

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 20th March 2019 at Northway Community Hub, Lee Walk, Northway, commencing at 7:07 p.m.

Present: Cllr S Ward (Committee Chairman) Cllr Mrs P Godwin (Committee Vice Chairman)
Cllr D Birch Cllr P Cox
Cllr Mrs E MacTiernan Cllr E Phennah
Cllr C Porter Cllr J Roberts

In attendance: Gordon Buchanan (Environmental Health Manager, Tewkesbury Borough Council) (until Min Ref: GP/34/19 refers)
Kath Henly (Environmental Health Officer, Tewkesbury Borough Council) (until Min Ref: GP/34/19 refers)
Mrs C Woodward, Clerk of the Council
Mrs L Stewart, Clerk's Assistant

GP/30/19 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Terry, Castle and Bailey.

GP/31/19 **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/32/19 **Previous Minutes**

Cllr Godwin PROPOSED that the Minutes of the General Purposes Committee Meeting held on Wednesday, 27th February 2019 should be approved as a true and accurate record. Cllr MacTiernan SECONDED.

FOR:	Cllr Godwin	Cllr MacTiernan
	Cllr Cox	Cllr Phennah
	Cllr Porter	Cllr Roberts
	Cllr Ward	

ABSTENTIONS: Cllr Birch

GP/33/19 **Matters Arising From the Previous Minutes**

GP/20/19 Northway Playing Field > Northway Play Park – GAB Waste had emptied the trampoline pit of water.

GP/20/19 Northway Playing Field > Footpath – Following confirmation (from Tewkesbury Borough Council) that Section 106 funds could cover the cost of resurfacing this footpath, a quotation for the works (from Cheltenham Surfacing) had been accepted.

GP/23/19 Newsletter – The latest copy of Northway Voice (issue 19) was in the process of being distributed around the parish.

It was noted that, following the article appealing for help on behalf of the Luncheon Club, four people had contacted the Council offering their services voluntarily, and also at least two new people had signed up to attend. Zumba had also had new member(s) and several residents had contacted the Council to request nomination packs.

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GP/33/19 **Matters Arising From the Previous Minutes** (continued)

GP/28/19 Correspondence for Action > Woodland Trust – *The Council's application for free trees had been successful (for November delivery). The Clerk mentioned that a local resident had offered to help with planting and/or watering the trees.*

GP/34/19 **Dog Fouling**

- i. **Signs** – Gordon Buchanan (EH Manager at TBC) introduced himself and Kath Henly (EH Officer at TBC) to Members and apologised for the length of time it had taken for him to get signs and stickers to the Parish Council, but they had been extremely busy trying to roll out the new Environmental Order across the parishes.

Kath explained the Public Space Protection Order that had been introduced by TBC in 2018. It specifically addressed the issue of dog fouling and would last three years - following which it would be evaluated and reviewed as part of an ongoing process.

The new Order made it an offence for persons in control of a dog/dogs not to pick up after them straight away. In addition, it was also an offence for dog walkers not to have a receptacle (dog poo bags) on them and a fixed penalty fine of £100 could be issued (if prosecuted it would be a maximum fine of £1,000).

Kath explained that TBC was aware that the vast majority of dog walkers did pick up after their pets but they wanted to spread the word that people needed to make sure that they had sufficient dog poo bags before leaving the house. If one or two bags had been used during the walk, leaving the walker without any more bags, it would not be a sufficient excuse and people would still be fined.

Gordon and Kath showed Members signs that would be going up around the Borough advising of these new rules.

Cllr Roberts asked who would be able to enforce the Order and issue the fixed penalty fines. Kath explained that only authorised TBC officers would be serving the fixed penalty notices. At this stage though, they were trying to raise awareness. Kath asked if the Council might be willing to mark on a map the problem areas in Northway (they were already aware that of the **Playing** Field being an issue and the surrounding footpaths). Gordon added that, if the Council continued to feed back particular areas to TBC, they could focus on these whilst doing their patrols (although officers were limited).

Gordon mentioned that the officers would be handing out promotional torches that doubled up as dog poo bag holders initially. They also hoped to hand out some printed dog poo bags and leaflets (some of which they would supply to Northway Parish Council for distribution).

Cllr MacTiernan asked whether the TBC was going to consider supplying dog poo bags again, as this had been done in the past. Gordon said the bags were only being provided as a way of promotion at the moment, going forward he could not guarantee this would become a long-term thing – although if residents found it useful and this was fed back to the Borough Council, bids could possibly be made to arrange this (although he re-iterated that he could not guarantee this).

Cllr Birch asked what time of day the officers would be doing their patrols. Kath said that they would be doing patrols in the early morning, mid-day and in the evening. They would also be encouraging people to report any incidents of dog fouling (not being picked up) when witnessing it.

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GP/34/19 **Dog Fouling** (continued)

Cllr MacTiernan asked when promotion would be starting in Northway. Gordon said it was starting immediately. Leaflets would be ready by the following week and they already had some stickers available for placing over existing dog fouling signs. He could only provide 20 stickers for the Northway area at this time as they wanted to see how well they worked and whether they would wear. Members confirmed that they would be willing to help affix these stickers to some of the existing signs.

Gordon mentioned that it would be useful if the Parish Council could mark sign locations (highlighting which ones had been given stickers), dog bins and litter bins on a map. TBC could then use their mapping software to create an overall plan of the area and what was where. This would also give an idea of how many more stickers would be required.

Gordon said that TBC had issued a press release about the new Public Space Protection Order - 'Be prepared: Bag and bin it!' - which had received a lot of interactions on Facebook. Dog fouling was a big issue. Another thing a lot of people did not realise was that they could use litter bins for disposing of their dog poo bags.

Initially, on their patrols, officers would be asking dog walkers if they had sufficient dog poo bags, they did not want to upset anyone and it would be part of spreading awareness of the new Plan. When it came time to patrol the area again though, they would be looking to fine anyone who did not leave the house prepared with enough dog poo bags. Members of the Council asked whether they could assist TBC with the patrols. Gordon said that, if Northway Parish Councillors were interested in accompanying officers (who would be working in pairs), it would allow them to split up and cover larger areas. Several Members were interested in assisting TBC officers if they were told when the patrols would be taking place.

Cllr Ward asked what money from the fines issued would go towards. Kath confirmed that fixed penalty fine money would go back to TBC.

Cllr MacTiernan asked what TBC intended to do if someone refused to give their details when asked (if being issued with a fine). Gordon said that they would be working closely with the Police and there was also the option of talking to the Parish Council and/or other dog walkers – describing what dog a person walked was often information for someone to recognise who they were and where they lived. Also, it would be an offence for someone not to give their details to a uniformed Officer, when asked. It was always a risk but, generally, most people were compliant.

Gordon hoped that, in taking this approach (doing various campaigns, starting the patrols and stepping up enforcement later), people would get the message. If it turned out that officers were getting abuse and not being given information when requested, TBC might consider the use of body cams.

Cllr MacTiernan mentioned that the Parish Council was hosting a Community Day on 8th June and Gordon said that he would be happy to arrange for someone from Environmental Health at TBC to attend and help promote all the issues that were covered by this department, as it was so varied, and interaction with the community allowed officers to do their jobs much better.

Members asked whether TBC would object if Northway Parish Council had signs made with TBC's wording – and perhaps NPC's logo included as well – as it already had agreement to purchase and install ten dog fouling signs on the Playing Field (Min Ref: GP/33/18 refers). Gordon said that he had no objections to this and gave details of the printing company that TBC had used.

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GP/34/19 **Dog Fouling** (continued)

- ii. **Bins** – Members explained to Gordon and Kath about its agreement to install a dog bin in Sinderberry Drive (at residents’ request) but Tewkesbury Borough Council could not advise whether it would be able to add it to Ubico’s maintenance schedule (Min Ref: GP/19/19 refers). It was noted that a sign had been put up, as requested by Julie Davis (TBC Waste and Recycling Services) advising residents to use the nearby bins for disposing of their dog poo bags, however, the Council still had a dog bin in storage ready for installation. Gordon said that he would talk to Julie about this but explained when there were too many bins installed it added to Ubico’s workload, however, in situations where there was evidence of a need (such as this) they were willing to take it into consideration.

It was explained to Gordon that, due to the fact that there were already a lot of dog bins in place (and litter bins could now also be used for disposal of dog poo bags) Northway Parish Council had introduced a policy that it only installed further dog bins if there was a specific need for them (Min Ref: GP/126/18 refers).

Cllr Ward mentioned that Tewkesbury Borough operatives had been spotted leaving the dog bin lids open after emptying them. Gordon said that he would talk to the operatives about this.

The possibility of getting signs to affix on litter bins advising that dog poo bags could be disposed of in them was mentioned.

7:55pm – Gordon Buchanan and Kath Henly left the meeting.

GP/35/19 **Northway Playing Field**

i. **Northway Play Park**

- a. **Inspection Reports** – It had been reported that the boundary walls had been subjected to vandalism and graffiti and required repainting. Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED that yellow paint should be purchased for use on the boundary walls and also the concrete bollards at the entrance to the field (as agreed under Min Ref: GP/20/19). Cllr Roberts SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

It was also suggested that the presence of graffiti boards on the Playing Field should be highlighted in the next issue of Northway Voice.

- b. **Self Closing Gate** - It was noted that, following advice received from a local contractor, plans to modify the self closing gate at the Play Park might not be possible - and, upon seeing photographs, Members agreed that installation of a cover over the mechanism would prevent the gate from being opened.

It had also been suggested, by two firms, that the mechanism was more likely to have been damaged because of the gate opening too far (as opposed to children standing on the gate, as previously thought).

Following this new information, Cllr Roberts PROPOSED that the Council should look into the possibility of repositioning or adapting the posts in place to stop the gate opening too far. Cllr MacTiernan SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

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GP/35/19 **Northway Playing Field** (continued)

- ii. **Northway Skate Park** – Members received inspection reports relating to the Skate Park. It was noted that graffiti was present on the Half Pipe. It was AGREED that GAB Waste should be asked to attempt to remove this with graffiti wipes.
- iii. **M.U.G.A / Outdoor Gym** – Members received the inspection reports relating to the MUGA and outdoor gym area. No issues were raised.
- iv. **BMX Track** – Members received inspection reports relating to the BMX Track. No issues were raised.
- v. **Other Issues** – None received.

GP/36/19 **Parish Maintenance Contract**

- i. **Tree Management Strategy** - Cllr Birch confirmed that he would be happy to help risk assess the trees (along with other Members) once it had been established which areas the Parish Council was responsible for (Min Ref: GP/10/19 refers). Members considered how it could map the trees for which it was responsible – as recording each tree individually would be a lot of work.

It was AGREED that the Clerk and Clerk's Assistant should first ascertain the areas for which the Parish was responsible and mark them on a map. Following this, Members should be asked to help inspect trees at each of these locations, highlighting any that they might consider to be medium or high risk.

- ii. **Flood Warden** – It was noted that Cllr Shelton had stepped down from his position as Flood Warden for Northway. Cllr Roberts PROPOSED that the Council thanked Cllr Shelton for the time and effort that he had put towards this role. AGREED.
- iii. **Other Issues** – It was noted that several vehicles had been witnessed parking on the grass alongside the access road to Northway Playing Field (old Northway Lane). A blanket letter had been sent asking resident not to park on this grass.

GP/37/19 **'Report It'**

Numerous incidents of graffiti had been reported to Gloucestershire Constabulary (and photographs were tabled for Members).

GP/38/19 **Correspondence for Information**

- i. **Sunshine Gym** – Outdoor fitness.
- ii. **Keep Britain Tidy** – LEQ Solutions

GP/39/19 **Correspondence received after 14th March 2019**

- i. **Councillor Resignation** – Cllr Cox thanked Members for being so welcoming but advised that he would be resigning from his councillor position. He explained that it had not been what he expected and he did not feel like he was the right person for the role, although he was happy to help with any future events. Cllr Ward thanked Cllr Cox for his contribution to the Council and said he was sorry it had not been for him.

As there was no other business the meeting concluded at 8:25 p.m.