

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 17th February 2021.

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 7:10p.m.

Present: Cllr S Terry (from Min Ref: GP/23/21) Cllr S Ward (Committee Vice Chairman)
Cllr M Barnes Cllr C Blackmore
Cllr P Godwin Cllr P Mackenzie
Cllr E MacTiernan Cllr J Roberts
Cllr G Shelton Cllr T Treacy

In attendance: Mrs C Woodward, Clerk of the Council
Mrs L Stewart, Clerk's Assistant

GP/17/20 **Apologies for Absence**

Cllr Terry had advised that she may be late for the meeting. No further apologies for absence had been received. In the absence of Cllr Terry Cllr Ward as Committee Vice Chairman chaired the meeting)

GP/18/21 **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).

GP/19/21 **Previous Minutes**

Cllr Shelton PROPOSED that the Minutes of the General Purposes Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 20th January 2021 should be approved as a true and accurate record. Cllr Mackenzie SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

GP/20/21 **Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes**

GP/14/20 Bird Boxes for Hub Grounds – Cllr Terry had donated bird boxes to the Parish Council and these had now been installed in the Hub grounds by Cllr Ward. It was noted that bird activity had already been noticed around the boxes.

GP/05/21 Northway Playing Field > COVID 19 Restrictions – Notices had been displayed at the Playing Field advising that the Skatepark, Outdoor Gym and MUGA were out of use for the remainder of the current lockdown.

GP/07/21 Joan's Field > Strimming – SmartCut had been asked to strim in Joan's Field after April and, if possible, be mindful of the daffodils. They had confirmed that they would attend the site on 10th May 2021.

GP/11/21 Parish Maintenance Contract > Land Opposite The Northway Centre – SmartCut had been instructed to mow to the edges of the land opposite The Northway Centre (following recent maintenance). A response had also been sent to the resident who contacted the Parish Council regarding this.

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GP/21/21 **GP Projects Working Party**

Members had been circulated a copy of the notes relating to the GP Projects Working Party Meeting that had taken place on 3rd February 2021. Cllr Mackenzie PROPOSED that recommendations made by the Working Party were approved (as detailed below). Cllr Treacy SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

Cllr Godwin PROPOSED that the Terms of Reference were approved. Cllr Barnes SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

Cllr Roberts gave a short report following his attendance at a Funding Workshop with Severn Trent Community Fund. A copy of the presentation was available from the Clerk for anyone interested.

Cllr Roberts also explained what had been discussed at the Working Party Meeting and the list of projects which had been arranged in order of priority: 1) Activity/Trim Trail, 2) Wheelchair Swing, 3) Skate Park upgrade, 4) Outdoor Gym Equipment upgrade, 5) Repair/replacement of the Roundabout in the Play Park. More information was being sought in readiness for the next meeting (due to take place on 7th April 2021).

Cllr Ward wondered whether a letter should be sent to houses backing onto The Spine to gauge opinions on the installation of a wooden trail along the footpath.

The Clerk reminded Members that, when applying for outside funding towards any of these projects, the Council would be required to show it had consulted with the community. Members considered whether it was worth expanding on the article being included in the newsletter so that it would serve as a consultation and save time in the long run. Cllr Godwin suggested that residents could be asked to let the Council know which projects they would like to see happen first. Cllr Ward felt that this was not practical as there were different time scales associated with the projects, specifically the Skate Park as it would cost a lot more.

Following investigations into provision of a wheelchair swing, the Council had been sent information on an Inclusive Play webinar taking place on 24th February 2021. Cllrs Roberts and Godwin expressed their interest in attending.

GP/22/21 **Northway Playing Field**

- i. **Northway Play Park** – Inspection reports relating to the Play Park had been received. No new issues had been raised.

Replacement grass matting had been delivered to the Office (Min Ref: GP/137/20 refers). Cllr Ward PROPOSED that a contractor was found to fix these to the ground.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- ii. **Northway Skate Park** – Inspection reports relating to the Skate Park had been received, however, no new issues were raised.

- iii. **M.U.G.A / Outdoor Gym** – No issues, relating to the M.U.G.A / outdoor gym, had been raised in the inspection reports.

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GP/22/21 **Northway Playing Field** (Continued)

- iv **BMX Humps** – No issues, relating to the BMX Humps, had been raised in the inspection reports.
- v **Other Issues** – A local resident had contacted the Office to complain about dog fouling on the Playing Field and the Football Club had mentioned that there was a real issue with dogs digging holes on the pitches, some quite large. Cllrs Roberts and Godwin had also noticed that there were a lot of holes on the Field.

The Clerk added that the Litter Picker had also commented on the amount of dog mess and the holes. A large group of people did regularly gather and talk by the Skate Park, often not paying attention to their dogs (off the lead).

Cllr Blackmore asked whether Councillors visiting the Playing Field could perhaps keep a look out to try and find out what the issue was. Several Members expressed that they would be happy to do this, however, Cllr Roberts felt that councillors should refrain from approaching any field users.

It was noted that people who live outside the Parish, particularly Bredon, came regularly to Northway specifically to use the field for their dogs as Bredon ban dogs from their playing field.

Members recalled previous discussions with Tewkesbury Borough Council regarding the possibility of a dog warden for the area. Cllr MacTiernan mentioned that the Officer who had been leading these discussions had since left the Borough Council and so the chances of them picking up again were slim.

Cllr Roberts felt that all the Council could do was either ban dogs from the Field or educate people on trying to improve the situation. Another option the Parish Council had would be to employ their own warden to patrol the area in the future.

Cllr Blackmore commented that she had not noticed any signage asking users of the Playing Field to keep dogs on a lead. It was confirmed that there were signs at the main entrances to the field. Cllr Ward suggested that signage was reviewed to make sure it was clear enough.

Members also considered what could be done about the holes in the field. The Clerk advised that as this had been reported to the Council it was responsible for filling the holes in and would be liable if they caused someone to hurt themselves. Cllr Godwin puts the soil back in the soils as and when she sees it.

Cllr Treacy wondered whether there would be any benefit in checking the CCTV to catch people letting their dogs off the lead, messing, and digging holes in the field. Cllr Blackmore agreed and felt that the Council could utilise the CCTV system to check for this anti-social behaviour. If the people responsible were the ones who were coming from outside of the Parish to use the field, because dogs were banned from the field in their own parish, this would be picked up by the cameras.

Members AGREED that any observations made upon visiting the Playing Field over the following month should be brought back to the Committee for debate.

GP/23/21 **Trees**

- i. **Joan's Field** – Ms. Teele, arborist, had almost completed tree work in Joan's Field (Min Ref: GP/06/21 refers), she hoped to finish there the following day.

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GP/23/21 **Trees** (continued)

- ii. **The Park** – Ms. Teele had been asked to be considerate of neighbouring properties, roads and, especially, the motorway if burning wood on site at The Park (GP/06/21 refers). Ms Teele shared the Council’s reservations about burning the wood and worried that it might cause complaints from residents, it would also be more time consuming. As an alternative, she was wondering where was best to leave wood on site - although this was not ideal (because the wood was diseased) it should pose low risk if far enough away from the trees. Ms Teele asked whether the Council would object to her leaving

Cllr Mackenzie had visited the site to ascertain the best place for brash to be left and explained to Members where he felt was most suitable (the far end of the field). Cllr Mackenzie confirmed that he would be willing to meet Ms. Teele on site to advise her of this. Cllr Ward PROPOSED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

Cllr Mackenzie also offered to assist Ms. Teele by moving some of the brash for her, if she wanted. It was AGREED that this offer should be passed on.

7.42 pm – Cllr Terry joined the meeting.

- iii. **Ash Dieback** – Further correspondence had been received from Gloucestershire County Council with regard to the Ash Dieback Project confirming that the Parish Council’s comments had been noted. It was also advised that there were already promising signs of natural regeneration being seen at sites where infected ash trees had been felled in large numbers.

As Cllr Terry had joined the meeting she took over the Chair.

GP/24/21 **Joan’s Field**

- i. **Giant Hogweed** – It was noted that the next Giant Hogweed inspections were due at the start of March and end of May. Cllr Roberts offered to undertake the inspections.
- ii. **Strimming** – Members were reminded of a previous agreement to undertake strimming around the trees in Joan’s Field (Min Ref: GP/125/20 refers). Cllr Terry PROPOSED that the Office should contact those Councillors that had volunteered to assist with this to arrange a suitable date.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- iii. **Nature Trail** – A recommendation had been made by the GP Projects Committee that the Council progress creation of a nature trail at Joan’s Field (Ref: GPP/06/21 refers). Some photographs were shown of a nature trail that had been established in Leicester.

Cllr Ward felt that his only concern with progressing something like this was the lack of a safe access into the field.

Cllr Roberts PROPOSED that the Council should progress this project. Cllr Ward SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

Members considered how this should be moved forward. It was felt that it might be useful to seek the advice of someone with a bit of knowledge and put together a drawing or plan. It was AGREED that further discussions should be left until the next GP Projects Working Party meeting.

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GP/25/21 **The Park**

- i. **Inspection Report** – No new issues had been raised in the inspection report.
- ii. **Other Issues** – No other issues were raised relating to The Park.

GP/26/21 **Newsletter**

Members looked over the draft copy of Northway Voice (Issue 24) and made some minor amendments. It was agreed that a short update on the bridge was included (that it would be going to Planning Committee at TBC in March).

Cllr Mackenzie explained the figures quoted in his speeding article, which had been based on data recorded by Police, Councillors as well as himself (as a member of the public).

The Clerk reminded Members of the discussion earlier in the meeting (GP/21/21 refers) and enquired whether they wished to put out a more in depth consultation relating to the GP Projects to try and meet the requirements of any grant funding applications. Cllr Terry pointed out that she had referred to residents' feedback being part of the process but agreed to re-word the article slightly. Cllr Ward suggested adding on the office contact details.

Cllr Roberts offered to write an article on the success of Santa's post-box for inclusion alongside a photograph of it.

Cllr Shelton had taken a photograph of the bird boxes in the Hub grounds, Cllr MacTiernan thought it would be nice to include this.

Cllr Blackmore suggested some amendments to the article explaining the precept increase. Cllr Terry offered to make these changes.

Cllr Ward suggested making mention of the fact that the scheduled roadworks along the A46 were not in relation to the proposed Retail Outlet, as some people suspected. Cllrs MacTiernan and Terry felt that it was not worth including this, as would be too late by the time the newsletter went out.

Members were asked to have all articles sent in before the following Wednesday so that the newsletter could be printed as soon as possible.

GP/27/21 **Dog Fouling**

Cllrs Terry and Mackenzie had suggested locations for installation of the 'We're Watching You' signs and the Litter Picker had also given her recommendations. It was noted that it would be good to put at least one of them on the Playing Field whilst there was such an issue with dogs there. Cllr Ward highlighted the fact that the signs would not work well in dimly lit areas.

Cllr Mackenzie expressed that he would be willing to put up the signs, if it would be of help. Cllr MacTiernan felt that too many Councillors went above and beyond their duty when it came to volunteering and so felt that a contractor should be instructed to install the signs. Cllr Godwin PROPOSED a contractor was instructed to do this work. Cllr Mackenzie SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

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GP/27/21 **Dog Fouling**

Members considered how regularly these should be moved about the various suggested locations. Cllr Ward felt that the Council should look at relocating the signs after a month or so.

Cllr Ward mentioned that the Litter Picker was going to highlight dog mess with pink spray paint whilst on duty. A lot of bagged poo was being left along The Spine (twenty-five bags had been collected by the Litter Picker that day) and so he had suggested spraying the bag itself – to highlight the issue – then picking it up on the next visit (if still there). Cllr Mackenzie wondered whether the fact that the Council was spraying the poo pink should be included in the Dog Fouling article in the newsletter.

It was felt that, with the various efforts being taken to tackle dog fouling in the Parish such as Councillor visits to the Playing Field (Min Ref: GP/22/21 refers), spraying of pink paint and installation of signage – this subject should be reviewed again at the March General Purposes Committee Meeting.

Cllr Ward PROPOSED that the Office should be authorised to purchase more spray/line marker paint, if necessary. Cllr Mackenzie SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

GP/28/21 **Parish Maintenance Contract**

- i. **Bins** – Cllr Ward reported on the condition of bins in the Parish. The worst one, he believed, was the dog bin along Kingston Road/Steward Road by the alleyway leading to Northway Lane which was badly damaged and rusted. The rest of the bins were not too bad, he did suggest, however, that the Council considered removing one of the bins in Grange Road, where there were dog and litter bins next to each other and storing it for future use. Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED that one of the bins in Grange Road was removed and put into storage. Cllr Barnes SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

Cllr Ward offered to remove the bin from its post and deliver it to the Hub.

Cllr Ward PROPOSED that the Council should put the request for a replacement bin along Kingston/Steward Road to Tewkesbury Borough Council (Min Ref: GP/142/20 refers). Cllr Terry SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- ii. **Grass Cutting** – A draft contract and grant agreement had been received from Tewkesbury Borough Council in relation to the grass cutting for 2021/22 (Min Ref: GP/143/20 refers). The contract did refer to three-monthly reports being submitted by the Parish Council, however, this was being amended to once-yearly as agreed with Mr Tonge, Head of Community Services, at the meeting in December.

Cllr Terry PROPOSED approval of the contract and grant agreement once amendment.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- iii. **Bus Shelter Cleaning** – Members received four quotations for cleaning of the bus shelters from April 2021 – Golden Valley Window Cleaning, Eco Blue, SCS and Fine Jet. Golden Valley Window Cleaning, the firm that was already being used for cleaning

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GP/28/21 **Parish Maintenance Contract** (Continued)

the brick shelters had provided the lowest price for all the shelters at £166.80 (3 brick shelters and 7 perspex). Members were happy with the standard of work that had so far been received and believed it was more manageable to use just one contractor for the cleaning. Therefore, Cllr Ward PROPOSED that Golden Valley were contracted to do this work. Cllr MacTiernan SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- iv. **Other Issues** – Cllr Mackenzie mentioned that he had forwarded a photograph of surfacing along The Spine where tarmac had broken up (near to The Hopyard), this was shown to Members. The Clerk recalled that this had been added to the County Council's programme after an elderly lady had fallen the previous year. Cllr Blackmore offered to report the issue via 'Fix My Street'. Cllr Ward pointed out that multiple complaints might get the problem dealt with quicker.

GP/29/21 **Drainage and Flooding**

- i. **Reports** – No reports were made in relation to drainage and flooding.
- ii. **Flood Warden** – Cllr Mackenzie (Flood Warden) had no issues to report.

GP/30/21 **'Report It'**

The following issues had been reported to the relevant authority since the previous General Purposes Committee Meeting:-

- Pot hole on Hardwick Bank Road junction with The Park.
- Pot hole on side of speed hump between Hardwick Bank Road and Willis Walk.
- Pot hole on The Park close to Long Eights.
- Pot hole outside 5 Lee Road.
- Pot hole outside 53 Fairway.
- Pothole on Northway Lane overbridge.
- Cars on verge in Davey Walk.
- Overhanging tree on corner of Grange Road and Hardwick Bank Road cut back.

GP/31/21 **Correspondence for Information**

None received.

GP/32/21 **Correspondence received after 11th February 2021**

- i. **HAGS** – Details of Play Cubes.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 8.30pm