

COOKHAM PARISH COUNCIL**Minutes of a Meeting of the GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE****Held in the Community Room on Tuesday 19th December 2023, commencing at 7.30pm**

PRESENT: Cllr H. Pleming (Chairman)
Cllrs C. Aisladie, L Austin, M. Brar, E. Bune, J. Edwards and M-L Kellaway

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

OPEN FORUM:

The were no representations.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies received from Cllrs T. Caen, M. Howard, A-L Regan and L. Tull

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

None.

3. TO CONSIDER A QUOTE FOR MAINTENANCE WORK TO TREES ON THE ALFRED MAJOR RECREATION GROUND:

Further to a decision made at the October General Purposes Cmte meeting to obtain a quote from R Watts and Sons Arboricultural Services for advice regarding tidying up and thinning out trees for safety and size: Cllrs reviewed the results of the tree survey, associated costs and map of the Alfred Major trees. The trees surveyed are: T4, T5, T6, T7, T8 and G1 (group of trees) and G2 on the tree map and also trees T11 Oak and T12 Walnut, both of which are within the allotment site.

After discussion and on the proposal of Cllr M. Brar, Cllrs approved the works deemed necessary for safety purposes to all trees listed, this was seconded by Cllr Aisladie and unanimously approved. The Clerk to clarify the costs of works where more than one option had been given and report back to the Cmte. The maximum cost would be £3,940 (+ VAT). NB: R Watts and Sons are the preferred contractor of the council.

Trees on south side of Alfred Major recreation ground are subject to a Tree Preservation Order. Although certain works can happen on a TPO tree without planning permission, something more major will need to go through the approval process. This process takes a minimum of 6 weeks and can be managed by R. Watts and Sons on our behalf.

The cost will come from the budgets for:

Footpaths and Open Spaces/ AM Waste Clearence – Misc/Trees	
Budget for 23/24	£1,116, (£40 used of a budget of £1,156)
Budget for 24/25	£1,202

Footpaths and Open Spaces/ Footpaths and other Open spaces/Tree Work	
Budget for 23/24	£2,101
Budget for 24/25	£2,100

Unused budget from this year could be moved to reserves for use next year if works cross financial years.

4. TO RECEIVE A PROPOSAL FROM CLLR H. PLEMING REGARDING PLANTING ADDITIONAL TREES ON THE ALFRED MAJOR RECREATION GROUND:

Cllr Pleming discussed the proposals, which fell into three sections:

- **Hedging around the allotment site:** Cllrs agreed to purchase approx 25 Hawthorn whips to improve the hedge line around the allotment site. Cllrs Edwards and Pleming volunteered to plant them.
- **Woodland Trust scheme:** The Woodland Trust are running a scheme, open to Parish Councils, where they are offering a pack of trees to be planted in small groups or hedges.

Cllrs agreed to make an application to the Woodland Trust for a 'Small Copse' pack worth £30 for 30 small trees (10 each of: silver birch, rowan and wild cherry). It is anticipated that, if successful, the trees would be delivered in March 2024.

Further information will be brought forward at the February General Purposes Cmte meeting where a decision on where the trees will be planted and if any tree guards are needed, will be finalised. Initial discussion suggested the area east of the allotment site would be ideal.

- **Additional trees:** Following the removal of a tree in June 2021, Cllrs agreed to plant a replacement tree at the same site. Cllrs approved a copper beach at a cost of approx. £50. A tree guard will also be needed, cost TBA. The site in question is by the benches in the centre of the park.

Cllr Aisladie will contact WildCookham for further advice.

Cllr M Brar left the meeting at 8.20pm

5. **TO CONSIDER MAKING AN APPLICATION TO THE RBWM GRANT FUNDING SCHEME AVAILABLE TO CREATE COMMUNITY ORCHARDS:**

Cllrs reviewed the information regarding the RBWM's grant funding offer to create community orchards. For the purposes of the offer a community orchards is defined as five fruit trees or more, which the community can help look after and access for seasonal events on at least one occasion per year for the next five years. They are offering grants of up to £6,000 together with a bespoke package of guidance and support. The offer is open until 24th January.

Cllrs were keen to take up the opportunity and Cllr J. Edwards will complete the application form with the Clerk. The Clerk to email RBWM to express an interest. Cllrs discussed using the field at the back of the Sutton Road allotment site for this project. Feedback will provided on the success of the application at the February GP Cmte meeting.

6. **TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE PROGRESS OF THE ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION AND THEIR MEETINGS:**

Cllrs Edwards and Fleming have met with the Clerk to plan a way forward.

The Clerk to send an email to allotment tenants advising them of the revival of the meetings with a proposed agenda coming out closer to the event. Two meetings will be held per year with the first one being held in March 2024.

7. **TO DISCUSS THE MOWING FIELD AT THE BACK OF THE ALLOTMENTS ON SUTTON ROAD:**

Following on from the discussion in item 5, regarding the Community orchard grant, the Committee were keen to investigate the possibly putting the orchard on this site. More information will follow if the application is successful. The area will continue to be kept mowed, at the councils expense, a few times a year to keep it under control.

8. **TO DECIDE IF A SPARE SET OF KEYS FOR THE ALFRED MAJOR RECREATION GROUND CAN BE HELD OFF SITE AND CONFIRM ANY SIGNING IN/OUT PROCEDURE:**

On the proposal of Cllr M-L Kellaway the key for the Alfred Major recreation ground will be kept in the Office and signed in/out using the current office procedures. This was seconded by Cllr Aisladie and unanimously agreed. Clerk to let the Allotment tenants know of the new procedure.

9. **TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE WASTE BIN COLLECTIONS OVER THE CHRISTMAS PERIOD BY SHORTS LTD FOR PARISH OWNED WASTE BINS:**

The information supplied by Shorts Ltd was acknowledged.

10. **TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE UPDATES FOR THE GENERAL PURPOSES ACTIONS LIST:**

The action list was reviewed:

Improve hedging at the allotment site: dealt with in item 4.

Cemetery memorial checks: Provisional costs obtained, more accurate quotes needed. Clerk to obtain for February meeting.

Signage project: Add to February meeting agenda.

11. **CHAIRMAN'S SUBMISSIONS:**

None.

The Meeting closed at 8.35pm