Briefing Note
Estates & Facilities Update

Item 8 - For Estates & Facilities Management Committee on 12 November 2020

Introduction

This briefing note updates Members on the management of the Parish Council's estates and facilities from 11 September 2020 to 31 October 2020.

Hurst Meadows

The quotes for the Autumn programme of works were agreed at the last Committee meeting.

Paths

The works to add additional paths in St George's Green and a new 100m path down the length of Bellows Nose were completed during the last week of September. All the Fittleworth stone paths were also "vibra rolled" on 19 October to compact the surfaces and make them smoother. An additional £400 of stone was needed for the paths work as we also instructed Conservation and Access to add two spurs to the paths in Hovel Field. This was so that our path extends to the dropped curbs put in by Bovis where the Bramble Park development is almost completed at that end. During the course of the stone being delivered, a lorry damaged one of the litter bins as you enter Bellows Nose from St George's Lane and a new one has been fitted, at no cost to the Parish Council.

Whilst completing the paths work, the contractor said he was complemented some 80 or more times by walkers who all commented on how pleased they were with the new paths. The paths have also become very popular with considerable foot traffic now coming in to the village centre from the Bramble Park development.

Meadow Grass Cutting

Barcombe Landscapes were awarded the work to cut, collect and dispose of the arisings for Buckwilly Field and 15 Acre. They started on 5 October and completed the orchard on Friday 11 October.

Hedge and Tree Planting

Greenscene were awarded the work to replace four dead trees in Buckwilly plus some of the dead whips in the new hedge along the Layton Fields Development. This work and the new hedge planting in Hovel Field is programmed to take place in early January 2021. Bovis are due to instal a post and rail fence along the northern boundary of Hovel Field where we will plant our hedge. Part of the Hovel Field work will be replacing the 'wrong' Alders that were mistakenly planted. They will be replanted elsewhere.

Leyton Fields Signage

A meeting was held on the Buckwilly/Leyton Fields boundary with Remus Property Management on 26 August 2020 with the Chairman and Clerk, to confirm each parties boundaries and to agree for Remus to re-site misleading signage they had erected indicating parts of Hurst Meadows were private land/no access. In early October Remus still hadn't removed the signs so we unscrewed them and took them down carefully and notified Remus.

Forest Schools

Small groups of school children are taken outdoors to learn about nature and make dens. A Forest School meeting was held in July to discuss the use of Millennium Gardens and St George's Green with representatives of Cottis Primary and Hurstpierpoint Pre-School. It was agreed that the Schools could use the two sites until a wider review of the Hurst Meadows could be considered. One further option is to use the "Fat Pony's" field which is a small area of fenced off land next to Hovel Field.

Butterfly Conservation

Dr Georgina Judd held a meeting with Butterfly Conservation Sussex to set up a monitoring and recording process and arrange some volunteer training in the spring. This will run as a UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme Project and although it might take a bit of work to set it up and train volunteers, once it gets going, it will hopefully be run by those volunteers.

Lost Woods Project

The Lost Woods project for the Wilderness and Tilley's Copse has made great progress in the last few months. Two meetings were held with the Woodland Trust and both an assessment and draft Management Plan have been produced by the Woodland Trust's consultant Petra Billings. The Management Plan is being considered later on the agenda. The Plan is only a statement of intent and gives us Forestry Commission permission, via a licence, to carry out the stated works, such as removing the trees adversely affected by ash die back. Dr Georgina Judd has worked tirelessly on behalf of the Parish Council to secure and progress this exciting project, and is formally thanked.

Bramble Park/Bovis Development

The Chairman and Clerk met with the MSDC Planning Officer responsible for the site on 9 October to discuss the outstanding Planning Conditions concerning drainage and various landscaping issues.

Court Bushes

The Hurstpierpoint Food Bank relocated back to Court Bushes on 11 August. It was operating for a short time from the Village Centre during the first lock-down. It is storing its supplies for deliveries rather than collections and approx. 8 households are being assisted each fortnight. The Food Bank have warned that as the service is underutilised, it may need to close its Hurstpierpoint operation and function only from Burgess Hill. The Parish Council has offered its full support to the Food Bank during the second lock-down and to help promote the service to those in need, such as leafleting specific roads/flats.

Some hirers returned to the building between lock-downs, namely Kung-Fu and baby massage. Kiddie Capers held an open day on 12 August 2020 and has continued to offer holiday places for a small number of children throughout the Summer. They report a positive start to the new School Year and have been able to increase their numbers significantly.

Work to improve the drainage and resurfacing in the car park took place late August 2020/early September by Hailsham Roadways. The new decking to the rear of the Club Room is currently on hold pending future consideration. A minor leak in the ladies toilet was repaired on 2 November. A number of small fencing repairs to the wire mesh boundary fences are required, as well as one small repair at the Reeds Lane play area fence.

Village Centre

The Pre-School re-opened on 7 September after its Summer break. Some key hirers returned such as WW, the Hurstpierpoint Gymnastics Club, Sama Karate, Yellow Brick Labs and Star Dance (ballroom dancing). Since the second lock-down, the Gymnastics Club has closed but other groups that are exempt from the restrictions are continuing where they provide support for children or for therapy.

A quote for new thermostatic mixing valves to be fitted to the pipes in the toilets to stop the hot water scalding people was approved and the work completed on 18 & 25 September. The quote included fixing the dripping kitchen tap and replacing the seized up taps in the Cleaners/Caretaker's sink.

Portable electrical appliances were also tested (PAT testing) on 19 October. The two Hyco wall mounted boiling water dispensers were inspected by the company and were so corroded that they are not able to be repaired. These currently remain out of service.

At both venues, signage has been displayed around the building encouraging hand washing, wearing of face coverings, getting tested if you feel unwell and social distancing. Hand sanitizers are in place and face masks, gloves, wipes and extra hand sanitizer has been provided for staff. QR codes are displayed as part of the track and trace system.

The office blinds were fixed on 18 September. The office air conditioning was serviced on 16 September and the office intruder alarm was serviced on 19 October.

Other Facilities

The lower churchyard at the Holy Trinity Church has been strimmed and two wasps nests have been treated. The Garden of Rest Cemetery works was complimented on by two members of the public.

The electrical distribution board was replaced in the Pit Road Public Toilets as it had become brittle and was starting to become a risk. One external light and the extractor fan motors needed replacing in Pit Road, and upon investigation the three extractor fan motors were replaced at the Trinity Road public toilets as well. This should prevent any further complaints about foul odours.

Two memorial benches have been installed one on the Village Garden to remember Ian Nelson who passed away in January and one in Millenium Gardens to remember Daisy Bushnell (aged 14).

RECOMMENDATION: The Committee is asked to NOTE the update report.