



Minutes of a Meeting of the
AMENITY COMMITTEE
held on

Tuesday 7 February 2023 at 8:00pm

PRESENT: Cllrs: Mike Coker (Chairman), Steve Collett, Katherine Giles and Paul Smith
Also Present: Ceri Rance, Parish Clerk, Purveen Hira, Amenity Officer,
Two members of the public

53. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Feazey and Leake.

54. **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

None

55. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Malcolm Tott and David Ireland attended on behalf of the Binfield Singers who wish to donate £827.37 to Binfield Parish Council to pay for a new tree and bench at one of the open spaces. Binfield Singers haven't come together since 2020, prior to the pandemic. This is mainly due to members moving away, illness, etc. As per their constitution, they would like a portion of the residual funds to be put back into the community. Mike Coker thanked the Binfield Singers for keeping the group going for so long.

56. **TREE REPORT-TREE SURVEY**

The parish owned trees are assessed every two years and the previous contractor was no longer trading. A list of approved contractors was obtained from Bracknell Forest Council and three of the contractors were approached for a quote. Each contractor was asked to provide examples of their reporting along with a detailed breakdown of associated costs.

It was proposed by Cllr Coker and seconded by Cllr Collett and **RESOLVED** to appoint Merewood Arboricultural Consultancy Services to conduct the tree survey in April 2023 at a cost of £900.

57. **ALLOTMENT REPORTS**

57.1 Pocket Copse Allotments

The Pocket Copse Allotment site has been up and running since April 2021, with 24 plots occupied. The allotment year for this site runs from 1 March to 28/29 February each year. Members were asked to consider the following.

- To increase the rent to £25.30 which brings it inline with the Red Rose Allotment site.
- To approve the recommendation to run the allotment year from 1 March 2023 until 30 September to coincide with Red Rose. Therefore, the rental period for Pocket Copse for this year will be for 7 months at a cost of £14.76 (pro rata)
- To approve the draft copy of the rules for the period March 2023 – September 2023

Councillors discussed the above proposals. It was agreed to align the rent renewals for all allotment sites; however, concerns were raised about which month would be the best start date so as not to have significant impact on the growing season.

Following discussions, it was proposed by Cllr Coker and seconded by Cllr Collett and **RESOLVED** to approve the above decisions.

57.2 Blue Mountain Allotments

An allotment provision at the Blue Mountain development was included in the outline planning application for Blue Mountain (16/00020/OUT). The land is in the ownership of Bloor Homes, and they were working in

partnership with Boyer Planning to develop the site for allotments. During the September 2021 meeting of the council, minute 59.3.1 recorded the Councils decision to take on the management of the allotment site. Following this decision, the parish council opened a waiting list in 2019 for allotments in this location. To date, there are just under 60 names on the waiting list.

The Amenity Officer and Parish Clerk attended a site visit with a representative from Bloor Homes in November 2022. Bloor are in the process of finalising the land transfer to Binfield Parish Council. There are, however, several areas of concern that BPC have identified which need to be addressed before the site is ready to be used. These include access to the site, the perimeter fence, plot layout, lack of water points and the level of the walkways between plots.

The Amenity Officer and Clerk were asked to continue corresponding with Bloor to try and get clarification on the above areas of concern prior to receiving the land transfer documentation. Any updates will be reported at the next meeting.

58. **Resurfacing and Drainage Works in Wicks Green Car Park and Silver Jubilee**

The car park in the Wicks Green open space has been deteriorating for some time. There are many potholes, and the surface is very uneven in places. Vehicles also drive onto the grass verges which has caused damage to the grass. Following the recent risk walks, it was noted that the surface is very uneven and would need attention. The temporary fixes of filling in the holes were no longer viable.

Drainage issues on both Silver Jubilee and Wicks Green have been evident for some time. The excess water that gathers on the grassed areas often floods onto the paths.

In the December Amenity Committee meeting, members requested that quotes be sourced to resurface the car park and investigate potential solutions to the drainage issues. Quotes were obtained from three companies.

Quotations for the car park and potential solutions to the drainage issues were presented at the meeting. The Amenity Officer was asked to obtain further information from contractors regarding the resurfacing material quantities. Members also raised concerns over the impact the drainage solutions would have on the water available to surrounding trees on Silver Jubilee.

59. **POLICIES**

59.1 Tree Policy

Members reviewed the policy, and the following comments were made.

The opening sentence of the policy should be changed to "trees for which the Parish Council are responsible for". Ancient trees should be referenced in the Veteran Trees paragraph.

It was proposed by Cllr Coker and seconded by Cllr Giles and **RESOLVED** to adopt the policy with the recommended amendments.

59.2 Memorial Policy

Members reviewed the policy, and the following comments were made.

The prices should be removed from the Memorial Fees table in Appendix 1.

It was proposed by Cllr Coker and seconded by Cllr Giles and **RESOLVED** to adopt the policy with the recommended amendment.

60. **ADDITIONAL OPEN SPACES WORK**

It was agreed at December Amenity (dated: 06.12.22 Min: 51.1) to appoint Pro Landscapes as the Open Spaces Contractor, to commence from April 1, 2023.

A site visit was held with the director of the company, Daniel Pilcher, along with the Parish Clerk and the Amenity Officer. The meeting took place on 19 January 2023. Observations were made on the following areas of parish owned land (Foxley Fields, Knox Green, Wicks Green, Silver Jubilee Field, Red Rose Allotments and York Road) NB: Mutton Oaks and Pocket Copse Allotments were not visited due to time constraints.

Some additional tasks were highlighted. Pro Landscapes provided a report and quotation detailing the reasons behind the recommendations for these works. The cost of all proposed works totalled £3,450.

It was proposed by Cllr Coker and seconded by Cllr Giles and **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendation to appoint Pro Landscapes to carry out the additional open spaces work before their contract commences on 1 April 2023. The amount of £3,450 which will come out of the Open Spaces Contract budget line 21/1 which has a current underspend of £8,746.74 in FY 22/23.

61. PROPOSAL FROM THE BINFIELD SINGERS

The Amenity Officer was asked to investigate the cost of a Mulberry Tree and a bench with a memorial plaque. The information will be presented at the March Council meeting, at which time, Councillors will be asked to decide on the location of the tree and bench.

It was proposed by Cllr Coker and seconded by Cllr Collett and **RESOLVED** to top up the fund to £1000 from Amenity underspend if the additional amount was required for the project.

62. UPDATE REPORT

Members considered all the information included. The report was **NOTED** and following comments were made.

62.1 The dog poop bag dispenser in the walk through next to the Victoria Arms needs to be removed by the Parish Warden as soon as possible. It is being mistakenly used as a dog waste bin despite notices from BPC that it is not meant for that purpose.

62.2 There is an outstanding invoice for the clearance of Plot 27 on Red Rose from a previous tenant. The Parish Council staff have attempted to get payment for the work by contacting the person concerned via post. This has been unsuccessful. The Clerk and Amenity Officer were asked to investigate the process of pursuing a claim through the Small Claims Court. An update will be provided at the March Council meeting.

63. Correspondence regarding the potential adoption of Mosses Path

It was brought to the last Amenity Committee meeting (dated: 06.12.22 min: 44) that Bracknell Forest Council requested the removal of Bridleway BR23A as they considered no need for public use. Members did not support the closure, however requested whether consideration could be taken on Mosses Path becoming an adopted footpath as a replacement for the loss of BR23A.

The Parish Council has received an update that BFBC are going to begin the process, which includes a consultation and path creation agreement, to determine if they can adopt it as a public footpath.

The report was **NOTED**.

64. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None

Meeting Closed at 21.38pm

