

PADDOCK WOOD TOWN COUNCIL
The Podmore Building, St Andrews Road, Paddock Wood
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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ESTATES COMMITTEE held on
Monday 11th December 2023 in the Day Centre Commercial Road at 7.45 pm

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

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

APOLOGIES Cllr H Atkins D Sargison

ES61 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
 There were no declarations of interest.

ES62 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING
 The minutes of the meeting held on 9th October 2023 were approved. .

ES63 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES
 ES52 – Probation Service. The MoU has been signed and the first day of work has been completed in the Old Church Yard – see below.
 ES53 – St Andrews Field - the order for the replacement fence has been placed and work will commence on the 13th December 2023.
 Putlands Field – The Estates Manager and Cllr R Atkins had met with residents adjoining Putlands Field and agreed a schedule of tree and hedge works along the boundary.
 Work on the ponds has been delayed but had recommenced this Monday. The contractor is hoping to have the work completed by Christmas.

ES64 SKATE PARK UPGRADE
 A Skate Park company has been contacted to see what services they could offer the town council. Details were attached for members information. Contact has also been made with The Skate Park Project for advice. A copy of Skate GB's design guide has been forwarded to all members for information.
 The residents who attended the previous meeting have also been contacted for further discussions.
 The Clerk and Estates Manager have attended grant finding & bid writing training courses as well as a Project Management Course. They have also attended Procurement training.

The Town Council currently has £30,000 in its reserve fund for the skate park upgrade. There are two S196 payments which could potentially be used for Skate

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Park improvements if the Council so wished. Both are identified as being available for offsite sport & recreation facilities in Paddock Wood.

Church Farm £74,500 (2019)

Mascalls Farm £44,700 (2021)

Both these sums will have risen by RPI since they were signed.

A list of possible grant funders was attached for information.

Members discussed the impact of the TWBC Local Plan will have on facilities in Paddock Wood. In the Plan both Putlands and Green Lane had been identified as possible sites for upgrading sports facilities. These include a skate park at Green Lane. However, as the timeline of the Local Plan was unclear members considered whether the Town Council should be allocating money to upgrade facilities now. Some members felt it was unwise to proceed until there was clarity in the Local Plan.

Cllr R Atkins proposed, Cllr Thompson seconded:

The Town Council fully supports the upgrading of the Skate Park at Putlands. But in light of the pre-submission Local Plan the Town Council will put it on hold until the summer of 2024.

CARRIED unanimously.

ES65 **FOAL HURST WOOD 25TH ANNIVERSARY**

Unfortunately, further research has revealed that the 25th anniversary of the opening of the wood was May 1999, not 2000 as had previously been advised. This means there will be less time to arrange a major event. The Town Council has asked that the Estates Committee considers several small monthly events rather than one big Country Fair.

Cllr Moon & R Atkins agreed to organise, along with the volunteers a suitable commemoration for Foal Hurst Wood.

ES66 **CAR PARK MAINTENANCE**

PW has maintained the soft landscaping the Town Centre car parks since 2000. Due to the rising costs TWBC were advised last year that the TC was no longer prepared to do this. Contractors have carried out this work for the Town Council since 2018. TWBC this year asked the Town Council to arrange for the contractor to cut the hedges and they would re-imburse the costs. This work was carried out in November.

Going forward TWBC has asked PWTC to continue to look after the car parks for which TWBC would pay a fee. The Estates Manager advised members on the costs.

Cllr Mobbs proposed, Cllr R Atkins seconded:

The Town Council should continue to carry out the maintenance of the Town Centre car parks and re-charge the Borough Council.

ES67 **BENCHES AND BINS**

Members noted the audit of benches and bins which has been carried out by the Deputy Clerk. This document has been produced to inform members going forward

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as to whether any additional/replacement bins or benches are required. The Deputy Clerk was thanked for her work on this document.

Members were asked to review the document and contact the office if they had any suggestions for additional bins or benches.

ES68 **PLAYGROUND INSPECTIONS**

The annual playground inspections have been carried out – a copy of the reports had been forwarded to members.

The inspector had highlighted the condition of the zip wire at St Andrews and recommended its removal/renovation. The town council has already allocated funds in the 2024/25 budget for the zip wire to be replaced and this will include the costs of removal. The old one has been disabled on safety grounds.

A contractor had quoted £5000 to remove the existing zip wire and make good the ground.

Members agreed that the assuming the funds are approved by full council then the old zip wire should not be removed until the new one is installed.

ES69 **OLD CHURCHYARD & NEW CEMETERY**

The Probation Service has started work on clearing the vegetation in the Old Church Yard. The contractor will be starting strimming work later this month. Once this work has been completed a meeting with the residents/members who have volunteered to help with the maintenance of the site can be held and plans made going forward. There next visit will be on Sunday 17th December and volunteers will be invited to join the. The Estates Manager will be present.

The New Cemetery Working Group are meeting on the 19th December.

(the Clerk left the meeting)

ES70 **TREWORK**

The Town Council allocated £3000 for coppicing in the Old Church Yard for this financial year. The tree surgeon has advised that the coppicing work is not urgent and can be carried out in the next couple of years. However, a tree has been identified on the Batters as in need of urgent removal. Members are asked to vire the funds allocated to the Old Church yard to the Batters so that this work can be carried out this financial year. This is permitted under the Committees Terms of Reference.

Cllr Kent proposed, Cllr Thompson seconded:

That the funds should be vired the funds to The Batters for tree removal.

CARRIED unanimously.

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ES71 COUNCIL BUILDINGS

Members received a report on the condition of the Town Council Buildings. This detailed minor maintenance which was required and would be dealt with but Council staff or contractors. There were concerns about the long-term maintenance for the St Andrew Hall. In particular the insulation as the building needs to be brought up to EPC rating B by 2030 – it is currently E. Members discussed whether the building was fit for purpose.

Concerns were also raised about the viability of the old groundsman store. The building is used by the allotment holders as an allotment shop. A discussion was had as to whether the Allotment Association should be asked to contribute towards the costs of maintenance.

The roof is leaking, and the roofer is having difficulties sourcing materials for repairs. The Estates manager was asked to get a quote for a temporary roof for the building.

Members also consider what S106 applications could be made.

Cllr R Atkins proposed, Cllr Thompson seconded:

all urgent work should be carried out.

A working group would review the assets of the Council.

S106 requests should be considered by full council.

A working group would look at the assets.

CARRIED 5 in favour 1 abstention.

ES72 BUDGET FOR 24/25

Members reviewed the attached spreadsheet which has been submitted for inclusion in in the 2024/25 budget. The Estates Manager advised that the tractor & larger truck needed replacing. Funds for the Estates Manger's van was already included.

Cllr Atkins proposed, Cllr Kent Seconded:

That £25,000 should be included for a replacement tractor.

A further £20,000 for a replacement large van.

CARRIED 4 in favour 2 abstention

This will be referred to the Finance Committee for approval.

ES73 RESIDENT SUPPORT

A resident has contacted the town council to request that its staff clear the leaves from their front lawn. The leaves are falling from town council trees which adjoin their property.

The clerk would be asked to speak to the resident and advise that the council cannot do the work but signpost some possible voluntary groups who may help.

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ES74 POPPY MEADOW

The town council owns a piece of land alongside Poppy Meadow off Green Lane. KCC have recently notified the Town Council that the hedge line was encroaching onto the pavement and needed cutting back. The Estates Manager has carried out clearance work along the length of the plot. A contractor has flailed the hedge as well.

ES75 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place on 12th February 2024, at 7.45 in the Day Centre.

The meeting closed at 10 pm

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