

**Washington Parish Council**

**Open Spaces (Recreation, Allotments, Footpaths and Conservation) Committee Meeting**

**Draft MINUTES of the Committee Meeting held on Monday, held on 15th July, 2019 at Washington Village Hall**

 **PRESENT:** Cllr S Buddell, Cllr J DeLittle, Cllr D Glithero, Cllr A Lisher, Cllr G Lockerbie (Chairman),

**ALSO:** Zoe Savill, Clerk to the Council

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**: **0**

**ABSENT:** 0

**The meeting was opened at: 19:40 hours**

1. **Receive apologies for absence**

None received

1. **Declaration of interest and Dispensations**.

None declared.

1. **Approval of the Minutes of the last Open Spaces (Recreation, Allotments and Open Spaces meeting**

The minutes of the meeting on 17th June, 2019 were **AGREED** as a correct record and **duly signed** by the Chairman.

1. **Public Speaking**

None

1. **Matters arising from previous minutes** (For information only)

*To report any matters arising from the previous minutes.*

* Mr Paul Neary, South East NAS Mentor of the National Allotment Society advised OSRA members regarding tenancy management and rent reviews, at a meeting on 19th July.
* The Heath Common Association has declined to contribute towards replacing the damaged concrete bollards by Vera’s Shelter as it does not fall within its remit.

The clerk advised that she had sought a confirmed quotation from Mr Trott for the installation of the bollards which the committee agreed at its last meeting.

**RESOLVED** to defer a decision pending the quotation.

* Applications submitted to renew registration of Washington

Recreation Ground and the Allotment Garden on the district asset register.

Clerk awaiting supporting information from the Washington Village Memorial Hall to renew its registration on the register before deadline on 23 July 2019.

1. **Allotments**

# Allotment Notice of Termination

 Plot 7 - Notice to Quit served 2 July 2019 - Council repossession on 31 July 2019.

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 **Allotment Tenancy Applications**

 Approved Tenancy Agreements sent to new tenants:

 Mrs Hannah Eaton Plot 9a - awaiting response

 Mrs Lisa Trott Plot 9b - signed 8th July 2019.

 **Allotment Tenancy Inspection report**

 *To Receive the Allotment Inspection report and agree any necessary actions.*

It was reported that Cllr Lockerbie had inspected the allotment garden and noted

 that two plots had made a start but now appeared to be neglected.

 The westerly side of the site on three plots (two recently taken over and one the subject of

 a Notice to Quit) is now infested with the pernicious weed Horsetail/Horseweed/Marestail

 **RESOLVED** to notify all tenants affected on the western side to take urgent remedial action,

 and send written reminders of tenancy obligations to tenants with neglected and weedy

 plots.

 ***To Review rent and tenancy agreement***

A copy of the Council’s tenancy agreement terms, example from a neighbouring

 parish council, the allotment map with plot dimensions were circulated with

 agenda. Also circulated were rent charges for 22 allotment authorities in the

 South East ranging between £2.80 and £18 per rod.

 There are 15 plots on the Council’s allotment garden ranging from 120 to 280

 square metres, with an average rent of £7 compared with £20 and £25 for plots on

 some of the neighbouring parishes. It was noted that they had many more plots and

 generate a greater income.

The last tenancy and rent review was carried out in **August 2014**. The rents were not

 increased and have remained the same as follows:

 Guide: 1 rod = 25msq

 Whole plots: 1 (10.8 rods - round up to **9 rods**), 2 (11.3 rods - round down to

 **11 rods**), 3 (9.5 rods - round up to **10 rods**), 4 (**7 rods**), 5 (7.2 rods -round to **7 rods**),

 6 (9.6 rods - round up to **10 rods**) & 12 (13.8 rods - round up to **14 rods**): £10

 3/4 Plots 7 & 8: £7 (**9 rods**)

 Plot 13: £8 (5.5 rods/hens) - round up to **6 rods - plot unsuitable for cultivation.**

 Half Plots 9a (4.5 rods -round up to **5 rods**), 9b (4.5 rods, round up to **5 rods**),

 10a (**8 rods**), 10b (**6 rods**), 11a (7.3 rods -round down to **7 rods**),

 11b (7.3 rods - round down to **7 rods**): £5.

 Total rods (excluding Plot 8 which cannot be cultivated: **115 rods** if rounding to

 nearest whole number or **115.80 on exact sizing**.

 Total rental income**: £122 at current rent charges (not charged per rod) or 115.80**

 In the August, 2014 review, there was one amendment to the rules which

 introduced the clause for removal of non-organic waste/refuse from the site.

 This was to be covered by the introduction of a £20 deposit for each tenancy.

 Members discussed advice given by Mr Paul Neary, the National Allotment

 Society’s South East Mentor regarding rents and tenancy agreements in a findings

 session before the meeting. They were of the view that it is necessary to establish

 first whether the Council intends to renew its agreement to continue administering

 the allotments in 12 months, before a decision is made about rent increases or

 other changes to the terms.

 **RESOLVED** to defer the discussion on rents and any changes to tenancy agreements

 to full council.

 ***To Consider a request to block gap in the hedge to land behind Allotment Garden***

 Members considered a report from a relative who helps manage one of the plots,

 which raised safety concerns about unauthorised access to the allotment garden

 and a “dilapidated” shed by school children. He has requested that the council

 reinstate a wire fencing in a gap in hedge to the rear of the allotment as a

 deterrant. Members were sympathetic but noted that the gap is used

 as access for tree works, and that there was nothing to stop access via the main

 gate. The location of the shed in question was not identified in the

 correspondence. It was NOTED that tenants are responsible for the security of

 and maintenance of their sheds. Archived minutes show that blackthorn hedging

 was planted and a bund was created at the back of the allotment garden in 2014 to

 deter trespassing from the rear of the site which now appeared impenetrable. The

 complainant has written to the school to request that parents are warned not to let

 their children trespass on the site and to warn them of the dangers.

 **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the concerns and letter to the school, and that no further

 action is required. Clerk to advise the tenant.

1. **Recreation Ground and Parish Property**

*To Receive and Discuss the inspection report of the Ash Tree in the north eastern corner of the Recreation Ground.*

Members NOTED a report of further inspection of the Ash tree by Gale Tree Consultancy which advised that the tree appears to have the symptoms of Ash die-back, and to monitor closely. The tree surgeon reported that the Woodland Trust will be publishing new guidelines to help management of this disease and he will contact the Council as soon as they are available.

**RESOLVED** to thank Gale Tree Consultancy for the report and to **NOTE** the information.

## To Consider quotations to repair pathway from the Play Area

Members considered a quotation of £735.90 net to replace with bark chippings of the pathway from the children’s play area. The contractor is unable to repair the bitumen because of the risk of damaging tree roots. The Clerk requested quotes from two other contractors - one was unable to help and

the other did not respond. Members agreed that bark chippings were an expensive and not an ideal long term solution, particularly as they may not be easily accessible to pushchairs and mobility aids.

**RESOLVED** that the pathway does not pose a hazard and to defer a decision on the quotation pending the findings of the scheduled annual play inspection.

 *To Consider request for container planting by Vera’s Shelter*

Members considered a request for new container planting by the Shelter.

  **RESOLVED** to decline the proposal on grounds of cost.

 ***RESOLVED to NOTE the following for information only:***

 **Defibrillators**

 Batteries fully charged on both units in the parish.

**Ground Maintenance**

 Grounds looking tidy and hedges cut. No invoices received to date.

 **Village Hall**

 Nothing to report.

 **Recreation Ground and Parish Property**

 **Fencing:**

 Clerk to chasequotation for tree surgery along cinder path to allow for fencing

 replacement.

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 Benches

 Clerk to seek quotations for cleaning up some of the benches. Clerk to chase.

 Jubilee Tree

 No further deterioration to report.

 Chestnut Tree

 Nothing to report.

 Lime tree

 Clerk has requested a quotation from Connor Geal to remove basal growth.

MUGA

 Clerk requested a quotation from Paul Parker on 27th June to re-paint the MUGA

 court lines. Response pending. Cllr Glithero kindly offered to seek other contractors

 who could do the works. Clerk to contact the Local Authority’s Parks deparment

 for recommended contractors.

Children’s Play Area

 Nothing to report.

Vera’s Shelter

 Repairs to the Shelter are completed - invoice for payment submitted by S Trott - see

 payments to be approved

 Bus Shelters

 Cllr Henderson has completed repairs to the shelter by the former Chardonnay Restaurant.

Parish Noticeboards

 Clerk seeking quotation to replace backing on the noticeboard by Spring Gardens and

 Rock Road.

 **First Extension Graveyard**

*To Receive report of the First Extension Graveyard monthly inspection*.

Cllr Lisher’s July inspection was circulated to members.

**RESOLVED** to **NOTE** there were no issues.

1. **To Approve Payments**

**RESOLVED** to **AGREE** the following invoices for payment**:**

* S Trott - Vera’s Shelter repairs and painting: £325.00;
* S Russell - litter picking, May 2019:- £115.20
1. **Footpaths and Bridleways**

It was NOTED that pathways along the Storrington Road, Washington were overgrown and impassable again and not being cut to schedule.

**RESOLVED** to report the problem to West Sussex County Council. Clerk to action.

1. **Conservation Issues**

Nothing to report**.**

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1. **Any other Open Space, Recreation & Allotment and Footpaths & Conservation**

 **Issues that may arise OR items for the next Agenda (information only)**

1. Date of the next OSRA Committee meeting, 19th August, 2019.

Full Council Meeting, 5th August, 2019

 The meeting closed at **20:30 hrs.**

 Signed………………………………………………..

 Date………………………………………………….