

COOKHAM PARISH COUNCIL**Minutes of a Meeting of the GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE****Held in the Community Room on Tuesday 20th February 2024, commencing at 7.30pm**

PRESENT: Cllr H. Pleming (Chairman)
Cllrs C. Aisladie, L Austin, M. Brar, T. Caen J. Edwards, M-L Kellaway and A-L Regan.

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 E. Bune, M. Howard and L. Tull

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

None.

3. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE WOODLAND TRUST APPLICATION AND CONSIDER A PLANTING PLAN FOR THE TREES AND APPROVE ASSOCIATED COSTS:

The application for 30 small trees (30cm) has been approved by the Woodland Trust and these will be delivered in early March. The trees will be planted on the Alfred Major recreation ground and it was agreed that this will be in three fenced plots in the area between the allotments and Shergold Way, near the Peace Land boundary. There will be supplementary wildflower planting within the fenced plots, varieties to be confirmed. The saplings will be monitored regularly, particularly in the early stages and throughout the summer. It is not envisaged that all will survive.

On the proposal, of Cllr J. Edwards a budget of £1,000 was allocated to the project to pay for additional resources to protect the trees (tree guards and temporary fencing) and for contractor's time. This was unanimously approved. This will come from the Alfred Major Maintenance budget.

4. TO DECIDE WHETHER TO TAKE PART IN 'NO MOW MAY' AND LEAVE THE AREA OF THE ALFRED MAJOR BETWEEN THE ALLOTMENTS AND SHERGOLD WAY, UNMOWN DURING THE PERIOD FROM APRIL TO END OF MAY:

On the proposal of Cllr Brar, seconded by Cllr Aisladie, the Cmte unanimously agreed to leave the section of the Alfred Major between the allotments and Shergold Way unmown from mid April to end of May.

5. TO REVIEW AND DISCUSS THE COMMUNITY ORCHARD APPLICATION AT THE SUTTON ROAD ALLOTMENT SITE AND TO CONSIDER WHAT IS INVOLVED IN NEXT STAGES OF THE PROJECT IF SUCCESSFUL, INCLUDING:

A copy of the Community Orchard Grant application, written by Cllr Edwards, had been given to Cllrs with their agenda papers. Although the council is awaiting formal notification, it is understood that CPC have been awarded a grant of £4,990 which will be used for the purchase of the trees, additional resources to protect and help manage the trees and some consultancy advice. The planned site of the orchard is the northeast corner, at the rear of the Sutton Road allotment site. Planting is expected in autumn, which will allow time to properly plan the project.

In accordance with the terms of the grant, occasional open days for community access will be run at least once a year with access to other community groups to be considered.

- i. **To agree the quantity of trees to be purchased:** On the proposal of Cllr Edwards, seconded by Cllr Brar and unanimously approved, a quantity of 30 trees will be purchased.

- ii. **To agree the varieties of trees to be purchased and planted:** Cllrs were keen to see a mix of varieties. Cllr Edwards will seek advice from experts such as the supplier, RBWM and WildCookham and report back.
- iii. **To discuss a plan for planting and care of the trees:** It was agreed that Cllrs Edwards and Fleming will create a plan which will include: options for the varieties to be planted, planting proposals and timelines and the ongoing management for the area. This will be reviewed at a future meeting.

6. **TO DISCUSS THE BROADER PLANS FOR THE MOWING FIELD AT THE BACK OF SUTTON RD ALLOTMENTS AND AGREE A PLAN TO UTILISE THE SPACE IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE COUNCIL'S BIODIVERSITY POLICY:**

Not only do the proposal for the mowing field help make better use of the space, but the enhancement of this area is a key factor in the proposal for the orchard. The grant awarding panel are keen that the council work with WildCookham to help to form some ideas. The RBWM Environment Engagement Team, who are responsible for the community orchard project, have worked with WildCookham on a number of other projects. The changes will follow the principles of the council's newly adopted Biodiversity Policy and action plan.

It was agreed that Cllrs Edwards and Fleming will work with WildCookham to create a plan for the area to bring it back to a future meeting. In the short term, simple steps will be taken to start the project by changing the current mowing regime, so that some areas are mown to create paths and other larger areas left unmown. The Clerk will action this with the contractor.

Once the area is established over the next few years, further consideration may be given to wider community access.

It is noted that this area remains allotment land and that none of the planned changes are to be permanent, which will allow the council to return it to allotment use if there was ever sufficient demand to do so.

7. **TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE REGARDING THE CONVERSATION WITH WILDCOOKHAM ABOUT THEIR PLANS FOR THE HARRIS WOODBRIDGE WILDLIFE RESERVE:**

Cllrs Brar and Edwards met with WildCookham representatives, Mr M. Copland and Mrs C. Collins in January. WildCookham are keen to utilise other spaces around the Harris Woodbridge Wildlife Reserve and have expressed an interest in using Alleyns Lane allotment field. NB: This land is currently let under a Grazing Licence to a long term tenant. WildCookham are planning to bring a proposal to the April General Purpose Cmte meeting for review.

8. **TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE PROGRESS OF ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION:**

Cllrs Edwards and Fleming will discuss a date for the meeting then the Clerk will send out the invitation.

9. **TO DISCUSS THE WILDFLOWER PATCHES ON THE ALFRED MAJOR RECREATION GROUND AND CONSIDER ANY FURTHER STEPS:**

The two wild flower patches on the Alfred Major recreation ground are in need of some tiding, a job that has previously been done by Cllrs. Cllr Aisladie asked for volunteers to help with the tiding and advised that the session will incorporate a litter pick with Keep Cookham Tidy. Cllrs were keen to help. This will take place on Sunday 17th March from 11am onwards.

10. **TO APPROVE A RESPONSE TO THE RBWM PARISH COUNCIL CONSULTATION ON PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY MILESTONES STATEMENT 2024-25:**

Cllrs reviewed the information. Cllrs were happy to support the Statement. The Clerk to reply to the consultation with that response.

11. TO REVIEW THE LATEST HAGS OPERATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT (DECEMBER 2023):

The report was reviewed, there were no medium or higher risks noted. There were a couple of requests from Cllrs:

- i. To make the entrances to the play area less muddy. Clerk to get costs for adding gravel/scalping's.
- ii. A bin appears to need replacing, Clerk to investigate and replace if necessary.
- iii. Clear the mats under certain play equipment that has become silted up. Clerk to ask for options and quotes for replacement matting.

12. TO REVIEW THE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE GENERAL PURPOSES CMTE AND DISCUSS POSSIBLE CHANGES FOR APPROVAL AT ANNUAL MEETING IN MAY 2024:

On the proposal of Cllr Brar, seconded by Cllr Regan and unanimously approved, the recommendation for the following revised Terms of Reference for the General Purposes Committee will be put forward for approval at the Annual Meeting in May.

Current Terms of Reference, as approved at the Annual Meeting on 16th May 2023:

Composed of: Nine Councillors plus the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council.

A Quorum will consist of: Five members of the Committee.

Meeting frequency: Six times per year as specified in the Schedule of Meetings.

1. To be responsible for all matters relating to the Cookham Parish Cemetery, Street Lighting, the two War Memorials and the Seat at the Tarrystone.
2. In particular, the General Purposes Committee will be responsible for:
 - Recommendations to the Finance Committee concerning the Cemetery Fees and Payments.
 - (a) The upkeep, maintenance and improvement of the street lighting in Cookham controlled by the Parish Council.
 - (b) To liaise with the Royal Borough and other bodies over the upkeep and improvement of other street lighting not under the control of the Council.
3. The maintenance and general upkeep of all Footpaths shown on the definitive numbered footpaths within the Parish Boundaries of Cookham.
4. The general upkeep of Odney Common and other Common Land within the Parish Boundaries of Cookham.
5. The maintenance, general upkeep and improvement of the Alfred Major Recreation Ground and other Council property, including Cemetery Cottage.
6. The administration of the Parish Allotments as regards terms of letting, collection of rent, upkeep and maximised use of allotments.
7. The organisation and preparation of the Annual "Britain in Bloom" Competition with help and assistance provided by the Royal Borough, the National Trust and other organisations associated with the event.
8. To determine the extent of the Council's involvement in former community projects such as the Harris Woodbridge Conservation Area, tree surveys and bird & bat boxes.
9. To prepare an Annual Budget in the month of October each year for consideration by the Finance Committee at their meetings in December and January.
10. Once the Budget has been approved by the Council, the General Purposes Committee has the executive power to decide on all matters relating to their administration within the framework of the Budget and policies agreed by the Council. Only matters considered to be of great importance should be referred to the Full Council for a decision.

Approved Recommendation:

Composed of: Nine Councillors plus the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council.

A Quorum will consist of: Five members of the Committee.

Meeting frequency: Six times per year as specified in the Schedule of Meetings.

The General Purposes Committee, with consideration of the councils Biodiversity Policy and Action Plan, will be responsible for, and consider and take decisions on matters concerning:

Allotments and Associated Land: The administration of the three Allotments sites with regards terms of letting, collection of rent, site maintenance and upkeep and maximised use of allotments and associated land, including the Harris Woodbridge Wildlife Reserve.

Cookham Parish Cemetery: The administration of Cookham Parish Cemetery, including maintenance of the grounds, the continued checks of cemetery memorials and the upkeep of the cemetery buildings, including the Chapel.

Open Spaces and Common Land: The maintenance, general upkeep and improvement of the Alfred Major Recreation Ground and other Parish Council owned open spaces and/or common land within the Council's responsibility.

Tree Survey: To ensure that a tree survey for trees on Council owned land is completed periodically and results acted upon.

Footpaths: Vegetation clearance on limited (not all) Footpaths shown on the definitive footpaths map within the Parish boundary of Cookham and to liaise with the RBWM Rights of Way Team where necessary.

War Memorials: The care of the two War Memorials at Cookham Dean and Cookham Village and the memorial bench at the Tarrystone.

Street Lighting: The upkeep, maintenance and improvement of the street lighting in Cookham controlled by the Parish Council and to liaise with the RBWM Highways Team (and other bodies) over the upkeep and improvement of other street lighting not under the control of the Council.

Finance: To prepare an Annual Budget by the month of October each year for consideration by the Finance Committee at their meetings in October and November with final approval from Full Council.

Delegation: Once the Budget has been approved by the Council, the General Purposes Committee has the executive power to decide on all matters relating to their administration within the framework of the Budget and policies agreed by the Council.

Matters considered to be of great importance shall be referred to the Full Council for a decision.

13. **TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE UPDATES FOR THE GENERAL PURPOSES ACTIONS LIST:**
The report was reviewed, there were no further updates or question.

14. **CHAIRMAN'S SUBMISSIONS:**
None.

The Meeting closed at 8.40pm