

WESTERHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Allotments, Playing Fields and Open Spaces Committee
held at Russell House on
Monday 17th June 2024 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: Dr J Lord (JL) - Chairman
Mr N Robson (NR)
Mrs S Sheen (SS)

In attendance: Mrs D Marshall (DM) – Interim Officer for APFOS
Mrs C Debono (CD) Deputy Town Clerk

Item		Action
1.	<u>Apologies for Absence</u> Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Rogers – holiday.	
2.	<u>Declarations of Interest not previously declared</u> None.	
3.	<u>Minutes of the Meeting</u> Minutes of the meeting held on the 4 th March 2024 were approved at Full Council on the 20 th May 2024.	
4.	<u>Information items arising from the minutes of the previous meeting not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda</u> 4.1 The Groundsman Hut – Ongoing investigations to the sewage pipe to be carried out. 5.11 Greensand Commons - an update from the Greensands webinar: funding to recruit a park warden three days a week had been confirmed and the job description had been circulated. 5.12 Madan Road – reflectors had been sourced and installed on the ends of the knee rail. 5.13 Hanging Baskets – the Interim Clerk confirmed that the hanging baskets had been installed the first week of June and the bedding plants had been planted in the second week of June.	
5.	<u>Clerks Report - this is a general update since the last meeting for information.</u> The report was received and noted.	
6.	<u>Finance</u> 6.1 To receive the APFOS Financial Statement up to 31st May 2024 the report was received and noted.	

7.	<u>WTC Strategy</u> <u>King George's Field</u> Continue planned KGF redevelopment • Continue planned KGF redevelopment - to include the renovation of KGF Memorial Pavilion to provide toilets and a café; installation of a MUGA and further seating in KGF • Improve access to KGF from south of town – The committee felt this was adequate • Cycle trail around KGF / Walking, running track - completed • Café and toilet in KGF – Ongoing research into what facilities residents would like. • Deputy Clerk to investigate seating between KGF and the Town <u>Keeping Westerham and Crockham Hill clean and tidy</u> Continue maintenance of all areas under our remit. • Keeping footpaths clear of summer growth – Lobby KCC • More weeding of public footpaths – Lobby KCC • Keeping Westerham looking nice – Ongoing routine maintenance, Lobby KCC, SDC, consider re-painting the Crockham Hill sign and further planting in Crockham Hill Garden. • Maintain the Green all year round – Ongoing routine maintenance. • Clean town – Litter pick date to be confirmed at the next Youth & Community meeting. • Chairs and tables on the Green – Ongoing routine maintenance, and further investigation for further seating. <u>Improving Westerham eco/ biodiversity</u> Develop land register detailing sites, ownership, use and restrictions. Investigate opportunities for planting within Westerham and Crockham Hill. • More wildflowers – Research areas within Westerham suitable for planting wildflowers. • More tree planting – Trees had recently been planted at the skate park, playground and Costells Meadow car park. <u>Allotments</u> Continue managing effectively. • Keep allotments – Ongoing management. • Local walks kept open – Agreed new walk to be advertised end of 2024.	CD
8.	<u>Allotment sites</u> 8.1 – Bloomfield update – A site visit had been carried out by the Deputy Clerk and Cllr Lord, and a further meeting was held with the Bloomfield representative. It was established that there were three full plots available for tenure, one of which was left with a considerable amount of rubbish by the previous tenant. Several of the plots were uncultivated and the representative had concerns that the plots had been abandoned. Letters were sent out to the uncultivated plot holders with a view to inspect at a later date. A letter was also sent out to the previous tenant about the rubbish left behind – to date there had been no response. Plots 24 and 32 had been re-assigned.	

Current Hill – A site visit was carried out by the Deputy Clerk/Cllr Lord and a further meeting was held on site with the site representative. It was established that there were three full plots and potentially four half plots available. All of the plots were overgrown/covered in brambles and would be cut back by the groundsman before being re-assigned. There were five people on the waiting list. Several of the plots were uncultivated – letters were sent out to three plot holders, with a view to inspect at a later date. The Deputy Clerk had sourced a contractor to remove the 300 tyres on site and a date was waited for the works to be undertaken. The committee **agreed** that the groundsman should cover the newly cleared plots with weed control layer before they are re-assigned, which would be funded by WTC.

Farley – the work to replace the pipework at Farley had now been completed. A site meeting with the allotment representative was held. Several of the plots were uncultivated and the representative was concerned with the amount of rubbish on site – letters were sent out to uncultivated plot holders, with a view to inspect at a later date.

Letters were sent out to the two plot holders responsible for removing the boundary hedge regarding the re-instatement of the hedge with evergreens. The representative had spoken with both parties who had agreed to do so with immediate effect.

A clearance of the far end of the allotment site was carried out, now topsoil can be accessed by all allotment holders.

8.2 - Allotment competition – was arranged with the external judge to take place on Thursday 4th July at 10:30am

8.3 - Rubbish removal at Bloomfield – Following a site visit by Cllr Lord and the Deputy Clerk It was noted that a previous tenant had left considerable amount of rubbish on a plot. The Deputy Clerk had sent out a letter regarding the rubbish but to date there had been no response. Following discussion, it was **agreed** that the Deputy Clerk would source a skip for the clearance of the rubbish on plot 30 at the Bloomfield allotment site.

8.4 - Play equipment – Two Farley allotment holders attended the meeting, to discuss with the Committee regarding the play equipment that had been brought onto the allotment site, for young people to occupy themselves whilst their parent/carer worked their plot.

It was **agreed** by the Committee that the play equipment could remain, providing plot was being worked.

8.5 – Currant Hill Water usage – The Deputy Clerk had sent letters to all Currant Hill tenants regarding water usage, hose pipe ban and not bringing tyres onto site.

The allotment holders' initial report of a water leak was repaired by the groundsman. The office did not receive any further reports of a water leak, which consequently ran up a high-water bill.

Two Currant Hill allotment holders attended the meeting to discuss with the Committee the water usage, and unhygienic stagnant water in the water troughs which the plot holders were using to water their plots with.

The residents requested that the installation of standpipes be considered as a more hygienic means of watering.

	Following a lengthy discussion, it was agreed by the Committee that far more water would be used by using standpipes, therefore would not be considered at this time. Water trough cleaning to be arranged and lids to be sourced by the Deputy Clerk. Cllr Lord recommended that water butts were used as a means of collecting rainwater by plot holders who had sheds. It was agreed that the water would be monitored this season. The Finance Officer to compare the last five years water bills as requested.	CD DM
9.	<u>King Georges Field</u> 9.1 – KGF Fencing – The quotation to repair fencing between the Groundsman Hut and WSA was approved by the Committee. 9.2 - Goals – the Interim Clerk had met with the Football Club Secretary to discuss the goals that were constantly left out on the field. There is insufficient space in the enclosure for all goals, so the club intends to install another small enclosure next to the existing enclosure and to site a container for junior goals in the hedgerow adjacent to the junior pitches, as previously agreed by APFOS. The Deputy Clerk to arrange for the removal of two old pine trees to facilitate this, as agreed. 9.3 - Skate lessons – went ahead in the Easter Holidays and the Interim Clerk advised that they were well attended and received, and some of the planned Summer Holiday sessions are already full.	CD CD
10.	<u>Open Spaces</u> 10.1 - Visual Inspections - Visual inspections to be carried out in July. Due to the bad weather over the May bank holiday the Green required brushing and spiking. 10.2 - Events on our land Following lengthy discussion, it was agreed that a request from Valence School to hold a stall on the Green was rejected. They will be contacted by the Town Clerk and will suggest they use Market Square instead. 10.3 – Quotation to repair / repaint Crockham Hill signage – following discussion it was agreed to revisit the quote for the signage in Crockham Hill gardens at year end. One further quotation to be sourced for comparison. To improve the garden further Cllr Sheen asked if additional planting could be undertaken in this anniversary year – Deputy Clerk to liaise with Just the Jones. The Interim Clerk also suggested that they be asked to trim along the outside of the garden fence. 10.4 - Planting to Beggars Lane roundabout – following discussion to be agreed that planting of the roundabout would be researched by the Deputy Clerk and an additional budget to be discussed at the next meeting. 10.5 – Dog Bins – SDC had communicated that dog bins in and around Westerham, would slowly be phased out and replaced with SDC bins for both litter and dog waste. The Committee requested the Deputy Clerk to map all the dog bins and adjacent litter bins, so that a strategy could be developed at the next meeting.	ALL CD CD CD CD CD
11.	<u>Climate Change/Environmental & Biodiversity</u>	

	11.1 ECO Action Plan – The Deputy Clerk to add the request for surplus food to be considered for the food bank and the tyre removal at Currant Hill Allotment site.	CD
12.	<u>Reports from Councillors relevant to APFOS (not already covered elsewhere in the minutes)</u> None.	
13.	<u>TN16 Magazine, Crockham Hill Newsletter and website</u> None	
14.	<u>Matters for District and County Councillors</u> None.	
15.	<u>Further Matters for consideration at the next meeting.</u> None.	
16.	<u>Date of next meeting</u> Monday 9 th September 2024 at 7pm.	

The meeting was concluded at 10:00pm

Minutes confirmed as a correct record:

Chair