

Abbots Langley Parish Council

Minutes of the Leisure Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 26th October 2022 at 7.30 pm in Council Chambers, Abbots Langley Parish Council, Council Office, Langley Road, Abbots Langley, WD5 0EJ.

Those present:

Chairman: Councillor Jane Lay

Councillors: Councillor Sara Bedford
Councillor Liz Burns
Councillor Ruth Clark
Councillor Simon Stanley
Councillor John Wyatt
Councillor Roxanne Yau

Also Present: Mrs Tricia Buttress - Allotment Representative (KF)
Mr John Kersey - Allotment Representative (JF)
Mr Tim Denyer - Sports Representative

Officers: Isabel Montesdeoca - Chief Officer & Clerk to the Council
David Abbott - Facilities Manager
Mark Ellis - Works Manager
Rebecca Finlay - Leisure & Council Administration Officer

The meeting opened at 7:30 pm.

183. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received, accepted and recorded from Councillor Jon Andrews (unavailable).

Allotment Representatives (PH) Rob Stimpson, (MH) Chris Bromwich, and Sports Representative Mark Ward also sent their apologies.

184. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Jane Lay declared an interest in agenda item 9ii Fees and Charges as a member of the Gardening Society and an allotment tenant.

185. Public Participation

None.

186. Minutes of the Meeting

Correction to Allotment Representative's report on Manor House allotment. The report should state "Wire netting cages and other net cages seem to offer some defence against the squirrels".

It was proposed by Councillor Liz Burns, seconded by Councillor John Wyatt and RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 24th August 2022, copies of which had been sent to all members of the Parish Council prior to the meeting, be taken as read with the above amendment and were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

187. Reports from the Sports Representatives

Tim Denyer

The Sports Representative noted he would like to make a comment regarding agenda item 10ii - Unauthorised Play Charges.

The Sports Representative also alerted members he has spotted children riding electric motorbikes (EPVs) on Manor House Playing Fields. He recommended the Council consider publishing guidance on the usage of these mini-motorbikes of Council grounds.

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Councillor Sara Bedford recommended Officers contact local PCSOs to alert them and ask them to keep a look out for these.

188. Reports from the Allotments Representatives

Kingsfield - Patricia Buttress

The representative shared updates on the number of vacant plots, and the number of plots that received a letter post the last inspection that have since been worked. The representative also requested Officers double check if plot 19B vs 9B is the plot being monitored post the last inspection.

Jacketts Field - John Kersey

The representative noted that he had previously sent his comments to Officers regarding plots at Jacketts Field.

With respect to the 50% deposit now being collected for allotment tenants, the representative queried if this meant going forward the Council would clean any plots left in a poor state before letting to a new tenants.

The Chief Officer & Clerk noted the deposit amount being collected was not sufficient to cover the clearing of abandoned plots, however, it formed just one part of the potential longer term carrot and stick strategy to help reduce the number of plots left in a poor state.

189. Allotment Tenancy Report

The Works manager confirmed the final inspections for the year would be done in November. Officers confirmed viewings were ongoing and vacant plots are being taken. The Leisure & Council Administration Officer continues to review the waiting list and update to reflect any residents whose circumstances have changed. The Chief Officer & Clerk confirmed that no major issues have been raised by tenants with either the signing of the new Tenancy Agreement or payment of the 50% deposit.

Members noted the report and thanked Officers for their ongoing efforts in this area.

190. Bookings Update

Members noted the bookings update and thanked Officers for the report.

Councillor Jane Lay requested an update on plans discussed to attach a board on the side of the Manor House building advertising the venue with a contact number. The Facilities manager confirmed that he is still planning to proceed with this project.

191. Budget 2023-2024

i. Budget Expenditure and Income 2022-2023

Members noted the Chief Officer & Clerk's report and the first revision of the committee pages for the above. The Chief Officer noted that the YE spend forecast was 1% over budget for the year which is very good given high inflation rates (10%). The Chief Officer & Clerk thanked Officers for their efforts to keep costs down through fixed rate contracts and a commitment to making best value purchases.

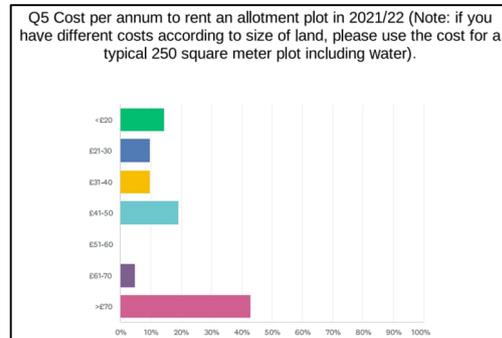
ii. Fees & Charges 2023-2024

Members reviewed the proposed allotment rent increase. Members felt the proposed increase for allotment rents was not sufficient to cover day-to-day expenses and one-of larger maintenance costs. The Chief Officer & Clerk shared data from the 'State of the Market Survey 2022 – Allotment Services' stating the majority of allotments in Southern England are charged at £70 for a full plot.

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Members agreed to recommend allotment rents be set at £53 for a full plot and £37 for half plot, resulting in the allotment deposit increasing to £26.50 for a full plot and £18.50 for a half plot. A vote was taken and agreement was unanimous.

[Post meeting note: Data taken from 'State of the Market Survey 2022 – Allotment Services']



Members reviewed the proposed lease charges and agreed to an overall 4% YoY increase on the basis that this represented solely a cost of living increase in rents.

Members reviewed the proposed venue hire charges and agreed to the Chief Officer & Clerk's request to hold venue charges for Manor House and Tanners Wood Hall steady. The Facilities manager confirmed that at the current rates these halls are still more expensive than other local venues available for hire.

It was proposed by Councillor Sara Bedford, seconded by Councillor Liz Burns and RESOLVED that with the above amendments, the fees & charges schedule be agreed and recommended for approval to the Parish Council.

iii. Key Projects 2022-2024

Members noted the latest updates on the Key Projects report and the proposed priority projects for consideration in the 2023-2024 budget.

Members discussed using CIL money for Manor House Footpath (KP5) and Primrose Hill Footpath (KP6). The Chief Officer & Clerk reminded members there is CIL money expiring in October 2023 and April 2024 (totals £60K). It is estimated that this could cover the costs of these two projects.

It was proposed by Councillor Liz Burns, seconded by Councillor Ruth Clark and RESOLVED that the following key projects be recommended for inclusion in the 2023-2024 budget:

- a) KP4 - Water Fountains, cost estimate £7000, funded through Nominal Code 7245
- b) KP5 - Manor House Footpath (Dell Meadow to Standfield), cost estimate £20000 (updated quote requested), funded through CIL funds
- c) KP6 - Primrose Hill Footpath, cost estimate £25000 (updated quote requested), funded through CIL funds
- d) KP8 - Bedmond MUGA, cost estimate £80000 (quote requested), funded over a number of years via funds set aside yearly in the Open Spaces Earmarked Reserves starting in 2023-2024

A recommendation will be agreed on KP7 - Manor House Footpath Paving, MUGA to Manor Lodge Car Park at the next meeting of the Committee once the quote has been shared.

The Works manager noted that the above quote for the KP6 - Primrose Hill footpath was only for a replacement of the existing footpath and does not include the cost of a new off-shoot from the main path to a bench to make it

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more accessible to disabled residents. Members were supportive of this new extension. Officers will request a quote for and share it at the next meeting of this Committee.

Councillor Sara Bedford recommended Officers explore potential grant schemes available from Thrive and Sanctuary to support the costs of the Bedmond MUGA.

All project numbers above refer to the Key Projects list, October 2022, Leisure Committee Update.

192. Football Charges

i. Football Pitch Invoices

Members thanked Officers for providing the option for teams to pay in instalments in response to the request made by the Sports Representatives.

It was proposed by Councillor Liz Burns, seconded by Councillor Jane Lay and RESOLVED that going forward teams will be given the option of paying annual football pitch invoices either in full or in two equal instalments due September and January, and failure to pay an invoice by the due date will incur a 5% late payment surcharge on the value of the invoice.

ii. Unauthorised Play Charges

Members noted the report from the Chief Officer & Clerk regarding the issue of unauthorised play and charges, and the invoice served on Abbots Langley Youth FC for unauthorised play in July 2022.

Tim Denyer, Sports Representative and Abbots Langley Youth Chairman, was invited to speak by the Chairman. Mr. Denyer expressed serious concern at the amount the club was charged for unauthorised play, stating that the charges were disproportionate and would adversely impact the finances of the club. Mr. Denyer asked Members to consider decreasing the charge.

Members acknowledged Mr. Denyer's concerns however felt that as this was the third such offence and the club had received warnings after the first two offences, the charge for unauthorised play was warranted. Members also felt the charge plays a critical role in deterring all local clubs from unauthorised play during the off-season during which the pitches are maintained and allowed to rest. Without a period of maintenance and rest each summer, the pitches will deteriorate to the point where the Council could be forced to take pitches out of usage for a period of time to aid recovery. Members are keen to avoid this outcome.

Members also confirmed that as the charge was part of the 2022-2023 Fees & Charges schedule approved by the full Parish Council, it could only be changed by the full Parish Council.

193. Primrose Hill Orchard

Members noted a verbal report from the Works Manager and the written report from the Leisure & Council Administration Officer regarding plans for the Primrose Hill Planting Day on Wednesday, 23rd November 2022.

The Works Manager confirmed 97 trees would be planted in the Primrose Hill Orchard between November and January. Trees to be planted in November / December include a feature Old English Oak as well as apple, plum, cherry, pear and walnut trees. The Leisure & Council Administration Officer shared plans to engage local councillors, local schools, Primrose Hill allotment holders, local gardening related charities, and local residents that had previously registered an interest in the project. A second set of fruit trees will be planted in January.

Members requested a second planting day be scheduled for a Saturday in January to allow all councillors wishing to take part the opportunity to do so. Members thanked the both Officers for their ongoing work on this project.

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194. Dates to Note

i. Remembrance Day

Members noted the arrangements that have been made for the laying of wreaths on behalf of the Council.

Councillor Liz Burns noted that there is a service being held at Bedmond Tin Church on Sunday, 13th November 2022 at 3:00pm

ii. Fireworks Night

Members noted the verbal update from the Works Manager regarding planning for this year's fireworks event.

iii. Christmas Carol Concert & Lights

Members noted the verbal update from the Facilities Manager and Works Manager regarding planning for this year's Christmas Carol Concert and Lights event.

The Works manager shared that the Christmas lights installation have now been approved by HCC and will be put up on 14th November 2022.

The meeting closed at 9:00 pm.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____