

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 16th September 2020.

Following the passing of the Coronavirus Act 2020 (c.7), Councils are unable to meet in person during the COVID emergency. This meeting was therefore held via a Zoom link, with Councillors connecting remotely. The meeting began at approximately 7:10 p.m.

Present: Cllr Mrs S Terry (Committee Chairman) Cllr S Ward (Vice Chairman)
Cllr M Barnes Cllr Mrs P Godwin
Cllr Mrs E MacTiernan Cllr E Phennah
Cllr J Roberts

In attendance: Mr T Treacy, Clerk's Assistant
Mrs C Woodward, Clerk of the Council

GP/94/20 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Mackenzie.

GP/95/20 **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made as required by the Code of Conduct adopted by the Parish Council on 11th July 2012 (Min Ref C/159/12), including paragraph 12(2), were made.

GP/96/20 **Previous Minutes**

Cllr Godwin PROPOSED that the Minutes of the General Purposes Committee Meeting held on Wednesday, 15th July 2020 should be approved as a true and accurate record. Cllr Roberts SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

GP/97/20 **Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes**

GP/86/20 (vi, a) Emergency Plan – *The Clerk's Assistant provided an update regarding the Emergency Plan Boxes. It was reported that additional PPE had been purchased, and that five pairs of protective gloves and five disposable face masks had now been added to the Emergency Plan boxes.*

GP/89/20 (ii) Tree Undergrowth – *The Clerk's Assistant informed the Committee that having initially missed the undergrowth cut-back, Smart Cut were informed, and had responded promptly. It was reported that the three trees in question were now looking very much better. Cllr Roberts reported that following an earlier discussion about the condition of some trees on Northway Lane, at Saxon Park, Cllr Ward had attended them and cut back some of the excess growth. Cllr Roberts thanked Cllr Ward for having done the work.*

GP/44/20 (i) Removal of Cross Trainer – *The Clerk's Assistant reported that although there had been a slight delay, the work had now been done to remove the Cross Trainer and to make good the ground where it had been installed. It was also reported that the original price quoted to do the work had been held.*

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

GP/98/20 **Northway Playing Field**

The Clerk's Assistant informed the Committee that since the previous General Purposes Committee meeting on 15th July 2020, there had been a number of Inspection Records submitted. The Clerk's Assistant suggested that only the most recent ones be read out, which the Committee agreed to.

- i. **Northway Play Park** – Inspection Reports had been received and no new concerns were raised.

The Clerk's Assistant provided an update relating to the service of the Roundabout at the Play Park. The report had concluded that the Bearing Ring had worn due to uneven use of the equipment and that only by replacing that worn part, would the roundabout be restored to its normal function. Cllr Terry PROPOSED that the Clerk's Assistant investigate costs for the replacement part.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- ii. **Northway Skate Park** – Inspection Reports had been received and no new concerns were raised.
- iii. **MUGA** – Inspection Reports had been received and no new concerns raised.

The Clerk's Assistant reported that following an earlier report of damage to some metal fencing, the Clerk's Assistant advised the Committee that repairs had been carried out and the fencing made safe. The work had been done as a combined job, with the removal of a large piece of red brick from the ground at the BMX Humps. The total expenditure was £35.00

Cllr Barnes PROPOSED that the expenditure be ratified. Cllr Godwin SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- iv. **BMX Humps** – Inspection Reports had been received and no new concerns raised.
- v. **Crime and Disorder** – The Clerk's Assistant provided a summary of the quotations that had been received from three different companies, for the provision and installation of a CCTV system at Northway Playing Field.

Cllr Ward was able to show the summary spreadsheet that had been produced, which outlined the options that had been submitted. The Clerk's Assistant advised the Committee that a considerable amount of information had been gathered and that the overview being given was deliberately kept concise. Due to the amount of information that needed to be processed, Cllr Ward suggested that a Working Party be set up to work through the various options and quotations.

Cllr MacTiernan asked what measures were in place to prevent the cameras being vandalised. Cllr Ward explained that the cameras were similar to those fitted at the Hub, and were anti-vandal dome shaped, making them very difficult to grip.

The question of access to the monitoring equipment was raised, and the Clerk advised that although the football club uses the storage facility, the Council has rights to enter the store. The question of controlled access to any recorded data was discussed and the Clerk confirmed that, as with the Hub, access rights would be tightly controlled, in order to comply with GDPR regulations.

Cllr MacTiernan reported that there was another Parish Council which has recently had CCTV installed and the Councillors can access the cameras via their mobile phones and wondered if this could be included in the system. The Clerk's Assistant said that at least

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

GP/98/20 **Northway Playing Field** – (continued)

one of these companies would be able to provide that facility. The Clerk expressed surprise this that was allowed due to strict GDPR regulations, Cllr Terry agreed that this was inappropriate and pointed out that the Council would not necessarily know the background of a Councillor. At the moment the Council policy only allowed the Clerk and one nominated Councillor to have access to the data. Cllr Terry expressed the view that sharing of recorded data to a wider group should not be allowed. She said that the Council had always been cautious because any proposed cameras would be recording children. The Clerk's Assistant offered to investigate this further with the Surveillance Commissioner's Office. Cllr Terry accepted the offer.

Cllrs Ward and Terry suggested that it was a good time to progress with discussions around installing a security system now that so much information was available. The Police always asked if there was CCTV available following incidents and Cllr Ward pointed out that it would have been beneficial when the Travellers gained entry to the Playing Field.

The Clerk advised that GP did not have a budget set aside for this equipment, but NPC had funds available in its rolling programmes budget, which could cover the costs. Members were asked to express their interest in being on the Working Party and Cllrs Phennah, Terry, Ward, Barnes and Roberts asked to be included.

Cllr Terry concluded the discussion, confirming that the Working Party would review all the available documentation, including the quotes and would present their recommendation to Full Council at their October meeting.

- vi **Other Issues** - The Clerk's Assistant advised that there were no other issues to report in relation to Northway Playing Field.

GP/99/20 **Joan's Field**

- i. Following an emergency repair to the stile at the entrance to Joan's Field, Cllr Terry asked that the £78.00 repair cost be ratified. Cllr Godwin PROPOSED ratification. Cllr MacTiernan SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- ii. Cllr Terry reported that during a recent visit to Joan's Field, she had noticed that several of the apple trees appeared to have some kind of blight and asked if it would be appropriate to have them properly checked and perhaps sprayed. Cllr MacTiernan advised that at a certain time of year, clumps of apples should be thinned out to promote better growth. Cllr Godwin suggested that the poor condition of some of the trees could also be the result of a lack of water during the season.

Cllr MacTiernan informed the Committee that there were organisations that offer a service to inspect trees and provide advice. This was done on a charitable basis and could be of benefit at Joan's Field. Cllr Terry offered to investigate this further, but it was agreed that any action be deferred for six months, when the trees would be close to blooming again.

GP/100/20 **The Park**

- i. Teenage Shelter – The Clerk's Assistant informed the Committee that during a quarterly inspection of the Teenage Shelter, the appointed contractor had discovered one loose bolt, which he had fitted a new washer to, and re-tightened. He had also

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

GP/100/20 **The Park** – (Continued)

noticed a number of small holes in the main pole supporting the roof, which he was not able to explain. The Clerk informed the Committee that she had contacted previous Inspectors and the original one suggested the holes were where solar lighting had originally been fitted. Even with the holes the Contractor said that in their view the shelter was structurally sound and safe to use.

Cllr Terry suggested that as the structure was safe, no further action should be taken.

- iii. Following an emergency repair to two bollards on The Park, Cllr Terry asked for the Committee to ratify the repair cost. The work entailed removal and replacement of one bollard and the resetting of a loose bollard. The total cost for labour and materials was £145.00. Cllr Terry PROPOSED ratification of the costs.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

The Clerk also commented that the contractor had carried out the work on the same day as being asked.

GP/101/20 **Parish Maintenance Contract**

i. **Grass Cutting**

- a) **Tewkesbury Borough Council (TBC) Contract** – The Clerk’s Assistant updated the Committee with regard to the three-monthly progress report that NPC were required to submit as part of the Grass Cutting Contract. The samples spreadsheet provided by TBC had been used and the report submitted on time.

The Clerk’s Assistant informed the Committee that he had requested feedback on the report, as it was the first time it had been submitted. It was reported that TBC had acknowledged receipt of the report and that it would be discussed at a senior management level. At the time of reporting, there had been no feedback.

Cllr MacTiernan advised that Pete Tonge had been off ill for some time and that may have contributed to a delay. Cllr MacTiernan offered to progress a response from TBC, which was warmly received.

The Clerk informed the Committee that she had been in contact with TBC regarding payments to NPC under the contract; one payment of £1000.00 under the grant, and the same amount via invoice. At the time of reporting, neither sum had been received. Cllr MacTiernan also offered to progress this on behalf of NPC.

- b) **Grass Cutting Contractors** – The Clerk’s Assistant informed the Committee that more comments had been received from local residents praising the work of the contractors. These were read to the Committee and the Clerk’s Assistant confirmed that the feedback had been sent on to Smart Cut. Cllr Terry congratulated the Committee on the decision to change to a new contractor. Although there had been some initial doubts, it had turned out to be the right thing to do.

ii. **Other Issues**

- a) **Litter Picking** - The Clerk’s Assistant reported that a local resident had asked that the Litter Picker be given a mention for “*the great job she is doing*”.

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

GP/101/20 **Parish Maintenance Contract** – (continued)

- b) **Litter Picking Staff / Contractor Cover** – There was a discussion about staff cover for times when the Litter Picker is on leave or ill. It was reported that following a week of leave, the dog waste bins were very difficult to empty due to their weight. Cllr Ward agreed that, from his own experience, the build-up can make the contents very hard to lift and could risk back injury.

The Clerk informed the Committee that she had enquired, from an existing member of staff, whether they would be interested in covering the position if offered, they agreed they would be happy to take on the work if required. There was a brief discussion about whether the temporary cover should deal only with dog waste bins or all the whole round. Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED asking the member of staff to cover the whole litter picking round. Cllr Phennah SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- c) **Winter Maintenance** – There was a discussion around the provision of winter maintenance facilities, in particular the Grit Bins. It was noted that one of the grit bins near Shannon Way had recently been refilled. Cllr Roberts observed that there had been no plans drawn up to purchase more bins and the Clerk reminded the Committee that it had two hand spreaders that had not yet been used or invoiced.

Having discussed the routes in and out of Northway, and the difficulty that was associated with selecting appropriate sites, Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED that no further action be taken beyond the grit bins that were already in place. Cllr Ward SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- d) **Tenders** - The Committee was asked to consider if it wished to go out to tender on any of the current contracts. Cllr MacTiernan asked when the Committee had last gone to tender, which the Clerk advised was last year, for the grass cutting which was the biggest contract and would not normally do this more than three yearly, unless there were problems. It was suggested that as that work had resulted in a new contractor and the feedback being received was so positive, that it should not be completed.

The other large-scale contract was for insurance, which runs until next year, and the Clerk advised that the Council would be at the end of its four year contract so would automatically look at whether to seek alternative quotes. This would probably be February or March.

Given that other tasking was now undertaken by staff, Cllr Ward PROPOSED that no further action be taken. Cllr Roberts SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- e) **Dog Bins** – The Clerk's Assistant reported that a Ubico employee came to the Hub on 7th September to report a dog bin that had fallen apart as he was emptying it. The bin was located on Kingston Road and was badly rusted. The issue had been reported to TBC.

There was also a long running issue relating to the removal of a dog bin on The Spine. A local resident had requested that the missing bin be replaced as there

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

GP/101/20 **Parish Maintenance Contract** – (continued)

were no other bins in close proximity. The Committee recalled that the bin in question had been removed as it had developed jagged edges due to rust and was considered no longer safe. However, it was thought that the ground fixings had remained and Cllr Terry agreed to check that they were still in place and that, if the bin located at the middle of The Spine was in good enough condition to still be re-sited.

On the basis that one bin could be relocated, Cllr Ward PROPOSED moving it. Cllr Phennah SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

It was noted that Ubico would need to be informed of the move.

GP/102/20 **Drainage and Flooding**

- i. **Reports** – There were no reports received.
- ii. **Flood Warden** – There was no report presented for this meeting.

GP/103/20 **Newsletter**

Consideration was given to the items listed on the agenda for inclusion in the Newsletter: Bridge details, dropped kerbs, in considerate parking, and ex-Councillor long service.

The Clerk confirmed that the Bridge Application had been received by TBC but was awaiting validation. It was agreed that timing was critical for release of the Newsletter, to allow residents time to read and respond to the proposal. Cllr Ward asked what more needed to be included, given that Christmas celebrations at the Hub were not likely to go ahead this year.

Cllr Ward recommended that the Newsletter should be in print by the time of the next GP Committee meeting. Cllr Roberts recommended that emails be used between Members to relay information relating to articles for the Newsletter. Further suggestions were made for inclusion and Cllr Ward asked for articles to be produced as soon as possible to enable the Newsletter to be produced to the above timeframe. Cllr Roberts agreed to write an article on the work done at the Hub, to make it COVID secure. Cllr Terry agreed to write two articles, one on behalf of the Council, thanking those in the community that had helped support other residents and neighbours through the COVID restrictions, and one recognising the long service of former Cllr Bailey.

Cllr MacTiernan asked about the Rule of 6, in relation to the Hub. Cllr Roberts explained how the rule applied in the Hub, depending on whether a gathering was business related or of a social nature. It was noted that the rule may be subject to change.

The Clerk suggested that the GP Committee needed to approve delegated authority for articles for the newsletter to be approved by email as well as the final copy.

Cllr Terry PROPOSED approval was given for the Newsletter to be agreed by email.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

GP/104/20 **'Report It'**

The list of reported issues, as detailed in the meeting agenda were read out by the Clerk's Assistant, with a request for Members to ask questions at any point.

- Overflowing dog bins (Cllr Ward clarified that this was because Tewkesbury Borough Council had stopped doing two weekly collections)
- Broken shoulder round street lamp no 2, The Park
- Cover off illuminated street sign on the junction of The Park/Northway Lane
- Damage to roof of changing room downpipe, vent and tiles
- Damage to bin in Kingston Road, next to the bus shelter
- Youths making small fires on play equipment
- Northway Lane overbridge overgrown (boy injured when fell off bike)
- Street light 2 on The Park constantly on
- No entry sign in Northway Lane (by old car auctions) (No entry sign had fallen into the hedge causing cars to be travelling the wrong way along the lane).
- Tree with broken branch, Northway Lane junction with Hardwick Bank Road
- Overgrown hedges on Northway Lane close to The Northway pub
- Tree on junction of Hardwick Bank Road/Grange Road, cut by farmer to allow combine access, Cllr Ward reported that a farmer had cut part of the tree back to allow access for combine equipment. Cllr Ward pointed out that there was a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) on this tree and suggested that the issue be raised with County Cllr Smith, who had previously invited issues of this nature to be brought to his attention.

Cllr MacTiernan enquired whether any response was ever received regarding the reports. The Clerk's Assistant said that an immediate response was received supplying a log number. Cllr MacTiernan further asked whether the Council was informed when the repair has been undertaken and, if not, should the Council make further enquiries. The Clerk responded that sometimes further responses were received but the Item was included on the Agenda so Members could see some of the issues being addressed in the Parish.

GP/106/20 **Correspondence for Information**

- i. The Rural Bulletin – Newsletters dated 21st, 28th July, 4th, 25th August 2020.
- ii. The Rural Funding Digest – August 202 Edition.
- iii. RoSPA Playsafety Routine Training Course. Charlotte had been booked on this course, which was now scheduled for 27th October, from 24th September, due to COVID-19.
- iv. Gloucestershire Playing Fields Association – COVID19 related guidance on reopening sports facilities.
- v. Guidance for gardeners on ash-dieback disease.
- vi. Keep Britain Tidy – Great British September Clean, 11th – 27th September.

GP/107/20 **Correspondence received after 10th September 2020**

There was no further correspondence received.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 8.35 p.m.