

**MINUTES of the Meeting of THE ESTATES & FACILITIES MANAGEMENT Committee** held at 7.30pm on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2021 at Court Bushes Community Centre.

**Members present:**

Allan Brown (Chair)	Rodney Jackson
Malcolm Llewellyn	Bob Sampson
Claire Majsai	David Evans
Duncan Ranger	Helen Bedford

**Also, present:** Sarah Groom, Clerk and Stephen Witchell, Estates and Facilities Manager.

**EF21/22.029 Apologies for absence:** Apologies for absence were received from Cllr John Lowman, and it was:

**RESOLVED: That the Committee ACCEPTS the apologies for absence from Cllr John Lowman.**

**EF21/22.030 Declarations of interest:** There were no declarations of interest.

**EF21/22.031 Minutes of the previous meeting of the Estates & Facilities Management Committee:** The minutes of 9<sup>th</sup> September 2021 were received and accepted and would be signed by the Chair at the next available opportunity and it was:

**RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREES the minutes of the previous meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2021.**

**EF21/22.032 Adjournment for questions from the public:** There were no members of the public present.

**EF21/22.033 Monthly Budget Monitoring:** The Committee considered the budget monitoring report and made the following observations:

- Cemetery – Nothing to add.
- Recreation grounds – Nothing to add.
- Stables – no issues or concerns, the Charity Shop to be chased for outstanding payment.
- Parish office – We will be short of rent revenue at the end of year as family Centre office will be vacated in December. Total received £1800 by time they leave.
- Public conveniences – Nothing to add.
- Highway and byways – The Resurfacing of South Lane and Pitt lane Project has £18,000 ear marked, this Project should proceed before Christmas.
- Allotments – no issues, few payment stragglers but in hand.
- Street furniture – costs for two of the memorial benches refunded, no invoice received yet for the third memorial bench. Village Gateways cleaning has been added to next year's budget.
- Hurst Meadow – All invoices have been received, The Parish Clerk is to check that all have been received and reflected in the budget.
- Court bushes – Revenues are down, but so are expenses which should help reduce the deficit at the year end.
- Vehicles and machinery - £730 for van insurance re-coded under general admin code.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee NOTED the budget monitoring report.**

**EF21/22.034 Estate & Facilities Update:** The Committee considered the update report and noted the contents.

- Removal of gates in Hurst Meadow to trial improving the accessibility to the site.
- Ancient woodland – The management group are working with Bovis/Vistry to get the connection of the ditch system from the south west corner of Tilley’s Copse to connect Bramble Park, Cuckfield Road and Fairfield Recreation Ground.
- Parish office were commended for their work on Festive lighting in Sayers Common, which was started in July 2021 and will be turned on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2021.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee NOTED the contents of the update report.**

**EF21/22.035 Budget Considerations for 2022/23**

The Committee reviewed and assessed the Estates & Facilities Committee budget requirements for 2022/23 and made the following observations.

- Cemetery – Project £10,000 covering chapel and drainage issues.
- Recreation grounds – potential £10,000 for projects in Reeds Lane, build up banks and planting new hedge on northern boundary. New Vistry post and rail fence and new hedging planned on the development side.
- Stables – No Issues.
- Parish office – The use of the family room to be discussed in item 9 of the agenda.
- Public conveniences – £5,000 has been set aside for repairs of the public conveniences. There is one unknown fact, as the hand washer drier company Wallgate have doubled their prices. The Parish Clerk is to investigate whether we can find a better price elsewhere.
- Highways and byways – The cycleways budget this year has been set aside for assessment of projects.
- Street furniture – no comments
- Hurst Meadows – There are funds available for projects, as and when required. This is funded by the earmarked reserves. Waste service comes from the precept.
- Court Bushes – The Support grant will end next year, so next year will be a test, £15,000 set aside to cover the plan for additional storage, by installing some containers with electricity on site. After agreement £5,000 added to the project line for the possible installation of Audio/Visual systems and Wi-Fi improvements. Raising the project line from £15,000 to £20,000.
- Vehicle and machinery – New machinery bid to be raised by E&F Manager, possibly moving over to electrical machinery, E&F Manager to discuss with the Maintenance officer.
- Services – no change.
- External power supply to the rear of the bus stop by the War Memorial – a discussion took place to consider installing a permanent electrical outlet at the back of the adjacent bus shelter to enable easy electrical access in the memorial area for events such as the Remembrance Sunday event. A budgetary price of £800 has been received for the installation.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee NOTED the budget requirements for 2022/23.**

**EF21/22.036 Review of Parish Action Plan:** The Committee reviewed Version 18 of the Action Plan and made the following observations:

- Item 34 – Upgrade of equipment for Audio/Visual in the Village Centre was discussed – The actions are to be checked to make sure they in scope for works. Court Bushes Audio/Visual aids are to be added to the action plan as a separate item, indicating Village Centre as A and Court Bushes as B.

- Item 35 – Pitt Lane and South Lane – surface repairs could be completed by the next meeting. Council agreed the project and noted that speed humps had to be added to the specification. Land Registry issues resolved. WSCC have looked over the quotes and has agreed that they meet the specifications.
- Item 36 - Hurst Meadows – The HM Advisory group meeting was held on the 19<sup>th</sup> October 2021 and informal meeting of the management team, to discuss several points from the AGM including accessibility and the gate removal, seating within Hurst Meadows, E&F Manager to expand the Action Plan with items from the HM Management Group notes.
- Item 37 – Lost woods project, to be updated as specified in the meeting.
- Item 38 - Reeds Lane play equipment line – S106 funding the equipment for the play area – Parish paid for ditch clearance and other drainage works to be funded by WSCC Operation Watershed. The play equipment to be separated into in two phases, drainage separated into in two phase - change section in Reeds lane and itemise the project phases.
- Item 39 - Court Bushes decking works project is to be closed when final minor additions have been completed and accepted.
- Item 40 – Community Hub car park, On the completion of Pitt Lane and South Avenue resurfacing works, the resurfacing of the Community Hub car park is to be investigated.
- Item 41 – Community Hub additional Storage and Electric is to be explored.
- Item 42 - Waste bins audit is presently on hold until time available to achieve.

The Hurst Meadows Ancient Woodland Management Plan has been circulated but another copy can be issues if requested or found on the Parish website.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED that the Action Plan be updated and recommended to the Council on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021 for adoption.**

**EF21/22.037 Village Centre Children and Family Room:** The Committee considered the future of the room adjacent to the Library that has been occupied by the WSCC Children and Family Team:

- On the 31<sup>st</sup> December WSCC will be vacating the Village Centre Children and Family Room. The room is located straight ahead as you walk into the Library foyer.
- The room has a sink and hot water heater and is a decent size for a several options for its use.
- Given that the room has 33 years left on the lease, the Clerk will check the Lease to see if it can be leased out or if it will require an agreement for future users.
- The room will require Wi-Fi to be installed and the room will also require decorating, which can be achieved during the winter.
- Suggestions for the room include commercial use, audiology clinic, therapy room, mobile phone repair business or more usual groups, midwives, museum display, or hot desk facility. An article in Hurst Life is recommended to get interest.
- An investment in furniture and basic fittings may be necessary.
- Due to the closure this will create a £2,400 revenue loss in the budget.
- WSCC have offered to leave some of the furniture, and some will be left in the room for the time being.
- There is a Toilet next to the room, and this will need to be made available with the room. At present the Library hold this key.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED to decorate the room, install Wi-Fi, and advertise for new hirers.**

**EF21/22.038 Tree Planting:** The Committee received a verbal update on the tree planting plans:

- There have been two meetings with the Hurst Meadow Advisory Group and the Management Group.

- The plan is to limit our ambition this planting season to thicken up the trees in Hovel field, the E&F Manager is to try and apply for saplings from the Woodland Trust, and the trees planted are to be added to the Queens Canopy campaign for HM the Queens Platinum Jubilee.
- Other proposals will be considered at a later date in 2022, and it was:

**RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED to seek new saplings to plant in Hovel Field to thicken the planting on site and be added as part of the Queen's Canopy campaign.**

**EF21/22.039 Cemetery administration review:** The Committee considered the updated burial application forms, memorial installation application forms, Rules & Regulations for the Cemetery and the Memorial Management Policy and it was stated that:

- There have been a few minor changes made to the Cemetery Administration document, which will include the Councils rebranding, and is still to be completed.
- Head stones which fail the topple test will be laid down for health and safety to prevent injury.
- All modified documents will be presented to the Full Council for approval and adoption, and it was:

**RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED to recommend the updated burial application forms, memorial installation application forms, Rules & Regulations for the Cemetery, and the Memorial Management Policy to Council for adoption.**

**EF21/22.040 Reeds Lane Recreation ground update:** The Committee was presented with a paper which set out progress on the project. In addition, it was further stated that:

- The reason for the delay in implementing the new Play area was due to Covid and late first occupancy of the new adjacent development, which wasn't until July 2021. This triggered the payment of the S106 monies to MSDC. Before and after the funds were available the Parish Office was able to engage contractors, get plans approved, S106 funds approved and scheduled the first equipment installation for early 2022.
- After speaking to several drainage engineers, including MSDC specialists, about possible solutions that included for example raising the ground levels or installing field drainage and soak aways, it was agreed that because the water table in the area is high, those options were not practical. A solution which included adding the additional ditches, attenuation tank, and roadside gully connection on the south side and an ephemeral pond at the eastern end on the north side was identified instead. It was also recommended that an application be made to WSCC Operation Watershed to fund this work. If successful, that would also have the benefit of leaving the remaining S106 funds to be spent on play equipment and improvements to the Recreation Ground.
- It had also been established, after investigation, that the section of the Northern boundary ditch that should flow west towards Kingsland Cottages, is connected to a culvert that is blocked under the front gardens. The E&F Manager has approached WSCC to clean the road gullies, to determine if this culvert connects to the road gullies in the area, before approaching the residents about arranging the cleaning of the culvert.

The Committee agreed that applying for the Operation Watershed funds should not delay completion of the project, and it was:

**RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED to apply for the Operation Watershed funds for improvements to the Recreation Ground's drainage and ditches, as the most expeditious path to achieve the desired outcomes without delaying the process.**

**EF21/22.041 South Avenue Play Area Update:** It was recently discovered that toads had hibernated under the trampoline in South Ave Rec play area, which floods during heavy rains. A ladder for the toads to escape was created and the detritus and litter were removed, leaving a small safe haven for the toads if the water level raises again. Regular checks will ensure the toads are protected in future. The ground matting under

the swings and other items has been worn and has started to erode the ground. Resurfacing these areas with rubber safety surface will be investigated and a costing will be put together for a S106 application, and it was:

**RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED the changes and the proposals for resurfacing under the swings and other items.**

**EF21/22.42 Santa's fun Sunday:** The Committee considered the request from the Traders for an event on the Village Garden and South Avenue Recreation Ground on Sunday 5 December 2021, including donkey rides for children.

- The local businesses are holding a festive street Traders fair with stalls, entertainment, snow machine, mulled wine, and donkey rides. There is some concern over the ground conditions especially on the Village Garden where a marquee will be erected. This will be monitored.
- MSDC will be providing £4000 of Welcome Back funding, which will cover the marquee, entertainment (Singing Elsa, Stilt walkers and Skaters), and other items. The Traders have provided the quotes to MSDC.
- The donkey rides will be ticketed, and Harris Funfair will be placed on South Avenue Recreation grounds and it has been agreed to allow them to stay overnight on the Recreation grounds on Saturday and Sunday night.
- The Donkey transport will be parked at South Avenue. It was agreed to allow the Donkeys to attend, however if the ground conditions lead to excess damage this may need a rethink in the future.
- The organisers of the event will be hosting the MP's visit, Joy Dennis will also be present, and it was:

**RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED to the request from the Traders for an event on the Village Garden and South Avenue Recreation Ground on Sunday 5 December 2021, including donkeys' rides for children and the Harris Fun Fair parking overnight on South Avenue Recreation Ground.**

**EF21/22.043 Court Bushes Advisory Group:** The Committee considered the arrangements for the next Court Bushes Advisory Group meeting that had not been held since the start of COVID-19:

- Due to Lockdown the Court bushes Advisory group meetings had not been held.
- It was agreed feedback from the Groups was essential for how we can improve and take the Centre forward.
- It was recommended that a meeting should be held in the New Year, ideally in the daytime to allow business to be able to attend, and it was:

**RESOLVED: That the Committee NOTED the next Court Bushes Advisory Group meeting would be held in the new year.**

**EF21/22.044 Benches:** The Committee considered a request from a member of the public for a memorial bench in Hurst Meadows. The matter was discussed extensively, and it was agreed that all benches would conform to the existing style so that a precedent for different style benches was not set in Hurst Meadows. Further consideration was given to allowing Monday Group style benches with back rests. The Committee also considered the provision of up to three new perch benches in the Hurst Meadows.

- The Committee has agreed that only 3 more benches should be installed in Hurst Meadows at this time, and that this may be reviewed later.
- The letter of appeal from a resident requesting to have a memorial bench in Fifteen acre overlooking Hurst College has been read and discussed at the HMAG. It has been agreed that we would only want a perch benches in Hurst meadow installed and manufactured by The Monday Group with the possibility of adding a back rail to the perch benches as a compromise.
- The request for a new memorial bench in the Cemetery has been agreed, and it was:

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee **AGREED** to the provision of a further three Monday Group style benches in Hurst Meadows possibly with back rests and an additional memorial bench in the Cemetery.

**EF21/22.045 Information items, correspondence received or requests:**

- Grants and Funding to be investigated for Hurst Meadows.

There being no other business, the Chair closed the meeting at 10.05 pm.

Chairman