

**Environment Committee**  
**Minutes of a Meeting of the held on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2009**

Present: Mr Gregory (Chairman), Mrs Burgess, Mr Salisbury, Mr Gilboy, Mr Gallagher, Mr Blanch  
In attendance: Mrs King, Mrs Jones (Clerk)

**151 Declarations of Interest:** None

**152 Approval of the Minutes** The minutes of the meeting held 30<sup>th</sup> July 2009 (previously circulated) were taken as read and confirmed as a true record

**153 Clerk's Report and Matters Arising From the Minutes**

**Min 234/08: Skatepark:** The clerk reported that an accident had occurred last August when a young man had broken his arm. It was possible that this was due to a fault with the concrete bowl and repairs had been carried out by the contractors. The skatepark had now been in heavy use for over a year and this was the only incident. The matter was in the hands of the Insurance Company and MSDC were not of the opinion that there was any need to close the skatepark. Formal monthly inspections were now in place.

**Min 237/08: Dog Fouling:** Information had now been prepared and sent to the school for action.

**Min 33: Mantell Board:** The new display board had now been erected..

**Min 36: Footpath Maintenance:** A meeting would be arranged with the contractors to discuss the agreement.

**154 Financial Statement, Forward Plan and Budget for the Forthcoming Financial Year**

These documents had been circulated prior to the meeting. Questions were raised regarding current expenditure, in particular regarding the overspend on the maintenance budget and the upkeep of the toilets. The overspend on the maintenance budget was due to the shortfall in the allocation of the budget when this was set the previous year when only six months expenditure had been taken into account. The figure in the budget had now been corrected for the following year. With regard to the toilets, Southern Water had produced a backdated account for the past three years at a cost of over £3000 and there had also been back payments on rates. Costs for cleaning had also been increased when the District Council had changed contractors.

A draft forward plan had been circulated by the clerk. A discussion followed regarding the need for new staff facilities and a replacement ride-on mower but it was not considered that any work was required to the tarmac paths in the foreseeable future. Concerns regarding the impact of large items of expenditure being met from the budget were raised and the need to build reserves. The clerk stated that reserves should only be increased for major items of capital expenditure. At present it was considered that expenditure could be met from current budget provision.

Although the clerk had amended some budget amounts, it was proposed the overall level of precept remain unchanged from the current year. The budget for the forthcoming year, as circulated, was approved by the Committee.

**155 Cuckfield Cemetery**

**155.1 Quinquennial Inspection:** This had been carried out by Nicholas Rowe and recommendations made regarding the inspection of the lych gates and the removal of ivy from the tombs. The groundsmen had already removed some of the worst ivy growth and were in discussion with Mr Rowe regarding any further action.

**155.2 Replacement Gates by the Garden of Remembrance:** The quotation for the gates by the local blacksmith was high at about £2000 but the quality and design was very good. It was possible that these could be funded if a donation was received for the digitisation of the burial records. It was agreed that alternative quotations for both metal and wooden gates should be sought before any decision was taken.

**155.3 Memorial for the New Garden of Remembrance:** Mr Gallagher had circulated details of a commemorative memorial, designed as a wishing well, which could be placed over the well in the new Garden of Remembrance. Fifty memorial plaques could be fixed to the well and this would provide income for the cemetery. The problems caused at present by families leaving unsuitable markers was discussed and it was agreed that this could provide a useful service to the public. The cost of the memorial would be met by P & S Gallagher. It was agreed that the concept was one that should be taken forward but there was discussion regarding the suitability of the design. Further information would be obtained regarding both the well and the different designs of memorials.

**155.4 New Regulations for the Erection of Memorials:** Mr Gallagher tabled recommendations for an improved working environment in the new burial area in Newbury Meadow. The new working methods would conform to the latest National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM) code of practice. It was agreed that these draft regulations be used until such time as the full regulations could be adopted by the Council.

**155.5 Staffing:** A member of staff was currently on sick leave. It was agreed that a doctor's certificate must be obtained for staff to ensure that the person was fit to return to work.

## **156 Use of the Land At the End of Courtmead Road**

Discussions had taken place with MSDC regarding the transfer of the Glebe Road Allotments and the land at the end of Courtmead Road. Following a meeting in September, the Parish Council was awaiting action from MSDC. The land at Courtmead Road was currently used by various community groups and, if the land was transferred to the Parish Council, this use could continue (and the cost of maintenance would probably be low as the area would continue to be cut by the MSDC contractors). However, the land could be divided with the bottom area used as allotments or community gardens. Concerns were expressed regarding the designation of the use of the area for allotments as this would prevent the land being used for an alternative purpose in the future. It was probable that legal advice would need to be taken on this issue.

## **157 Management Plan for the Cemetery and the Observer Field**

Following a site meeting with the District Council, copies of various management plans for Local Nature Reserves had been circulated. In order to make this viable, it would need to encompass both the cemetery, allotments and the field in Courtmead Road. Mrs Burgess stated that the production of a full, detailed, management plan that would enable Local Nature Reserve status to be obtained was complex and would need professional input. A meeting had been arranged with the High Weald Unit who it was hoped would give advice but it was probable that there would be costs associated with the production of the plan.

## **158 Dog Fouling and Waste Bins**

There was an ongoing problem of dog fouling and certain owners seemed impervious to requests not to allow their dogs to foul the footpaths. After discussion it was agreed that an ordinary litter bin (in stock) be erected in Mytten Twitten. Mr Gregory agreed to look at the situation at the end of the Whitemans Green path by Ardingly Road to see if a further dog bin should be provided in this location.

## **159 Salt Bins**

A request for a salt bin had been received from the residents of Whitemans Close. It was agreed that the Parish Council did not have the resources to provide bins for all residential streets but that if the residents were to provide the bin, this would be filled, at no cost, by the County Council. There was a discussion regarding the clearing of the paths by the Church. The Parish Council staff would undertake some clearance during the week but were not available at weekends. It was agreed to approach the Old School to see if they would site a salt bin the their car park. This could then be used by churchwardens prior to weekend services.

## **160 Risk Assessment for the Environment Committee**

This had been previously circulated to members. It was agreed that the document covered all major risks involving the matters dealt with by the Environment Committee. However, it was essential to ensure that a record of training was kept in a book so that, in the event of any problems, a clear audit trail was in place. This was agreed by the Committee. The risk assessment was approved and signed by the Chairman and Clerk.

The meeting closed at 10.15 pm.