

## **NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

**Following the passing of the Coronavirus Act 2020 (c.7), Councils were 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 7:35p.m.**

Present: Cllr Mrs S Terry (Committee Chairman) Cllr S Ward (Vice Chairman)  
Cllr Mrs C Blackmore Cllr Mrs P Godwin  
Cllr P Mackenzie Cllr E MacTiernan  
Cllr E Phennah Cllr J Roberts  
Cllr G Shelton

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

### GP/122/20 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Porter.

### GP/123/20 **Declarations of Interest**

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

### GP/124/20 **Previous Minutes**

Cllr Godwin PROPOSED that the Minutes of the General Purposes Committee Meeting held on Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> October 2020 should be approved as a true and accurate record. Cllr Terry SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

### GP/125/20 **Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes**

**GP/115/20 (i, b) Parish Maintenance Contract, Grass Cutting** – The Clerk's Assistant reported that contact had been made with Tewkesbury Borough Council (TBC) about renewal of the Grass Cutting Contract for the next financial year. The response had been very positive and Northway Parish Council (NPC) was now waiting for TBC to propose some dates when it would be convenient to hold a zoom style meeting. Cllr MacTiernan asked why NPC were starting discussions with TBC about the Grass Cutting Contract. The Clerk explained that the current contract was set up as a trial for one year and that it was to be reviewed, to decide if NPC wished to continue with the same arrangement.

**GP/119/20 (ii) Budget for Financial Year 2021/2022** – The Clerk's Assistant reported that the minutes of the previous General Purposes (GP) Committee meeting had reported that the new trees that Cllrs Ward and Shelton had planted, had not survived. It had since been noted by Cllr Shelton that in fact a large number of the trees were growing and some images of them, provided by Cllr Shelton, were shown to Members. Cllr Shelton had also suggested that a strategy for managing the overgrowth around some of the trees should be considered.

Cllr Terry asked if a contractor should be asked to do the work or would volunteers be available. The Clerk advised that the Parish Council had bought a strimmer that could be used for this work. Following a brief discussion, Cllrs, Mackenzie, Ward, Phennah, Roberts

**NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL**

GP/125/20 **Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes** – (Continued)

*and Blackmore offered to help. Cllr Ward suggested that this would not need to be done until the spring, when the grass began to grow again.*

*Cllr Terry PROPOSED that the subject be discussed again on the GP Committee meeting in February, when a date to do the work could be agreed.*

FOR: UNANIMOUS

*Cllr Shelton reported a number of broken bird or bat boxes in a corner of Joan's Field and asked if Northway Community Volunteers (NCV) were responsible for re-fixing them. Cllr Godwin advised that it was a mouse box that had been seen.*

GP/126/20 **Northway Playing Field**

- i. **Northway Play Park** – The Clerk's Assistant advised the Committee that there was a new reporting format, following Charlotte's recent training course. Any items of play equipment that are reported as being faulty, were shown in summary at the beginning of the report, with all relevant details contained later in the report on an item by item basis.

Cllr Ward was able to show Members the report on screen and suggested that just the items where a fault had been reported be discussed.

- a) Boundary walls – No sharp edges or protrusions, but there was chipped paint and graffiti noticed.
- b) Aerial Runway – Ground mats were lifting again in places. Cllr Ward had agreed to look at the matting and advise the Committee on a course of action.
- c) 3Mtr High Cone Climber – One area of rope had unravelled and another had frayed. Cllr Ward offered to investigate further to see if anything could be done in the short term, but also PROPOSED that NPC contact the manufacturer to find out what they would advise. Cllr Godwin SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

Cllr Mackenzie suggested that if tape was going to be used to bind the rope, that amalgamating tape be used, as it was very difficult to remove.

Cllr Ward was thanked for offering to investigate and repair the equipment where possible.

- ii. **Roundabout Repair Costs** - The Clerk's Assistant reported that the original supplier of the roundabout had been identified and had now provided costings for the parts and labour. To supply the replacement bearing only, a price of £595.00 had been quoted. To supply and fit the bearing, a price of £999.81 had been quoted. The Clerk's Assistant also provided a sample cost from another supplier, where a price for a bearing alone was £955.00 and to supply and fit, was £1,850.00.

Following discussions about the costs of the roundabout originally and the likelihood of ongoing repair costs, Cllr Ward PROPOSED that the discussion be deferred to the next GP meeting, where original costs could be discussed. Cllr Godwin SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- iii. **Northway Skate Park** – An Inspection Report had been received and it revealed that all the equipment at the Skate Park had damaged paintwork or finishing. It was also

**NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL**

GP/126/20 **Northway Playing Field** (Continued)

reported that there was a bent sign on the site and that the Serpent Runway had chipped concrete on top. Nothing noted in the report required immediate attention.

- iv **MUGA** – It was reported that there was one bent fence panel and a hoop that was looking very grubby. Nothing noted in the report required immediate attention.
- v **BMX Humps** – It was reported that there was a hole on the interior of the track. Nothing further was known about the extent of the damage. Cllr Terry asked that if any Members found themselves in the area, they could note any further detail and report back at the next GP meeting. Nothing noted in the inspection report required immediate attention.
- vi **Other Issues** – There were no other issues raised at this time.

GP/127/20 **Joan's Field**

- i. Following agreement at the last GP meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> October, for local contractor, Kristy Teele to inspect the trees at Joan's Field, the Clerk's Assistant read out a summary of the findings from the report received:
  - It was difficult to ascertain whether the disease that had been observed was on the fruit, the leaves, or the trees.
  - Two small instances of disease were found, and it was noted that it was possible that this could invade the bark/wood of the trees and spread, if left unchecked.
  - It was observed that the trees had been cut either earlier this year or last, but only on the basis of superficial shaping. For fruit trees to remain healthy, they should be pruned in such a way as to allow airflow and sunlight to get into them. It was reported that these trees are slowly becoming congested with wood.
  - It was recommended that NPC considered having the trees pruned in order to extend their lifespan, as once significant disease takes hold, they will deteriorate without the possibility of turning them back.
  - The report advised that a fair amount of work needed to be done to restore the trees to a proper state. An estimate of 2 to 2½ days would be needed at a day rate of £150.00.
  - The option was offered to undertake the work in one go, or to spread it out over a longer period, which may assist with budgets. It was recommended that any pruning should not be carried out by a non fruit tree person, as the tendency with tree surgeons was to cut for shape, rather than for fruit and longevity.
  - The final recommendation was to attach fruit tree grease bands to the trunks of the trees as these reduce aphid and other pest damage in the coming season.

Cllr Roberts commented that the trees were a great asset to the area and that it would be a shame if they were lost. Cllr Roberts' view was widely supported, and he PROPOSED that NPC asked Kristy Teele to carry out the work on the basis that it applied to all the fruit trees that she had been asked to quote for. Cllr Phennah SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

**NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL**

GP/127/20 **Joan's Field** – (continued)

Cllr MacTiernan reminded Members that there was a small number of fruit trees at The Park, which were in quite poor condition. Following a discussion on the various options that could be chosen to address that area as well, it was decided to ask Kristy that whilst she was in the area to carry out the work at Joan's Field, she also carry out an inspection only, of the trees at The Park, and submit her recommendations for treatment to them.

Cllr Terry PROPOSED this approach, which should allow sufficient time for the additional cost of the work at The Park to be obtained, ready for consideration at the next GP meeting.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- ii. With regard to the overgrowth at the base of trees and the embankment in Joan's Field, the Clerk's Assistant reported that he had been in contact with SmartCut, who advised that they had carried out the strimming work, in April and July, as per the terms of the contract. SmartCut were also asked to provide quote for a dedicated end of season cut-back, which they advised would be £170.00. The general view was that this was not worth doing at this stage in the season, as the grass would now stop growing.

Cllr Godwin commented that a strim would be required in early spring, because some of the smaller flowers that were planted there would not come through if the area was overgrown. Following a discussion about the various options for strimming, to help promote early growth of smaller flowers, Cllr Blackmore PROPOSED that NPC ask for advice from SmartCut about when they think the best time to do the strimming would be. Cllr Ward SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

GP/128/20 **The Park**

- i. With regard to The Park, the Clerk's Assistant advised that there was nothing to report at this time.
- ii. Teenage Shelter – The Clerk's Assistant informed the Committee that an inspection report had been received for the Teenage Shelter and that there were no concerns raised.

GP/129/20 **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 to TBC as part of the Grass Cutting Contract. The report due in November was submitted on 10<sup>th</sup> November, with a request for feedback if possible. The format adopted was a repeat of that used in July. The immediate feedback was to advise that the point of contact at TBC was moving to a new job and a new point of contact had been given to NPC.

Cllr Roberts PROPOSED that when negotiations get underway on the contract renewal, that NPC suggest TBC remove the three-monthly reporting requirement, as everything had gone so well during the year. Cllr Terry SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

**NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL**

GP/129/20 **Parish Maintenance Contract** – (continued)

Cllr Mackenzie reported that a dog waste bin in Spruce Close had been broken again and asked if it could be reported. Cllr Ward replied that the area was not TBC or NPC land, but came under Bromford.

Cllr Mackenzie also reported that a resident had been struck by a low hanging branch on a tree in Kestrel Way and asked if this could be reported to TBC.

Cllr Ward made the suggestion that Members could report issues of this nature directly to the TBC website, which would remove the need for reporting to go through the Parish Council office.

ii. **Other Issues**

- a) **Overgrowth of Bushes on Northway Lane** - The Clerk's Assistant updated the Committee by reporting that TBC had received a cancellation of work and that as a result, they may be able to start the cutting back of the overgrown bushes on the land opposite the Northway Centre and on Grange Road as early as today (18<sup>th</sup> November). The Clerk's Assistant reported that he had seen members of a TBC crew in the area but that the cutting back had not yet started. The Clerk reported that she had progressed this today and was informed that the work would be done during the week.

Cllr Roberts reported that the bushes and branches that were overhanging Northway Lane, close to the Northway Centre had been cut back, and the area made to look good. Cllr Terry commented that she had also seen the TBC crew in the area and had hoped that they would remove a loose branch from a tree at the Northway Lane – Hardwick Bank junction, but unfortunately that was not removed.

b) **Dog Bins –**

- i. With regard to the re-siting of a dog waste bin on The Spine, and the re-seating of a general waste bin on Kingstone road, Members were asked to ratify expenditure for these two pieces of work, that had been undertaken as a matter of urgency, on health and safety grounds.

Cllr Terry informed the meeting that she was aware that during the move of the dog waste bin, the wrong bin had been lifted and re-sited, but that the overall result was as requested.

Cllr Terry requested that the overall expenditure of £200 be ratified and Cllr Ward PROPOSED that it should be. Cllr MacTiernan SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- ii. The Committee was made aware of a telephone call that had been received at the Parish Office from a local resident, who had complained about the way that the bins in the local area were being used. She had reported to TBC that people had been adding dog waste bags on top of general waste in a bin close to Carrant Brook School. She reported that the person she had spoken to at TBC had been '*horrified*' that people had been using a general waste bin for dog waste. On contacting the Parish Office, she was informed that NPC had adopted the same policy as TBC with regard to mixed use bins.

Cllr Roberts suggested that it would be appropriate for NPC to acknowledge the efforts the resident had made, which Cllr Terry supported. Cllr Ward PROPOSED that a letter of thanks be sent to the resident. It was also noted that

**NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL**

GP/129/20 **Parish Maintenance Contract** (Continued)

the situation would continue, if bins were not emptied as frequently as they were supposed to be, and that there was little NPC could do.

It was suggested that a copy of the telephone call transcript be sent to TBC for comment, which Cllr Terry PROPOSED. Cllr Roberts SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- iii. With regard to support from TBC for the cost of bins and their installation, the Clerk's Assistant was able to report that NPC had been contacted by TBC, and informed that if the requirement was for one or two bins, they could possibly help but beyond that, NPC would have to self-fund.

With regard to the cost of replacement (dual purpose) bins, members were shown a number of available options from different suppliers, including TBC.

The Clerk commented that one of the options came with a lifetime guarantee, which could be a worthwhile trade off against its slightly higher cost. Cllr Ward commented that TBC do not have a policy of unlocking bins, which in this instance could be a problem.

Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED that to satisfy the immediate requirement, NPC accept the offer of the two bins from TBC, then survey the remaining bins in the area to understand how many need to be replaced and add the figure to the budget for the coming Financial Year. Cllr Ward SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

The Clerk's Assistant updated the Committee on the current budget position for waste bins: For litter bins, there was £800. For dog waste bins there was £350.

The Clerk reported that in respect of the two bins that were in need of urgent replacement, the Clerk's Assistant had made repeated requests of TBC for an update on availability and had received no response to a number of emails, and telephone messages. The Clerk had also been chasing for information on the same subject and found the response to have been very poor.

The Clerk reported that she had spoken to TBC earlier today and it appeared that some progress would be made, but was not confident of a swift response based on recent experience. Cllr MacTiernan responded that most TBC officers are very overloaded, mostly due to COVID-19, as well as having to manage their daily responsibilities, as well as some other major projects. Cllr MacTiernan offered to try to progress the immediate issue with TBC.

Cllr Ward suggested that if TBC could provide the bins, NPC could arrange installation at its own expense, if that would help. It was agreed that a like for like exchange would be acceptable, given that the two in question would be free of charge, but that a dual waste alternative would also be acceptable.

It was agreed that NPC would wait to see what progress could be made, following Cllr MacTiernan's offer to help, but leave the subject as an agenda item for December.

**NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL**

GP/129/20 **Parish Maintenance Contract** (Continued)

Cllr Terry PROPOSED that if nothing had changed by the time of the next GP meeting that NPC should proceed with purchasing replacement bins as necessary.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

GP/130/20 **Drainage and Flooding**

- i. **Reports** – There were no reports received for this meeting.
- ii. **Flood Warden** – Cllr Mackenzie reminded the Committee that he had asked if the gullies at The Park, Northway Lane and Hardwick Bank at Carrant Brook could be checked and if necessary, cleared, before the winter season arrived. Progress on this was ongoing and an update would be provided at the next GP.

GP/131/20 **'Report It'**

The Clerk's Assistant reported that nothing new had been added to the list since the last meeting.

Cllr MacTiernan asked that in relation to email correspondence between NPC and TBC to do with dog bins, that she be included for reference, as she was trying to help progress the issue.

GP/132/20 **Correspondence for Information**

- i. Bulletin War Memorials Trust.
- ii. **Gloucestershire Playing Fields Association (GPFA)** – New COVID-19 Lockdown Restrictions – Implications for sport and recreation.
- iii. Cllr Terry made Members aware that this was the last meeting for the Clerk's Assistant as he would be leaving this month. Cllr Terry thanked him for taking over in what turned out to be a difficult time, due to COVID-19 and for his work on the various issues that had emerged during his time in the Parish Office.

The Clerk's Assistant thanked Members for all the support they had given in making the job easier, during what was a difficult time, that no one could have anticipated.

GP/133/20 **Correspondence received after 12<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

There was no further correspondence received.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 20.30p.m.