

Minutes of the SERVICES COMMITTEE Meeting

Held on Monday 4th January 2016 in the Council Office at 8.00pm

Cllrs.	Mr B Harding (Chairman)	Mrs S Williams
	Mrs M Heath (Vice-Chairman)	Mrs T Riley
	Mrs M Skelton	# Mr G Hollis
	Dr J Newby	Mr W Davey

Clerk.	Mr J Coleman
Co-Clerk	Mr R Hill

1. Apologies for Absence
As denoted by # above.
Cllr. Hollis was unwell.
2. Notification of any urgent matters to be taken under any other business.
None.
3. Matters dealt with under urgent action since the last meeting on 30th November 2015
None.
4. Matters arising from the distributed and approved minutes of the Services Committee held on 30th November 2015 not dealt with in the agenda.
None.
5. Correspondence List
No requests had been made to the Clerk for copies of items on the correspondence list.
6. Financial Report
The latest Services Income and Expenditure report was distributed at the meeting and noted by the members.
Cllr. Heath asked if the replacement playhouse at the Alderbourne play area could be shown in the accounts as not being over budget as it is at present due to the expense not being seen as offset by the funds received from the insurance claim. The Clerk to investigate the best way to show the costs as neutral which is the true case apart from the excess on the insurance policy of £120.00
7. Devolution of Services update
Report from the Co-Clerk on Grass Cutting:
The recent wet and warm weather has meant that the grass has continued to grow. It is fortunate that the last cutting cycle was deliberately held in reserve and have only just completed the penultimate cut. However, unless the growing soon slows down we will be forced to have the first cut of 2016 early or risk the verges looking very unsightly. In addition, it may be necessary to change the planned cutting cycle so as to maintain the areas in an acceptable state. Cllr. Williams enquired as to the cost if an extra cut has to be made; the Co-Clerk replied that it would be £2200.00

A meeting with our contractor has recently taken place and they are prepared to be flexible

next season to try and get the best result possible.

A request to TfB for early notice of their proposed grass cutting cycle for the A40 and A4112 has so far not been responded to but we are hoping for that information in the very near future so we can try and co-ordinate activities effectively.

Weed Spraying:

No residential area weed spraying was undertaken across the Parish in 2015 resulting in many justified complaints about the neglect of weed killing.

It has been requested from TfB that all residential areas in Denham be weed sprayed in March and we await their response. Discussions have taken place with Blue Sky and asked for their advice as to how we can be pro-active in trying to ensure that aggressive weed growth in the areas where we are cutting grass is better managed.

Maintenance of Rights of Way:

A meeting is being arranged with Groundwork Trust in January and we will be discussing our arrangement with them about the maintenance of Rights of Way Clearance across the Parish.

Cllr. Skelton reported that flooding had taken place recently in Cheapside Lane and Old Mill Road, both near the junctions with the A40. A resident in Old Mill Road had also complained about flooding and mud being washed on the road and pavement in Old Mill Road. It appears that the gully cleaning gangs have been reduced by TfB; Cllr. Williams recalled that at the recent TfB conference, they stated that new gully cleaning equipment had been purchased. Cllr. Heath reminded the members that TfB do have to cover the whole of Buckinghamshire. The Clerk to chase up TfB to clean the gullies in the flooded areas.

8. The Pyghtle

Following the decision of Government to charge shoppers for the use of disposable plastic bags Tesco have introduced a Community Fund scheme that is to be managed by Groundwork Trust.

Applications for the first round of the scheme were slightly mis-managed and information was distributed too late to allow for applications to be prepared. Discussions have taken place with the Groundwork Trust and a proposal to fund the re-surfacing of the Pyghtle and a general improvement of the Right of Way has been put forward.

Groundwork have accepted that the proposal would meet the Fund criteria and have agreed to meet in January to prepare a bid for the second phase of the bid process. They have also confirmed that there will be four funding opportunities for each year for a three-year period which is almost certain to be repeated in future years. It is in order for an organisation to make different applications at each phase and, in addition organisations can work in partnership with other applicants. It has been discussed with Groundwork Trust, the possibility of us partnering with them for funding to maintain additional Rights of Way and residential area footpaths. In principal they have agreed to this and it is to be discussed at the meeting in January.

The Tesco Fund can only be used for Community Funding Ideas that can be qualified as being for Community Environments improvement and the committee is invited to recommend projects that can be added to the Parish 'shopping list'.

9. New Denham Allotments

Since the last meeting we have now let an additional 5 plots and collected rents from an additional 12 plots. The total sum now collected is £1850.

The total number of plots now without a tenant is 7 full plots and 2 half plots. In addition, there remains 7 plots where no payment has been received and we will make one last effort to get payment before ending the tenancy.

A complaint has been received from the plot holder on plot 53 regarding vehicles driving over her plot and destroying plants. The vehicles are being forced off the pathway by overhanging trees on vacant half plot 112 which need to be removed. It has been reported that some of the vehicles involved have been lorries delivering building materials to the rear of a property in Oxford Road. The Co-Clerk has drafted a letter to the properties in Oxford Road that back on to the allotments to warn them not to use the allotments as an access route to the rear of their properties. Cllr. Williams stated that any residents in Oxford Road that have allotment plots must not use vehicles to access the rear of their properties and a violation of this rule should result in the loss of their plots. The Co-Clerk to amend his letter to reflect this. It was agreed that GTB Plant hire be requested to remove the trees from plot 112. Once removed, the Co-Clerk suggested that plots 112 and 113 could be used for extra car parking.

PLAY AREAS, RECREATION GROUNDS AND AMENITY OPEN SPACES

10. Inspection Reports for Play Areas and Open Spaces by the Co-Clerk

An update from the Co-Clerk on Play Area matters had been circulated to the members prior to the meeting. The report follows:

Alderbourne Play Area:

The Alderbourne Play Area has been vandalised by graffiti being sprayed on the new playhouse roof. The handyman has successfully removed the graffiti and only a small area remains slightly soiled. We will treat this area again and there is every hope that everything will be removed.

Tatling End Play Area:

We have been approached by a Denham resident, Carmel Bees, who is a Running Fitness Trainer to run training sessions at the play area on Friday mornings. She is recently qualified and holds accreditation in multiple areas of fitness.

The Co-Clerk has met with Carmel and discussed her proposals and is happy to recommend to the committee that we agree to her request. In addition, it has been discussed with her the possibility of additional opportunities being explored at the Way & Tillard and Denham Green Open Space. She is willing to discuss this further once her Tatling End sessions are established. Cllr. Davey welcomed the move and said that he and Cllr. Newby, both of the Tatling End Residents Association, would do their best to inform as many local residents as possible about this exciting new opportunity.

Carmel is also willing to assist the Parish Council in the choosing of relevant outdoor exercise equipment and to assist us in introducing outdoor exercise sessions as part of our requirement under the Healthy Bucks programme where additional funding may be available.

Purchase of New Play Area equipment:

The Co-Clerk had received a new quote from HAGS SMP for the replacement play equipment for the Tatling End and Alderbourne play areas. The new quote has come in at £6K over the previous quote as the removal of the old equipment had not been factored in previously. Cllr. Harding enquired if we had gone to market for alternative quotes; we had

not due to the fact that the equipment quoted was on special offer and much less expensive than the original list price. The problem now is that the new quote with the removal of the old equipment negates the discount offered. Cllr. Harding suggested that we proceed to go to market for further quotes. Agreed by the committee.

11. Denham Green Railings

The painter has now almost recovered following his accident and will prime and paint the timber prior to it being installed. The Clerk is meeting with the painter tomorrow to discuss.

12. Denham Cricket Club

Following a meeting on the 17th December 2015 with the Denham Cricket Club, the minutes from the meeting as follows.

Present:

Cllrs. Mrs M Heath (Chairman, Mr B Harding, Mrs S Williams

Denham CC Mr W Nicholas (Chairman, DCC), Mr J Grover (Treasurer, DCC), Mr P Dixon

Clerk Mr J Coleman, Co-Clerk Mr R Hill

Item 1. Reason for the Meeting

This meeting was convened to discuss renewing the lease of the Denham Cricket Club. (DCC). The current lease expires in 5 years-time (year 2020) which is insufficient time to allow the Cricket Club to apply for grants to improve the club. Most grant giving organisations require a lease of 25 years or longer from applicants. The Cricket Club therefore are seeking a new lease in order to facilitate the application for grants.

Item 2. Aims of the Denham Cricket Club

Mr Nicholas started by explaining that in the last 10 years less youngsters have been coming through and the membership has been getting older. Playing membership is dwindling especially the adults and something needs to be done. The club has two league sides on Saturdays and one on Sundays; this needs to increase as more cricket equals more playing fees. Last year there were 18 adult members and 16 life members making the active membership 34. Youngsters do play in the adult sides but at 18 years old they are lost to university or other outside factors. The under 15's are doing well but there is a need to start another group at around 8 years of age; coaching is free of charge. Youngsters are mainly drawn from Denham and Iver. All too often, the youngsters are lured away by the bigger clubs with better facilities than DCC. Cllr. Heath asked if the main aim therefore is recruitment? Mr Nicholas replied that recruitment and better facilities were the main priorities. Better nets are needed as the old concrete and matting ones are no longer suitable as they do not conform to ECB standards and have uneven bounce. New ECB approved nets would not fit within the currently leased area of the Way and Tillard recreation ground. An alternative may be to install a practice wicket on the edge of the square. The old disused tennis court area may be suitable for the new nets but this falls outside of the leased area. Cllr. Heath advised DCC that the Parish Council have had a discussion on this and our aim is to achieve a cost neutral result. At present DCC costs the Parish Council more than we collect in rent and asked Mr Nicholas if he had thoughts on what had been discussed regarding taking over the mowing of the outfield. Mr Nicholas advised that the upkeep of the square alone costs around £5K to maintain. Cllr. Heath replied that the Bowls Club maintain all their facilities themselves. Cllr Harding stated that the Parish Council subsidises the DCC as we spend more on maintenance than we

collect in rent; he added that if DCC did not use the outfield, we would only cut the grass when necessary and not twice a week (in the cricket season). We would also not roll the outfield every year. Cllr. Harding said to move forward, DCC would need a new lease and the Parish Council would need to look at costs in order to be cost neutral. All open spaces under the Parish Councils control are cut every three weeks, the cricket field outfield is cut twice a week and last year cost £1320.00 all in. Cllr. Harding advised that we lease facilities to other clubs and they maintain their own grounds and facilities. Cllr. Heath advised that the Parish Council no longer receive grants from the government so we have to make ends meet in order to make grants available to local causes. Cllr. Heath added that we now have added pressure on our resources as more functions are being devolved down to Parish Councils like Dementia and other social issues. DCC does have a clubhouse which could be let out for functions to raise money. Mr Nicholas stated that DCC do run a golf day that brings in funds. Cllr. Harding enquired how it costs £5K to maintain the cricket square; Mr Nicholas replied that it costs around £2K-£3K to relay the square and the rest on cutting and mower maintenance. Mr Nicholas stated that the Cricketfield bungalow used to have a resident groundsman up to 2001 when it became a private tenancy, he asked if the council thought that rent from the letting of the bungalow could be spent on the cricket field.

Cllr. Harding stated that we had incurred a lot of legal costs due to the cricket ball incident in 2013. Also the lime trees need pollarding which we have left recently due to the height of the nets that needs to be maintained to stop cricket balls flying into resident's gardens. Mr Nicholas asked if any decision has been taken regarding the pollarding of the trees; the Co-Clerk replied that no decision has been made yet and that we will follow the advice of the tree services company as the trees have tree preservation orders on them and are in a conservation area. Mr Grover asked if it was possible to do one tree per year; Cllr. Harding replied that we cut one side of the field one year and the other side the next.

Mr Nicholas advised that the club had doubled their subscription rates and raised the match fee to £12.00, the youngsters pay less. Mr Dixon emphasised that they do need a constant stream of new youngsters coming through. Cllr. Harding asked what would be a win-win solution look like to DCC; Mr Nicholas replied that a new lease extending the leased area for no extra rent to enable new nets to go on the site of the old tennis courts. Cllr. Heath asked if DCC if they have made a decision on the area they wished to lease and Mr Nicholas replied that a decision will not be made until after Christmas; he added that he had the impression that the Parish Council would be happy if the DCC took over the cost of cutting the outfield. Cllr. Harding asked if the Parish Council were minded to grant a new lease, would the DCC be willing to look at the costs of restoring the tennis court area and cut the outfield. Mr Nicholas asked if the Parish Council would fund the equipment to cut the outfield; he added that he needed to go back and work out the cost of the equipment and extra wages for the groundsman. Cllr. Harding stated that we cannot go forward on the new lease with the old tractor. The Co-Clerk advised that Sports Council funding may be available for the equipment if you put a good case forward and that LEAP would help with the application. Mr Nicholas produced a specification sheet for an ex-authority ride on mower costing around £7K including VAT. Cllr. Harding stated that there was still value in the tractor so we may part fund the new mower by selling the tractor and gang mowers. This would be dependent on DCC doing the outfield mowing. Cllr. Harding advised Mr Nicholas that Channer Mower Services in Chesham also sell ex-authority mowers as an alternative source. Cllr. Heath suggested to Mr Nicholas that a retired person may like to take on the mowing of the outfield to keep costs down. Mr Grover said that this arrangement would be fine in the cricket season but who will cut the outfield for the rest of the year. The Co-Clerk advised that we do not cut the outfield between November and March and Cllr. Harding advised that it may be necessary to get a contractor to do the first cut as we have done so in previous years. Cllr. Harding explained

that the current gang mowers are land driven and the modern ride on mowers are power driven which gives a cleaner cut on long grass.

Cllr. Heath suggested that Mr Nicholas talks to his committee and investigates what grants are available. Cllr. Williams advised that when the Scouts looks at grants, all members of the committee get involved. Mr Nicholas stated that the deadline for grants is the 21st January 2016 but he may stand a chance if the Parish Council agree to a new lease. Cllr. Harding replied that the Parish Council could issue a letter of intent to help with the grant; we could take chairman's action and be supportive but can't help by giving cash. Cllr. Harding advised that the DCC may need a 25-year lease but could have a break clause at 10 years.; if DCC takes on the outfield mowing, the Parish Council may take a helpful stance but emphasised that we must remain cost neutral.

Cllr. Heath requested that once Mr Nicholas had set a date with his committee, he contacts the Clerk to set a date for another meeting. Cllr. Heath added that the DCC committee must work at getting grants. With regards to advertising for new members they should try 'In and Around Denham' magazine, local schools, the Bucks Advertiser etc. They could place a banner at the Parish Councils allotments fence, on the Parish Council Noticeboards and website and also approach the Colne Valley CIC as they have a noticeboard too and search out youngsters for field activities.

Cllr. Davey said that 'we should be very proud of Denham cricket Club' which he felt did not get the praise which it was due. The club had produced some fine players over the years, none more so than the three generations of the Hales family. Alex Hales who started his cricket on this ground is currently playing for England in South Africa and batting extremely well. He was proving to be a good successor to great players like Ian Botham. Cllr. Davey added that in our dealings with Denham Cricket Club, we should always remember the debt we owe this little club and cut the club as much slack as we could in our dealings with it.

13. Play Area Signage

The signage for Play areas and bus stops has been installed. Noted by the committee.

14. Dog Bins and Waste Bins

We are currently awaiting confirmation from SBDC that they are in agreement with the siting of the two new dog bins in Willowbank. A request has also been lodged with SBDC regarding the replacement of the three missing waste bins at bus stops.

LIGHTING AND HIGHWAYS

LIGHTING MATTERS

15. Lighting Considerations

Costs for the proposed new lights in Newtown Road from SSE has been confirmed at £800.00 per light. We await the final siting of the lights following a consultation with residents.

HIGHWAY MATTERS

16. Denham Avenue

The high kerb installation in Denham Avenue appears to be working well and the restored verge is starting to look good now that the grass is starting to come through. However, lorries continue to cut up the central reservation and in some cases the heavier lorries are making three point turns on the highway in order to make the turn. Zoe ford (BCC LAT)

has requested the reinstatement of the central reservation. Cllr. Williams asked if we knew when the A412 would be resurfaced as we had assurance that this would be done before Christmas. The Co-Clerk reported that County Councillor Reed had met with BCC at a high level but no feedback from the meeting had been received to date. Cllr. Riley suggested that we need to install CCTV to monitor the traffic movements from Springbridge Direct as the operation is ever expanding its operations and is soon to start dealing in aggregates. Cllr. Riley added that a new road needs to be built that would allow lorries to exit at the rear of the Springbridge Direct site and travel to meet up with the A40 slip road. Cllr. Harding said that this would be unlikely as Springbridge Direct do not own the land to enable this to happen. Cllr. Harding added that waste and minerals are BCC planning issues and not a TFB issue. Cllr. Skelton reminded the meeting that County Cllr. Reed was the chairman of the BCC Development Control Committee. It was agreed to write to County Cllr. Reed in his capacity as chairman of the aforementioned committee and to copy in Dominic Grieve MP and Olivia Stapleford, the BCC Enforcement Officer

17. Springbridge Direct Ltd.

This matter was covered under item 16 above.

18. Destruction of Verges Between Residential Properties and Esso Garage on A40

The Co-Clerk reported that he and Cllr. Heath had witnessed a lorry parked on the grass verge and took a photograph. The driver of the vehicle had been asleep. This incident was reported to TfB and was taken up by the BCC Green Claims department who are now pursuing the company responsible. Representation has been made to TfB to re-instate the bollards to stop access to the petrol station.

Cllr. Heath suggested that where new developments take place, photographs are taken of the verges and pavements prior to commencement of works so that damage caused by builder's lorries can be more easily monitored and identified. A note with the images could be sent to the planning department before work starts. A letter to be drafted to SBDC Planning Department with this suggestion.

OTHER MATTERS

19. Any other business notified at 2 above

None.

20. Date of Next Meeting

To confirm the next scheduled meeting as Monday 1st February 2016 at 8pm in the Council Office.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm

John Coleman-Clerk
Roy Hill-Co Clerk