2 Management of bike trails proposal)

In attendance: Susan Robertson (Clerk), Diane Linsley (Deputy Clerk).

1. Apologies: Mr Blundell had informed the Clerk that he would be delayed to the meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

2.1 Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI): None declared.

2.2 Local non-Pecuniary Interest (LNPI): Mr Irwin, Parish Council representative on Pavilion Management Committee - item 7.1 Harry Higgins Play Area refurbishments.

3. Actions from last Meeting

Actions completed or on agenda.

4. PUBLIC FORUM

4.1 To allow members of the public to address business on the agenda

Contributions were made by the public under item 7.1 Harry Higgins Play Area refurbishments and item 7.2 Management of bike trails proposal.

4.2 Any issues raised by the public

See items 7.1 Harry Higgins Play Area refurbishments and item 7.2 Management of bike trails proposal.

Items for consideration

5. Playground inspections and risk assessments

5.1 Combined report including Record of decisions made by the Clerk between meetings, as required by the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 CP filed in the office together with these minutes.

DECISION R2021/3a: To pay, in full, the cost of removing the trip hazard on the path leading to the Harry Higgins Play Area of **£80.00 + VAT**. The work will involve breaking up the existing concrete and re levelling new concrete. Agreed.

To incorporate improvements to the path leading to Kronjis Piece Play Area into the work planned to resurface the adjacent track and carpark which form part of the management plan for the Recreation Ground. Agreed.

DECISION R2021/3b: To ratify the Record of decisions made by the Clerk between meetings and taken in the exceptional circumstances of the COVID-19 crisis, for March, as required by the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014. Report filed in the office together with these minutes. Agreed.

5.2 Annual inspection report 2020 – Signage CP filed in the office together with these minutes.

DECISION R2021/3c: To use the report on signage as the basis to compiling a list of the essential signs needed at the Centenary Play Space, Kronjis Piece, the Recreation Ground, the Jubilee Play Space, bike trails and the Community Orchard and include details of the text required and costs involved. Agreed.

6. Sports Fund Working Group (SFWG)

6.1 Update on progress of the SFWG project at the Jubilee Playspace CR1 & CPs – meeting notes 22.01.21 & 26.02.21 & consultation details filed in the office together with these minutes.

DECISION R2021/3d: To ratify the actions taken by the Sports Fund Working Group detailed in the notes of the meetings held on 22.01.21 and 26.02.21. Agreed.

7. Sites

7.1 Harry Higgins Play Area refurbishments & meeting held on 23.02.21 with R&AC Chairman, volunteer inspectors and Pavilion Play Area Sub-Committee CP from the Pavilion Play Area Sub-Committee filed in the office together with these minutes.

Approve the purchase of the items and surfacing & consider maintenance.

The Chairman stressed the need to involve experts in the decision to retain the 'old car' play equipment. Prue Denton and Aldwyn Jones reported that, to ensure the old car passed safety standards and was covered by the PMC insurance, Wicksteed had advised that the car had to remain in its current position and not be modified. The PMC's insurers have no problem with insuring the car if the Wicksteed conditions are met.

Prue Denton showed the Committee the new layout of the play equipment, altered to accommodate the old car, using the shared facility on Zoom. The PMC had made the recent decision to retain the car because of public demand. Many local people have a personal attachment to it because of their happy memories of playing on it as children and/or experiencing their children/grandchildren enjoying playing on it.

Any extra cost e.g. the cost of refreshing the old car to be paid for by the PMC.

Prue Denton to ask Wicksteed if volunteer inspectors would be allowed to observe the post installation check to aid future weekly inspections. Agreed.

DECISION R2021/3e: To approve the purchase of the play equipment and new safety surfacing for the Harry Higgins Play Area as presented by the Pavilion Play Area Sub Committee and agree to continue to maintain the play area after the refurbishments have been successfully carried out.

Agreed.

7.2 Management of bike trails proposal CR2 & CPs – notes of meeting 27.01.21 and sketch plan filed in the office together with the minutes.

The expertise and experience of a management group would oversee the safe development of a set of jumps for older and younger users and would be similar to the original Operational Management Team set up when the jumps were first created. This management group would enable changes to be made and would replace the current 'set design' which is less able to accommodate modifications.

Zita Kingsbury was aware of a lot of enthusiasm for the bike trails and was keen to see safe changes made to the jumps. The new approach would hopefully encourage more people to get involved.

DECISION R2021/3f: To progress the establishment of a new management team for the bike trails and allow the safe modification of the jumps to take place, noting that the safety of the bike trails is paramount, and an inspection regime will be kept in place. Agreed.

Mr Blundell joined the meeting.

Zita Kingsbury left the meeting.

7.3 Recreation Ground - Consultation results & priorities CPs - Consultation results & priorities and notes of meeting 25.02.21 filed in the office together with the minutes.

Mr Irwin presented the results of the consultation. The Committee addressed the responses to the comments made for each of the questions in turn.

Question 5b: Although most of the comments made were in favour of retaining the fence around the football pitch (27) the response of the Steering Group is to remove it for the reasons set out in the Survey Results report as follows:

Q5b Screening and tidied fence lines, comments on fence around football pitch 9/1/3/27	
In favour of removal	Response
Encourages dog owners to use the pitch, leading to mess and disease problems	The mess is become a serious hazard to other users of the pitch. The clearing up operation before every organised match can be played is

	in itself a health hazard. It has also been a hazard for the council's contractors when working on the pitch. Some dog owners hinder the work of contractors by not controlling their dogs
It could be a hazard during games if people fall/collide with it	It is sufficiently far from the playing area to fulfil FA regulations and is not considered a hazard
Temporary fences could be used by football club when in use	The MYFC advise this is unnecessary and expensive
In favour of retaining	Response
To fulfil its original purpose of keeping out rabbits, health and safety issue	This risk has to be considered in relation to other risks associated with the fence
Keeps potential intruders off pitch during games (parents, other children and dogs). Stops balls going astray	MYFC advises this is not a problem
Used widely for puppy and dog training and exercising, lack of alternative local facilities. Comment that never used for football	For health and safety reasons and liability considerations the PC has to make the choice between a facility which attracts so many dog owners the football pitch becomes unusable or maintaining it as a football pitch.
Provides a safe environment for dogs not on leash away from children, picnic area and traffic	To fence off the area for dog use only is arguably unlawful as the trust deed requires all beneficiaries must have access to the land. Strong anecdotal evidence exists that dog owners are willing to travel considerable distances to access enclosed facilities for dogs, which already exist at Sutton Heath. This wide catchment area also suggests that significant numbers of users will come from outside the area, so again it would be debatable whether such a facility can be provided
Opportunity for dog owners to socialise	
Stops anti-social behaviour by drivers	The bunds nearer the entrance will be strengthened and we are consulting the police on reducing ASB of all types
Rebuild and strengthen to prevent use by dog owners	This would be expensive to build and maintain
Other comments	Response
Separate fenced area for dogs, possibly bookable and chargeable	There are still health and hygiene problems associated with such areas. The administrative burden would be too significant to be met by a level of charges which people would pay. Unless 100% compliance was achieved this would not solve the problems
Remove unless football club wants it retained	The football club does not want the pitch to be retained
Permanent goal posts needed with nets	MYFC advise this has been tried, but it causes too much wear and tear in the goal mouths
Perimeter track around pitch needed for running	As this would be a major and ongoing expense and only requested by one person we do not feel we can go ahead with this
The fence discourages use by dog owners	In practice the opposite is the case

fence.

The Committee fully supports the removal of the fence around the football pitch for the reasons given in the list of responses under Q5b of the report. Agreed.

RECOMMENDATION R2021/3a: To support and ratify the responses of the Kronjis Piece & Recreation Ground Steering Group to the comments submitted to the Recreation Ground Consultation (January 2021). Agreed.

The agreed responses to be published via the PC's website and Facebook page and the Martlesham Monthly newsletter. Agreed.

RECOMMENDATION R2021/3b: To agree the Action Plan for the Recreation Ground and Kronjis Piece resulting from the Consultation which took place in January 2021. Agreed.

Mr Irwin was thanked for his work on collating the Consultation results. Agreed.

7.4 Forbes Spinney – watering new trees CR3

Mr Burrows reported that the nine trees planted on the Recreation Ground included eight trees planted for Forbes Spinney and an oak planted by the river.

Ros Jones to be asked if she knows of anyone locally who could help. Agreed.

A request for volunteers to be placed on the PC's Facebook page and website. Agreed.

7.5 Tree planting on Martlesham Common LNR or new memorial tree

This item was not considered as additional information had not been received.

Mr Irwin suggested that in future if planting trees were not permissible, a donation to help manage Martlesham Common, could be put forward.

7.6 Request from Martlesham Youth Football Club (MYFC) for possible sites to play football

The Committee to keep a look out for any sites that might be suitable to play football on and inform MYFC.

MYFC to be asked what the target age group is, and the size of pitch needed.

The **Clerk** to suggest that MYFC approach Milsom Kesgrave Hall to see if they have any suitable space available.

8. Amenities

8.1 Carol Avenue planting project – removal of dead tree CR4

Cllr Blundell to enquire whether the East Suffolk Council can help with the removal of the dead tree from Carol Avenue. Agreed.

8.2 Request to plant bulbs on another verge on Carol Avenue CR5

Consider request noting fee of £100 for SCC Highways licence

The **Clerk** to enquire whether it is possible to extend the new SCC Highways Licence to cultivate in the highway (Licence No. 287896) for Carol Avenue, to include the planting of bulbs on the verge in front of homes No 9-13. Agreed.

The Clerk urged caution when considering planting on verges and on land not owned by the PC due to the cost of a licence and the long-term responsibility for maintenance of trees etc planted.

The Clerk highlighted that Martlesham Climate Action were planning on engaging with the Principal Authorities for a simpler approach to planting trees on the highway which doesn't incur a charge for a licence.

The possibility of providing a MPC grant to cover the cost of the £100 licence fee was discussed.

8.3 Grit Bin Policy & refilling grit bins update CPs filed in the office together with the minutes.

RECOMMENDATION R2021/3c: To agree that the Provision of Grit Bins Policy remains unchanged as follows:

Provision of Grit Bins Policy

- No grit bins to be installed in the hamlets off Eagle Way.
- The Recreation & Amenities Committee (R&AC) will not actively seek to place grit bins but respond to requests from residents.

- On receipt of a request the R&AC will decide in principle if the expense can be justified.
- If considered justified those making the request must take responsibility for completing part of the Suffolk Highways (on behalf of Suffolk County Council) application form and put in place mechanisms to meet the initial and ongoing SCC criteria. They must also name the contact person who Martlesham Parish Council will deal with. Information provided by those requesting a grit bin will be dealt with as per the Parish Council's General Privacy Notice, the details of which are available on the Parish Council's website.
- The form and details of arrangements must be passed to the R&AC and if the initial and ongoing criteria are met the request will be sent by the PC to SCC using the SCC's online highways 'report it' tool.
- Members of the public to be made aware that grit bin request forms are submitted to Suffolk Highways to assess by 31st August and where all criteria are met, approval will be granted within a 4 week period.
- Installation will be arranged by the PC following its usual procedures.
- If at any time the R&AC find the group is failing to meet the SCC ongoing criteria the SCC will be informed.

Agreed.

To note that only Parish Councils can request that grit bins are refilled using SCC's online Highways Reporting Tool and not, as previously was the case, the volunteers insured to spread the grit.

Noted.

8.4 Grit bin request on Mill Heath

This item was not considered as further information had not been received.

9. Finance

9.1 Pending expenditure

There were no pending expenditure invoices to report.

The **Clerk** to find out if payment of the play equipment for the Harry Higgins Play Area is done in stages or on completion of the installation of the equipment.

9.2 Income & Expenditure report CP filed in the office together with the minutes. Noted.

9.3 Review end of year budget & expenditure CPs filed in the office together with the minutes. Noted.

The Clerk reported in an email circulated before the meeting that:

“.....to date we have spent 85.3%, £30,655 of the R&AC budget of £35,940. I do anticipate further expenditure during the month on land maintenance and play area repairs. In addition, I've not yet received February invoices. I'm afraid that I will not have the time before the meeting to provide an estimate of what we can expect the final expenditure to be.”

Items for noting

10. Wildflower Project

10.1 Verges managed by ESC update CR6 Noted.

10.2 Improved management of Mill Heath Buffer Zone

Meeting to be arranged with interested parties. Ongoing.

11. Martlesham Climate Action (MCA)

11.1 Notes of the meeting held on 15.02.21 CP filed in the office together with the minutes. Noted.

12. Sites

12.1 Martlesham Common LNR update CR7 Noted.

12.2 Portal Woodlands Conservation Group (PWCG) update CR8 Noted.

12.3 Community Orchard Working Group update & Memorandum of Understanding CP – notes of meetings 19.01.21 & 23.02.21.

It was noted that the MOU was accepted by the Full Council (RESOLUTION C2021/3f and RESOLUTION C2021/3g). Noted.

It was noted that May is the earliest time to order trees that will be planted in the autumn. Noted.

12.4 Carol Avenue – tree and bulb planting update CR9 Noted.

12.5 Opening up of Trim Trail from 29th March 2021 due to lifting of 3rd lockdown restrictions CR10 Noted.

13. Amenities

13.1 Request for larger bin on Top St by Village Hall and bus stop CR11 Noted.

DECISION R2019/11h: To support the installation of a larger bin on Top Street by the Village Hall and bus stop if the District Council agrees that there is sufficient space for one.

13.2 Talking bench in front of Community Hall

To note that the bench has been delivered to the land maintenance contractor who aims to install it soon. Noted.

14. Signs

14.1 'Do not park in front of gate' for the green gate on Kronji's Piece (at Bowls Club request) Temporary sign in place. Recreation Ground Steering Group is addressing signage. Noted.

15. Martlesham Wombles

15.1 Any update? CP filed in the office together with the minutes. Noted.

The Clerk reported that she had received the signed volunteer forms delivered to the office by Ms Jones. The group was doing well and growing in numbers and covering a wider area of the parish.

16. Working with volunteers

16.1 Development of policies & procedures Ongoing.

17. August Workshop

17.1 Response to the Climate Emergency

Martlesham Climate Action is planning the content for the August Workshop. Noted.

18. Annual Review

18.1 Annual Review March 2021 CP filed in the office together with the minutes. Noted.

The May R&AC meeting to review the Land Maintenance Contract. Agreed.

19. Community Partnership

19.1 Environmental Care

It was noted that ESC's Community Partnership is focusing on Environmental Care. Dave Green and the Deputy Clerk attended the first workshop 24.02.21. Data arising from the workshop is currently being analysed.

At 9.30pm the following decision was taken:

DECISION R2021/3g: To suspend Standing Order 3w to complete all business on the agenda.

Agreed.

20. Items for Friends of the Common webpage and summing up phrase for Facebook

20.1 List items & suggest phrase

James Baker's update (CR7).

21. Newsletter items for May 2021

21.1 Suggestions for inclusion

James Baker's update (CR7), results of the Recreation Ground Survey.

22. Items for consideration at the next R&AC meeting

22.1 There were none.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 9.36pm

M. Williamson

Chairman, 07 April 2021