

NORTH HORSHAM PARISH COUNCIL

**PROPERTY COMMITTEE
THURSDAY 11th JUNE 2015**

COMMITTEE REPORT

3. 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.

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

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

7. 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.

8. EARLES MEADOW

(a) Commemorative Seat

Members are advised that the commemorative bench has now been installed.

(b) Flooding issues

Members are advised that this matter is still ongoing. Contact has been made with the developers, who have apologised for the delay and it is anticipated that the developer's external consultant will make contact before the Committee meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

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

(c) Pedestrian Access Point to Earles Meadow

Members will, no doubt, recall that this matter was discussed at the last Committee meeting, where it was resolved that the fence would not be re-instated but that the situation would be monitored.

The situation regarding the displacement of bins onto the Earles Meadow Open Space is continuing and local residents have asked that concrete posts are installed. This would also provide a measure of safety for local people, following the previous incident with a small child.

The cost of providing such posts would be £65 per post, plus installation, which would be met from the Open Spaces Budget.

RECOMMENDATION

Members' views are sought

(d) Oak Tree

Members will have had the benefit of hearing the comments of David Kavanagh-Spall at the Council meeting on 19th May 2015. The Resolution of that meeting was as follows –

- (a) That initial work be undertaken as described in Mr Kavanagh-Spall's Report, subject to planning permission
- (b) That a 20-year Management Plan be put in place as described in Mr Kavanagh-Spall's Report
- (c) That an Information Sign be provided to explain the actions taken regarding the tree
- (d) That the matter be referred to the Property Committee for further action with a Report for the next meeting on 11th June 2015 as regards the exclusion area and Information Sign.

At the time of writing the Report, Members are advised of the following –

- (i) the planning application for the tree work has been submitted
- (ii) a quotation for the initial stage of the work, subject, of course, to planning permission, has been received in the sum of £3,300. This cost includes two and four ton Cobra bracing; and the removal of the ‘middle’ oak tree and if planning permission is not granted for that tree’s removal, the cost will reduce by £800.
- (iii) a quotation for the supply and installation of materials for the exclusion zone has been received in the sum of £973.

With regard to the proposed exclusion zone, it is proposed that the zone will extend 8 to 10 metres from the centre of the tree, giving a total circumference of c. 60 metres. This will leave at least a 3 metre walking zone around the entire tree.

Further, Members are invited to consider the following –

- (i) the suggested manila rope and oak or chestnut wooden posts are in keeping with the surroundings
- (ii) the rope provides a physical barrier without taking up visual space
- (ii) the rope is placed at waist height so as not to create a trip hazard at any time of the day. Also the softness of the rope will reduce the likelihood of injury
- (iv) The ‘structure’ can be easily dismantled and re-instated when access is required to the tree
- (v) each section of the ‘structure’ can be easily replaced and/or repaired
- (vi) the bays can be reasonably long thus minimising the number of posts to be installed, thus reducing disruption to the root system of the tree

Photographs of the suggested materials to be used will be available at the meeting

Members would be asked to note that all expenditure would be met from the Open Spaces budget.

RECOMMENDATION
Members’ views are sought

9. COMMITTEE BUDGET MONITORING – to 31.3.2015

Members are advised that the internal spreadsheets detailing Committee Budget monitoring information up to 31st March 2015 will be available at the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee Budget monitoring information is noted

10. ACQUISITION OF LAND – HIGHDOWN WAY

Members may be aware that this parcel of land, which is a Play Area in the ownership of Horsham District Council (HDC), was brought to the attention of the Parish Council by a local resident who was aware of a planning application for a change of use for the land. The change of use was conversion from Play Area to Garden Lane and involved the disposal of the land to an adjoining land owner.

Members are asked to note that, at this time, the Parish Council were not aware of the planning application. The application subsequently came before the Parish Council's Planning Committee who made the following objection – ' As it would represent the loss of land intended as open space and a public amenity, and it could set a dangerous precedent for other similar parcels of land. The Parish Council is also concerned over the due diligence process and the apparent lack of consultation with nearby residents and lack of notice on the site itself'.

Subsequently, the application was refused by HDC and at the District Council's Planning Meeting it was suggested that the Parish Council might like to acquire the land.

An email has now been received from HDC for a nominal consideration of £1.

The land in question is a land locked Play Area with no vehicular access. HDC comments – 'The Council decided to decommission the play area due to the proximity of a new and better facility for children of all ages at Sloughbrook Park, approximately 100 metres away. The play equipment was reaching the end of its life and had complied with play regulations at the time but new national guidance favours a shift away from formal play equipment on very small sites'.

Members are advised that photographs of the site will be available to the meeting.

Following receipt of the email HDC were asked –

- (a) who owns the boundary walls – a definitive reply is still awaited, although it would appear to be the adjoining property owners
- (b) whether HDC would clear the redundant play equipment and remove the ‘safety surfacing’ – to which a negative response has been received
- (c) whether, if there was a negative response to (b) above, an, as yet, unspecified sum of money would be made available to clear the area – again, a negative response
- (d) was it envisaged that any other restrictions might be placed on the land – to which it was responded that the £1 consideration was on the basis that the land be used solely for recreational and public open space purposes and that the Parish Council would be responsible thereafter for its maintenance.

Members are asked to be aware that, as has been said, this site is land locked and there is no vehicular access. Items and rubble will have to be hand carried and barrowed from the site, which could be an additional cost.

Members are invited to consider that if they took over this land, what could be done with it. A number of suggestions have been put forward, including the creation of a small green Open Space with perhaps a central tree. Members may wish to consider seeking the assistance of Green Gym with this part of the project; with future maintenance being added to the existing Grounds Maintenance contract. Other suggestions may be tabled at the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION
Members’ views are sought

11. REPLACEMENT NOTICE BOARDS – various locations

Members are advised that the number of ‘external’ notice boards (those are not fixed to the outside of the three buildings) in the Parish as shown on the Asset Register is 6, plus the Roundel. The locations of these are - Coltsfoot Drive, Bartholomew Way, Lambs Farm Road (at the shops). Church Road, North Heath Lane (at Riverside Walk) and Godwin Way.

Members are invited to consider the replacement of three of those listed above; together with the external boards at North Heath Hall. for the following reasons –

- (a) Bartholomew Way and North Heath Lane both have an ‘up and over’ opening mechanism. In both boards the mechanism that holds the ‘door’ open has failed, so a balancing act has to be performed, which is dangerous. In addition, the board at North Heath Lane is quite flimsy.

- (b) Church Road is too small and is not fit for purpose. It will hold four sheets of A4 (and with some overlap) and all the notice boards carry two A4 standard notices, so there is little room for anything else.
- (c) The two boards at North Heath Hall are again too small and are not fit for purpose. In these boards there are always four standard A4 notices, again leaving little room for anything else.

A quotation has been given from a local company, for the replacement and installation of four new notice boards in the sum of £2,272. All will be in the Parish Council's corporate colour, with a header board, magnetic backing and magnets and plexichoc glazing. Members are advised that plexichoc glazing is 'a transparent organic UV-blocking glazing material with good shock resistance'.

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) **That the quotation in the sum of £2,272 for the supply and installation of four new notice boards as described above is accepted**
- (b) **That the expenditure be met from the Repairs and Renewals Reserve**

12. ACOUSTIC PANELS – NORTH HEATH HALL

Members will recall that a Reverberation Test was conducted at the same time, as that at the Wallace Room at Holbrook Tythe Barn. The recommendation from the test for North Heath Hall was the provision of five (5) 100mm thick panels installed in the recommended places in the Hall.

The cost of this is quoted as £2,950 and is from the same company that undertook the work at Holbrook Tythe Barn, which has been a resounding success.

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) **That the quotation in the sum of £2,950 for the supply and installation of five acoustic panels as described above is accepted**
- (b) **That the expenditure be met from the Repairs and Renewals Reserve**

13. GROUNDWORKS AT MULTI COURTS ENTRANCE

Members are advised that following the works on the Multi Courts some levelling and re-seeding work is required. A quotation has been received in the sum of £725 for this work and will also include top soiling and re-seeding around the goal mouths at Amberley Close Open Space.

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) **That the quotation for levelling and re-seeding the entrance to the Multi Courts and goal mouths at Amberley Close Open Space, in the sum of £725 is accepted**
- (b) **That the cost of this work is met from the Open Spaces budget**

14. HIRE OF REAR GARDEN AT NORTH HEATH HALL – MANOR THEATRE GROUP

Members are asked to consider two requests for the specific use of the rear garden at North Heath Hall. Members are asked to note that, generally, the garden is available for the use of hirers.

- (a) The first request is that the Saturday performance of Manor Theatre's next production is held solely outside in the garden (the Friday performance would be, as usual, in the building).

Manor Theatre would provide staging and have asked about using the Hall chairs outside. The suggestion was made so as to avoid this, that the event be a 'picnic event'.

The Bar would be inside in the Hall but if drinks were brought outside, only plastic glasses would be used. Access to the Hall would be by turning left from the garden (thus avoiding the steps).

Manor Theatre are seeking the Committee's view regarding music etc. There would be a PR system with two speakers, either side of the stage with the direction of sound being away from houses. Further, for quiet classical music to be played from 5pm to 6.30pm and during the interval of 7.30pm to 8pm. The performance finishes at 9.30pm, when the speakers would be switched off and all equipment being packed away immediately. There is a 'bad weather' contingency plan.

RECOMMENDATION

Members' views are sought.

- (b) The second event is on 29th August (the Bank Holiday weekend) for a wedding blessing celebration of two members of the Theatre Group.

As regards music, this would be played from c. 4.30pm outside in the garden, until 9pm, when the part would move into the Hall. Ideally, the outside music would be provided by a Band.

Other requests made include the provision of a dance floor on the grass, a marquee (6m by 9m) and a hogroast.

RECOMMENDATION
Members' views are sought

15. NEW FLOORING – NORTH HEATH HALL

Members are asked to consider the replacement of the vinyl floor covering in the following areas of North Heath Hall – the entrance hall, WCs, kitchen and Room 9. The existing flooring is the original tiles (laid in 1988) and is, in many places worn and lifting. It is becoming more and more difficult to keep the floor in these areas clean and is looking extremely 'tired'.

A quotation has been received from a contractor who has previously undertaken work for the Parish Council in the total sum of £3,966. This includes £460 for a new sit on the skirting and £600 for a damp proof membrane (which may not be required)

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) **That the quotation in the sum of £3,966 for new vinyl flooring as described above is accepted**
- (b) **That the expenditure be met from the Repairs and Renewals Reserve**

16. TREE WORKS – VARIOUS LOCATIONS

(a) Earles Meadow – end of Brushwood Road

Members are asked to note that this area has been subject to comment from Councillors . A planning application will be required and is being submitted, as the trees are all within the confines of the Area Tree Preservation Order.

The quotation received is to 'crown raise and remove dead hangers from a cherry, sycamore, beech and willow trees; to neaten the elderflower hedgerow; and to hard trim the laurel shrub alongside the path; and is in the sum of £350.

RECOMMENDATION

That the quotation for the tree work described above is accepted in the sum of £350

(b) Holbrook Tythe Barn

(i) Park Farm Close boundary

Members are advised that complaints have been received from residents of Park Farm Close regarding the tree line along the boundary of Holbrook Tythe Barn. Members are advised that work was last undertaken in 2010 at a cost of £1,100, when the shrubbery was reduced away from the fence line by approximately 0.6 to 0.9 metres and the height of the remaining hedge reduced.

(ii) Poplar trees in corner of the site

Members are advised that work was carried out on this group of poplar trees in 2010, when two were removed from the group. The request now is for the reduction of the three remaining trees.

Quotations have been received as follows –

- (a) For the cutting back of shrubbery away from fences to provide a walkway (as in (i) above), in the sum of £300; or
- (b) For both (i) and (ii) above, in the sum of £740

Members are asked to note that these works will not be subject to planning permission. There are, however, two issues surrounding this area relating to land usage, which is currently being investigated by the Clerk and it may be that a Report will be presented to the next full Council meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That quotation (b) be accepted in relation to work on the two poplar trees only**
- (b) That a further Report be prepared, as appropriate, to full Council**

(c) Earles Meadow – opposite No. 11

Members are advised that complaints have been received from residents regarding the low hanging branches and damage (caused by the refuse lorry and other high sided vans) to two cherry trees. A quotation has been received in the sum of £120 for the cutting back and crown raising of both trees. This work would not be subject to planning permission.

RECOMMENDATION

That the quotation for the tree work described above is accepted in the sum of £120

17. ONGOING WORKS

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

Roffey Millennium Hall

- (a) Re-design of Parish Office

North Heath Hall

- (a) Gutters and fascia boards

Holbrook Tythe Barn

- (a) Partial re-tarmacing of footpath across carpark

- (b) Taps and pop up wastes in WC's**

Members are asked to note that the taps will not be replaced with monobloc concussive taps, as these are too expensive. For the time being, all washers and pop up wastes will be replaced and the situation will be monitored.

- (c) Damage to knee high fencing

- (d) Re-instatement of external awning**

Members are asked to note that the awning is now installed and fully operational

RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to note this section of the Report

18. COMPLETED WORKS

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

- (a) Seating in Manor Fields Bus Shelter
- (b) Acoustic Panels at Holbrook Tythe Barn (Wallace Room)
- (c) Roof window openings at North Heath Hall
- (d) Workshop at Holbrook Tythe Barn
- (e) Replacement of felled hornbeam tree at Cherry Tree Walk

RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to note this section of the Report

Members are asked to note that in respect of (a) above a letter of thanks has been received from the Chesterton Court Residents' Association. That said, however, comments have been made that the seat is too short – it being able to accommodate a couple of people.

Whilst the request has not been specifically made, there is suggestion in the letter that perhaps another seat could be fitted. It is also commented that rain water is leaking onto the seat between one of the new panels and the roof. Members are advised that enquiries are being made of the manufacturer/installer.

RECOMMENDATION

Members' views are sought

19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 30th July 2015 (scheduled)

20. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

To consider whether to exclude the Press and Public from the meeting during the consideration of the following items in accordance with S1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information

RECOMMENDATION

That the Press and Public are now excluded from the meeting

21. CHILDCARE PROVISION

Members are asked to note that a Report will be given at the Committee meeting

Sue Kemp – Parish Clerk
10th June 2015