

OPEN SPACES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the virtual **OPEN SPACES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE** meeting held on Tuesday 12 January 2021 at 7.00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs Bullion, Elliott, Ms Hill, Lewis, Munn, and Ms Wharton

ALSO PRESENT: Cllr Harris

OFFICERS PRESENT: Carolyn Ripley (Office Administrator) Tracy Kelly (Town Clerk)

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN** - Councillor Ms Hill was elected to Chairman and Councillor Lewis was then elected Deputy Chairman. Councillor Ms Hill, as duly elected by the Committee, then proceeded to Chair the rest of the meeting.
2. **APOLOGIES AND REASON FOR ABSENCE** – Cllrs Kinghorn and Mrs Kinghorn (Prior Engagement).
3. **DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY AND OTHER SIGNIFICANT INTERESTS** – Cllr Harris, though not a member of this committee with voting powers, declared an interest as Treasurer of the Southborough Allotment Holders' Association (SAHA).
4. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION** – Two members of the public attended and spoke on items 5 and 6.
5. **REVIEW OF ALLOTMENT TERMS AND CONDITIONS** – Members **AGREED** on the following amendments:
 - **Fires/BBQS/Wood Ovens:** Providing that the insurance policy covers such eventualities, Members resolved to keep the regulations in their existing format in regard to fires, but to tighten up some of the wording so it is clearer. Members asked the Office Administrator to produce a guidance leaflet on bonfires that can be sent to all plot holders.
 - **Ponds/Water:** Members discussed various suggestions but agreed that the current regulations are clear that no new ponds/baths/deep standing water are permitted. Reference to permission for bog gardens should be added.
 - **Alcohol/Social:** Members recognise the importance of allotments, especially given the pandemic and do not wish to restrict personal enjoyment, though their primary function remains cultivation. It was agreed that a general clause covering issues beyond those currently listed in the Terms and Conditions should be added.

Members asked the Office Administrator to amend the Terms and Conditions accordingly and to put them on the next agenda for 9th February 2021, as well as to draft a bonfires guidance leaflet.

6. **ALLOTMENT HEDGING** – Members **AGREED** to provide additional hedging along the boundary of the Yew Tree Road Allotments and gave permission to obtain quotes.
7. **DAVID SALOMONS HORSE TROUGH** – Members **AGREED** that a similar planter-style trough of a comparable size and with a similar heritage feel should be explored, ideally in stone, costs permitting. Members requested that Officers investigate the options and obtain quotes.

- 8. PROVISION OF LITTER BINS** – Members **AGREED** to supply as many additional bins as funds would allow and this could be done in phases. Members discussed an educational exercise on litter, which remains a big issue in the town, not just on the playing fields. It was also agreed that the Town Council could run social media campaigns to highlight the issue and get the wider community involved, in support of the work already being done by Southborough SOS.
- 9. PROPOSED FUTURE PROJECTS** – Members discussed a number of projects that they would like to explore and implement, as funds and time allow. These include:
- Town Council getting involved again in the future with the “In Bloom” Competition run by TWBC.
 - Town Council re-establishing the “Southborough in Bloom” Competition.
 - Members proposed lobbying KCC Highways regarding 20mph zones on roads that intersect Southborough Common.
 - The Town Clerk advised that Holden Pond was due to be re-silted. She further advised that a new Common Management Plan was needed, as well as new bat and dormouse surveys. Additionally, she suggested that re-wilding some areas of Town Council-owned land could be considered. Wheeler’s Field/The Piggery offer sites for a potential apiary and bee-keeping project. The Office Administrator and Town Clerk would also like to implement a more advanced Tree Management System.
- 10. CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS** - It was proposed that during the consideration of the following items, the public and press shall be temporarily excluded (Standing Order 3 (c)):

These items are considered confidential for the following reason(s):
Information relating to the financial and personnel affairs of the Council.

- a) Boundary Fencing Pennington Grounds** – Members **AGREED** to accept the supplied quote for replacing a section of boundary fencing.
- b) Invoices- COVID issues** – Members **AGREED** to waive all charges for the period October 2020 – March 2021 in regard to all football clubs using the pitches on the playing fields, due to the lack of play caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

There being no further business the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 8.56 p.m.

CHAIRMAN