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**STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET PARISH COUNCIL OPEN SPACES**

MINUTES of a meeting of the OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 19th April 2023 in The Mountfitchet Exchange, Crafton Green, 72 Chapel Hill, Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex

**PRESENT** Cllrs A Barnes (Chair), M Caton, A Guney, J Hudson, J Kavanagh, A Khan,

F Richards

**ATTENDING** Mrs Laila Azure-Marxen – Project Officer

 Cllr P Jones

 1 member of the Press via Zoom

 1 member of the public via Zoom

**447 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Prior (Holiday) and Cllr Braeckman (away at Uni). It was unanimously:

**RESOLVED** to accept the apologies from Cllrs Prior and Braeckman

 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

**448 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE OPEN SPACES MEETING HELD ON 8th March 2023**

The headline for item 400 has a few spelling errors. This will be corrected.

**RESOLVED** To approve the minutes of the Open Spaces meeting held on 8th March 2023 as a true and accurate account.

**449 UPDATE ON ACTION POINTS FROM THE LAST MEETING**

338 Cllr Kavanagh visited Rainsford Road and Longcroft and reported logs along the edge to keep residents from parking. It is still possible to plant wildflowers behind the logs. There were some concerns that the area might flood occasionally. The area is maintained by the Parish Council, but is owned by Highways. A formal application to plant wildflowers is needed, the office needs to research what kind and the extent of it. Cllr Jones said it was a good area to include in the rewilding project as it would connect the development and the countryside.

392 GWB has been approached for quotes, but is still to respond. GWB have a lot of requests from the office at the moment and this might not take priority.

A map of the agreed locations for the new planters has been made, and shared with GWB. The planters can go up any time, although flowers might have to wait due to risk of frosts

393 Reseeding quotes have been accepted. The reseeding cannot be done now because of the Coronation event, so it has been recommended by MD Landscapes to wait until the Autumn.

396a S106 Officer from Uttlesford has made progress on the matter of the playground fence, and has requested a new RoSPA report be done.

397 Dan has done a post on dog waste.

398 The quote from GWB was requested, but he did not respond in time for the quotes being presented to Full Council.

400 Dan has requested donations for the plaque via Facebook.

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The office plan to draft a letter which can be sent to other businesses, incl. Daniel Robison.

402 Considering hiring out the public open space is on the agenda

 Sustainable Stansted was invited and it is on the agenda

**450 TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE PROJECTS OFFICER**

Attached

**451 TO RECEIVE A REPORT OF INTERMENTS FROM THE CLERK**

The following interments have taken place since the last meeting:

Clifford Luckey

Delia Stringer

Cyril Stoneham

Memorial/additional inscription approvals:

Margaret Gray

**452 TO RECEIVE PRESENTATION FROM SUSTAINABLE STANSTED AND DISCUSS FUTURE COLLABORATIONS WITH THE PARISH COUNCIL**

 Group member Alan MacPherson was going to present for Sustainable Stansted but cannot because of the district election. The presentation will be added to the next OS agenda.

 Instead, Cllr Jones presented a report: The group is on top of publications and is releasing a survey soon. Energy leaflets will be out by the end of summer. The website is ready to populate with content. A script for a video for children has been prepared. The group is also preparing responses to planning applications, with a green point of view. Cllr Jones explained that the group is ambitious and work well together, but have many ideas. They need to focus on preparing project which can pulled forward when grant opportunities occur.

At the next Sustainable Stansted meeting Cllr O’Brien is to be asked to discuss cycle routes. The Cllrs discuss the lack of public transportation in the village, especially from Foresthall Park to the Centre. The poor provision is a dilemma for non-car drivers.

On future collaborations with the group: It is essential to avoid duplicated projects, so there needs to be an exchange of ideas. The group is keen to work on rewilding: They can assist with consultation and some monitoring of the sites, when established. While discussing the rewilding project, it was noted that the SUDs area on Foresthall Park has been visited again, and plans have been sent to GWB and MD Landscapes for review. The hope is that some of it can be accomplished this Summer.

**453 TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM STANSTED IN BLOOM ON THEIR PLANS FOR 2023**

Nobody from Stansted in Bloom was able to attend the meeting. Trevor Lloyd has sent the committee a report. For Anglia in Bloom there are less entries for the portfolio this year. There are a few missing from last year: The care home has a new manager and it is unknown to what extent the replacement is involved in the

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gardening, however, it is hoped that new sections on the Men’s Sheds and Bentfield school allotments will address any shortfall.

For Stansted in Bloom there is a lack of entries for the children’s competitions (essay writing and photo). Cllr Barnes asked for the members to promote the competitions if they can. It is suggested to approach the schools directly, but it is agreed that the schools have a lot going on with strikes, etc.

The deadline for entries for the open garden competitions and the children’s competitions is early May.

**454 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON PLAY EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE**

All repair items approved at the last meeting are in hand and taking place now that the weather is improving. No additional issues have been identified. Cllr Barnes expressed disappointment that the report did not include the quarterly spread sheet visualising all the play equipment inspection results. It was agreed that the spread sheet will be presented at next meeting.

**455 TO APPROVE QUOTE FOR REPLACEMENT OF THE JUNIOR SWING SET ON WALSON WAY**

 The quote for replacing the swing set is £2,675. Concerns about the water issue causing the rot on the original swing set on Walson Way were discussed. As this could be a serious issue, which could affect the longevity and use of a new swing, councillors discussed investigating the cause of water to avoid replacing the swing too soon. Foresthall Park money could possibly fund a survey. Having been proposed by Cllr Richards, seconded by Cllr Kavanagh, it was unanimously:

**RESOLVED** To approve the quote for replacement of the metal swing set on Walson Way play area in principle if the water issue is investigated and rectified.

It was agreed Dan should communicate the progress of the project.

**456 TO CONSIDER THE PRINCIPLE OF ALLOWING ORGANISATIONS TO HIRE AREAS OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE**

This question had been previously raised andCouncillors believed it was not permitted to hire out Public Open Spaces. If allowed, they agreed that the idea would be difficult to control and would result in administrative and insurance issues. It was also considered wrong to take away POS from the public and use it for business purposes. Having been proposed by Cllr Barnes, seconded by Cllr Caton, it was unanimously:

**RESOLVED** Not to agree to the principle of allowing organisations to hire areas of public open space.

**457 TO CONSIDER THE PLANNING OF A VILLAGE LITTER PICK 2023**

The National litter pick was undertaken in March this year. Cllr Barnes asked if anyone was willing to take on the planning of a litter pick this spring, or would Councillors prefer leaving it until the Autumn. The Parish Council used to do two litter picks a year and it was agreed to delay the project until the Autumn. When the new O/S committee is formed this item will go back on the agenda.

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The office to investigate if Churchill’s are still interested in collaborating.

**458 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON FOOTPATHS**

The footpath from Five Acres to King Charles Drive has been reported to Highways several times. The Committee requests Mr Stiles walk around Bentfield to establish where the permitted footpaths are around the old football pitch.

It was discussed that the signage for the footpaths in Stansted is generally bad. It is agreed that the office should write to the responsible body. Message the office with specific areas of concern.

**459 MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED FOR THE NEXT AGENDA**

No Mow May was raised: Is the Parish Council participating in this? The office will investigate if it is included in the contracts.

Cllr Barnes thanked Cllrs Richards and Hudson for their service to the Council and the Open Spaces Committee and wished them well.

Meeting closed at 8.49pm

**ACTION POINTS**

449 The office needs to research what kind and the extent of the Highways application for planting on Rainsford Rd/Longcroft.

Coronation plaque donations: The office to draft a letter which can be sent to other businesses

452 Sustainable Stansted re-invited to the next OS meeting

454 The Play equipment maintenance spread sheet to be presented at next OS meeting

457 The office to investigate if Churchills is still interested in contributing to the Village litter pick

458 The office to ask Mr Stiles to walk the Bentfield area to establish which paths are permitted

The office to investigate if No Mow May is included in the grass cutting contracts