

NORTH HORSHAM PARISH COUNCIL

PROPERTY COMMITTEE THURSDAY 4th FEBRUARY 2016

COMMITTEE REPORT

1. PUBLIC FORUM

Members of the public are invited to put questions or draw relevant matters to the Council's attention, prior to the commencement of business. This is for a period of up to 15 minutes and shall be limited to 3 minutes per person.

4. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS – for information and noting only

At the time of preparing the Report, there are no Chairman's Announcements

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are advised to consider the agenda for the meeting and determine in advance if they may have a Personal, Prejudicial or a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any of the agenda items. If a Member decides they do have a declarable interest, they are reminded that the interest and the nature of the interest must be declared at the commencement of the consideration of the agenda item; or when the interest becomes apparent to them. Details of the interest will be minuted.

Where you have a Prejudicial Interest (which is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest), Members are reminded that they must now withdraw from the meeting chamber after making representations or asking questions.

If the interest is a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, Members are reminded that they must take no part in the discussions of the item at all; or participate in any voting; and must withdraw from the meeting chamber; unless they have received a dispensation.

6. FINANCIAL MATTERS

(a) Committee Budget Monitoring – to 31.12.2015

Members are advised that the internal spreadsheets detailing Committee Budget monitoring information up to 31st December 2016 will be available at the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to note the Committee Budget Monitoring information

(b) Council's current VAT position

Members are no doubt aware that the Council is subject to a Partial Exemption situation in respect of VAT. Members are advised that the percentages applicable to the amounts of VAT that **cannot** be reclaimed are as follows, subject to the £7,500 *de minimis* limit -

Roffey Millennium Hall – all VAT can be reclaimed

Holbrook Tythe Barn – 70% of VAT cannot be reclaimed

Multi Courts – 85% of VAT cannot be reclaimed

North Heath Hall – 100% of VAT cannot be reclaimed

Administration expenditure – 37% of VAT cannot be reclaimed

Other expenditure – all VAT can be reclaimed

Members are advised that at 31st December 2015 the Council was £1,677.23 below the *de minimis* limit.

At the time of writing the Report at 27.1.2016, that figure has reduced to £1,463.30.

Known invoices to be paid (utilities etc) that will impact on this figure amount to a VAT implication of £178.66, thus reducing the 27.1.2016 figure further, to £1,284.64. This figure of 'unspent' VAT is available until 31st March 2016.

Members are asked to note that these figures are from the Clerk's own spreadsheet, which has been accepted by HMRC, and does not match the VAT figures produced by the accounts system.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to note this section of the Report

(c) Projects for 2016/2017

Members are asked to take into account section (b) above when considering this issue.

If Members consider that the £7,500 *de minimis* limit is likely to be breached before 31st March 2016, they may wish to consider bringing forward the four projects for 2016/2017, which will impact on the Partial Exemption VAT situation in that year.

These projects are –

North Heath Hall

- (a) Conversion to mains water supply -
Cost - £2324.00 VAT implication - £464.80
- (b) Replacement water heater (Room 15/16)
Cost - £1462.25 VAT implication - £292.45

Holbrook Tythe Barn

- (c) New Patio Doors and Surrounds
Cost - £8771.67 VAT implication - £1228.03
- (d) New Water Heater – disabled WC
Cost - £648.00 VAT implication - £47.95

The total VAT implication of these four projects equates to £2,033.23

Multi Courts

Members are further advised that dependant on the outcome discussions regarding agenda item (10) below, there may be additional expenditure (currently the amount of which is not known), which will also impact on the VAT situation.

RECOMMENDATION

Members' views are sought

7. FLOODING ISSUES - EARLES MEADOW

Members are advised that this issue was first raised with the Committee at the meeting on 5th February 2015. The issue began with the owner of 38, Earles Meadow raising concerns regarding flooding in her garden and that of no. 39. At this point, Members are advised that this was the first complaint of this nature received from any residents at this location over the past 15 years.

The matter was raised with the original developer on 2nd February 2015, where they were told that 'the two properties are flooding in the rear gardens and on the communal driveway, with both instances not having occurred before'.

This was responded to on 5th February 2015 with the developer saying that they had 'passed this onto my external consultant to investigate as it appears that we own this communal land, however I cannot say whether this is being managed'.

This was followed by a 'chasing email' on 24th February to the developers. This was because of the continuing rain (as Members may recall last winter was extremely wet) and investigations by the Council's former Premises Manager and a local resident (one of the original families who moved into Earles Meadow) seemed to show that the problems were not caused by anything the Parish Council was or was not doing on land within their ownership.

During the summer months, the developer's 'external consultant visited the site but there has been no feedback from him regarding anything the Parish Council should or should not be doing.

On 30th September 2015, an updating email was received from the developers stating that they 'have requested asset plans from Southern Water so as to identify whether the flooding has been caused by difficulties with nearby drainage pipes'.

On 1st October 2015 the developers were requested to make every effort to progress with their enquiries before the onset of winter.

On 13th January 2016 an email was received stating 'we have tried to identify the exact ownership of this culvert, however, the title plans for the adjoining properties are proving difficult when trying to identify the exact boundary lines. Please may you advise whether there is a management company?'

On the receipt of this email and in consideration of the ambiguity of the last sentence, the Parish Clerk made the decision to contact the former Premises Manager to seek his assistance. This resulted with him, on behalf of the Parish Clerk, making an arrangement to meet with an external contractor who had undertaken drainage work for the Parish Council in the past. Councillor Knight also attended this meeting.

On 19th January a further email was received from the developers regarding the ditch at the rear of 28, 29 and 31, Earles Meadow. I can confirm that the ditch runs through these property boundaries and is clearly marked on the asset plans within their title. Upon conducting a site visit of the area this week, these residents have assumed responsibility of this ditch as within their boundary as seen by the fence line.

The condition of this ditch will therefore depend on the individual residents and is not our responsibility to maintain this area.

If the problem persists may I suggest you write to each of the residents to inform them of the recurring problem and the impact the blocked ditch may be having on their neighbours'.

A subsequent telephone conversation with the developer gave the information that the ditch at the rear of no. 28 was filled with water at the time of the site visit but they (the developers) were unable to say whether this was impacting on 38 and 39 Earles Meadow.

Members are advised that the quotation received from the external drainage contractors is as follows –

- Supply and maintain a 3ton and .8 ton excavator
 - Remove and replace fence panels as required to allow entry to the work area
 - Remove any fallen trees and shrub as required
 - Excavate and form a new ditch c. 40 metres in length
 - Supply and install c. 40 metres of 300mm UPVC pipe wrapped in geotax membrane from the rear of 39, Earles Meadow and terminate at the existing watercourse located at the rear of 40, Earles Meadow
 - Cover new 300mm UPVC pipe with 40mm aggregates to form ditch banks and level ground with any soil removed when excavating the ditch
 - Construct new header wall at the discharge point
 - Replace and repair fencing as required
 - Clear site and de-mobilise all plant
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- The Parish Council to arrange authorisation to enter 38, 39 and 40 gardens and allotment owners to enable the work to be carried out

Cost of works £9,935

Members are advised that there is evidence of a pipe in the ditch at the rear of 39, Earles Meadow, which is broken. This is very close to where a gate from that property and steps out onto the allotment site have been installed. The existence of the pipe is acknowledged by the owner of 39, Earles Meadow but no further explanation has been given.

RECOMMENDATION
Members' views are sought

- 8. FOOTPATH BETWEEN EARLES MEADOW AND AMBERLEY CLOSE**
Members are advised that this path comes from the estate, over a footbridge across a watercourse and out onto the Amberley Close Open Space.

Once across this small area of grass the path links to the rough hard surface path laid some time ago.

The complaint, made via the Fix My Street website and Horsham District Council is as follows – ‘I appreciate that we have recently suffered from heavy rain but the path between Earles Meadow and the Amberley Close green space is so muddy that is unusable for anyone wearing normal footwear. This means for instance, that anyone walking to the bus stop or train station would have to use another route to get there’.

RECOMMENDATION

Members’ views are sought as to whether they wish to take any remedial action regarding this area.

9. REDUCTION OF HEDGEROW BETWEEN EARLES MEADOW AND AMBERLEY CLOSE ALLOTMENTS

Members are advised that a request has been received from the residents of 39 and 40 Earles Meadow to reduce the height of the mixed hedge (bramble, holly, hazel etc) on the Allotment site to around 5 to 6 feet in height, as this has not been cut back for some time and light is being reduced into the properties.

The work will be undertaken by a professional Tree Surgeon and the cost of the work will be met by the residents.

RECOMMENDATION

Members’ views are sought

10. NORTH HEATH HALL CAR PARK

Members are advised that Councillor Knight and the Clerk met with the Contracts Manager and the Site Manager of Castleoak Group (at the former Evelyn Lancaster House site) on 19th January 2016, to discuss the ongoing issue of parking and lorries turning in the mouth of the North Heath Hall car park, which was generating an almost constant stream of emails from a group of local residents.

(a) Parking

Members may, no doubt, recall, that a previous arrangement made by the Clerk for the parking of vehicles in the top end of the car park was withdrawn by Full Council on 19th March 2015.

Since then the parking situation in the area has gradually deteriorated and as Members are, no doubt aware, vehicles are now being parked on North Heath Lane itself, outside the Church.

Whilst there are no parking restrictions at this location, a number of verbal complaints have been received. As Members are aware, parents park along North Heath Lane at dropping off and collecting time for their children for Holbrook School. There is also a bus stop just past the Church and the entrance to the Business Park on the right. If lorries are waiting to deliver to the site, there can be considerable congestion. Added to this, the approach to the junction with St Marks Lane is just around a bend and at the beginning of the decline in North Heath Hall and unfortunately, there is a tendency for vehicles travelling towards Horsham to be travelling in excess of the speed limit.

Members may wish to consider that this current situation extends beyond those in the immediate vicinity of the site but is now impacting on the wider community.

Members are invited to consider, again, granting permission for a maximum of ten vehicles, which would be the personal vehicles of site management personnel and workers only (not contractors' vans), to use the area at the top of the North Heath Hall car park for the remainder of the site work; and between the hours of 7.30am and 5.30pm, Monday to Friday. This would be subject to the use of the Hall by Parish Council customers.

RECOMMENDATION

That permission is granted for car parking in North Heath Hall to the Castleoak Group, as outlined above

(b) Lorry movements

This issue is also partly bound up with those raised at (a) above, where articulated vehicles and other large fixed base vehicles e.g. cranes have to reverse out into North Heath Lane. An assurance has been given that such vehicle movements amount to approximately two per week. Permission is sought to allow the turning of articulated vehicles, but only in extreme circumstances.

Castleoak have provided a Dilapidation Survey of the current condition of the entrance to and top end of the car, together with a number of photographs and an Undertaking to repair any damage caused by Castleoak Group, including their contractors, at the end of the project.

RECOMMENDATION

That permission is granted as outlined.

11. ADDITIONAL FENCING AT THE MULTI COURTS

Members are advised that a request has been received from Horsham Bowling Club to provide additional two metre high protective netting to the top of the fence of the Multi Courts, alongside the Bowls Green.

The complaint of the Bowling Club is that users of the Multi Courts are kicking footballs (and other objects) onto the Green and they say there is a real possibility that injury will be caused to a Bowling Club member; or damage caused to the Green. The complaint continues that users of the Multi Courts are accessing the Bowls Green by the rear of the Tythe Barn, over the fence and onto the Green to retrieve the balls.

Members are advised that earlier in the year, the Bowling Club themselves said that they would be installing such netting on their own fence to prevent such incidents, but this has not happened.

Members are advised that the installation of such netting would be the subject of a planning application. Further that at the present time, the Clerk has no indication of cost.

RECOMMENDATION

Members' views are sought

12. ON-GOING WORKS

Members are asked to note that the following works continue to be ongoing -

- (a) Roffey Millennium Hall**
 - (i) Re-design of the Parish Office

RECOMMENDATION

That this item is re-visited by the new Parish Clerk, when appointed

- (b) Multi Courts**
 - (i) Minor groundworks at Courts entrance**
Members are advised that this work will be undertaken later in the season
- (c) Other locations**
 - (i) Tree works – end of Brushwood Road**
 - (ii) ‘Lower and Upper Meadows’ – Earles Meadow**

Members are asked to note that it is anticipated that a Report will be available at the Committee meeting

RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to note sections (b) and (c) above of the Report

13. COMPLETED WORKS

Members are asked to note the completion of the following works –

(a) Holbrook Tythe Barn

- (i) New vinyl flooring – main Barn area
- (ii) Partial tarmacing of car park footpath

(b) North Heath Hall

- (i) New vinyl flooring – various areas
- (ii) Guttering work – joints, brackets etc.

(c) Roffey Millennium Hall

- (i) Emergency Light replacement – remainder

(d) Other locations

- (i) Tree works in Heath Way
- (ii) Pedestrian access point – Earles Meadow
- (iii) Rope fencing of oak tree – Earles Meadow

RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to note this section of the Report

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 7th April 2016 (scheduled)

Sue Kemp – Parish Clerk
28th January 2016