

## COOKHAM PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of a Meeting of the GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE Held in the Community Room on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022, commencing at 7.30pm

**PRESENT:** Cllr C. Doyle (Chairman)  
Cllrs C. Aisladie, E. Bune, I. Herd, M. Howard, J. Perry, B. Perry and H. Philip

**Also Present:** Two members of public were present.  
There were no members of the press present.

#### **OPEN FORUM:**

On behalf of WildCookham, Mr M. Day gave an overview of the work they had been doing over the last year at the Harris Woodbridge Wildlife Reserve. WildCookham have been managing the reserve for the last four years. The volunteers have continued to keep the site well maintained but respect its wild nature. The year started with a good display from the bulbs, but the drought and heatwave hampered further growth over the summer. He reported that the water quality in the pond was good. On behalf of the Council, Cllr C. Doyle thanked Mr Day for his presentation and WildCookham for their continued help with the wildlife reserve.

Following on from the August General Purposes Cmte meeting, the resident who had shown an interest in improving the appearance of the skate ramp, had produced a report which had been reviewed by Cllrs prior to the meeting. There was a further discussion at item 4.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**

Apologies received from Cllrs M. Brar and I. Wernham.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:**

Cllr H. Philip	Pecuniary	Alfred Major allotment tenant
Cllr M Howard	Pecuniary	Harris Woodbridge wildlife reserve.

3. **TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM WILDCOOKHAM ON THE ONGOING MAINTENANCE OF THE HARRIS WOODBRIDGE WILDLIFE RESERVE AND PROPOSE A DONATION OF £225 BE GIVEN TO SUPPORT THEIR WORK:**

Following on from the presentation and on the proposal of Cllr C. Doyle, seconded by Cllr M. Howard, Cllrs unanimously approved a donation of £225 to WildCookham to support this work.

4. **TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC REGARDING THE APPEARANCE OF THE SKATE RAMP AND CONSIDER ANY NEXT STEPS:**

Following a review of the report, Cllrs were keen to continue to explore ways to create a piece of public art on the walls of the skate ramp. Cllr Doyle has had initial discussions with Furze Platt Senior School and Berkshire Collage of Agriculture art departments with early positive feedback. She will continue to pursue these links. Cllrs were keen that Cookham children played a part in the project. The resident suggested a competition as another way to get designs. Cllrs were keen to get a first design painted by spring and review the process for the future. An update will be given in December. Consideration for the cost of the materials needs to be made.

5. **TO CONSIDER A CEMETERY BENCH MAINTENANCE PROGRAM:**

Cllrs reviewed the cemetery bench information supplied by Cllr C. Doyle. Although most of them are memorial benches the Clerk has not come across any family contact information. Most of the benches are still in good order but could benefit from a clean and fix any broken slats. Cllr M. Howard proposed a budget of £1,000 for the financial year 23/24. This was seconded by Cllr B. Perry and unanimously approved. The cemetery signs will be added to the list of signs to update and refresh.

It was noted that, if the Council was to continue with memorial benches, that a suitable policy or agreement is put in place.

6. **TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE WILDFLOWER PROJECT FROM CLLR C. AISLADIE:**  
A second wildflower patch will be created at the bed at the bottom of the park next to the train track. Cllr Aisladie suggested that the work be done on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> October. She will advertise locally for some volunteer help to prepare the bed and sow seed.
7. **TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE PROJECT TO UPDATE SIGNS FOR THE ALFRED MAJOR RECREATION GROUND AND AGREE NEXT STEPS:**  
This will be reviewed at the next meeting. Wording for the signs need to be finalised and quotes need to be sourced. Cllr Aisladie volunteered to help Cllr Doyle. Cllr B. Perry to look at the history of the Alfred Major recreation ground for the information section.  
There are a number of other signs across parish owned land that also need to be updated, as mentioned on the action list.
8. **TO AGREE NEXT STEPS FOR THE CPC OWNED PHONE BOX ON DEAN LANE:**  
Cllrs considered a number of suggestions that had been made on cookham.com for the phone box. After discussion the two top ideas were a bug hotel, with the phone box filled with wood, or pursue an offer to buy made by a local resident, these were proposed by Cllr Howard and unanimously approved. Cllr Howard was keen that local residents were informed prior to any changes and volunteered to talk to the residents to get their feedback and Cllr Doyle will follow up both options. Cllrs to report back at a future meeting.  
Other ideas that were discounted, mainly due to the position of the phone box on the side of a busy but rural road with no pavement were: a light box, a defibrillator, maps for walkers and a mobile phone antenna.
9. **TO CONSIDER THE NUMBER OF VACANT ALLOTMENT PLOTS AND THE ONGOING MAINTENANCE OPTIONS:**  
The Clerk reported that there was a higher than average number of vacant plots at Sutton Road and Alleyns Lane allotment sites. To keep these plots in a manageable state they need to either be strimmed at regular intervals throughout the year or covered, both options incur cost. Covering is a better long term solution however new sets of covers needs to be purchased. The Committee unanimously proposed that initially a set of covers, up to the value of £300 be sourced and put in place. Remaining vacant plots will be reviewed to see if further covers are required.
10. **TO APPROVE A PROPOSAL FOR A TWO YEAR REPAINT DEAL WITH CHAZ METALWORK TO REPAINT THE STAKING SURFACE OF THE SKATE RAMP AT A COST OF £1,000 PER PAINT, IF FIXED FOR THE NEXT TWO YEARS.**  
On the proposal of Cllr C Doyle, in order to benefit from a reduced rate, Cllrs unanimously approved to go ahead with an annual skating surface repaint for the next two years at a cost of £1,000 per year. This will help to keep the surface in good repair and maintain a good skating experience.
11. **TO REVIEW THE LATEST PROSPECT LETTING AGENT (WILKINSON'S) ROUTINE INSPECTION REPORT FOR CEMETERY LODGE (OCTOBER 2022):**  
The report was reviewed, once again Cllrs noted the poor condition of the property. The renewal of the Tenancy will be discussed in the October Finance Cmte Meeting.
12. **TO REVIEW FIRST HALF FIGURES FOR 22/23 AND FORECAST FOR 23/24 AND CONFIRM BUDGET REQUESTS FOR THE NEXT FINANCIAL YEAR (2023-24) INCLUDING ANY PROJECT NEEDS:**  
The figures were reviewed. Budget suggestions put forward were:  
£2,000 for Chapel heating and lighting,  
£7,000 for Alfred Major projects: Play area fencing, Hillcrest Ave entrance ground work and signage.
13. **TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE UPDATES FOR THE GENERAL PURPOSES ACTIONS LIST:**  
The list was not reviewed at the meeting.
14. **CHAIRMAN'S SUBMISSIONS:**  
Cllr Doyle commented on the recent non collection of the Alfred Major waste bins.

The Meeting closed at 9.15pm