

PADDOCK WOOD TOWN COUNCIL
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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ESTATES COMMITTEE
held on Monday 10th July 2023 in the Day Centre Commercial Road at 7.45 pm.

PRESENT: Cllr J Thompson, in the chair
 Cllrs A Mackie, D Kent, T Mobbs, R Moon, D Sargison,

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs N Reay, Town Clerk
 Mr C Smith, Estates Manager

APOLOGIES: Cllrs H Atkins, R. Atkins

ES12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
 There were no declarations of interest.

ES13 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING
 The Minutes of the meeting held on the 12th June 2023 were APPROVED.

ES14 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

- a) ES4 – roundabout – Cllr Kent had reviewed the roundabout plans and suggested speaking to a local engineering company to see if they could carry out repairs. However, no local company was willing to do so due to the nature of the work. Following a discussion, when member expressed disappointment that it had failed so quickly Cllr Thompson proposed, Cllr Mackie seconded:
That the repairs should be carried out as per the quotes. The Clerk should write to the manufacturer expressed the council's concern that the roundabout had not lasted very long. Approval should be sought from the Town Council to pay for the repairs from the general reserve fund.
 CARRIED 5 in favour, 1 abstention.
- b) ES6 Developer funding for the Memorial Field – the application to draw down the funding had been made.
- c) ES 7 – Levelling Up Fund – the Estates Manager had made 3 applications of £3500 each.
- i) Whites Corner
 ii) Batters and Mount Pleasant
 iii) Planting at Memorial Park
- d) ES8 – van – a larger van from the current provider would cost £490/month which was outside of the current budget.
- e) es9 – Tree at Memorial – a further quote of £1500 had been obtained for this work and had been accepted.

Signed Committee Chairman:

Date:

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ES15 IMPROVEMENTS TO SKATE PARK

The Council has been approached by skateboard park users asking for the park to be upgraded.

There is currently £30,000 ringfenced in the Town Council reserves and another £74,500 in section 106 funding for skatepark improvements.

It is recommended that a local consultant who has worked in both Swanley and East Peckham should be invited to attend the September meeting to look at options.

Cllr Thompson proposed, Cllr Moon seconded:

That the consultant should be invited to meet with the committee chairman and other interested parties prior to the September meeting.

CARRIED unanimously.

ES16 WATERING OF HANGING BASKETS

The current watering restrictions still allow for the watering of the hanging baskets.

Cllr Moon proposed, Cllr Thompson seconded:

That the Estates staff should continue watering the hanging baskets

CARRIED

Members discussed what steps could be taken in the future to ensure that the plants can be watered, even if there were water shortages.

Options were:

Different types of plants

Water extraction licence

Water harvesting

Cllr Mobbs proposed, Cllr Mackie seconded:

That options for the future should be explored.

CARRIED unanimously.

ES17 OLD CHURCH YARD MAINTENANCE

Complaints have been received regarding the vegetation at the Old Church Yard. Concerns were expressed last year that the cuts had been carried out earlier, allowing for two cuts a year rather than just one. However, this has resulted in the Churchyard becoming very overgrown. Members were asked to agree to returning to two cuts a year. This will prevent it from being so overgrown and make cutting back easier. The Estates Manager advised that the funds would only be spent if required. Members discussed the level of maintenance that was appropriate for the site. Whilst some graves were still tended, as were the War Graves, most of it was left as a wildlife area.

It was also thought that a group of volunteers might be found to help manage the area.

Cllr Thompson proposed, Cllr Mackie seconded:

The council should budget for two cuts a year by a contractor if required.

CARRIED 5 in favour, 1 against (Cllr R Moon)

Signed Committee Chairman:

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Cllr Thompson proposed, Cllr Kent seconded:

A request should be put on the Town Council website to see if there was interest in creating a "Friends of the Old Church Yard Group". To help preserve and maintain the area.

CARRIED unanimously.

ES18 **HEDGE CUTTING**

There have also been complaints regarding overhanging hedges around the fields and onto the public footways. During the period April – July it is not possible to carry out major hedge cutting due to bird nesting. Limited cutting by hand can be carried out when essential. The Council's contractor normally cuts the main hedges in August.

Members were asked to consider two cuts a year in the future. Once before the bird nesting season and later in the year.

Cllr Sargison proposed, Cllr Thompson seconded:

That the council should budget for two cuts a year, once in winter when the structure of the hedge can be seen, and another after the nesting season.

CARRIED 4 in favour, 2 against (Cllrs Kent and Moon)

ES19 **TENNIS COURTS**

The nets and posts had been installed. The estates manager has reported that the grass around the courts has been left to grow wild. Poppies, cornflowers, and wild geraniums are now growing there. Members were asked to agree that this can be left as a wildflower area with additional planting later in the season. A strip would be kept clear alongside the tennis court fence.

Cllr Thompson proposed, Cllr Kent seconded:

That the area around the tennis court should be left to grow wild with additional planting as required. This would be reviewed after a year.

CARRIED unanimously.

ES20 **LONG GRASS AREAS**

The long grass areas at all our sites need wildflowers to be added. Members were asked to decide whether the Estates manager can invest in these areas in the autumn and spring by purchasing plants and seeds to enhance these areas.

Cllr Thompson proposed, Cllr Mobbs seconded:

That planting within the approved budget should be carried out.

CARRIED unanimously.

Signed Committee Chairman:

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ES21

FOAL HURST WOOD

There has been a request from a volunteer to spray the paths with glyphosate. Members were asked whether they support this request to be carried out by the Estates team. The Estates Manager advised that the use of glyphosate was legal. Members discussed whether it was appropriate to use it in Wood. The paths at the entrance of the reserve were designed to make the wood accessible to all. The grass was encroaching onto the path and damaging it. The work could be carried out in two halves, with one half being shut off whilst work was carried out.

Cllr Thompson proposed, Cllr Kent seconded:

That glyphosate could be used on the entrance paths.

CARRIED 5 in favour 1 against

At a previous meeting the Committee had agreed that quotes should be obtained to carry out a survey of the trees adjoining the paths in the wood land.

A quote for £360 had been received.

Cllr Thompson proposed, Cllr Mobbs seconded:

That the quote should be accepted

CARRIED 5 in favour 1 abstention.

Whilst visiting the woodland the tree surgeon had identified a tree in need of urgent attention. The Estates Manager had taped the area off and would arrange for a tree surgeon to attend as soon as possible and make the tree safe.

ES22

RINGDEN AVENUE ALLOTMENTS

The water pipes are leaking at Ringden Avenue allotments. It is likely that a full section of pipe requires repairing. An estimate for £1300 had been received.

The plumber could only estimate the costs as until the pipe had been exposed it was difficult to tell exactly what work was needed.

Cllr Thompson proposed, Cllr Sargison seconded:

That work should go ahead with a maximum expenditure of £2600 for the work.

CARRIED unanimously.

ES23

CEMETERY FENCING IMPROVEMENTS

This item was withdrawn pending further information.

ES24

REPLACEMENT OF LIGHTS IN PODMORE BUILDING

Cllr Thompson proposed, Cllr Mackie seconded:

That the quote to replace the lights in the Podmore building should be accepted.

CARRIED unanimously.

Signed Committee Chairman:

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ES25

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place on 14th August 2023.

Meeting closed at 9.40 pm.

Signed Committee Chairman:

Date:

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