



PEASEDOWN ST JOHN PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Amenities & Facilities Committee held on Tuesday 23rd July 2024 at 7.00pm at Beacon Hall, French Close, Peasedown St John

Present:

Fiona Carr; Audrey Gillard-Sprake; Howard Hartley; Les Sprake; Kathy Thomas (Chair); Daniel Walker. Cllr Jonathan Rich was also present at the meeting, in his capacity as Chair of Full Council. As the Committee was quorate, he did not utilise his voting rights.

Cllr Andy Larcombe, who was a non-committee member, was also present at the meeting. The Chair had invited him to attend as several items on the agenda link to the Finance & Governance Committee, of which he is Chair. As invited to the meeting by the Chair, Cllr Larcombe was able to take part in the discussions at the meeting but as he was not a committee member, he was unable to vote.

In attendance:

Tanya West – Parish Clerk & RFO.

Public Session

There were not any members of the public present at the meeting.

The Chair asked if any persons were recording the meeting. No one responded that they were.

A&F015 – 23/07/2024

Attendance Roll Call and Declarations of Interest

The attendance roll call was undertaken (those present are detailed above).

No further interests to those already disclosed to the Monitoring Officer were declared.

A&F016 – 23/07/2024

Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence had been received. Cllr Daniel Walker was absent without apology.

Cllr Conor Ogilvie-Davidson (Vice-Chair of Full Council) was absent without apology, however, as not summonsed to the meeting, and being ex-officio, this was not necessarily a requirement.

A&F017 – 23/07/2024

Minutes & Actions

- i. The minutes of the Amenities & Facilities Committee meeting held on 11th June 2024 had been circulated in advance of the meeting; it was resolved that they be accepted as a true and correct record of that meeting and were signed by the Chair accordingly.
- ii. The Actions Register on Planner had not been updated. The Clerk and Chair were still due to meet to review the actions. A time to be agreed within the next month for this to take place.

A&F018 – 23/07/2024

Items for Urgent Report

There were no items for urgent report.

A&F019 – 23/07/2024

Amenities & Facilities Advisory Panel

Councillors considered suggested dates for future Advisory Panel meetings, along with proposed topics for discussion at those meetings including review of policies, fees, and the Risk Register.

It was felt that due to the amount of work the committee has to get through it would be prudent to hold an Advisory Panel meeting on the months there is not a scheduled committee meeting.

A date of 20th August 2024 had been set for the first Advisory Panel Meeting, with the focus of meeting being the approved/preferred suppliers list to link in with the new Financial Regulations and to help reduce the risk of fraud and make the process slicker for placing orders etc.

A date for an October Advisory Panel meeting needed to be determined. The focus of this meeting will be to review the fees for all the sites.

It was noted that there are not enough available Tuesdays in each month to hold these Advisory Panel meetings, it was agreed that Monday evenings are acceptable for most members as an alternative day if Tuesday evenings are not an option.

The notes from the Amenities & Facilities Advisory Panel meeting held on Wednesday 3rd July 2024 at 5.30pm as a site inspection of Braysdown Allotments were received. It was acknowledged that recommendations from this meeting would be discussed under the next agenda item (A&F020 – 23/07/2024).

A&F020 – 23/07/2024

Asset Summary & ‘Lead Councillor’ Reports

Councillors received reports on the Parish Council land and associated assets, discussions were held, and any proposals and associated decisions were raised as follows:

Ashgrove Cemetery

- i. **Scattering area** – Works were planned to improve this in the coming weeks.
- ii. **Repairs to the pathway** – These were now complete. The contractors had reported that the issues were likely due to the ground being too wet when the surface was laid, so that it didn’t adhere properly to the underlying substrate.
- iii. **Mowing of the lower area of the cemetery** – This would be completed shortly by a contractor as the grass has grown too long for the Parish Council’s mower.
- iv. **Boundary Hedges/Trees** – A complaint had been received regarding overhanging trees which were touching the garage of one of the neighbouring properties. Quotations were being obtained for remedial works. It was also suggested that the cemetery boundary hedge needed to be cut back more generally, because the trees are growing towards the properties.

Following discussion, it was **resolved** to recommend to Full Council to approve funding up to £2,500+VAT, to be deducted from the cemetery operational budget and contracted amenities works, to cut back all the hedges and trees around the perimeter of the cemetery. The works to include the cutting back of foliage upwards, in line with the boundary wall edge, especially along the back of properties 21 to 29 Under Knoll and along the eastern boundary wall adjacent the road with Under Knoll. The Clerk would aim to get three quotes for this work to Full Council in time for the meeting on 13th August 2024.

v. Other maintenance issues

- a. 100m of new hedgerow had recently been planted and it was hoped that volunteers would help to weed around these trees. The area is currently full of stinging nettles, which would be cut back by Parish Council staff.
 - b. Two of the cherry trees were diseased with honey fungus and it was likely they will have to be removed in due course.
 - c. Weeding of the round (Garden of Remembrance) bed is now largely complete. Replanting and mulching would be carried out in due course. Work would now be starting on the cremated remains quadrangles.
 - d. The existing compost bins would be emptied in the coming weeks, and others constructed in the lower car park.
- vi. **Green Flag Award** – It was suggested that the Parish Council should start working towards a Green Flag Award and (with this in mind) should start following Avon Wildlife Trust’s Ecology Management Plan, including such items as identification boards, one for bugs and one for flowers. Examples were provided of these.

It was noted the amount of time the volunteers spend working at the cemetery. The group started in April and consists of 5 or 6 people that work from 10am until 1pm. It has taken months for them to get on top of one of the round beds and it is a constant job to keep on top of the weeds. The roundabout and verge floral displays are also maintained with the help of volunteers. The council needs to recognise how much time it takes to maintain the floral displays and our general amenities, it was suggested that the Chair’s Allowance could be used to reward these volunteers.

Beacon Field & Jubilee Garden

- i. The Caretakers have recently cut back the hedge along the rear of the Jubilee Garden and the play areas on Beacon Field.
- ii. The crack in the pathway of the Jubilee Garden is still to be repaired again. The contractor is continuing to be chased on the matter.
- iii. The seats in the dog area on Beacon Field need some attention as the ground has worn away considerably underneath. Some form of paving or grass matting needs to be installed around it. The Clerk to investigate options and to establish if the seats are bolted down or not. This will be brought back to a future meeting.

Beacon Hall

- i. **Solar panels** – Planning permission will be required which is in progress. A surveyor from B&NES Council had also made a site visit and was currently working on the licence for these works which is a requirement of the lease.
- ii. **Cork insulation** – Cllr Fiona Carr had met with the Clerk on Monday and had discussed the spraying of cork insulation on the inside of the roof in the hall. There were some concerns regarding spraying the metal roof girders due to maintaining full access to the wiring that runs along them. It was suggested that the insulation should be applied to the metal panels but not the girders themselves. It was also noted there will be some down time of the hall whilst these works are carried out.
- iii. **Lighting in the main hall** – It was noted that the existing LED lights shine at eye level for some people, and cast shadows, which is unhelpful for groups such as the art group, blood donors and line dancing. A local company had been contacted to provide a price for alternative lighting, the quotation was reviewed at the meeting. It was noted that the specification of these lights relied on reflection from the hall ceiling. It was raised about any possible impact on this following the cork insulation spray. The Clerk was requested to contact the lighting company for advice.
- iv. **Microphones** – It had previously been agreed to purchase three new wireless microphones. The Clerk to follow up on this to make sure that it has been actioned.
- v. **Flooring** – A company had been invited to make a site visit to discuss some options to replace the kitchen, bar, and foyer flooring. It was noted that replacement of these floors would also include works for gas, plumbing, and electrics due to the appliances that would need to be moved. A temporary alternative option, if there are insufficient funds available, would be for the floors to be deep cleaned until the replacement flooring works could be funded and scheduled.
- vi. **Use of the hall on a Sunday** – A suggestion was raised about offering the hall to charities and local groups free of charge on a Sunday to enable them to raise funds by serving refreshments etc. The Clerk had been requested to investigate how often the hall is hired on a Sunday. It was noted that there were the following Sunday bookings – 2 in June, 3 in July, 2 in August, 2 in September. It was therefore felt this suggestion was not worthwhile pursuing as there were regular Sunday bookings.
- vii. **Martyn's Law** – Cllr Fiona Carr advised that this was raised at the Community Centre Network meeting she had recently attended. Cllr Howard Hartley and the Clerk had also attended an online briefing session on Martyn's Law. This bill would impose requirements in relation to certain premises and events to increase their preparedness for, and protection from, a terrorist attack by requiring them to take proportionate steps, depending on the size and nature of the activities that take place at the premises. It would apply to buildings and outdoor events that have a capacity of over 100. The organisation Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) is lobbying to get this number increased to 200 but, as it stands, this proposed legislation is clearly something that the Parish Council may need to consider with a view to putting the necessary procedures in place once it becomes law.

Braysdown Allotments

- i. **Inspection** – It was generally felt, after the inspection, that the allotments were looking untidy, although it was reported that this was, in part, due to a shortage of staff on the caretaking team. Following the inspection, an email was sent out to all allotment holders requesting their support in getting the site tidied up.
At a previous Finance & Amenities Committee meeting it was requested that a spreadsheet be put together keeping a record of which allotment holders have received letters to give a better picture over time of which plot holders were consistently receiving letters. This needs to be actioned as soon as possible.

One of the councillors had received a complaint from a plot holder about various items including grass clippings on their plot generated from works undertaken by the Caretakers. Cllr Kathy Thomas advised she would respond to the complainant. The Clerk to follow up with the Caretakers.

- ii. **Second Gateway** – It was noted that the works to block up the second gateway entrance still needed to be actioned and this would be organised as soon as possible.
- iii. **Future Improvements** – It was suggested to put together some ideas of how the allotments could be improved [some were raised at the meeting] so that suggestions can be put forward for budget setting. This process could begin with an email survey to all allotment holders to ask for their views. Further discussion to take place at the next Advisory Panel meeting.

Ecewiche Green

- i. **Wildlife Pond** – Following publication on Contracts Finder, a summary of the quotations received for the wildlife pond were circulated as pre-reading (see appendix A&F020i). Cllr Howard Hartley explained the document and why it was felt that The Habitat Restoration Company would be the preferred contractor. It was considered this would be the best course of action and it was agreed for Cllr Howard Hartley and Cllr Kathy Thomas to work with the Clerk to create a motion to be included on the Full Council agenda based on the suggested recommendation in the pre-reading along with the inclusion of the additional items like the solar lighting and benches.
- ii. **Fly Tipping** - It was reported there was a large pile of fly tipped waste on Ecewiche Green behind some of the properties on Faulkland View. It was further noted that a wall had been built to the rear of one of these properties, and it was not clear if the waste was related to these works or not. It was agreed that the waste should be removed and that the whole area is cleared so as not to encourage further fly tipping.
It was requested that an article on fly tipping is included in the next newsletter highlighting that it is a criminal offence.
- iii. **Steps** – The wooden steps leading up from the Morgan Way entrance need some building up. The Clerk to arrange with the Caretakers to action by raising the levels with soil or bark chippings or similar.
- iv. **Planting by Residents** – Some residents have undertaken planting on the verge outside of the Morgan Way entrance to Ecewiche Green. The Council needs to consider how this is handled as otherwise the same rules may be applied by other residents. The general feeling was the permission should be obtained from the Parish Council first as some locations may not be suitable for planting.

Persimmon Land

- i. **Initial Improvement Works** – Pre-reading included a copy of the photographic condition survey report providing detail on all the areas of Persimmon land due to be transferred to the Parish Council. From this report, the Clerk had created a list of areas that needed initial improvement works (likely to be undertaken by contractors) to bring the sites up to a standard that they can be maintained as operational activity by the Caretakers. They were:
 1. Entrance to Orchard Way near to Underleaf Way.
 2. Entrance to Wellow Mead.
 3. Entrance to French Close and along Orchard Way.
 4. Hedge along Orchard Way between Faulkland view and Eckweek Lane.
 5. The entrances to Ecewiche Green from Faulkland View.
 6. Contained area of land on Ecewiche Green near the proposed pond.
 7. Orchard Way, Orchard hedge to be cut back hard in the autumn.

Estimates on pricing for these works had also been obtained.

Upon completion of the land transfer the Parish Council will be paid £70k from Persimmon Homes, from which any monies already spent on the transfer will be deducted and returned to General Reserves. It is suggested that the funding for the above listed works should be deducted from these monies.

It was **resolved** to recommend to Full Council that the above works are undertaken and for the cost to be deducted from the Persimmon land transfer monies, to carry out essential maintenance work post transfer, up to a total value of £7,500+VAT.

It was noted that an additional section [Morgan Way footpath to Ecewiche Green] also needs work but is likely to be able to be completed by current Caretaking staff as some sections have already been maintained.

- ii. **Land North of Under Knoll** – It was noted that Council needs to consider establishing a plan for the development and maintenance of the large piece of land north of Under Knoll. The plan should include establishing the boundary and investigating into the previous suggestion of extending the public right of

way. Cllrs Les Sprake and Kathy Thomas and the Clerk made arrangements to meet with the B&NES Council Public Rights of Way Officer regarding this matter, which had been originally raised back in 2015.

- iii. **Mowing of Bypass Verges** – It was reported that B&NES Council Highways have been contacted regarding the mowing they undertake annually along the edge of the highway to request that they mow at least double the width of this strip along the highway edge to assist with maintenance of the site. This may result in the Parish Council having to contribute towards the cost of these works.

Prince of Wales & Tump Village Greens – It was mentioned that the Prince of Wales Village Green needs to be mowed more frequently. Carlingcott Tump was being kept up together and a replacement table had recently been installed, which had been well received by residents.

Public Rights of Way – It was reported that the public rights of way have been trimmed in accordance with the vegetation agreement held with B&NES Council. It was reported that the bridleway off Eckweek Lane had been blocked off. This had been reported to the Public Rights of Way Officer to deal with.

Recreation Ground – The repairs to the spectator stand roof are due to commence next week. It was mentioned that the Committee needs to consider the hedges on the Recreation Ground as they need to be cut more frequently than the other hedges, particularly the one along Church Road. The damaged cover on the skate park sign has now been replaced. There is graffiti on some of the structures, for which the Parish Office is liaising with contractors to attend to remove it.

A&F021 – 23/07/2024

Service Level Agreements for Amenity Land

Councillors discussed the suggestion for signage to be installed at areas of public open space detailing what service level agreements residents should expect from the Parish Council.

If new signs were provided on all areas of open space it should help to highlight how much the Parish Council does and give an all-round better understanding and transparency of the Parish Council's activities and services. A draft template sign was circulated in pre-reading for consideration, and it was suggested that the frequency is taken off the sign itself but included in information available via the QR code. Information could also be included regarding the football facilities.

It was agreed that the draft template should be updated, and draft signs be created for all sites prior to a final decision being made. It was further suggested there should be sign at the entrance to the Recreation Ground stating that it is not a public car park, and that parking is only provided for ancillary use to the Recreation Ground objectives and then parking must be in the designated area only.

A&F022 – 23/07/2024

Review of Finances 2024/25

A report on income and expenditure for the 2024/25 financial year for those budgets specifically linked to the Amenities & Facilities Committee was reviewed at the meeting. A list of questions had been raised by Cllr Kathy Thomas prior to the meeting, the questions, and answers provided by the Clerk, were discussed.

This included information on what expenditure was scheduled for later in the year, why some budgets had already used 50% of their allocation, explanation of the accrual for cemetery waste, what some budgets actually covered in relation to the different sites, if any of the budgets were expected to overspend.

The Clerk had also provided a breakdown of various items for contractors to undertake additional works with estimated costs and timings. It was noted that the finances would be looked at in greater detail at the next meeting.

A&F023 – 23/07/2024

Tree Surveys

Councillors reviewed the quotations obtained from three different tree professionals to undertake tree surveys in 2024 on Parish Council land. All three of them had previously carried out works for the Parish Council. It was noted that two of the contractors are both registered consultants with the Arboricultural Association and it was considered prudent to proceed with one of them.

It was **resolved** to appoint Assured Trees to undertake tree survey works on trees on Parish Council managed land for a cost of £1,440+VAT to be deducted from the Infrequent Operational Expenditure budget as previously agreed by Full Council [minute C030 – 25/06/2024 refers].

The Clerk to also check with the contractor that they include in their report about what trees are almost touching people's houses so the Parish Council can take any appropriate action.

A&F024 – 23/07/2024

Sponsorship of Roundabouts

Pre-reading provided a report on the sponsorship of the roundabout on the A367 and considered a new request for the sponsorship of the roundabout at Dunkerton Hill. It was noted that a request had previously been received from Bath Fertility Clinic to sponsor the roundabout next to the Mercedes Garage, and it had been agreed to offer sponsorship of the full roundabout (4x signs) at a cost of £1,000 per year. A further request had now been received from Somer Valley Farms Butchers to sponsor the roundabout at the top of Dunkerton Hill. It was noted that, because there are only three roads coming off this roundabout, it would make sense to have a maximum of three signs, and the cost would be reduced accordingly. It was **resolved** to offer sponsorship of Dunkerton roundabout to Somer Valley Butchers at a cost of £750 per year for three signs. The offer letter to mention that because this roundabout is a high-risk location, there will be a limit to the number of replacement signs provided as part of the agreement.

F&A025 – 23/07/2024

Date and Time of Next Meeting & Future Agenda Items

The next meeting of the Amenities & Facilities Committee is scheduled to be held on Tuesday 17th September 2024 at 7pm at Beacon Hall.

Cllr Andy Larcombe asked if the bin on Orchard Way near the entrance to Frenchfield Road could be looked at being replaced with a dog waste only bin as the fly tipping of domestic waste in this bin has not improved.

The meeting closed at 9.37pm

Signed..... Date.....

Appendix A&F020i – Summary of Quotations & Information for Wildlife Pond at Ecewiche Green

Summary of quotations for Wildlife Pond:

Name of Company	Total Cost	Comments:
Pageo Contracting Ltd.	£5,848.90 + VAT	Price is for supply of geomembrane only
Habitat Restoration Co.	£12,844.80 + VAT	See below.
Ecolibrium Ltd.	£19,634 + VAT	Mainly waterways management experience
ATM Estimating	£26,070.80 + VAT	No direct pond experience
A R Banks	£26,234.41 + VAT	No direct pond experience

Background:

The Habitat Restoration Company was one of only two companies who made a site visit (the other was Ecolibrium) and they have offered the best value quotation. They are able to accommodate a start time of October 2024. They're a fairly new company but have gained pond experience from prior employment. The company was established by a former member of the Estate Team at The Lost Gardens of Heligan (Cornwall), who has been involved in several major pond-installation projects there. A reference has been obtained from the Head of the Estate Team at Heligan, as follows:

"Charlie worked well as a team member in both the Estate team and working with wider departments and teams throughout the site.

He worked on aspects of pond repair, and stream revetment and repair and has a very good working knowledge of habitat creation and maintenance through his time at Heligan. He has experience of similar projects and is capable enough to carry out the contracted work for you. I have no reason not to recommend Charlie for this contract."

As the price was considerably more competitive, some prices for additional options were obtained as follows:

1. Option for Recycled plastic fencing – additional £10,993.71

Note: The cost of wooden fencing in the original quote was only **£974.40**. This was a lot less than the other contractors' prices for fencing (£2,850, £4,336 and £5,815). The quote is in partnership with Gripsure (UK) Ltd, who supply timber decking and might therefore have access to lower timber prices.

2. Additional price for wildflower turf rather than wildflower seed - £1,613.70 + VAT

3. Additional price for butyl pond liner £2,937.65 + VAT

(Comment from contractor: Both these products are synthetic rubbers, but butyl is much longer lasting and hard wearing than EPDM. It makes no difference which product you chose to the maintenance of the pond, only that butyl will outlast EPDM.)

Suggested recommendation:

To award the contract to The Habitat Restoration Company with the additional option of wildflower turf and a butyl liner, but retaining the timber fence at a total cost of £17,396.15 + VAT.