

Minutes of the **OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE** held at Pembury Parish Council offices on **Monday 15 January 2024** at 3:24pm.



**Councillors Present:**

Cllr D Reilly (Vice-Chair)  
Cllr M Barrett

Cllr M Weaver  
Cllr J Webster

**Apologies:**

Cllr C Snow (Chair)

**Officers present:**

Helen Munro (Clerk)

23/365. **CHAIR.** Cllr Reilly took the Chair in Cllr Snow's absence.

23/366. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.** Apologies were received from Cllr Snow. The reason given was accepted.

23/367. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.** There were none.

23/368. **MINUTES.** The minutes from committee meetings held on 25 September 2023 and 6 November 2023 were approved and signed by the Chair as an accurate record.

23/369. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.** There were none.

23/370. **CLERK'S REPORT.** The following report was **noted**:

- a. Dog Bins. The request had been escalated to the Chief Executive previously, but no response had been received. Consideration of abandoning the project to be added to next committee meeting.
- b. Burial Ground. The Community Warden has been working with the person in question and a solution has been agreed.
- c. War Memorial Plaque. Cleaning of the sloping plaque by the Groundsmen was unsuccessful. It was suggested that the Commonwealth War Graves Commission might be able to help.
- d. Lower Green Cemetery. Slight changes to the grass management to be introduced from April 2024.
- e. Shipping Container. No further work has been done on this project due to workload issues.

23/371. **OPEN SESSION.** There was no one to speak.

23/372. **BURIALS.**

- a. The draft Memorial Policy was reviewed, and it was **RESOLVED** to recommend it to Full Council.
- b. It was reported that a number of memorials had failed the recent inspection. Failed memorials had all been staked and banded to ensure they were temporarily safe. Grave owners had been contacted where possible and they would appoint a stonemason to undertake the necessary remedial work themselves.

This leaves 23 memorials that need attention to be funded by the Parish Council. One quote for £8,050 had been obtained and another is awaited. It was **RESOLVED** that once the additional quote has been obtained, a recommendation should be made to Full Council for the work to go ahead and be funded by General Reserves.

23/373. **OLD CHURCH.** Quotes for a replacement tarmac path to both sides of Old Church were considered. It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Contractor C, SKF Contractors at a cost of £5,632 plus VAT.

23/374. **CORONATION FRUIT TREE AVENUE.** Volunteers were thanked for helping plant the trees. A plaque has been purchased and would be erected next to the trees.

23/375. **LOWER GREEN RECREATION GROUND.**

- a. Quotes for new lines on the Multi-Use Games Area were considered. It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Contractor A, Capel Groundcare at a cost of £612.56.
- b. Quotes for playground repairs raised in the RoSPA Report were considered. It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Contractor A, Capel Groundcare at a cost of £4,411.33. It was agreed that the work to the single point swing would be deferred until April 2024 due to budget constraints.
- c. Following a request from a resident, research had been undertaken into playground shading options. Options for a pergola, gazebo and sail were presented. Costs were between £2,000 and £16,000 plus VAT but there were no Parish Council funds available for this project at present. It was **RESOLVED** that this will not be progressed due to the budgetary constraints but would be kept for future consideration. An update to be sent to the resident.
- d. The next steps for a new climbing frame funded by Section 106 payment were discussed. It was agreed that a site visit for Lower

Green Recreation Ground would be arranged to discuss requirements further and added to the next committee agenda.

23/376. **MEETING WITH TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH COUNCIL (TWBC).** The update TWBC had given on Snipe and Baset Woods was noted. They are exploring option to lease Marshleyharbour Woods to a third party which could include the Parish Council. Further information had been requested and would be discussed again at the next committee meeting. Full Council to be informed of the matter at their next meeting.

23/377. **SECTION 106.** The following projects were suggested to be included in future Section 106 requests:

- Children's playground improvements and enhancements
- Skate Park
- Allotments
- Extension to the burial ground
- Quiet garden
- Public toilet in Lower Green Recreation Ground
- Old Coach Road improvements
- Biodiversity projects: allotment pond, bee houses etc at Lower Green Cemetery, improvements to Coronation Gardens.

Further research to be undertaken and suggestions to be discussed at the next Committee meeting.

23/378. **TREES.** The annual visual tree assessment was received and noted. Quotes for recommended work were considered. It was **RESOLVED** that the Living Forest be appointed at a cost of £8,078.50. £372 to be spent in 2023/24 and remaining works to be done in 2024/25.

23/379. **LITTER PICK.** It was agreed that the 2024 community litter pick events would be held on 23 March, 15 June (during the Big Green Week) and 28 September.

23/380. **GROUNDS MAINTENANCE RENEWALS.**

- a. Quotes to purchase an additional battery for electric grounds maintenance equipment were considered. It was **RESOLVED** that Contractor B, Kidmans be appointed at a cost of £209 plus VAT.
- b. Quotes to replace the damaged bollard near the pavilion were considered. It was **RESOLVED** that Contractor B, Capel Groundcare be appointed at a cost of £507.75.

23/381. **RISKS.** No new risks had been identified.

23/382. **QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS OR AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS.** Concern about bark growing over plaques on trees on Village Green was raised. Cllr Webster agreed to look at the issue and advise accordingly.

23/383. **MEETING DATES.** The date of **11 March 2024** for the next Open Spaces meeting was noted.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 16:35pm.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman