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**STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET PARISH COUNCIL OPEN SPACES**

MINUTES of a meeting of the OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE held on Wednesday 12th July 2023 at 7.30pm in The Mountfitchet Exchange, Crafton Green, 72 Chapel Hill, Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex

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

 A Love, L Prior and T van de Bilt

**ATTENDING** Mrs Ruth Clifford – Parish Clerk

 Mrs Emma Philbrick – Deputy Clerk

 Cllr J O’Brien

 Cllr P Jones – via Zoom

 3 members of the public (1 via Zoom)

**111 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Caton – holiday.

 This was unanimously approved

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

**113 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7TH JUNE 2023**

 **RESOLVED** To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 7th June 2023 as a true and accurate account

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

52 – Office to seek advice on a water supply to the Fountain – Done and in the Projects Officer report

 55b – Make an application to sow wildflowers on corners of Rainsford Road – Information for application being gathered. It’s in progress but not quite ready to be submitted yet.

 Life span of metal and timber swing for Walson Way to be investigated – Life span of metal swing was double that of a timber one so has been ordered with an 8 week lead time.

 59 – Office to do a final push for donations towards the Coronation Shelter plaque and take to Full Council to consider underwriting the costs – Done and update in Project Officers report. Since the report was sent out, we have had one further donation.

 60 – Put on future agenda for Spring litter pick – Scheduled to go on the agenda in November 2023

**115 TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE CHAIR, CLLR JO KAVANAGH**

Attached. Cllr Guney reported that she has had a number of conversations with the sub-contractor working at the Elms Farm public open space and he has given her some relevant advice. The Clerk will pass this to the Uttlesford S.106 officer.

The Chair advised that due to a member of the public attending for agenda item 13, she would be bringing this item forward to be discussed next.

**116 TO CONSIDER MAINTENANCE ISSUES RELATING TO ST MARY’S CHURCHYARD**

Lynda Dale from The Friends of St Mary’s introduced herself and gave members some background to the church and the work of her voluntary group. She highlighted the issues which have arisen due to the way the grass cutting contract has been written,

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 such as the grass not being collected and not cut often enough during the growing season.

 Discussions took place between members and Cllr Prior voiced her view that the contract for the Churchyard and Cemetery should be reviewed and should encompass more than just grass cutting. Members agreed to establish a working group to identify the issues and consider how best these could be dealt with going forward and come up with a longterm plan to be considered by the Committee. Cllrs Braeckman, Jones and Prior all agreed to be on this group and to seek input from others, including Lynda Dale, to inform their discussions. Thanks were given to Lynda Dale and her fellow volunteers for all their hard work.

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

Attached and circulated to members ahead of the meeting.

 Discussion took place regarding the Fountain and why it was suggested at looking at having a water supply installed. Members agreed not to pursue this. Cllr O’Brien outlined a proposal which the F&GP committee would be asked to consider with regard to lighting the fountain.

**118 TO RECEIVE INTERMENTS REPORT FROM THE CLERK**

A report was circulated to members ahead of the meeting.

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

Kate Allen from Sustainable Stansted attended the meeting and read out the attached report.

 Cllr Prior asked for advice on achieving No Mow May without it affecting areas such as the Churchyard and Cemetery where this was not practicable. Kate confirmed that No Mow May would not be suitable for all areas.

 Cllr van de Bilt asked regarding cycle ways and whether any contact had been made with the Manchester Airport Group as a lot of workers commute from the Foresthall Park Estate to work at the airport and some of the companies have a Corporate Social Responsibility budget.

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

A report and the monitoring sheets were circulated to members ahead of the meeting.

 Cllr O’Brien was given permission to speak and suggested that the Committee take a resolution to Full Council that when commenting on future planning applications, the Parish Council should be consulted with regard to any play equipment to be provided by the developer. It was generally agreed that longer lasting, sustainable materials should be used and correctly installed following our experience of timbers rotting and the cost to the council in replacement/repair.

 Having been proposed by Cllr Khan and seconded by Cllr Guney, it was unanimously

 **RECOMMENDED** that the Full Council pass a resolution to request that we are consulted by developers or UDC with regard to play equipment when considering future planning applications. If the equipment does not subsequently meet this Council’s standards, we may decide not to accept on-going ownership and maintenance.

**121 TO CONSIDER FORMING A WORKING GROUP TO REVIEW THE PROS AND CONS ON REWILDING**

It was suggested by Cllr van de Bilt that a Biodiversity Working Group be set up to look at rewilding, No Mow May and the use of pesticides and herbicides. This was agreed and Cllrs Barnes, Jones and van de Bilt will be on this group.

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**122 TO CONSIDER FORMING A WORKING GROUP TO REVIEW NO MOW MAY FOR CONTRACTS**

Will be looked at by the new Biodiversity Working Group set up as above.

**123 TO CONSIDER A POLICY ON THE USE OF PESTICIDES AND HERBICIDES IN CONTRACTS**

Will be looked at by the new Biodiversity Working Group set up as above and they will draft a policy to bring back to the Committee for discussion and approval. The Clerk

 gave some background on a complaint from a resident who had stated that weeds from Parish Council land seed into his garden. She advised that Cllr Barnes had looked into this and carried out site visits when he was Chair and his decision at the time was that the issue was not severe enough to warrant any treatment and as seeds are airborne there was no guarantee that all of the weeds in the resident’s garden had come from Parish Council land. Members agreed that the Clerk should maintain our current position of not treating the weeds but that the resident was welcome to spot treat any weeds he was concerned about.

**124 TO CONSIDER A QUOTE FOR WORK TO HEDGES ON REEVE ROAD**

The quote which had been circulated to members ahead of the meeting gave details of why the work should be carried out. Having been proposed by Cllr Khan and seconded by Cllr Guney, it was unanimously

 **RESOLVED** To accept the quote for work to the hedges on Reeve Road to be funded by the FHP S.106 maintenance budget.

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

The report was circulated to members ahead of the meeting.

 The Deputy Clerk gave updates on the suggested action points.

Meeting closed at 9.15pm

**ACTION POINTS**

120 Take a recommendation to Full Council regarding any new play areas installed by developers.

121/122/123 Biodiversity Working Group to meet to start discussions on the items listed.

123 Clerk to contact the resident and confirm the Parish Council’s stance on the weeds by their property.