

N.B. All Minutes are deemed as draft until formally approved and signed.

MINUTES of the MEETING of PROPERTY MANAGEMENT AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE held VIRTUALLY ONLINE (via Zoom) on 3 September 2020 at 7.01 pm under Local Authorities (Coronavirus) Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings (England) Regulation effective 04.04.2020

Present: Councillor A Barker (Chairman)

Cllrs P Moulton, J Straw, R Woodward and Mrs. A Barker, Ms S Colledge

In Attendance:

Mrs. C Tibbles PSLCC, Parish Manager/Responsible Finance Officer

1 member of the public [Items 2231(c) – end only]

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and for the benefit of the attendance register, verbal confirmation was given for the Parish Manager to sign on their behalf.

2226. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Resolved: That Cllr Barker be elected for the Civic Year. (The Parish Manager apologised for omitting this from the agenda. Remaining items renumbered accordingly.)

2227. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

2228. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Ms Colledge declared a disclosable non-pecuniary interest in any planning matter that affected the Green Wedge as a member of Whitwick Action Group and a non-pecuniary interest in Whitwick Historical Group and Woodstock in Whitwick as a member.

Cllr J Straw declared a disclosable non-pecuniary interest in any planning matter that affected the Green Wedge as a member of Whitwick Action Group and a non-pecuniary interest in Whitwick Historical Group and Woodstock in Whitwick as a member.

Cllr P Moulton declared a disclosable non-pecuniary interest as a Link Councillor for Thornborough Road Allotment Society; in matters regarding the Bowls Club as a member and Link Councillor; a non-pecuniary interest in matters affecting Whitwick Historical Group as the Link Councillor and a member; a non-pecuniary interest in matters affecting Whitwick Royal British Legion as the Link Councillor and a member.

Cllr A Barker declared a disclosable non-pecuniary interest in Walkers Flats Allotment Society as a signatory on some transactions; a non-pecuniary interest in Whitwick Historical Group as a member.

2229. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION

None.

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2230. MINUTES

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2020 be approved and signed as a correct record.

2231. PARISH PROJECTS – WORKING PARTY/LINK COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Resolved: That the following actions be taken/noted:

- a) **Playground Working Party Report:** no meetings had taken place during the coronavirus pandemic;
- b) **Bowls Link Councillor:** Cllr Moulton reported that informal matches had been played, no annual dinner would take place this year and no date set for an AGM. The quality of the Bowls Green had improved, with thanks expressed to JR Landscaping for work done and clear benefit of investing in equipment to remove thatch. New members had joined the Club because of the quality of the Green, which the Chairman said was good to see.
- c) **Allotments Link Councillor – Thornborough Road:** No issues to report from the group but the Chairman was aware that the County Council were dealing with an overgrown blocked footpath at the rear of the allotment site. As a cyclist, the Chairman had requested signage on the cycle path to warn cyclists of the concealed entrance. This had not been approved and although drivers were cautious when exiting the site, it was a worry with the speed of bicycles using the path. Suggested that corners be cut back to improve visibility.
- d) **Allotments Link Councillor – Walkers Flats:** No new information to report.

PROJECTS

1. Whitwick Park Entrance Gates Repaired – date awaited from NWLDC for work to be done. Insurers want completion date and invoice;
2. Whitwick Park Entrance improvements – comparative quotations still being sought; **shrubs on driveway to be pruned as scheduled in September as it was too early for removal;**
3. The steps aside of Park Hall leading up to the grass area – 2 quotations now being received, **with a third quote being required and the Chairman to arrange a new contact.** Map shown to aid discussion on slope layout needed for disabled access to the grass;
4. New Signage for the Pavilion/Green/Parking/Tennis Courts – **Ms Colledge offered to design signage for these areas if the Parish Manager could clarify what was needed;**
5. Installation of Benches throughout the Village – 3 new benches delivered in readiness for when licence was granted by LCC; **letters to neighbouring residents and maps were requested by the Chairman for a bench in Brooks Lane by the bus shelter;**
6. Repairs to the Old Station Building – **Cllr Moulton reported on the verbal quotations given during inspection of the damp problems by P Morris Builders and due to urgency of the work it was resolved to accept the cost of investigation and repair for £1260 (including repointing of chimney wall by the pavement, internal**

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- works to remove flaking plaster, re-skim and apply sealant on chimney wall by stairs, resolve leaks on both chimneys with new lead flashing and soakers (if confirmed as needed). Additionally, to resolve the guttering problem on the canopy porch which still could not cope with heavy rainfall at a cost of £320;**
7. **Installation of the Miners Memorial Seat in front of the Wheel – the Parish Manager to send design information to LCC for preliminary consideration; members to potentially volunteer to fit this bench with secure fixings; enquiries to be made for a lectern/history board about the pit disaster with best location to be identified;**
 8. Park Hall Heating would be serviced ready for the winter and thanks given to Ms Mabey for her perseverance with the difficulties in finding a new company to do this;
 9. Grit Bins –provisional date of 1 November for volunteers to unlock, check and request any re-filling of the 4 parish grit bins; update needed on the LCC undertaking to place a bin in Clarke Close; 2 parish grit bins available for installation if new locations were identified (although ideally on parish land or by agreement on private land to avoid applying for a licence);
 10. **New Flag Pole -resolved to accept quotation from a local company One Stop Promotions and purchase 8m white fibreglass flagpole, with internal halyard, 2.5yd stitched union flag, 2.5 yd stitched St. George flag, with delivery, costing £487.99. A revised quotation for a parish flag of the same size would be sought; the Parish Manager to contact neighbouring Environment Agency with access clarification before the installation took place;**
 11. Memorial Garden in Whitwick Park – meetings had not taken place due to coronavirus but **a site meeting could be arranged with any interested parties attending (but socially distanced);**

2232. HEALTH & SAFETY ADVISORY SERVICE

Resolved: That the following actions be taken/noted:

- a) noted the overdue inspection of the Railway Station (missed last year) was undertaken on 17 August by the new consultant and review visits made to other buildings and Whitwick Park, with an updated report to be reviewed;
- b) **after careful consideration, it was resolved not to renew the 5 year subscription for H&S support at a cost of £9292.76 (plus £860 additional service) and alternatively to make use of the professional support and advice from the current insurance broker, with potential for specific project advice if/when necessary;**

2233. OWNERSHIP & MAINTENANCE OF LAND BARR CRESCENT

Resolved: That following discussion and consideration of the information supplied, the historical error in registering and

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transferring the land in question was not a parish council error, not a parish council responsibility and certainly not a parish council liability. Neighbouring residents should continue to seek resolution of this issue but members concurred the responsibility lay with the body who had mostly maintained it for many, many years (North West Leicestershire District Council) who still had grass cutting commitments in some parts of the parish. The parish council had the least budget in comparison to County and District and no legal obligation to be responsible for the error. Members expressed their surprise that the parish had been approached to take on this land.

2234. LAND MATTERS – EXCEPT KGV LAND

It was noted the action list is awaiting updating. **Resolved: That the following actions be taken/noted:**

ALLOTMENTS

- a) that allotments had remained open during the coronavirus pandemic, with guidance being followed carefully;
- b) that a query from the County Council asking if fly tipping on Thornborough Road (outside the allotment site) was blocking the ditch and creating a flood risk – after a site visit, the Parish Manager had found the rubble on the verge, not in the ditch, and reported it to NWLDC;
- c) that no matters had been submitted that required attention/action by the Committee but the Parish Manager received a recent application for a plot, which was good to see under the current circumstances with the pandemic;

RECREATION/OPEN SPACES

- d) that in line with previous action, the Parish Manager had again sanctioned preventative tree maintenance by WPD on trees adjacent to the power lines at Hilary Crescent;
- e) that Playground repairs were underway, with agreement for extra supply of safety surfacing to be ordered by our contractor, but vandalism reported on 17 August with surfacing repair ripped out at Hermitage Road/Green Lane play area; Cllr Straw undertook to check the current condition when able to make a site visit; **Parish Manager to write to several neighbouring properties to inform them of old fencing being fly tipped;**
- f) that abuse and vandalism continued to impede the ability to make progress and on occasions caused services to be withdrawn; **a meeting to be requested with the police to explore positive strategies, in light of the public support and appreciation of the Rangers endeavours to maintain a safe and welcoming environment;**
- g) that helpful action had been taken by a leisure group in response to report of nuisance/danger to walkers near to WPC.019 Car Hill Rock, without a meeting taking place between all parties. Therefore, the situation should be monitored for further review at a future date;
- h) that the Memorial Policy was still being drafted and was deferred;
- i) that enforcement action from last meeting was outstanding regarding

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- significant boundary infringement at one open space and a cause of concern to the Parish Manager;
- j) that the resolution of a request by resident (via NWLDC) on a maintenance issue was undertaken by JR Landscaping; that low branches on a tree at Robinson Road had been swiftly dealt with after a report by a resident; request to cut back shrubbery was noted but already scheduled for when nesting season finished;
- k) that the Parish Manager expressed her thanks to Reflec Sign and Graphics who had been very accommodating with producing urgent safety signage for playground re-opening, including metal replacements when the first signs were ripped down; that Severn Trent would be installing temporary monitoring equipment on the brook near Holly Hayes Road (after completing the parish Access Form); a resident had requested a tarmac surface to the cycleway from Bridle Road along the rear of the new leisure centre **and would be advised to contact the County Council with this request;**

2235. BUILDINGS MANAGEMENT

It was noted the action list is awaiting updating. **Resolved: That the following actions be taken/noted:**

- a. that insurance cover on buildings had been confirmed for those in regular use, with a referral by the brokers for other buildings with altered usage during coronavirus;
- b. that the Parish Manager thanked staff, JR Landscaping, Whitwick Bowls Club and Whitwick Historical Group for the joint work in risk-assessing how community buildings could be safely used and future adaptations to use during the pandemic;

PARK HALL:

- a) that Fire risk assessment had been received and diarised for next review in 2023;
- b) that the new Notice Board was awaiting installation by caretakers for outside the main entrance door;
- c) that a new maintenance company was booked to service the heating system at the end of September;
- d) that no date yet agreed by new company for the overdue periodic electrical inspection;
- e) that PAT testing was taking place the following day and that the Hall also opened to the first hirer since before lockdown in March, with new hire conditions and reduced capacity; **that capacity would be cautiously reviewed for October bookings if mitigation and appropriate measures were in place by hirers for 1m social distancing;**
- f) that no external issues were raised;
- g) that a councillor had requested detailed clarification from the Parish Manager to further understand the increase in business rates being levied on this building; information had been confirmed that verbal notification had been received on 23 January 2020 by the District Council stating that the building had been reclassified as it was no longer a Youth Club and that Discretionary Rate Relief was no longer possible. As the parish council also paid rates on the Community Office, it was only

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possibly to have Small Business Rate Relief on one building – officers at NWLDC had looked at all possibilities but the increase on Park Hall would be significant and could not be mitigated. This was the reason for an increase from an expected £121 to £1110.28 from 1 April 2020, approximately 991% increase; since the last meeting a direct refund equivalent to 4 months rates payments had been received, in consideration of the building being closed during coronavirus pandemic.

COMMUNITY OFFICE:

- h) that fire risk assessment had been received as above;
- i) that no building repairs or maintenance issues had been raised but the Risk Assessment for re-opening had not yet been completed although it was hoped to trial a Friday morning opening before the end of the month;

PAVILION/TOILETS, OUTBUILDINGS and OLD RAILWAY STATION:

- j) that fire risk assessment had been received for both buildings as above;
- k) that criminal damage to toilet door locks and handles had taken place before the bank holiday, and the toilet hand rails also dismantled by vandals with tools. Reported to the police, with repairs jointly done by JR, Cllr Barker and Mrs Barker to make it safe;
- l) that Whitwick Historical Group were planning to re-open but at a reduced level and that they were hoping to hold their AGM at Park Hall on 22 October;

2236. LAND MATTERS – KING GEORGES V FIELD

It was noted the action list is awaiting updating. **As trustee of the Whitwick Park (King Georges Field) Charity, members resolved that the following actions be taken/noted:**

WHITWICK PARK

- a) that a verbal report had been made of an incident in early August with a dog being bitten by an adder but the written details requested not received;
- b) that many comments of appreciation were received during the very successful Coffee Connect initiative in Whitwick Park on Wednesday mornings in July/August – the park facilities were greatly praised and Rangers and the parish council applauded for the standards achieved, despite constraints;
- c) to accept the good suggestion of Cllr Collins to organise a “look after our park” campaign, involving children and other park visitors. Members fully endorsed the poster competition “why I love my park”, which would be used for publicity and suggested an outdoor Macmillan Coffee morning be held to launch this competition; an outreach programme to meet more parishioners, including skateboarders and youngsters would take place over the winter once a month, with an increased Easter initiative to connect with children and young people in April 2021. Cllr Collins would lead the campaign with promotion also arranged via council social media, posters, delivering leaflets, Community**

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Voice etc.; [Parish Manager's Note: the Macmillan Coffee morning would be 10 am on Sunday 27 September in the Park.]

- d) that painting of many items of play equipment had been undertaken during the enforced closure; that weekly playground inspections had been maintained during lockdown;
 - e) that there had been frequent reports of breaches of the play equipment closures, all signed to explain the risk of coronavirus; the Rangers had been equipped with a body cam because of the aggression and threats, helping to identify one repeat young person who was also verbally aggressive to other park visitors;
 - f) that the Parish Manager faced difficulties, with limited resources, to interpret the changing national guidance and complete the risk assessments on re-opening playgrounds (5 sites) and outdoor equipment (2 sites); that new stronger signage had been professionally printed but ripped down and metal signs later commissioned as this would remain a long-term situation requiring management;
 - g) to note the remaining tree work in the park had been completed, with the felling of the four poplars in July; the tree surgeon had confirmed there was no evidence found of any nests in the poplar trees; stump grinding has been completed, except one border stump which was blocked by a vehicle in the car park;
 - h) the request of District Cllr S Gillard was discussed by members who agreed the security protection of the bowls green area had been a success and should not be changed by opening gates to Park View and the Green. This area was also used regularly by reversing vehicles and not a suitable pedestrian thoroughfare. Members had sympathy with residents who wanted a safe route to walk to their medical appointments and no-one wanted to see anyone injured on the roads. **Resolved that an alternative solution could be explored if the District Council wished to change their boundary fence and install a new single pedestrian gate which could access the path at the rear of the tennis courts, (requiring a tidy up). Residents of Park View could then access the park during opening hours, walk past the playground and use the main driveway. The Chairman would be happy to meet District Cllr S Gillard on site and explain this option he may wish to pursue.**
 - i) that a hirer had declined the opportunity to do fitness activities in the park; an organisation from a neighbouring parish (unable to use their normal Village Hall) had enquired about use of tennis courts for a fitness activity but this was declined (under delegated powers of the Parish Manager) as it would temporarily remove the chance to play tennis;
 - j) that remaining matters awaited action by the Parish Manager;
- PARSONWOOD HILL (part)
- k) that unauthorised use of the field by a sporting business was noted during a site visit in August and safety information submitted for retrospective consideration by the Parish Manager;
 - l) that criminal damage had been done to a neighbouring building at the park and deterrents were being installed by the owner.

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2237. OTHER MATTERS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

Resolved that the format for listing projects at the top of the agenda be continued; noted that two reports were outstanding from the Parish Manager – benefit of biodiversity training and potential for logging all current parish nature assets to help develop a plan; ideas explored for Community Orchard planting and fruit trail utilising a combination of parish open spaces, existing resources, even residents’ gardens, following a helpful site visit by Henry Pearson, a recently appointed County Forestry & Arboriculture Officer; noted that new projects would not be introduced until work was progressed on current plans; new information was being forwarded to the parish council from the voluntary Tree Warden, which was helpful.

Full signature of Chairman: Date:

The meeting terminated at 8.47 pm.

Date of the next meeting: Thursday 1 October at 7 pm