Minutes of the Open Spaces Committee Meeting

Held on 21st March 2022 at 7.30pm in the Grosvenor Centre.

Present: Cllr T Simkin (in the chair), Cllr G Gregory, Cllr R Greatrex, Cllr K Ingram and Jayne Cooper, Clerk/RFO

Public Open Forum - None present

The Chair welcomed Cllr Ingram to the committee who had agreed to replace Mike Deegan following his recent resignation.

1. **To receive apologies and record absences**
   Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr J Tomkinson, Cllr D Webb, Cllr M Holmes and Cllr G Symons.

2. **To record any declarations of interest**
   There were no declarations of interest.

3. **To receive and confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 17th January 2022**
   The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.

4. **To consider any matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda**
   - The bund created alongside the brook, on privately owned land and visible from the bridge over Station Road, had been reported to the Environment Agency on 10th March 2022.
   - Knightley Churchyard bench is to be stored in the container. Cllr Greatrex to help.
   - Resurfacing of allotment track, trimming of allotment hedges, trip hazard on boardwalk, repairs to Knightley bus stops and removal of ivy at The Wold had all been completed.

5. **To receive a report following a recent tree inspection and agree an action plan and consider formulating a tree planting policy to control the planting of trees on parish council land.**

   A comprehensive report from Morfe Valley Environmental Services had been received. At least 15 trees had been identified as needing felling and others that required attention along with some minor work (ie removal of ivy). It was agreed that the Clerk should make contact with Stafford Borough Council's Tree Officer to determine whether or not he needs to see the report prior to any work being undertaken and also confirm what is required to trees that are located along the edge of The Acres which is within the Conservation Area. The Clerk to obtain quotations from contractors to carry out the priority jobs as identified in the report.

   The frequency of tree inspections is to be determined. The Burial Ground agreement to be reviewed to determine who is responsible for tree maintence within the Burial Ground.

Planting of Trees: following a recent fatality on the Isabelle Trail in Stafford and knowledge that regular tree inspections are now required at considerable cost as well as ongoing costs to carry out work identified, it was agreed the planting of any more trees should be carefully controlled. It was acknowledged that around 50 trees had recently been planted on the Village Green which although enhance the green, would have to be inspected as they mature. It was therefore, agreed that for the foreseeable future, no more trees are to be planted on Parish Council owned land until the financial position of the Parish Council is more secure.

6. To consider allotment fees for 2022/23.

It was agreed that fees would remain the same as in 2021/22 ie £36 for a full plot and £18 for a half plot. In 2023/24 the fees would increase to £40 for a full plot and £20 for a half plot.

7. To consider correspondence including:

a) A request from a tennis coach to use the tennis court for tennis lessons.

The request was fully supported and the Clerk was asked to make contact with the coach to discuss requirements and obtain a price that other local tennis clubs charge for use of courts.

b) Response from St Lawrence school regarding removal of blockages in Doley brook

A response received from St Lawrence School was shared in which the Vice Chair of Governors had confirmed that the matter had been discussed at recent meeting and Governors had felt that the advice received from the Environment Agency meant they were not able to make any changes to the brook or approve individuals clearing blockages along the route through the school land. The response went on to say that the school boundary would be monitored and any fallen debris from trees would be removed when necessary.

Open Spaces Committee understood the concerns felt by School Governors but felt the blockage is being caused by tree debris. Further communicator is needed with The Environment Agency.

8. To agree the date and time of the next meeting

20th June 2022