

BUXTED PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Property and Recreation Grounds Committee held in Reading Room, Buxted at 7.15 p.m. on Tuesday 29th May 2012

Present: Cllrs. Rose, Blandford, Warner and Treacher, and co-opted member Mr M Cooper
Also present: Malcolm Wilson Clerk

Public: None

- 1 **Apologies for Absence:** None were received
- 2 **Declarations of Members Interests:** Cllr Treacher declared a personal interest by virtue of being a member of the High Hurstwood Village Hall Committee.
- 3 **High Hurstwood Recreation Ground:** Mr Cooper has been formally co-opted onto the Committee to improve liaison between the parish council and the High Hurstwood Village Green Committee. He gave an update on the progress following the public meeting on 1st February 2012.
 - i) A committee of seven, chaired by Tim Burgess, has been established
 - ii) It has looked at how the field could be designed to allow for a cricket wicket and two five a side football, touch rugby and stoolball pitches. Neighbours facing the green have been approached on their views which apparently are, on the whole, supportive.
 - iii) The verge opposite the Hurstwood Pub is an eyesore with dangerous potholes and is the first priority for the group. It has arranged to get two quotes from local contractors for draining and landscaping the area and installing bollards to discourage parking; they would also like to lower the hedge, to give a better view of the area from the road. This might mean removing some of the more sturdy branches by hand as they are too big for a flail. Whilst the hedge is owned by the parish council as part of the Recreation Ground, the verge is owned by East Sussex County Council. It was pointed out that ESCC are most unlikely to allow bollards on the verge; they will also insist that any contractors working on their land have appropriate public liability insurance and also safety training for working alongside the road. It was suggested that John Packer, who is looking after this aspect of the work, contacts Ian Johnson at ESCC Highways before potentially wasting too much time on plans that ESCC might not support.
 - iv) It was reported that £12,000 has been made available from local donations.
 - v) Moving to the pitches, it is recognised that neighbours would have to be protected by some type of safety netting and public liability insurance would be required. It is not clear whether planning permission for the poles and demountable netting will be required. It was reported that Buxted Park Cricket Club might be interested in using the facility for junior teams
 - vi) At the public meeting the idea of a new pavilion had been mooted. Having engaged the services of a local architect it now seems more likely that modifications to the existing hall might be more practical.
 - vii) It was noted that any planning application for poles/netting or a hall extension might fall foul of the new 7km exclusion zone for development which is being enforced by Wealden District Council. Given that extra sport will increase traffic numbers (visiting teams and spectators etc) and the exclusion policy is aimed at reducing traffic movements there may well be a conflict.
 - viii) Planning approval for the storage container expires in the short term. It was **agreed** to ask Beccy Macklen to speak to contacts in Wealden Planning to see if there would be any problems with renewing the existing permission.
 - ix) Formal parish council policy on the Recreation Ground was reiterated and the Clerk read out the agreed policy from the minutes of the parish council meeting on 14th February 2012. This stated that *"It was resolved that parish council policy was for the public space to remain in the ownership and control of the parish council, as an elected public body, and that exclusive use of the Recreation Ground by a small exclusive group was not in the wider public interest."* If any of the plans restricted use of the site by residents of other parts of the parish they would not receive the support of the parish council.
 - x) The High Hurstwood Recreation Ground committee is due to meet again on 11th June 2012 and will consider a further public meeting, possibly in the autumn, to discuss and receive feedback on improvement plans. It was **agreed** it would be helpful for representatives from the parish council to meet with the RG committee before that meeting.

- 4 Allotments:** The Clerk reported that three plots had come vacant – numbers 3, 7 and 25. All are overgrown so there will be no refund of deposits. The plots will be let to new tenants which will leave just one person on the waiting list. Six tenants are yet to pay their rental for 2012/13 and the Clerk will chase. The Clerk had met with Mr Weller who will deal with a number of issues – removing the pile of fly tipped soil, removing the fir tree logs on the pig syndicate track, checking the rabbit proofing of the fencing and strimming the three overgrown plots so at least they can be passed over in somewhat better condition. An offer by Mr Hodgson to have his plot rental reduced if he did some strimming of the surrounding undergrowth from time to time was appreciated but it **was rejected**. It was felt better to have this done commercially if required. The Clerk was asked to try and make contact with the appropriate Water company to see if the problems of water from the railway culvert flooding the allotments at times of heavy rain could be resolved.
- 5 Reading Room:** Until the fate of the planning application for the new community hall was determined there was nothing to be done about any possible sale of the Reading Room. Basic care and maintenance only would be undertaken to keep the fabric of the building sound and watertight. The Clerk is arranging PAT.
- 6 Nevill Road – tree work and other matters:** The Clerk has still to make contact with Simon Young to arrange for the felling of the ash tree, but it is not a dangerous or urgent matter. The Clerk was asked to approach Wealden DC to see if the blanket Tree Preservation Order on the site can be lifted – it serves no purpose and the woodland is not thought to be of sufficient merit to warrant such a restriction. In view of the new 7km exclusion zone for development it was agreed it was pointless pursuing possible development of this site at the current time.
- 7 Annual review of risk assessment of the Council’s physical assets:** The review had been circulated in advance and there were no additional points made beyond the Clerk being asked to register the title of the “allotment” field in High Hurstwood.
- 8 Annual review of the Council’s Risk Assessment Policies in relation to assets:** This had been circulated in advance and the committee was content that the Risk Assessment policies were sound and fit for purpose as they stand with no changes necessary.
- 9 Annual review of Council insurance arrangements:** The parish council is just about to start the second year of a three year deal with Aviva, brokered through Came & Co. All levels of cover are standard and appropriate.
- 10 Members Questions**
Cllr Blandford asked Cllr Warner for clarification on some of the matters reported under High Hurstwood Recreation Ground above.
- 11 Any Other Matters Properly Notified**
None this meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.15 p.m.

Signed:

Chairman

Date: