



BOX PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF AN MEETING OF THE PLAYING FIELDS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 4th DECEMBER 2023

- 1. Present:** Councillors: B. Walton (Chair); R. Bean; N. Ingledew;
H. Parker; M. Tye; T. Walton; D. Wright
Mrs Carey (Clerk)
Ms. G. Potts – Box Allotment Group
Mrs J. Collier; Mrs J. Wright - Box Bowls Club
- 2. Apologies:** Mrs T. Meek – Box Bowls Club
- 3. Absent:** Nil
- 4. Public Question Time:** There were three members of the public present
- 5. Minutes:** The Minutes of the Meeting held on 2nd October 2023 were taken as read and signed as a true record.

6. Matters Arising:

a. Play Area:

Community playground group to develop the play area: One of the members of the group had left so the numbers were now small.

The Group's priority would be to refurbish the whole of the Under 7s play area and Cllrs B. Walton and M. Tye will discuss an overall scheme to feedback to stakeholders.

RoSPA report The report had been received and a list of necessary repairs had been drawn up.

- Train in Under 7s: The boards need replacing. It was agreed to ask Touchwood for a quotation to replace this item with a Tractor which would be more interactive
- Resistograph check on cantilever swing: It was agreed to suggest to RoSPA that the check should be carried out every two years. The check had been carried out last year with no issues showing up.

Spring for motorcycle: The work has been completed. *Remove from Minutes*
Spring closure on gate: Joel to look at the gap by the hinge.

Following a request the RoSPA report had been put on the website

b. Allotments:

Ms Potts reported that one of the allotments had been relinquished. This has been relet.

There are now three people on the waiting list.

Quotation received from Ashley Rich for the path retaining work in the sum of £749 + vat which includes three sleepers, post and fixings plus labour. He will also top up the gravel on the steps in the Under 7s.

It was **recommended** that the quotation from £749 for the work be accepted and to ask him to carry this out next March so that the money can come from next year's budget.

The hazel on allotment 7a/b to be coppiced again this winter. Groundsmen to also cut the ivy from the fir tree between the allotments and the Under 7s; cut back the brambles from the path and to coppice the large Willow next Autumn. Groundsmen to be asked to check the condition of the Silver birch tree next to the Allotments. **Action: JA**

c. Update on Lovar Garden:

Community Fund update: The costs were based on Wiltshire Council's assessment of this eighteen month ago. The person who had submitted the quotation is unable to now carry out the work. A further quote has been provided by Ashley Rich. He has suggested digging out the path, putting down hardcore and then cobbles on the top. The quotation is in the sum of £6481.42 + vat

There is £1940 left from the grant received to create an accessibility path and £1800 in the budget which leaves a £2741.42 shortfall

It is **recommended** that the quotation from Ashley Rich in the sum of £6481.42 + vat be accepted with the shortfall to be taken from the earmarked reserves for the Lovar Garden

d. Trees and Hedges:

Veteran Chestnut tree: More logs have been put by the tree.

Notice board by the School: Cllr B. Walton and H. Parker to pursue this.

Action: BW/HP

Mill Lane Hedge: The hedge had been cut at a cost of £80.

It was **recommended** that this work is carried out annually

e. Bowling Green:

Mrs Wright reported that the Greenkeeper's manual was being updated and once this had been agreed by the Bowls Club a copy would be forwarded to the Parish Council.

She was checking the chemicals being used and queried whether some of these were necessary. It had been previously agreed that ASMC would contact her beforehand to agree the cost of the treatment before it is carried out. Clerk to contact ASMC and remind them of this.

The vertidrain had been carried out at a cost of £450 + vat which the Bowls Club would cover.

Charges for 2024/25

The charges for next year were discussed and it was **recommended** by four votes in favour, one against and one abstention that these be increased to £10000 made up as follows:

Contract for work to the Bowling Green	-	£6800
Cost of materials used	-	2500
Irrigation system	-	600s
Contingency	-	<u>100</u>
		£10000

Mrs Collier queried, and Cllr Bean also raised concerns, about the wording in the proposed new Agreement discussed at the October Committee meeting when it had been suggested that the words “the Hirer agrees to indemnify the Council for the maintenance costs” be added. She also asked who had completed the Agreement and why it was not signed. It was explained that this was a text document created from the original with the personal details removed to show as an example.

She stated that the Bowls Club had always paid all that they had been asked to pay. She felt that the Bowls Club should not be responsible for the paving slabs etc as they did not own the Bowling Green and could not pay for everything.

Cllr Bean stated that he felt that the Parish Council had been exceptionally generous in the past. He said that the tennis courts could be used by anyone but the use of the bowling green was exclusive to the Bowls Club.

He felt that the Bowls Club should enter into a long term Lease with a peppercorn rental and then cover all the costs involved.

Cllr T Walton stated that the Parish Council covers its costs by the charges it makes to its customers.

Mrs Collier answered that the Bowls Club were not the sole users and that the bowling green has always been available for use by members of the public. The Bowls Club had previously discussed the option of taking on a Lease and had turn this down and they have to look at the way they function from year to year.

VAT Refund: There was no further information on this and it will be discussed when it is known what is happening.

Mrs Collier stated that the Bowls Club has always paid costs including the VAT in the past which the Parish Council had reclaimed.

Cllr B Walton stated that the Parish Council had taken the VAT and passed it on to HMRC – it did not benefit the Council.

Gate lock: It was reported that the draw back part of the lock is broken. Clerk to ask the Groundsman to check this.

Action: MC

7. Other items for discussion:

Tennis Courts: The report from the recent meeting of the working group had been circulated. The group was looking at setting up its own bank account. £5000 had been put into the budget towards the cost of resurfacing the courts and the VAT refund and half the CIL money would also be added to this. The aim is to complete the resurfacing in 2026

It had been suggested that the Parish Council could look at leasing the tennis courts to a Tennis Club. Cllr Tye agreed to check this with the Charity Commission.

Action: MT

It was suggested a Pickleball tournament could be run as part of the 2024 Revels. The Badminton club could be involved and also the Green Room Youth Club. Cllr Bean to liaise with them

Action: RB

Forward Plan/Risk Assessment: This will be updated. Waiting to hear from the Cricket Club re Health & Safety procedures for grass cutting and maintenance re use of chemicals.

Action: RB

Discussion on Parish Council maintenance of the cricket area grass: Cllr B. Walton had gone through the timesheets and looked at the hours the Groundsmen have spent on the grass. They do not cut the cricket square but cut the outfield twice a week. They also harrow it and pick up the grass. Since April 2023 out of 92 hours they had spent 52 ½ extra hours on this equating to a cost of £787.50. The football pitch also gets extra work on it as a sports pitch.

It was asked whether the Parish Council would be asking the Cricket Club to contribute towards this cost - this was for information at present but could be discussed at a future meeting.

Signs on Recreation Ground: Cllr Parker had drawn up a list of the signs that need replacing. The quotation for this from Mirage Signs is £60 + vat and the signs had been ordered.

Report on meeting with Wessex Water: Cllr B. Walton had met with a representative from Wessex Water who are drawing up a scheme for approval. This would take up to a year and could prevent the Revels from taking place.. They are also talking to Jamies Farm re the purchase of land. The excavation would be 15m deep x 20m wide. The schedule for the work had slipped from 2025. Cllr Walton had asked that it would be preferable not to have the work done in 2026 as this is the centenary of the Deed of Gift.

Wessex Water also stated that Box may be selected for a trial of SuDSPods which catch water from roofs in a similar way to a waterbutt.

8. Issues arising from the Walkround:

- Groundsman to remove the rest of the covers from the sluice gate
- Plugs to be used in the Laurel stumps
- There are a couple of old rollers at the back of the bowling green. It was agreed to ask ASMC if they ever use them. If not they will be disposed of.
- Groundsman to treat the moss on the basketball and tennis courts by sweeping and then using sharp sand.

9. Climate Strategy Action Plan – Impact on Playing Fields actions:

Cllr H. Parker was obtaining a quotation for a glass recycling bin. The previous quote had been for £387 pa. It was agreed to go ahead and order this so long as the cost had not greatly increased. Signs were being drawn up to go on the recycling bins. It was agreed that the location for the next bin would be by the tennis courts.

It was reported that the refuse collection lorry could not get down Valens Terrace because of a parked car at the top.

10. Correspondence:

Path round the top of the Recreation Ground: Letter received from the School regarding the state of the path along the top of the Recreation Ground which is particularly bad in some areas. The School's Licence to use the Recreation Ground was increased from £1140 to £2000 pa in 2010.

Post minute note:

The increase of the Licence fee in 2010 was to bring this in line with comparable maintenance costs incurred by other schools. In return for the increase the Parish Council assumed responsibility for the maintenance of the path round the Recreation Ground.

It was stated that there was £500 in the budget for 2023/24 and £500 in next year's budget. The Parish Council had carried out work in the past by putting scalplings down. Cllr Wright reported that he has some batten boards available which could be used on the edging to prevent the stones spilling onto the grass. It was agreed to ask Ashley Rich for a quote and this will come back to the next meeting for further discussion. It may be possible to use the Community Payback team to carry out the work.

Post minute note:

From April 2024 there will be £4700 set aside for work to the path around the Recreation Ground

Clerk to write to the School outlining the Council's position. **Action: MC**

Use of Recreation Ground: Letter received from St Thomas a Becket Church asking for permission to use a small corner of the Recreation Ground between the Basketball Court and the steps down to the Lovar Garden to erect a Prayer Tent to be used as a Soul Space. This could be weekly on a Wednesday from 12pm to 4 pm starting during Lent and would be manned by volunteers. It was confirmed that this would be covered by the Church's insurance.

It was **recommended** by five votes in favour and one abstention that permission be granted for this.

Dogs on the Recreation Ground and excrement around the village

Letter received re keeping dogs on leads on the Recreation Ground and the excessive dog mess around the village. The "No dogs on lead" rule was rescinded by Wiltshire Council. It was agreed to put an article in the Parish Magazine reminding people to use the dog bags provided. Clerk to reply to the parishioners stating that the Council shares her frustrations but there is not much that the Parish Council can do.

11. Items of report and future agenda items: Nil

12. Date of next meeting – 4th December 2023

Chair

Meeting closed at 8.45 pm