

PADDOCK WOOD TOWN COUNCIL
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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ESTATES COMMITTEE held on Monday 14 August 2023
in the Day Centre Commercial Road at 7.45 pm.

PRESENT: Cllr R Atkins, in the Chair
 Cllr H Atkins A Mackie, D Kent, R Moon, D Sargison,

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs N Reay, Town Clerk

APOLOGIES: Cllr T Mobbs, J Thompson
 Mr C Smith, Estates Manager

ES21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
 There were no declarations of interest.

ES22 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING
 The minutes of the meeting held on the 10th July 2023 were APPROVED and signed.

ES23 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES.

- a) ES14 – A revised quote of £3029.32 for the repairs to the roundabout at St Andrews had been received. The Town Council approved the use of funds from the reserves at its meeting on the 17th July 2023. The order has been placed and work should commence in October.
- b) ES14 (e) - the tree at Memorial Field behind the tennis courts has been removed. The final bill was £930.
- c) ES21 - Foal Hurst Wood- the order had been placed for the tree inspection and for the removal of the tree identified during the visit by the tree surgeon.
- d) ES22 - the repairs to the pipe at the allotment had been carried out. The final bill was £1,700 as a further leak was identified whilst the plumber was on site.
- e) TWBC have approved the release of £146,997.92 s106 funding for sport improvements at the Memorial Field. There is currently £41,641. Held in the Council's reserves from the previous draw down. Total £188,638.92. Members held a discussion regarding the timescale for installation of the cricket wicket. It would not be possible to place the orders in time for work to commence this autumn.

ES24 ADVERSE WEATHER GUIDANCE
 The above guidance comes under the remit of the Governance Committee. Members are asked to consider the following for recommendation to Governance Committee at its meeting on the 29th August 2023. A copy of the current guidance is attached.

Signed Committee Chairman:

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a) **FOAL HURST WOOD**

Members discussed whether the Estates Manager and/or Town Clerk should have the authority to close the wood if deemed necessary due to adverse weather conditions.

Cllr R Atkins proposed, Cllr H Atkins seconded:

In the event of a yellow, amber or red weather warning for wind for the Southeast the Council authorises the Clerk and/or Estates Manager to close the wood on Health and Safety Grounds.

CARRIED 5 in favour 1 abstention.

Notices would be placed on the gates. The FHW volunteers would also be notified.

b) **WINTER GRITTING**

The Town Council receives 10 x 15 kg bags of a salt and grit mix from KCC to help with gritting. This is not for use on Town Council Property. The Town Council must supply its own for its property. The Estates Manager has advised that this is insufficient to grit the areas detailed in the plan.

Members agreed that the clerk should apply to KCC for a grit bin to be placed at the station end of Commercial Road.

Cllr H Atkins proposed, Cllr Moon seconded:

That the Town Council should buy in extra grit to allow it to cover the areas detailed in the Adverse Weather Plan.

CARRIED unanimously.

Both above would be referred to the Governance Committee for inclusion in the Plan.

ES25

GREEN LANE

A resident has contacted the council to advise that the roots from an adjacent poplar on town council land are encroaching into his garden and there are concerns that they will damage the drains. A quote for £590 has been obtained by the resident to remove the tree. The Council's insurers have been contacted and they have advised that the council could well be liable if damage was to occur to the residents' drains.

Cllr R Atkins proposed, Cllr H Atkins seconded:

That another quote should be sought, with separate costs for the removal of the roots on the resident's property. The Town Council will only cover the costs of removing the tree.

CARRIED 5 in favour and 1 abstention

ES26

ELM TREE SPORTS FIELD BOUNDARY

Following on from its culvert replacement works at Catts Place on Mile Oak Road, KCC have found that the watercourse flows towards Pearsons Green Road and into a culvert around the corner into Pearsons Green Road. They would like to remove as much of the culvert as possible to open the channel back up into

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an open ditch. As this is adjacent to Town Council land, KCC claim this falls under riparian ownership therefore keeping this clear is the responsibility of the Town Council. KCC are happy to do these works as a gesture of goodwill as removing the culvert and creating an open ditch allows for easier maintenance of the channel for the Town and will ensure the watercourse continues to flow effectively. The Estates Manager considers this to be a reasonable course of action.

Cllr H Atkins proposed, Cllr Sargison seconded:

That the Town Council should accept the offer from KCC to open the culvert.

CARRIED 4 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention

ES27

PONDS

Members considered the attached report for the costs and vegetation clearance of the ponds at Putlands, Green Lane and the Elm Tree.

Also included in the quote were the costs to either replace or remove the fishing platforms which had reached the end of their life. Members discussed whether all the platforms should be removed or whether to replace two of them.

Cllr H Atkins proposed, Cllr Kent seconded:

That all four platforms should be removed.

Cllr Mackie proposed the following amendment:

The council should consult on the the usage of the platforms first.

The amendment was not seconded and therefore fell. Members voted on the original proposal.

CARRIED 5 in favour 1 abstention.

Members then considered the costs and how to fund the work as set out in the report. The total cost for all the work including removing the fishing platforms and making good was £18,800. The Green Lane ponds could be funded from the remaining section 106 funding for the maintenance of Green Lane. The work at Green Lane was £6,000.

£3,500 was available for the work at Putlands. Leaving a total of £9,300 to be found from other sources.

Cllr H Atkins proposed, Cllr Kent seconded:

A request is put to Full Council for the funding to be released from the S106 reserve for Green Lane and general reserves to enable the contract to be placed.

CARRIED 5 in favour, 1 abstention.

ES28

MEMORIAL CAR PARK

The Estates Manager has raised concerns about the condition of the planting by the contractors when the Community Centre was built. A defect notice has been raised with the contractors. However, they dispute that the issues are defects. Attached is their response and the Estates Manager's comments.

It was agreed that if the depth of the wood chips was as described in the contract, then this should not be pursued.

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The Clerk advised that the notice had been referred to the Council's technical project manager and project manager for advice.

It was agreed to wait until the Estates Manager had had a site meeting regarding the uneven surface and that the council's advisors had responded.

The Committee chairman also asked that the issuing of defect notices should be referred to full council.

ES29

BENCHES

The Town Council has three benches to site on the Memorial Field, the coronation bench and two memorial benches for Paddock Wood Residents. Members had discussed placing them in front of the Memorial Car park facing the field, but it had been agreed to wait until the hoardings had been removed before finalising the location. The families of the memorial benches have been consulted.

The following locations were suggested:

Remove the old concrete bench from under the trees and replace with the Peter Swaite memorial bench.

David Henshaw Memorial bench and Coronation bench should be place facing onto the field in front of the car park rails.

Cllr R Atkins proposed, Cllr Mackie seconded:

That the above locations were acceptable.

CARRIED unanimously

ES30

PLAY AREAS

Members considered the attached report regarding the fencing around the play areas

a)

St Andrews Field

Cllr Kent proposed, Cllr H Atkins seconded:

That a quote for a complete refurbishment of the fence should be obtained

b)

Clover Way – member discussed way to prevent the continued damage to the fence at the play area. It was agreed that the current damage should be repaired, and the contractors should be asked to see if the fence can be re-enforced. Alternatively, it may need to be replaced with a bow topped fence which should prevent the continued damage.

ES31

ESTATES EQUIPMENT

The Estates Manager has advised that the Estates Staff should monitor their use of equipment for Hand Arm Vibrations. This can be done 2 ways:

- a) Manually using paper books and calculating the levels
- b) Monitoring equipment – a quote has been received for £2749.76 for the necessary equipment. There will be an ongoing cost of £70/pa once the equipment has been purchased.

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The Estates Manager has advised that in the short-term manual recording could be carried out but longer term the monitoring equipment will be more efficient.

The Clerk was asked to provide details of the legislation. (A link to the HSE guidance was forwarded to members)

Cllr H Atkins proposed, Cllr Kent seconded:

That manual records should be kept in the short term but funding for the monitoring equipment should be included in the 2024/25 budget.

CARRIED unanimously.

The Clerk also advised that the Council also needed to have discussions with the FHW volunteers to establish a suitable recording method for them.

ES32

DOG FOULING

There has been an increase in dog fouling on town council property. A dog fouling campaign for the town council property is required. The Council previously installed banners on its fields. Members agreed that the Clerk should obtain new banners and posters for the Town Council's sites.

ES33

STATUS OF GROUND STAFF

The Estates Manager has asked for clarification of the Ground staff status within the council, as to whether they should be described as officers or not.

The LGA states "A council's paid employees are called officers."

Members discussed the position and agreed that further advice was needed. The Clerk was asked to contact the GMA for advice.

ES34

DIPPING PLATFORM, ORCHARD MEADOW

The pond dipping platform at Orchard Meadow has been burnt and vandalised. See attached pictures.

Cllr R Atkins proposed, Cllr H Atkins seconded:

That the platform should be removed, and quotes obtained for the replacement of the platform and maintenance of the ponds for 2024/25.

CARRIED unanimously.

ES35

PUTLANDS TREES

During the weekend of the 29/30th July a large willow fell at the rear of Putlands Leisure Centre. The Estates Manager attended over the weekend along with the Chairman and secured the site as the tree was too large for him to deal with. The tree surgeon attended the site on Monday 31st July and cleared the tree. The cost was £420.

The remaining willows on the site need attending too and the tree surgeon has estimated that the work will cost £3500. A formal quote is awaited.

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ES36

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place on Monday 11th September 2023

The meeting closed at 10.45 pm

DRAFT

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