

Report of the Grounds Committee to the Parish Council

The Committee met at 8.17 pm on **Tuesday 29th March 2016**, in Committee Room 1 at the Parish Hall, Great Baddow. Cllr Mrs S Young chaired the meeting.

Present: Cllrs Mrs S Young, Mrs J Sosin, Mrs C Shaw, A Sosin, T Miller, K Liley, Mrs D Ronaldson, K Ronaldson, Mrs V Sadowsky and J Fuller

In Attendance: Cllr Mrs M Miller
Two members of the public
The Clerk of the Council

Before the meeting opened, the Chairman advised those present about the Recording and Use of Social Media at Council Meetings Policy.

The Chairman also spoke about the passing of the Grounds Manager Peter Jeffrey and said that the Council's thoughts are with his family at this sad time.

797/15 Apologies

There were no apologies for absence as all the members of the committee were present.

798/15 Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, Other Pecuniary Interests or Registerable Non Pecuniary Interests.

799/15 Minutes

The minutes from the last meeting held on 7th December 2015 were signed as a true record. Presented and proposed by Cllr Mrs S Young and seconded by Cllr Mrs J Sosin.

800/15 Public Question Time

There were two members of the public present. They are from the Bowling Club and had come to speak to the committee about the progress on the lease for the land on which the clubhouse stands, as the matter had been going on for some time. The Chairman told them that this item was in the Private and Confidential section of the agenda and that the meeting would be closed to the public for that item. The Chairman explained that some difficulties had been encountered with the negotiations of the lease and that this had led to delays. This included the establishment of a right of access for the Bowling Club, which had not been present in the original lease. The Clerk confirmed that there would not be a further update report to the committee later in the meeting because of the recent staffing difficulties. The matter is being progressed and it is hoped that a conclusion will be reached by the time of the next meeting in June 2016.

The members of the public also told the meeting that the agenda for the meeting had not been posted on the website and the Chairman apologised for the oversight.

801/15 Clerk's Report

1. Noticeboard, Cigarette Bin and Litter Bin in Recreation Ground

The noticeboard has been installed. The litter bin has been purchased but cannot be installed currently because the fixings are needed. The cigarette bin is still being progressed.

2. **Use of Open Space in the Recreation Ground**
The Clerk is still continuing to gather information and will be talking with Cllrs Mrs S Young, K Ronaldson and A Sosin as part of the Grounds Review.
3. **Land O/S The White Horse PH**
Essex County Council has confirmed that this land is historical highway and the Clerk will be contacting a highways officer to discuss a maintenance agreement for the area. In the current circumstances, it was agreed that this is not a priority matter.
4. **Church Wall**
The ownership of the wall still needs to be investigated with Chelmsford City Council. The wall has been repaired and is safe but in the current circumstances, it was agreed that establishing the ownership is not a priority matter.
5. **Recreation Ground Changing Rooms**
The Clerk still needs to speak with Cannon Hygiene about the hand dryers.
6. **Youth Shelter**
Following a complaint from a member of the public, the graffiti was removed from the Youth Shelter.
7. **Website**
The Clerk is still investigating putting directional information about Baddow Hall Park onto the Parish Council's website.
8. **Trees in Noakes Place**
The Clerk has e.mailed Chelmsford City Council about the tree surveys in Noakes Place but has not yet received a reply. The matter will be followed up.

802/15 **Noakes Place and the Recreation Ground**

The Clerk told the meeting that she had been contacted by Chelmsford City Council, who are planning to apply for Green Flag status for Noakes Place. The City Council wanted to know if the Parish Council would be interested in applying for the same status for the Recreation Ground and has offered to draw up the management plan that would be required. Cllr A Sosin told the meeting that this matter had been discussed several years ago at a meeting with the City Council but that nothing was progressed at the time for these sites. Chelmsford City Council does have Green Flag status on many of its other parks and open spaces. The meeting agreed that further information would be needed before a decision could be made and a proposal should be requested from the City Council. The Clerk was also asked to follow up the matter of negotiations about the maintenance agreement.

804/15 **Recreation Ground**

1. All Weather Sports Courts – The Clerk told the meeting that no reply had yet been received from Sport England about success or otherwise of the application for the Inspired Facilities Grant.
2. Fence at the Entrance to the Recreation Ground – Correspondence had been received from the resident at 442 Baddow Road about the replacement/repair of the fence. There was much discussion on this matter, which included the issues of planning permission and sight lines. The Clerk was asked to obtain further information from the resident.
It was proposed by Cllr Mrs D Ronaldson and seconded by Cllr J Fuller that a recommendation be made to the Finance and General Purposes committee on 3rd May 2016 that an amount not exceeding 1/3 of the total

cost should be paid. A vote was taken and the outcome was 9 for the proposal and 1 against. The proposal was agreed.

805/15 Luxfield

It had been reported that the dog waste bin at the entrance to Luxfield has been damaged and a replacement had been requested. It was agreed that the damage should be investigated and if necessary, information should be sought from the City Council as to whether the bin was still functional.

806/15 Forward Plan

The Clerk circulated an updated copy of the Forward Plan, which was discussed and agreed. The Grounds Machinery Schedule needs to be updated following information supplied by the Deputy Grounds Manager before he retired. This will be done and the updated plan will be discussed at the next meeting on 27th June 2016.

807/15 Matters for Information

There were no matters for information.

808/15 Private and Confidential

It was resolved that the meeting would be closed to the public and press under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted in the following items. Proposed by Cllr Mrs S Young and seconded by Cllr Mrs J Sosin.

809/15 Bowling Club Lease

As previously mentioned in the Public Question Time, the matter is being dealt with but has been delayed by the recent staffing difficulties. The Clerk will deal with this matter as a priority.

810/15 Update on Staffing

Following the retirement of the Deputy Grounds Manager in January, the retirement of one of the litter pickers in March, the imminent retirement of one of the Groundsmen in May 2016 and the recent tragic news about the death of Peter Jeffrey, the Council had had to take prompt action regarding covering the depleted staffing situation. Cllrs Mrs S Young and K Ronaldson and the Clerk had met with Steve Denton from SD Groundscare Ltd to discuss a proposal aimed at covering the work for the next six months. It was agreed by the meeting that the Council's reputation could be damaged if the current services are allowed to slip and that therefore urgent action was required. There was much discussion about the proposal, with the Chairman and Clerk supplying additional information where required.

It was proposed by Cllr J Fuller and seconded by Cllr Mrs J Sosin that the proposal from SD Groundscare Ltd should be accepted. It was noted that the contract is an emergency measure and that it is also a temporary measure. If at the end of the Internal Grounds Review, it is decided that the contract is to be extended in any way, it will have to be advertised formally under the Procurement Regulations 2015.

The contract is to be reviewed after three months and if the Grounds Committee budgets look to be exceeding the agreed budget, the matter must be reported immediately to the Finance and General Purposes committee.

It was also part of the proposal that the Internal Grounds Review should be continued as soon as possible.

A vote was taken and the outcome was 9 for the proposal and 1 against. The proposal was agreed and the contract accepted.

Cllr Mrs S Young and the Clerk will meet with the Grounds Staff as soon as possible to inform them of the outcome. The Clerk will also inform Mr Denton.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.40 pm.

Signed.....Dated.....