



Arborfield & Newland Parish Council

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Clerk: Mrs Annabel Wood

Minutes of a Parks Committee Meeting held on Monday 6th November 2023 at 7.30 PM at The Pavilion, Arborfield Park.

Present: Cllrs Starkey (Chair), Stevens, Clint

In attendance: Mrs Wood, Clerk, Mr Watts, The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)

Also Present: No members of the public were present.

1. Questions from members of the public in respect of the business on this agenda. (allotted time – 15 minutes)

The Clerk read out an email from a resident stating how the hedge around the flowerbed at the top of Melrose Gardens has been killed by blight and proposed that the rose should be saved as it was planted in memory of a resident, but the flower bed should be turfed over.

The Parks Committee agreed with this proposal.

Cllr Clint enters the room.

The Parks Committee Agreed this would be the best course of action and were all in favour of this. Clerk to notify resident to remove the rose, then the rest of the plants can be removed and grass seed sown.

2. To receive any apologies for absence.

Apologies have been received from Cllr Strong.

3. To receive any declarations of interest on items on the agenda.

No items of interest were declared.

4. Minutes of Council Meeting

The minutes of the Parks committee meeting held on Tuesday 5th September 2023 were approved with all in favour.

5. Capital Expenditure Plan on park equipment – To consider the expenditure for the next planned items of equipment.

A report from the RFO had been circulated in advance; details of equipment with prices was considered.

The Parks Committee agreed to prioritise the following:

- a) the removal of the Sport Active Game and replace with something else, possibly a basketball hoop/football goal on a suitable surface.
- b) Adding a second item to the area where there is currently the single spinner.

The possibility of having outdoor gym equipment in a fenced area near to the pavilion was also discussed. It was agreed that an outdoor gym was a lower priority than finding replacement equipment for the Sport Active Game.

RFO to obtain quotes for the basketball/football goal surface and other pieces of equipment to be positioned near the spinner.

6. To consider the potential expenditure on the Park Gates.

Details had been circulated by the RFO in advance. The chain from the height bar has been removed. However, the two section of the bar do not align. One solution is to have a metal clip to keep them together, one quote for this is £295. Alternatively, it could be automated. This would require two new gates, a power source, and solar panels; one quote for this is £15,000. Possible solutions available should cars be locked in were discussed.

The Parks Committee approved the £295 metal clip option with all in favour.

As there is now CCTV at the pavilion, the need for the lower park gates to be locked was discussed. Swallowfield park has CCTV but is not gated, Clerk to find out if any anti-social behaviour problems have been experienced. The Parks Committee decided to trial leaving the gates unlocked over the Christmas period, once the two sections of the height bar have been aligned. The side padlocks will remain locked and keep the height bar above the entrance as usual.

7. To receive a report from the RFO regarding the signage of the park

The signage report from the RFO had been circulated in advance.

The current signage regarding the locking of the park was discussed, and the Park's Committee concluded is not visible enough, and the wording is inconsistent. Possible wording for two different sizes of sign were presented by the RFO. Potential signage colour and if the current sizes were appropriate were discussed.

The Parks Committee decided to wait until it had trialled leaving the park unlocked before ordering any signage as it may not be required if the trial is successful.

8. To discuss the requirement for a sign for the park being closed at Christmas.

The Parks Committee, decided to wait until it had trialled leaving the park unlocked before ordering any such signage.

9. Budget setting – to discuss a Parks budget for the financial year 2024-2025.

The RFO had provided a verbal summary of Parks budget and forecasted spend using the table of figures which had been circulated in advance. Overall, the variance of forecast to budget was £1,310. One notable expenditure in the forecast for 2023-24 was for the repair of the Old Churchyard boundary wall, which might now take place in 2024-25.

As regards the budget for 2024-25 further work to Pound Copse would be required, which has not yet taken into consideration. The playground maintenance budget would also need to be increased next year. It was proposed that £7k would be allocated to the Park's budget for the financial year 2024-25.

The Park's Committee agreed to continue with the inspections by Play inspection company as follows: Annual Inspection at a cost of £135.00 and the Operational Inspection (six months after the former) at a cost of £105.00.

Emptying of dog waste bins costs £1,488 annually. Clerk to enquire which company Barkham PC uses for bin emptying.

10. For Councillors to:

a) Approve the quote to replace the damaged bin outside the playground.

The Park's Committee approved the quote of £250.00 to replace the damaged bin, with all in favour.

b) Note the cost to replace netting on 'Nature Trail' play equipment.

The Park's Committee noted the cost of £1,020 to replace the netting on the 'Nature Trail' equipment.

11. Park Walks update - To plan how the three walks will be completed.

The following actions were agreed:

Walk one – Cllr Stevens to find this map, description of walk has been written.

Walk two – Cllr Stevens to update this map, Cllr Starkey to write the description.

Walk Three – Cllr Steves to form a map, Cllr Starkey to write the description.

The Park's Committee agree that the walks should be displayed on a noticeboard with a QR code to accompany each walk, which links to the map on Parish Council website.

12. Next meeting - Councillors to consider items for discussion at the next meeting.

The next Committee meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 9th January 2024; however it was decided to re-schedule for Tuesday 16th January 2024.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting ended at 20:45.