

## **CENTRAL SWINDON NORTH PARISH COUNCIL**

### **LEISURE & RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING**

Minutes of the meeting held virtually via Zoom at 7pm on 20th October 2020

**Present** Cllr M Lucas (Chair)  
Cllr J Ballman  
Cllr R Ballman  
Cllr D Patey  
  
Cllr S Henderson (Non-committee Member)

**Officers** A Briggs (Estates Manager)  
Andy Reeves (Parish Clerk)  
A Webb (Youth Worker)  
A Cripps (Libraries Manager)

**Public** None

**227** **Apologies**  
None received.

**228** **Declarations of Interest & Applications for Dispensation**  
Cllrs J Ballman declared a non-pecuniary interest in HBUF and RSPB.  
Cllr M Lucas declared a non-pecuniary interest in the contractor who had quoted for the lighting works at Southbrook Recreation Ground.

**229** **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**  
Cllr R Ballman asked whether the Parish Council had considered engaging with schools and getting young people involved in improving ecosystems & biodiversity in areas across the Parish. Cllr M Lucas agreed with the suggestion and spoke of Idverde being involved and utilised to educate young people.  
The Estates Manager agreed to pass on contact details of the school in Ferndale and suggest the Youth Worker be involved.  
The Youth Worker confirmed that he has contacts at Fernbrook school and could obtain contact details for Ferndale School.  
The Estates Manager added that Idverde would look to involve youths in the bulb planting to take place.

Cllr J Ballman proposed the minutes be approved as a true and accurate record, seconded by Cllr D Patey. All agreed.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous meeting be approved as a true and accurate record.

**230** **St Marks Green Flag & Car Park**  
The Estates Manager confirmed that the Finance & General Purposes Committee had agreed to proceed with costing the project for St Marks and that the Parish Clerk was in the process of writing a business plan.  
Couple of additions and small minor purchases approved by Finance & General Purposes Committee which were being actioned.

With regards to the car park the Estates Manager informed the Committee that he was chasing a contractor for a quotation. One quotation received to extend the existing car park at St Marks was displayed on screen. It was confirmed that the quoted cost did not include VAT.

Cllr J Ballman informed the Committee that he had been in touch with a Swindon Borough Council (SBC) Planning Officer who had sent through the planning consent for an overflow car park obtained previously. SBC had confirmed that the consent was still live so no further planning permissions would be needed. Cllr J Ballman went on to say that no planning permissions would be needed for the proposed works at the Southbrook Recreation Ground.

Cllr J Ballman suggested contractors be given a deadline for providing quotes for the works required to enable them to proceed. Cllr M Lucas agreed.

Cllr M Lucas commented on quoted costs for the removal of excess material. The Estates Manager explained that the intention was to create a bund around the site from any excess materials.

Cllr J Ballman queried whether the works for Southbrook Recreation Ground and St Marks could be combined into one contract to reduce costs. The Estates Manager commented on the threshold for procurement/tendering.

Cllr D Patey asked whether anything could be done to deter local residents from parking within St Marks. The Estates Manager responded that the Parish Council were looking into options available re: securing the car park and enforcing TROs at St Marks.

**231 Asset Strategy & 2021-2023 Committee Budget Planning**

Cllr M Lucas explained to the Committee that this item had been brought up by Cllr J Ballman. He went on to speak of the Parish Council Community Centres and works required.

Cllr R Ballman commented on a leak in the roof at Gorse Hill Community Centre.

The Estates Manager shared a draft document on Asset Strategy which outlines objectives for the Parish Assets and includes an action plan. He explained that a collaborative approach was needed from Cllrs. The Estates Manager confirmed that the draft documents would be circulated for Cllrs to review and comment.

Cllr R Ballman queried whether agreed projects would be monitored via the RAG system. Cllr M Lucas commented that areas and projects needed to be prioritised with input from all Cllrs.

Cllr J Ballman spoke of the dilapidation reports received from Swindon Borough Council (SBC). He went on to suggest that the Parish Council engage with Public Power Solutions to discuss the possibility of installing solar panels at Community Centres.

The Estates Manager explained that one of the strategic objectives within the draft Asset Strategy is to improve the green credentials of assets, which includes the use of solar panels. He went on to explain some of the different facets of the draft Asset Strategy, cosmetic rejuvenation, compliance and key issues, and capital works.

Cllr M Lucas commented on the different aspects which needed to be looked at and budgeted for.

Cllr J Ballman asked for play areas to be considered within the Asset Strategy. He went on to talk of a project he had been involved in previously which was looking to install a young person play area on The Circle in Pinehurst. He also spoke of the possibility of installing a toddler play area at the back of Pinetrees Community Centre. Cllr M Lucas confirmed that existing and new play areas were included in the draft Asset Strategy.

It was confirmed that the draft Asset Strategy would be shared with Cllrs for comments and would be brought back for further discussion at the next Committee meeting. The Estates Manager suggested an Asset Working Group be created to develop the Asset

Strategy. Cllr M Lucas agreed.

Cllr S Henderson asked whether the Asset Strategy could be raised and brought to the attention of all Cllrs at the Full Council meeting to take place the following evening.

Cllr J Ballman suggested that, given the current Coronavirus situation and Government guidelines in place, the Parish Council aim to start any agreed works at Community Centres in March/April 2021. Cllr M Lucas agreed.

Cllr J Ballman commented that the Asset Strategy should not become a tool for delaying projects.

Cllr M Lucas spoke of his vision for a tiered strategy for completing projects and works.

### **232 Libraries Update**

The Libraries Manager reminded Cllrs that Moredon & Rodbourne Cheney Library and Even Swindon Library were opening for a 'Click & Collect' service. Usage had gradually picked up and a steady stream of customers were using the libraries and were pleased that service had resumed.

It was confirmed that Penhill Library and Pinetrees Library couldn't be opened currently due to the closure of the Community Centres they exist in. Because of this the opening hours of Moredon & Rodbourne Cheney Library had been extended.

The Libraries Manager explained that there was a demand for limited browsing and access to public computers within the libraries that were open. It was confirmed that Moredon & Rodbourne Cheney Library would be open for limited browsing from the Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2020 and members of the public would also be able to access the PCs and printing and copying services. Even Swindon would remain open for Click & Collect only due to the small floorspace available.

The Libraries Manager explained how limited browsing and use of public computers would work at Moredon & Rodbourne Cheney Library and how walk-ins would be accommodated.

It was confirmed that group activities would continue to be suspended.

The Libraries Manager confirmed that the additional services to be provided at Moredon & Rodbourne Cheney Library would be announced and promoted over the weekend.

### **233 Play Area Site Survey**

The Estates Manager informed members that Idverde were undertaking their due diligence in terms of cost seeking. Idverde had been arranged for external contractors to quote for replacing equipment.

The Estates Manager confirmed that the Committee had a budget of up to £10,000 to spend on replacing equipment and the costs would be shared once received from Idverde.

Cllr M Lucas queried the status of Barnum Court. The Estates Manager explained that a Working Group would have to meet to discuss Barnum Court in more detail due to the size of the proposed project.

Cllr M Lucas spoke of the need for consultation with residents around Barnum Court if the Parish Council were minded to relocate the existing play area. The Estates Manager responded that he needed to confirm the regulations re: distance of play areas from residential areas.

### **234 Southbrook Car Park & Lighting**

The Estates Manager explained that one quotation had been received for the car park provision and Idverde and one other contractor were being chased for additional quotes. It was hoped that three quotations could be presented at the next meeting of the Committee.

The Estates Manager displayed details of the one quote received on screen.

The Estates Manager explained that as the ecology survey had been completed at the Southbrook site; lighting could be installed as agreed previously. The quote originally received for the installation of lighting was displayed.

Cllr J Ballman queried the purpose of the lighting. The Estates Manager responded that it was to facilitate people walking around the pavilion on site during the evenings and to provide deterrent to Anti-social Behaviour.

**235 Allotment Fee's Review**

The Estates Manager referred to a report circulated prior to the meeting, a copy of which can be found as Annex A in the Minute Book.

Cllr M Lucas explained to the Committee how the fees for allotment plots had been reduced by the Parish Council in previous year to £30 for a half plot to enable contactless payments to be made.

Cllr M Lucas suggested the fees be increased to £35 for a half size plot and £70 for a full size rather than by the 10% recommended.

Cllr M Lucas explained that he had tasked Officers with measuring up all allotment plots to ensure the pricing is fair and plots are the intended size.

Cllr D Patey queried the sizing of plots compared to sites managed by other Parish Councils. Cllr M Lucas responded that the sizing of plots was currently unknown, and the Parish Council would try and obtain this information from the other Parish Councils referred to in the report.

Cllr S Henderson asked whether the Allotments Officer had completed any work on the plot sizing. He suggested the Parish Council speak with some of the local Allotment Associations for guidance and advice.

The Estates Manager confirmed that the Parish Council held maps of all the Leisure Garden sites but the sizing of plots was not definitive as these had changed over time.

The Parish Clerk explained that within the mapping system purchased by the Parish Council plots could be measured from Google Map images. It was suggested that an audit of plot sizes be completed at one of the Leisure Garden sites and be used as a pilot to compare with and update the mapping system and then roll out across all sites.

The Parish Clerk suggested a percentage increase isn't used.

Cllr J Ballman commented on the statutory allotments and statutory sizing. Cllr R Ballman confirmed there was only one statutory allotment site within Swindon.

The Parish Clerk confirmed that in 2017 the Parish Council agreed to adopt the standards of statutory allotments. He went on to comment on the legislation in place re: allotments and the principals the Parish Council agreed to adhere to.

Cllr R Ballman asked if the bills for the 20/21 year had been issued. Cllr M Lucas confirmed the bills for the new year hadn't been issued as the Head of Finance & Governance was waiting for a decision on the current Agenda Item.

The Parish Clerk commented that any price increase should be agreed by Full Council.

Cllr M Lucas suggested the cost of allotments be increased to £35 for a half plot and £70 for a full size plot. Cllr J Ballman supported the suggestion providing the increase could be justified and an explanation be provided to allotment holders explaining that all fees received for allotments were ringfenced for reinvestment into the Leisure Garden sites.

Cllr J Ballman proposed the fees for allotment plots be increased to £35 for a half plot and £70 for a full size plot for the billing year October 2021 to September 2022, seconded by Cllr D Patey.

Cllr M Lucas asked that a note be sent out with invoices explaining the price increase and reasons for it.

The Parish Clerk commented on the overspend reported on Leisure Gardens. He explained that a Capital Spend Report to be shared with Cllrs shortly showed a large underspend on Capital and the Allotments. It was suggested that a robust capital spend programme for allotments be developed.

**236 Penhill, Backland Vine Removal**

The Estates Manager confirmed that he and Idverde had looked around the area for which a complaint had been received and there were no further vines found within the vicinity. However, some brambles had be found which were to be cut back and tidied up. It was confirmed that the structures in place for which there were concerns about damage being caused would be safe and unaltered if the vine concerned was removed.

The Estates Manager confirmed that the cost to remove the vine. Approval was given for the Estates Manager to have the works completed.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm

Signed.....

Date.....

Chair of the Leisure & Recreation Committee