

PADDOCK WOOD TOWN COUNCIL
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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ESTATES COMMITTEE held on Monday 8th February 2021
at 7.30pm, via ZOOM.**

PRESENT: Cllr D Boyle, in the chair
Cllrs R Atkins, M Flashman, R. Moon, D. Sargison, R. Turk

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs N Reay, Clerk to the Council
Mr K Butler, Estates Manager
6 residents

APOLOGY: Cllr E Thomas

ES51 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
There were no Declarations of Interest.

ES52 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING
The minutes of the meeting held 14th December 2020 were APPROVED.

ES53 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

a) Cemetery Drainage – Members received a report on the cemetery drainage from the deputy clerk.

Cllr Boyle proposed, Cllr Moon seconded:

That the council should undertake the work to mitigate the flooding in the cemetery.

CARRIED unanimously.

b) Green Lane Spinney – the work at the spinney adjacent to the power line was scheduled to take place on Monday 8th February 2021. Due to the inclement weather, it has been postponed until a later date.

c) The new noticeboard has been installed outside the Day Centre.

ES54 PUTLANDS FIELD FLOODING

Residents were in attendance to ask the council to try to resolve the flooding issues at the bottom corner of the playing fields, adjacent to their properties.

Cllr Boyle proposed, Cllr Atkins seconded:

That Standing Orders should be suspended to allow the attending residents to speak.

CARRIED unanimously.

The chairman invited the residents to explain the situation. The following issues were raised.

- Concerns that if the bunds which have been constructed inside their property boundaries should fail then their properties could flood.
- Boundary fences are rotting due to water levels.
- Stream of water running through gardens.
- The situation is getting worse.

- The parking area to Stace Cottages fills with water.
- There used to be a drainage channel running down the side of Stace House, but it had been filled in.
- Could the water be piped to the drains under the Maidstone Road?

The chairman re-instated standing orders.

Members discussed the concerns. Residents had provided photographs for members information. The clerk directed members to the report issued by Peter Brett Ass in 2013 when the drainage scheme for the Athletics track had been drawn up. In that report it advised that Southern Water would not give permission for the water to be piped into the highways drains. It needed to be attenuated on site. Due to the high level of the water table in this area soakaways would not work either. The athletics track drainage was piped to the pond in the corner of Putlands Field and had been checked and was working. The drainage pipes on the football pitches have also been cleaned and checked and were working properly.

The area of concern was the lowest lying area of the field. The construction of additional hard landscaping and new houses in the immediate area had not helped the drainage problems. KCC Drainage Engineers had previously been consulted and the Chairman read out response, that advised that those “downstream” of the flooding were responsible for protecting their properties.

The clerk had obtained the costs of having the water pumped into tanker and disposed of offsite at a wastewater facility. It would cost £850 for the tanker, plus the disposal cost of the wastewater.

It was agreed that Cllr Turk would meet on site with a local drainage expert to explore solutions.

The Council and residents should work together to try to resolve the problem.

The chairman would write to TWBC planning department expressing the Council’s frustration at permission being granted in areas that have known flooding problems.

ES55

GRASSCUTTING

The Town Council has been approached by residents asking if some areas of the grass can be left “wild” rather than cut short. The Committee had previously agreed that a 2-metre strip along the hedge line at Green Lane should be left. It is also planned to allow the fencing off area at the end of Green Lane to be left uncut. Additional wildflower planting can be considered in this area once Southern Water have carried out the planned work.

The Clerk and Estates Manager put forward the following areas for consideration:

- along the boundaries of Green Lane Recreation Ground,
- between the buildings at St Andrews Field,
- along the fence line at the Memorial Field
- space between the boundary and the bowls club at Putlands

Members agreed that all areas should be left unmown to allow wild grasses and flowers to grow. The council could also consider planting some additional trees in these areas.

ES56 TREES GREEN LANE

Work has been carried out on the oak trees at along the public footpath at Green Lane. This was work which was carried out at the request of residents, as the trees were overshadowing their gardens.

The tree surgeon was asked to life the crowns to allow in more light. However, the residents have asked that the height of the trees be lowered.

Members agreed that they did not wish the oaks to be reduced in height. They asked that the tree surgeon and estates manager should meet on site and discuss whether the trees could be thinned further.

ES57 HEDGE, DAY CENTRE

The hawthorn hedge at the Day Centre has over the last two years suffered from an infestation of brown moths. These moths kill the hedge and cause rashes if they come into contact with the skin. The pest controller has visited on several occasions to try to burn the webs. This has had limited success. He has advised that the only successful way to eradicate them would be to remove the hedge and replant it with another variety.

However, an alternative contractor has advised that he can chemically spray the hedge to eradicate the moths. The cost would be £318/application. More than one may be required.

TWBC have been consulted regarding the hedging around Dowding House and have agreed that their part of the hedge should be treated as well.

Cllr Boyle proposed, Cllr Atkins seconded:

That the hedges should be sprayed (maximum of 3 applications) to try to eradicate the moths.

CARRIED unanimously.

ES58 METAL DETECTING

The Town Council has received a request to allow metal detecting on its land. A similar request has been received by all Tunbridge Wells Parishes. Some parishes have a policy regarding metal detecting.

Members agreed that under certain circumstances metal detecting might be considered on town council land.

Cllr Boyle proposed, Cllr Flashman seconded:

That a policy should be drawn up (based on the model supplied) and submitted to the PPP Committee for consideration.

CARRIED unanimously.

ES59 ELM TREE PLAYING FIELDS

Paddock Wood FC have received planning permission for the fencing and dugouts at Elm Tree Playing Fields.

The proposed maintenance agreement was ACCEPTED with the following addition:
The Town Council reserves the right to clear away the structures in the event of the club folding and failing to remove the structures themselves.

ES60 PW BOWLS CLUB

The Clerk advised that the solicitor had been consulted, and a response from the Club was awaited regarding fees. It had previously been agreed that the term of the lease should remain the same.

ES61 THE BATTERS

Over the weekend of the 30/31 January a water pipe burst under the Batters. South East Water have carried out the repairs and have advised that they will instate the area once it has dried out sufficiently.

ES62 ESTATES MANAGER'S REPORT

The Estates Manager advised that staff were continuing to work under the Covid 19 guidance set out by the council.

He also advised that his van had broken down that morning and he was waiting to hear from the garage what the problem was.

ES63 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place on Monday 8th March 2021.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm.

CHAIRMAN