

**NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2024 in the Ray Shill Room at Northway Community Hub, Lee Walk, Northway, commencing at 7:15 p.m.

Present: Cllr M Barnes (Committee Chairman) Cllr G Fancourt  
Cllr Godwin Cllr P Mackenzie (until/from Min Ref: GP/85/24)  
Cllr E MacTiernan Cllr K Poole  
Cllr G Shelton Cllr S Terry

In attendance: Geoff Sallis, SafeAvon (until Min Ref: GP/79/24)  
Mrs C Woodward, Clerk of the Council  
Mrs L Stewart, Clerk's Assistant

GP/75/24 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Roberts and Beadle.

GP/76/24 **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made as required by the Code of Conduct adopted by the Parish Council on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2023 (Min Ref C/85/23).

GP/77/24 **Previous Minutes**

Cllr Poole PROPOSED that the Minutes of the General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024 should be approved as a true and accurate record. Cllr Mackenzie SECONDED.

FOR: Cllr Poole Cllr Mackenzie  
Cllr Barnes Cllr Fancourt

ABSTENTIONS: Cllr Godwin Cllr MacTiernan  
Cllr Shelton Cllr Terry

GP/78/24 **Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes**

***Wheelchair Swing*** – An email of thanks had been sent regarding the installation of the wheelchair swing.

***GP/58/24 Ball Games*** – An email had been sent to the resident that complained about ball games being played in Hawthorn Way. A response was read to Members.

***GP/69/24 Parish Maintenance Contract > Litter Picking*** – A new trolley had been purchased for litter picking.

GP/79/24 **Safe Avon**

Geoff Sallis introduced himself to Members and gave a presentation on the rise that was being seen locally in 'sewage dumping' by power stations. He, along with other volunteers, had been testing the levels of nitrate and phosphate in local watercourses and collating this data.

He asked the Council to:

1. Consider supporting the project.
2. Allow use of noticeboard/website to direct information and data to the local community.
3. Support the project by buying water testing kits and volunteering to use them.

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GP/79/24 **Safe Avon** (continued)

Cllr Poole PROPOSED purchase of a kit, at a cost of £240 (which would allow two years of testing), to use as a Council. Additionally, the Council should liaise with Friends of the Earth regarding use of resources to share and raise awareness. Cllr Fancourt SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

Geoff added that he would also be happy to come out and give a talk for Members of the public to attend, if the Council wished.

8.02pm – Geoff Sallis left the meeting.

GP/80/24 **Northway Playing Field**

i. **Northway Play Park** – The following updates were reported:

Play Park Gate – Painting was in hand.

Aerial Runway – Cllr Mackenzie had checked finger trap and confirmed it was too high to reach.

Roundabout – Cllr Mackenzie had confirmed that the missing bolt could not be replaced due to there being no thread. (Youths removed a number of the bolts from the roundabout at the end of May but a local company had offered to provide replacement bolts and a contractor had fitted them).

Roundabout – Cllr Mackenzie had checked the finger trap which had reduced to 5mm, showing that the new bearing had made a difference.

Play Train – Cllr Mackenzie had replaced the missing bolt.

Merga Swing – Painting was in hand.

Swings – Cllr Mackenzie had checked, loosened bolts and lubricated the swings.

Table Tennis Table and Boundary Walls – Cllr Mackenzie had smoothed the chipped areas with a grinder.

MUGA Panel – Cllr Mackenzie had been unable to locate the damaged MUGA panel.

Additionally, the following new issues had been raised:

Wheelchair Swing Area – A lot of weeds had been noted. It was reported that contractors had not, initially, been given a radar key to access this part of the Park and so had since been provided with one to allow maintenance.

Swing Seats – Bird poo - The play inspector had since cleaned the seats.

Tiger Mulch – Mulch was missing/loose around edge of roundabout.

Merga Swing - Screw needed tightening. Cllr Mackenzie offered to assess this and tighten, if possible.

Aerial Runway – It was reported that there was a lot of slack in the cable. Cllr Mackenzie offered to take a look. Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED that, if necessary, a contractor should be instructed to tighten the cable. Cllr Terry SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

ii. **Northway Skatepark**

a. **Inspection Reports** - The following updates were reported:

Quad/Driveway with Rail – Cllr Mackenzie had reported that he did not feel the transition posed a safety risk.

Grind Box – Cllr Mackenzie had reported that the grind box would need to be dismantled to replace the missing bolt.

The following new issues had been raised:

Half Pipe – Panel pulled slightly away from unit.  
Serpent – Holes in the surface (cement)  
Cllr Mackenzie offered to inspect both of these items.

b. **Skatepark Project**

The Clerk, Clerk's Assistant and Cllr Roberts had met with the National Lottery's Funding Officer regarding the grant which had been awarded towards the skatepark. They had gone through the terms and conditions as well as everything else that needed to be addressed.

It was noted that the Parish Council needed to adopt a Whistleblowing policy. Cllr Terry PROPOSED that the office was authorised to put this together alongside Cllr Roberts. Cllr MacTiernan SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

The National Lottery had felt that it was unlikely that the legal side of things would be in place before the end of July, which was when Maverick hoped to begin construction.

The National Lottery had listed the official project start date as 19<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

Cllr Barnes PROPOSED that the Council authorised Thomson and Bancks to liaise with the National Lottery on behalf of the Parish Council on legal matters (estimated to cost between £2,000 - £2,500). (It was noted that, although this was over what had been allocated for legal matters in the grant, the overspend could potentially be reclaimed from the contingency).

FOR: UNANIMOUS

Cllr Terry PROPOSED that the Council should request access to water from the Changing Rooms whilst skatepark construction was taking place and, if permitted, cover the cost of water invoices during this period. Cllr MacTiernan SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

Members considered the GP Projects Working Party's decision to look into fundraising towards the skatepark project. Cllr Terry PROPOSED that this was deferred until the next meeting, by which time the Council would, hopefully, have more of an idea of timeframe. Cllr Poole SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- iii. **M.U.G.A / Outdoor Gym** – Weekly inspection reports relating to the MUGA/Outdoor Gym were received. It was noted that the MUGA fencing, posts and basketball backboard were still dirty. Cllr Barnes said that he hoped to clean them in July. The peeling post had been repainted (by the Play Inspector) (Min Ref: GP/61/24 refers).
- iv. **BMX Humps** – Weekly inspection reports relating to the BMX Humps had been received, no issues were raised.
- vi. **Other Issues** – Residents of a property backing onto the Playing Field had complained that overgrowth was encroaching into their garden. Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED that the Council's contractors were asked to remove the bush causing this overgrowth. Cllr Poole SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

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GP/80/24 **Northway Playing Field** (continued)

It was noted that there was a section of overgrowth on the Field closer to the car park. Cllr Terry PROPOSED that this was also removed. Cllr Shelton SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

GP/81/24 **Joan's Field**

- i. **Giant Hogweed Inspection** – It noted that Cllr Roberts had agreed to undertake the next Giant Hogweed inspection. It was AGREED that the outcome of this should be deferred until the next meeting.
- ii. **Other Issues** – No further issues were raised.

GP/82/24 **Platinum Park**

- i. **Teenage Shelter** – The weekly inspection reports relating to the Teenage Shelter had been received. No issues were raised.
- ii. **Trees**
  - a. An application had been submitted to the Community Orchard Grant Scheme towards purchase and planting of six fruit trees (Min Ref: GP/67/24 refers). A response was being awaited.
  - b. It was reported that seven out of the ten new trees on Platinum Park had died. Cllr MacTiernan recalled that Gloucestershire County Council, who had provided the trees, usually budgeted for replacing any that died. Cllr Barnes PROPOSED that the Council should try and apply for the trees to be replaced.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

Members considered reasons why so many of the trees had died. It was suggested that perhaps advice should be sought regarding whether different trees, or a different location, might be more suitable.

- iii. **Bollards** – Cllr Barnes offered to check the stability of the bollards on Platinum Park.
- iv. **Other Issues** – No further issues were raised.

GP/83/24 **Newsletter**

Cllr Poole suggested that an article on the SafeAvon project should be included in the newsletter and she offered to write this. Cllr Terry added that she had a couple of articles she would forward to the office for inclusion.

GP/84/24 **Tree Maintenance Schedule**

It was noted that visual tree inspections had taken place. A tree surgeon had been asked to remove a hanging branch from a tree in Sycamore Road.

Cllr Fancourt expressed frustration that the walkway between Sallis Close and Joan's Field could not be cut back. It was pointed out that, previously, residents of Sallis Close had not wanted this walkway maintained.

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GP/84/24 **Tree Maintenance Schedule** (continued)

Cllr Godwin mentioned that young trees planted amongst overgrowth at the entrance to Northway Playing Field had been mowed by the Council's contractors.

Cllr Fancourt requested that the Committee considered what tree work was required in three months time so that it could all be tackled at once.

GP/85/24 **NCV Flower Barrels**

8.45pm – Cllr Mackenzie left the meeting.

The Clerk reported that she had spoken to Richard Dunn, who had previously been involved with Northway Community Volunteers (NCV) He had wanted to try and lift the barrels and relocate them to the Ashchurch Railway Station, however, since inspecting them, he felt that only one would be strong enough to move and so he was going to leave them where they were.

Cllr Shelton expressed that he would be willing to plant flowers and water them in the barrels on Platinum Park. Cllr Fancourt said that he would be happy to help maintain the one in Joan's Field.

8.50pm – Cllr Mackenzie joined the meeting.

Cllr Shelton suggested that the Council should take on ownership of all the NCV barrels and fund replacement of them in the future. Cllr MacTiernan was against funding more barrels when there were not enough volunteers to maintain them.

Cllr Poole suggested appealing for volunteers in the newsletter, she was advised that the Council had already done this, and no serious interest had been received. Cllr Poole felt that the area might have changed since then and felt a last-ditch attempt should be made. Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED inclusion of a short article in the newsletter asking if any residents would be interested in taking on maintenance of any barrels (at their own expense). Cllr Terry SECONDED. Cllr Poole offered to write the article.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

GP/86/24 **Parish Maintenance Contract**

- i. **Weed Killing** – Members were reminded that Gloucestershire County Council would no longer support any weed spraying programmes that used Glyphosate, only ones that used ICADE. Smart Cut had advised that ICADE, although good on brambles, would not kill grass so would be ineffective for hard standing spraying. It would also cost a lot more to use (nearly double what the Council was currently paying).

Members considered looking into other weed killing products that could be used, however, since Gloucestershire County Council had advised that they would only support the use of ICADE it was felt that there would be no benefit in looking at alternatives.

Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED that the Parish Council should stop weedkilling for the time being and re-consider whether or not it was necessary at the 2026/27 budget setting meeting (taking place in October 2025). Cllr Poole SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- ii. **Other Issues** – Tewkesbury Borough Council had been in touch following a complaint that the Parish Council's mowing teams had trimmed off some whips and cut into the base of trees opposite the Northway Centre.

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GP/86/24 **Parish Maintenance Contract** (continued)

The contractors had been informed of this complaint and would be looking at the alleged damage.

It had been noted that the Northway bus shelters had not been cleaned for a while. The firm that had been contracted to take on the work had overlooked the initial email accepting their price but had since confirmed that they would do a clean. Members were informed that the Litter Picker had cleaned and weeded at the Saxon Park bus shelter. It was AGREED that the Council's thanks should be passed on.

GP/87/24 **Drainage and Flooding**

- i. **Reports** – No reports were received.
- ii. **Flood Warden** – Cllr Mackenzie confirmed that there were no flooding issues to report. He mentioned that he was unable to attend the next GRCC Flood Warden's meeting.

GP/88/24 **'Report It'**

The following issues had been reported to the relevant authorities over the past month:

Willis Walk overgrowth.  
Parking on pavements with no dropped kerbs.  
Bag of sand on grassed area in Willis Walk.  
Youths throwing bottles at Hub building.  
Overhanging bushes along Northway Lane footpath.  
Damage to roundabout in Play Park.  
Overgrowth along alleyway between Fairway and Northway Lane.  
Overhanging bushes on Northway Lane M5 overpass.  
Works on Northway Lane motorway bridge – dangerous for cyclists.  
Smell in Long Eights coming from Vetspeed.

GP/89/24 **Correspondence for Information**

- i. **CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England) Gloucestershire** – Message from Chair.
- ii. **GRCC (Gloucestershire Rural Community Councils)** – Community Buildings Network.
- iii. **GAPTC (Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils)** – Slides from Networking session on Public Rights of Way.

GP/90/24 **Correspondence Received After 13<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

None received.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 9.10 pm.