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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 7th June 2023 in The Mountfitchet Exchange, Crafton Green, 72 Chapel Hill, Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex

**PRESENT** Cllr J Kavanagh (Chair), Cllrs A Barnes, G Braeckman, M Caton, A Guney,

 A Love and L Prior

**ATTENDING** Mrs Emma Philbrick – Deputy Clerk

 Mrs Laila Azure-Marxen – Projects Officer

 Cllr P Jones

 2 members of the public (via Zoom)

**45 TO ELECT A CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE**

As Chair of the Council, Cllr Caton called for nominations. Cllr Barnes proposed Cllr Kavanagh and Cllr Braeckman proposed Cllr Prior. With Cllr Kavanagh receiving 4 votes and Cllr Prior receiving 3 votes, it was:

 **RESOLVED** that Cllr Kavanagh be elected as Chair of the Open Spaces Committee for the Civic Year 2023/24

**46 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE -** None

 No apologies were received from Cllr Khan

**47 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST -** None

**48 TO ELECT A VICE-CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE**

Cllr Kavanagh called for nominations. Cllr Caton proposed Cllr Barnes and Cllr Braeckman proposed Cllr Prior. With Cllr Barnes receiving 4 votes and Cllr Prior receiving 3 votes, it was:

 **RESOLVED** that Cllr Barnes be elected as Vice-Chair of the Open Spaces Committee for the Civic Year 2023/24

**49 TO APPOINT:**

**a) THE TENNIS CLUB REPRESENTATIVE**

Cllr Kavanagh advised that she had been the representative previously. Following discussion, Cllr Jones offered to take this role. This was unanimously agreed.

**b) THE PARISH PUBLIC FOOTPATH REPRESENTATIVE**

The Deputy Clerk advised that this had been done by Bill Stiles for a number of years and that he had confirmed he was happy to continue. It was unanimously agreed to accept his kind offer.

**c) THE PARISH TREE WARDEN**

Cllr Braeckman kindly offered to continue in this role. It was unanimously agreed.

**50 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19TH APRIL 2023**

 **RESOLVED** To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 19th April 2023 as a true and accurate account.

**51 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON ACTION POINTS FROM THE LAST MEETING**

449 The office contacted the licence office at Essex County Council and has received the application and guidance needed for planting wildflowers.

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The office has written letters to request donations for the Coronation Plaque, contacting 9 local businesses. One donation of £500 has been received. A decision on how to proceed with this project is on the agenda.

452 Sustainable Stansted were re-invited to the meeting, but no members were available. Cllr Jones has provided a written report and will update on the group’s activities at tonight’s meeting.

454 The play equipment maintenance spread sheet is on the agenda

457 After reviewing last year’s correspondence with Churchill’s the office concluded that it would not be beneficial to ask for more vouchers at this time. Any future working group will have to find alternative ways to sponsor the event.

458 Mr Stiles walked the Bentfield area as requested by the Committee and it is included in the footpath report.

No Mow May is not included in the current grass cutting contracts, and has never been included for practical reasons. If the Committee believes the Parish Council should support No Mow May, this can be considered for the contract’s renewal in 2025.

Trevor Lloyd attended the meeting and gave a progress report on Stansted in Bloom and Anglia in Bloom. He said that the support for several ideas had been disappointing but that they would continue with the Anglia in Bloom application. Cllr Prior asked several questions relating to publicity surrounding the various initiatives that the group had been promoting. She reiterated advice she had given at previous meetings and how it was essential to promote repeatedly.

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

Attached

This was circulated to members ahead of the meeting.

Cllr Barnes asked about the possibility of getting a water supply to the fountain. The office will seek advice as to whether this is possible in principle. Cllr Barnes also requested that the fountain be decorated with bunting at future events, as this creates a central visual impact.

**53 CEMETERY - TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE CLERK**

 **Interments:**

Margaret Grey

 Thomas Pittam

 June Webb

 **Memorial Permit Granted:**

John and Dorothy McHale

**54 TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM SUSTAINABLE STANSTED**

This was circulated to members ahead of the meeting.

 Cllr Jones advised that the group were looking at doing a biodiversity survey for the whole of the parish.

**55 REWILDING:**

**a) TO DECIDE ON WHETHER TO APPLY FOR A LICENCE FOR THE LOGS ON RAINSFORD ROAD**

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After discussions it was agreed that the Parish Council would not apply for a licence for the logs that had been placed there anonymously, and it would be up to Essex Highways if they wish to remove them.

**b) TO DECIDE IF IT IS FEASIBLE TO SOW WILDFLOWERS ON THE CORNERS OF RAINSFORD ROAD**

It was unanimously agreed that an application to sow wildflowers should be made. It was also agreed that the Parish Council should inform residents if/when the workwas due to go ahead.

**56 TO RECEIVE A QUARTERLY REVIEW ON GARDENING AND GRASS CUTTING CONTRACTS.**

This was circulated to members ahead of the meeting.

 Members asked regarding the impact of the bank holiday Monday’s preventing cuts at the Cemetery in May. It was suggested that when reviewing the contracts, that the cut days could be moved to a different day of the week to prevent this happening in future.

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

This was circulated to members ahead of the meeting.

 The Clerk provided a written report which asked members to decide if they would like the swing at Walson Way to be replaced with a timber or metal frame. Cllr Barnes asked what the life span of each was to see whether it was worth spending the extra on the metal frame. Having been proposed by Cllr Braeckman and being unanimously agreed, it was:

 **RESOLVED** to go ahead with the metal frame in principle but for the office to find out the life span of each and together with the Chair, Cllr Kavanagh, to decide if spending the extra was cost effective.

**58 TO CONSIDER QUOTES FOR:**

**a) REDUCING THE CANOPY OF THE MAPLE ON CHAPEL HILL**

The Deputy Clerk advised that a quote had been received for £995 to cut back the tree by 1/3 with the crown to be shaped and thinned. She commented that the price was slightly higher due to the need for traffic management (traffic lights) being needed for the work to be carried out safely. It was unanimously:

 **RESOLVED** to accept the quote for the Maple on Chapel Hill

 It was agreed that this should be publicised once a date for the work is known.

**b) CUTTING BACK TREES ON THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN FORESTHALL PARK AND THE MOUNTFITCHET ESTATE.**

A quote and map of the proposed works was tabled at the meeting.

 Having been proposed by Cllr Caton it was unanimously:

 **RESOLVED** To accept the quote for cutting back trees on the boundary between Foresthall Park and the Mountfitchet Estate.

It was agreed that the Council should publicise the work once a start date is known. The Projects Officer confirmed that the work would be done towards the end of the year.

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**59 TO DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT TO PROCEED WITH A PLAQUE FOR THE CORONATION SHELTER**

The Project Officer had included in her report that they had written to several local companies asking for donations but had so far only received sponsorship of £500 from one of them. After discussions, it was agreed that the office should do one final

push for sponsorship but in the meantime, the Committee would like to ask the Full Council to underwrite the costs to cover either the remaining money towards the plaque or if the Committee decides to go with the individual little plaques to cover the costs and hopefully over time, make the money back from people wanting to purchase a small plaque.

**60 TO CONSIDER PLANNING A VILLAGE LITTER PICK IN AUTUMN 2023**

The Committee decided that this should not go ahead in the Autumn but instead be put on an agenda later in the year to be arranged in line with the National Litter Pick in Spring 2024.

**61 TO CONSIDER FORMULATING A POLICY ON ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO EXISTING MEMORIAL PLAQUES.**

The Committee decided that any changes to plaques on Council assets would be discussed at Committee meetings as and when required. It was also decided that the plaque in memory of Dr Gabb should be placed on the new bench on Chapel Hill.

**62 TO DELEGATE AUTHORITY TO PROJECTS OFFICER AND COMMITTEE CHAIR TO AGREE ON PROJECTS FOR UDC GRANT APPLICATIONS.**

It was unanimously agreed to delegate the authority but the Committee asked for a list of projects being applied for be sent to the Committee for information.

**63 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE REPORT ON FOOTPATHS**

This was circulated ahead of the meeting. A number of missing way-markers had been noticed. The office has reported this to Essex Rights of Way at Essex County Council.

**64 MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED FOR NEXT AGENDA**

Members asked for the following items:

 Cemetery – how many spaces left

 Update on Dairy Lane (Elms Farm)

 Update on Walpole Meadows

Meeting closed at 9.30pm

**ACTION POINTS**

52 Office to seek advice on a water supply to the Fountain

55b Make an application to sow wildflowers on corners of Rainsford Road

57 Life span of metal and timber swing for Walson Way to be investigated

59 Office to do a final push for donations towards the Coronation Shelter plaque and take to Full Council to consider underwriting the costs

60 Put on future agenda for Spring litter pick