

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Assets Committee  
held at Bishopstoke Methodist Church  
commencing at 7:35pm on 27 July 2021**

**Present:** Cllrs Dean R, Francis, McKeone D, Tidridge and Winstanley (from item 6)

**In Attendance:** Mrs S Thorogood (RFO to Bishopstoke Parish Council)

**Public Attendance:** 0 members of the public were present.

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**Public Session**

**1 Election of Chair**

1.1 Proposed Cllr Dave Francis, Seconded Cllr Ray Dean, **RESOLVED** unanimously that Cllr Gin Tidridge be elected Chair of the Assets Committee for the 2021 – 22 session of the Council.

**2 Election of Vice Chair**

2.1 Proposed Cllr Dave Francis, Seconded Cllr Gin Tidridge, **RESOLVED** unanimously that Cllr Ray Dean be elected Vice Chair of the Assets Committee for the 2021 – 22 session of the Council.

**3 Apologies for Absence**

3.1 No apologies had been received.

**4 To adopt as a true record, and sign, the Minutes of the Building Committee meeting held on 6 April 2021**

4.1 The Minutes of the above meeting had been circulated prior to the meeting.

4.2 Proposed Cllr Andrew Daly, Seconded Cllr Dave Francis, **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Buildings Committee meeting held on 6 April 2021 be adopted as a true record.

**5 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations**

5.1 Cllr Francis declared an interest in item 7 as he is an allotment tenant.

**6 To recommend the adoption of the Assets Committee Terms of Reference**

6.1 The ToR had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting.

6.2 Cllr Dean requested changing the wording in item 6.1.8 to read “ Council owned AND MANAGED buildings”

6.3 Cllr Francis requested changing the wording in item 6.1.10 to read “Council OWNED street furniture”.

6.4 Cllr Winstanley requested changing the wording in item 8.1.7 to read “Council owned AND MANAGED buildings”.

6.5 Proposed Cllr Ray Dean, seconded Cllr Anne Winstanley, **RESOLVED** unanimously to recommend to Full Council the adoption of the Assets Committee Terms of Reference, subject to the above changes.

## **7 To make recommendations regarding allotment rent**

7.1 The Clerk had circulated 2 proposed recommendations regarding allotment rent prior to the meeting. The Councillors were happy to accept recommendation 1 and not increase the rent for 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021 onwards.

7.2 Cllr Francis asked for clarification on the current rent. The RFO confirmed that tenants on older-style tenancy agreements prior to 2015 were eligible for the discount at age 65, whereas newer tenants were eligible at age 70.

7.3 Cllr McKeone suggested that once all the plots were measured in square metres, that a spreadsheet is produced to compare the rent due under square rods versus under square metres to highlight the number of tenants negatively impacted by this change.

7.4 Cllr Winstanley suggested that once this information is available, those particular tenants could be written to in advance to explain the reasons behind the change in pricing structure.

7.4 Cllr Dean is concerned over potential complaints by tenants. Cllr Dean also offered to help the Clerk and RFO carry out the measuring in person.

7.5 Proposed Cllr Anne Winstanley, seconded Cllr Ray Dean, **RESOLVED** with abstention by Cllr Francis, that the allotment rents for October 2021 remain fixed at £8 per rod, with a concessionary rate of £5 per rod for qualifying plot holders

7.6 Proposed Cllr Dermot McKeone, seconded Cllr Gin Tidridge, **RESOLVED** with abstention by Cllr Francis, that the Council adopts a metric billing system for allotments for the 2 new allotments sites, but defers the decision to move a metric billing system for Underwood Road and Jockey Lane sites until a spreadsheet is produced highlighting the potential extent of the problem. This would be brought back to a future meeting of the Assets Committee, in time for a review of rent charges for October 2022.

## **8 To approve the Open Space Specification for tender**

8.1 The amended specification was distributed to Councillors in advance of the meeting for comments.

8.2 The RFO explained that one area Green Smile had asked the Council to consider is the need to take all grass cuttings away from each area. Cllr Dean stated that if the Council move forward with their proposals for more wildflower areas in the village, the cuttings WILL need to be collected so the Council will not be removing that requirement from the specification. There are options available such as mulching mowers. The grass cuttings could also be offered to current allotment holders if they proved helpful with their composting.

8.3 Cllr Winstanley felt it was important to let prospective companies tendering know that the waste will potentially contain dog faeces, and also asked why the grass cutting around the Memorial Hall was not included. The RFO confirmed that as the footprint of the building may potentially cover the area that needs regular mowing, it would be easier to keep this area out of the specification and it will be invoiced separately during the summer months.

8.4 Cllr Francis requested clarification from the RFO over the current contract value. The contract is approximately £40,000 per year. The RFO confirmed that as part of the Council’s Standing orders,

Initial: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

attempts should be made to obtain at least 3 quotes for comparison, and the tender will also be placed on the contracts finder website.

8.5 Cllr Francis suggested further information should be added regarding the use of weedkillers on page 2 of the document. It was agreed to add the following wording to the bullet point “Bishopstoke Parish Council is in the catchment of the River Itchen, a Special Area of Conservation, and we have a duty to use chemicals responsibly. Further chemicals may be restricted at a later date”.

8.6 Cllr Dean requested the current level of Public Liability Insurance should be added into the document.

**Action – RFO/Clerk to investigate the current requirements of the insurance underwriters.**

8.7 Cllr Dean had numerous other changes to make to the specification. Due to time constraints, and the Clerk being absent from the Committee meeting, it was felt that it would be best to delegate to the Clerk and Chair to work together on these proposed amendments.

8.8 Proposed Cllr Gin Tidridge, seconded Cllr Ray Dean, **RESOLVED** unanimously to delegate to the Clerk and Chair to make further amendments to the specification, before it is taken to the next meeting of the Full Council for approval.

## **9 To make recommendations regarding the refurbishment of railings by the War Memorial**

9.1 A report on the proposed refurbishments of the War Memorial railings was circulated in advance of the meeting.

9.2 Proposed Cllr Gin Tidridge, seconded Cllr Anne Winstanley, **RESOLVED** unanimously to accept the recommendations regarding the refurbishment of the War Memorial railings.

## **10 To recommend approval of the Stoke Common Cemetery project brief**

10.1 A report on the proposed project brief was prepared by the Clerk and Cemeteries Officer and circulated in advance of the meeting.

10.2 Cemeteries Officer Wilkie was present to briefly introduce the item. She confirmed that there has been a definite shift from plot burials to ashes burials. Bishopstoke Cemetery should therefore not run out of room for burials in the next 12 months.

10.3 Cllr Francis had provided the template for the project brief that had been prepared, and felt such a document would be useful for all projects being managed by the Council. Cllr Francis also felt that the brief needed a detailed programme added to it with timelines. There is potentially software available to use which can be explored further, but in this instance, the Cemeteries Officer should be able to use excel.

10.4 Cllr Dean informed everyone that an email has been sent from Eastleigh Borough Council’s Asset Committee requesting that Bishopstoke Parish Council takes ownership of the Sewall Drive allotments, Sewall Drive open space and the Stoke Common Cemetery without them going through their 12 months monitoring. It would mean the developers contributions would be paid immediately and this could be spent to do the necessary work to all 3 sites to bring them into suitable state to be used.

**Action – Clerk to confirm receipt of this email and distribute to Committee.**

10.5 Cllr Francis recommended the Council hires an expert to draw a potential layout of Stoke Common Cemetery.

**Action – Cemeteries Officer to request information from ICCM for suitable companies**

10.6 Cllr Tidridge explained that as one of the Council’s new aims is regarding the environment, she would like to see an area of the new Cemetery developed into a natural burial ground. This means no headstones or markers are placed, and the area is gradually rewilded. The Institute for Natural Burial

Grounds is based in Twyford. They have informed Cllr Tidridge there are only 2 other natural burial grounds in Hampshire, based in East Meon and Andover. The Councillors could arrange to visit these 2 sites in person to see how they look in practice.

**Action – Cllr Tidridge to liaise with Cemeteries Officer and Clerk to ensure natural burial ground is included in the project brief, and also in the survey to be prepared for residents.**

10.7 Proposed Cllr Dave Francis, seconded Cllr Anne Winstanley, **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Stoke Common Cemetery brief, subject to the above changes.

## **11 To receive a report on all areas delegated to the Committee**

11.1 The report on all areas delegated to the Committee had been circulated with the supporting documents and was noted by the Committee.

11.2 The RFO commented that the only update was a resident had complained about overhanging branches at Sayers Road play area and would investigate this in the Clerk's absence.

**Action - RFO**

11.3 Cllr Dean was concerned about the shrinking matting around the play equipment at Brookfield play area and felt that it was an urgent issue. Cllr Dean requested the play area inspection reports are brought to the Assets Committee as a regular agenda item, with updates on any progress of necessary equipment repairs.

**Action – Clerk**

11.4 Cllr Tidridge commented that she would like to see regular inclusion on the Assets Committee agenda regarding an action log for every Council owned asset, and will liaise with the Clerk about how this should look.

11.5 Cllr Daly expressed concerns over potential drug material found in one of the pieces of equipment at Sayers Road. RFO to check at same time as checking overhanging branches from play area.

**Action – RFO**

11.6 Cllr Daly also asked when the Council will be taking on ownership of Bow Lake Gardens play area. The trampoline needs cleaning underneath. Cllr Tidridge offered to take this on in her position as a Borough Councillor.

**Action – Cllr Tidridge.**

## **12 Date, time, place and agenda items for next meeting**

12.1 The next meeting of the Assets Committee will take place at 7:30pm on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> September at the Bishopstoke Methodist Church.

*There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 8:56pm*

Chair's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Clerk's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_