

FRAMFIELD PARISH COUNCIL
Recreation Ground Committee Meeting
Wednesday, 15 July 2009, 7.30pm - Framfield Memorial Hall

Present: Committee Members: Myran Eade (ME) [Chairman], Peter Friend (PF) (Vice Chair), Ian Paisley (IP), Rob Newton (RN), Eryl Thomas (ET) and Fred Thurston (FT).

Also present: Brian Hodge (BH) [part].

In attendance: Ann Newton (Parish Clerk).

Public: Seven (for the item on bee-keeping only).

Myran Eade opened the meeting with the news of Rita Redman's death earlier that day. Condolences were conveyed to her family and thought was given to her many years on the Parish Council.

1. Apologies.

Mark Moore (MM).

2. Election of a Chairman.

IP proposed that ME be re-elected as Chairman. This was seconded by RN and agreed by all present. There were no other nominations.

3. Election of a Vice-Chairman.

ET proposed that PF be elected as Vice-Chairman. This was seconded by IP and agreed by all present. There were no other nominations.

4. Declarations of Interest.

FT declared a personal interest in that he is a joint-tenant of one allotment plot. He would take part in the discussion but not vote on the bee-keeping issue.

5. Approval of the last meeting's minutes.

These were approved as read (13 May 2009).

6. Matters Arising

- **Land Registry work** – the Clerk reported that she had met with ME, RN and ET to finalise the areas for registration. The details had now been passed to the solicitors who had been requested to provide an estimation of the costs prior to any work being carried out.

All other items are detailed under the relevant sections.

7. Proposal to keep bees on Blackboys Allotments.

Several tenants of the allotments were in attendance voicing their concerns over the proposal. The main issue was the worry that the would-be beekeepers might not have the training or expertise necessary to manage the bees and until this could be ascertained the worries would persist.

The Clerk stated that she had investigated the issue thoroughly with other local authorities, ESCC (with regard to the public footpath) and the Bee-keeping Association and as long as certain mitigating measures were put in place none of the bodies detailed had objections.

Some of the items mentioned were:-

- Evidence that the tenant is a member of the Bee-keeping Association and has the relevant training and competency.
- The Association can arrange for a mentor to advise them in the first year.
- The entrances should be at the furthest point away from the footpath, face away from the footpath and should face the sun – advice from ESCC.
- Gentle bees should be chosen from a known source.

- A fence should be placed around the hives with a warning notice (with emergency telephone number). Also, natural screening (hedging) encourages the bees to rise up a few feet when they leave the hive.
- Bees shouldn't be handled when there are a lot of people around.
- Another beekeeper should be nominated if the owner is away.
- The situation is reviewed annually.

The Committee were concerned that none of the applicants had turned up to the meeting – the Clerk explained that certainly one was away.

Following lengthy discussion the meeting agreed that the matter should be deferred until the applicants had produced a report on their intentions with details of relevant training and experience and the mitigation measures they intend putting in place.

The Clerk was asked to contact the applicants with this information and inform all the other tenants of the decision.

8. Private Access to Council Land.

The Clerk reported that she had consulted NALC and the Council is entitled to restrict the points of access to the recreation ground, ie to the public entrances that are already in place. However if someone endeavours to put a private access the following applies:

- Boundary hedge – if the resident owns the hedge he cannot be prevented from creating an opening in it or putting in a gate but this *does not authorise his entry* on to the Council land. If the hedge belongs to the Council then this can be stopped. If it is not clear who owns the hedge, the Council if they wish to stop anyone putting in an additional access, could consider erecting an additional obstacle in the form of a further hedge etc.
- *The easier option* - if the Council does not wish to take steps to prevent the access altogether but wishes to ensure that the resident does not, by the passage of time, gain a legal right of access (a failure by a council to do anything for 20 years), an acknowledgement in writing from the resident that he has an access only by continuing permission of the Council would prevent him acquiring a legal right. A suitable wording can be obtained from SALC and referred to NALC if the resident refuses to sign the acknowledgement.

Following discussion the 'easier option' was proposed for approval by Ian Paisley, seconded by Peter Friend and agreed by all present. The new applicant and existing gate-holders on Framfield Recreation Ground would be targeted initially.

9. Agreement to the Programme for the renewal of the grass maintenance contracts.

The Clerk reported that an advert has been put in the Parish Magazine asking interested parties to come forward if they wish to tender for the contracts. A deadline for receipt of the tenders has been stated as 30 September 2009.

Discussion continued on the number of cuts to be detailed on the specification and it was agreed that two specifications should be sent out this year, one detailing number of cuts, and the other length of grass. The meeting resolved that the details could be finalised by ET, ME and the Clerk.

10. Ratification by the Committee of the decision on the recent Freedom of Information Request.

The Clerk detailed at length a recent request for information on the current grounds maintenance contracts. The request was made by a resident who had already registered his interest in tendering after reading the article placed in the last issue of the Parish Magazine stating that the tendering process would be starting in the summer.

After consultation with the FOI Commission, a refusal was issued under Section 17 of the Act, Exemption 43 (Commercial Interests). The exemption applies before and during the

tendering process. However once the contracts have been awarded this information can be released. The applicant was issued with a set of accounts for the years ending 2006/7, 2007/8 and 2008/9 where the exact amounts spent on selected items can be clearly seen. Further information was then requested on the number of specifications sent out, tenders received etc – all of which was given.

IP proposed that the refusal be ratified as such by the Committee. This was seconded by PF and agreed by all present. Full Council would finally ratify this.

11. Recreation Grounds and Allotments – current condition etc.

ME reported that all the three recreation grounds seemed to be in reasonable condition for the time of year. Particular items to report were:

Framfield.

- Complaint by Tammy Bax on condition of play area and the possibility of applying for 'Pathfinder' funding. The Clerk reported that Mrs Bax no longer allows her children to use the play area as she found glass in the woodchipping and the equipment was passed it's sell-by date. The Clerk stated that she had acknowledged the email explaining that the woodchippings were used as a safety surfacing and raked on a weekly basis. The multi-unit was only approximately 5 years old so doubtful if anything would be renewed. Residents should also always contact the Council if any sort of vandalism is carried out in the Parish so that the Police can be informed. The Clerk was asked to confirm with Mrs Bax Council's agreement to the above.
- Request by the Church to use the recreation ground on the Sunday morning after the Show. The meeting agreed to the request.

Framfield Allotments

Everyone was in receipt of a report and draft programme for moving forward. Members volunteered for certain items on the report. It was thought that the entire process would take some considerable time.

Blackboys

ME reported that the Pre-school had used the recreation ground for their sports day and had gained the relevant permission. However, the parking in and around John Dann Close caused problems to the local residents, which was disappointing as he had offered to open the gates to the rec to enable parents to park inside.

Blackboys Allotments

BH had brought copies of the plan that he had measured out with PF. This gave a more accurate picture on the positioning of the allotments.

Palehouse Common

Nothing in particular to report.

12. Pavilion Update

- **Blackboys.**
 - The Clerk handed around a draft 'lease' agreement between the Council and the Cricket Club for their use of the grounds. It appeared that this had never existed and it was felt that a formal lease when the ground was used for cricket prior to becoming a recreation ground, irrelevant. The document was for the use of the new fundraiser when applying for grants. The Committee were asked to let the Clerk have comments within week.
 - Update on JDC – Downland Housing. The Clerk reported that she had received by email from Downland Housing confirmation that they have no objections to the proposals for the gateway from JDC to the Pavilion.

13. Any Other Business.

- **Active Play Project.** Suggested dates: Framfield - 23 July from 2.30-4.30 and 28 August from 2.30-4.30. Blackboys - on the 28 July 2.30-4.30 pm and 21 August from 2.30-4.30. These were agreed.
- **ROSPA Report.** There were three highlighted areas of high risk that had to be dealt with urgently. ME and the Clerk would go through the rest to see what could be done in-house.

14. Exclusion of the Public

- **Decision on a contractor for the spreading of the woodchips.** The Clerk reported that three quotes had been received. Following brief discussion the lowest quote was chosen, proposed by RN, seconded by ET and agreed by all present. The Clerk was asked to inform all parties concerned.

Meeting closed at 10 pm.

Chairman