



St Andrews Parish Council

**Draft Minutes of the Grounds Maintenance Committee Meeting
Held on Wednesday 21st June 2023 at 7:30pm
at Redhouse Community Centre, Frankel Avenue, Swindon**

Councillors Present: Daniel Adams, Jake Chandler, Steve Heyes, Sue MacDonald, Paul West and Vince Williams
Officer Present: Emma Sylvester – Parish Clerk
Luke Jones – Grounds Maintenance Manager (GMM)
Public Present: 0

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr B Williams

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meetings held on 25th January and 24th May 2023 as a true record.

5. PUBLIC RECESS

No public present

6. OPEN SPACES

(i) Members received the open spaces spreadsheet and the GMM reported that all raised issues had been dealt with. The Clerk reported that she had received a call that day regarding issues with verge near Wyld Court. Members agreed for Grounds Maintenance Team to deal with.

Cllr V Williams asked about the noise report at Brook Park Gym. The GMM responded that a response was awaited from the manufacture regarding a possible solution or a replacement piece of equipment.

Members discussed the broken wooden barrier at Helena Road and agreed to remove it.

(ii) Members considered the GMM's 'No Mow May' report and discussed the various issues raised. The GMM explained that the parish council does not have the correct equipment for cutting long grass or the ability to collect. Members agreed that the parish council was involved in several other projects which helped with biodiversity, and it was felt that there was a good balance across the parish. **RESOLVED** not to join 'No Mow May' and keep cutting the grass at 1.5 inches.

7. VEHICLE/MACHINERY

(i) The GMM reported that it had not been possible to get quotes for renewal of vehicles, and equipment as it was too far away from the renewal dates. It was agreed to look at this again in the Autumn.

The Clerk suggested that a brief is put together of what the parish council wants in terms of vehicles and equipment which can be then sent to all interested companies for quotations.

The GMM reported that the little van is used in the winter to go up the footpaths and acts as a spare van during other times.

The GMM reported that all the handheld equipment was lasting well and this was mostly due to staff looking after it.

The GMM suggested that the parish council looks to purchase some of the machinery when it comes to the end of lease. The Clerk suggest obtaining prices so that the parish council can budget appropriately and maybe spreading the cost over several years by putting money aside in reserves.

It was agreed that no additional equipment was required at the present time.

- (ii) The GMM reported that he was researching a more efficient jet wash attachment, to be used for removing graffiti and cleaning play area surfaces. One had been found which was also better for workers' backs however the pressure required did not match our current machine.

8. BINS

- (i) Councillors discussed responses received and the GMM reported that there was no longer an issue with the bin at Abbotsbury Way Park.
RESOLVED to leave the bin at the current location
- (ii) Members considered a report by the GMM regarding a bin and bench at Vaughan Williams Way.
RESOLVED to install a new bin and reinstate the bench at Vaughan Williams Way at a cost of £45.60.

9. NATURE TRAIL

- (i) Cllr Jake Chandler reported that the nature trail route had been approved at the Play Committee.
- (ii) Members discussed next steps.
RESOLVED to create a digital map for sharing with residents via the website and social media and look to see if signposts can be budgeted for in the next financial year.

10. WILDFLOWER AREAS

- (i) Members discussed a request received from a resident to wildflower bank at Viking Close.
RESOLVED to plant wildflowers next year at Viking Close subject to approval from Swindon Borough Council.
- (ii) Members discussed all wildflower areas, pollinator pathways and rewilding areas in the parish and it was agreed that all was going well. The GMM suggested leaving one tractor width of uncut grass around the edges of areas in the parish. It was requested a map showing the areas where this was possible was brought to the next meeting.

Cllr MacDonald reported that there were some wonderful birds flying around and fantastic wildflowers growing in the parish, in particular the pyramid orchids. All agreed there was a good balance in the parish and there was no need for additional areas at present.

11. WORK EXPERIENCE

The GMM reported that a third work experience student had completed a period of time with the Grounds Maintenance Team. He added that it had been a pleasure to

have the students and a great help. The GMM requested that the parish council consider having a small budget for PPE for any work experience students instead of it coming from the general staff uniform code.

12. **POLICIES, PROCEEDURES AND RISK ASSESSMENTS**

With a minor change regarding changing dates to a working week and calendar month it was **RESOLVED** to approve the following policies, procedures and risk assessments:

Grass Maintenance Policy
Hedge and Shrub Policy
Nesting Birds Check List
Street Cleaning Policy
Bin Installation Procedure and Risk Assessment
Chainsaw Procedure and Risk Assessment
Ride On Procedure
Shrub Cutting Procedure
Side Arm Flail Procedure
Strimming Procedure
Jet Washing Procedure and Risk Assessment
Painting Risk Assessment
Planting Risk Assessment
Use of Powered Hand Tools Risk Assessment

13. **SHRUBS AND HEDGES**

- (i) The GMM reported on an issue with a very tall hedge at Joyce Close which was over 15ft and ideally should only be 4ft.
- (ii) Members agreed to send a consultation letter to residents **RESOLVED** to delegate decision on final consultation letter to be sent to residents. to be finalised

14. **TREES**

The GMM reported that only two responses had been received following the Trees for Climate consultation. **RESOLVED** to approve the three sites as detailed in the Minute Book for tree planting and inform Swindon Borough Council of the confirmed areas. Members requested that they were kept informed of the trees to be planted. **RESOLVED** to work with the Youth Committee to set up tree planting days.

15. **PARKING**

Cllr Heyes reported that he had received complaints about vehicles being parked on verges in the parish in particular by the Jovial Monk. Members discussed whether it would be possible to place posts in the ground to prevent this. It was agreed for the Clerk and the GMM to speak to Swindon Borough Council about whether this would be possible.

16. **DEPOT (Standing Item)**

Cllr V Williams reported that the depot at Waterside was not ready to move into yet but asked if the committee was happy for himself and Luke to go and measure up to see what was needed. **RESOLVED** For Cllr V Williams and the GMM to measure up the depot at Waterside.

The meeting closed at 9:10 pm.

Chairman _____

Date _____