

Wickersley Parish Council

Minutes of the Woodland Committee Meeting

Tuesday 8th December 2020 @ 6.30pm held Remotely via the Microsoft Teams Platform

Members: Cllrs: - M Scott (Chairperson), P Thirlwall, E Boswell, S Ellis, K Phillips, R Postlethwaite, Gorse Wardens Paul Paddock and Graham Woodcock, Wood Warden Katie Smith

In Attendance: S Fletcher Deputy Clerk, Mark Scott, P Thirlwall, S Ellis, K Phillips, E Boswell, Katie Smith

The Chair welcomed all the attendees and set out his expectations for the woodland committee to be held on the Microsoft Teams platform. The Deputy Clerk advised the joining instructions had been advertised on the Parish Website with the details of the Agenda Items to be discussed

365. To receive apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from P Bates and P Ryder - volunteers, Paul Paddock – Gorse Warden and Councillor Postlethwaite.

366. To resolve if members of the press and public are to be excluded from any agenda items of the meeting due to the nature of the business to be transacted. Under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, S1 (2))

Resolved: There are no items to be excluded.

367. To approve the minutes of the Meeting held on 13th October 2020

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting were approved and signed as a true record by Councillor Scott.

368. To note matters arising from the Meeting held on 13th October 2020

There were no matters arising.

369. To receive information regarding the Volunteers Programme for 2020

369.1 Update on works completed and planned works – the deputy clerk provided a brief update on the works carried out by the Volunteer Team in October and November. October concentrated in the woods where they carried out a litter pick, cleared some small areas of brash and cleared the main network of footpaths that were overgrown with nettles. November concentrated on the Gorse where they strimmed around the entrance gate and field gate together with the path. Litter picked and strimmed and cleared gorse bushes and bracken close to the viewpoint. Pathways were cleared and some habitats created from broken limbs of trees. Areas have been identified to concentrate on next time.

The deputy clerk reported that a message of thanks and appreciation has been sent through to the group who have confirmed cancellation of December and January works due to Covid restrictions.

369.2 Bridge Proposal – the chair advised that due to other commitments and the shielding of the volunteers a meeting and further discussion had not taken place. However, he would progress this matter. The deputy clerk added that a complaint has been received and PROW from RMBC had visit to assess the bridge. She added that parish

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handymen had done some remedial work to assist. PROW officers had noted the concern and noted the second bridge up stream to allow access and provided contractor details to investigate. A discussion followed with general opinion that the replacement of the bridge would be a positive project for the volunteers if they have the right skill set and if the replacement comes within the project budget.

Resolved: Chair to liaise with the Volunteers and proceed with the project

370. To receive a budget update to 31.08.2020

370.1 – The Chair updated that the meeting to discuss the format of the budget details and the figures had not taken place and he noted that the figures circulated on the email showing the whole budget made it easier to understand. The information was shared on screen. A discussion followed and questions raised if there had been an overspend in the budget, it is noted from the figures presented what was allocated budget and what had been spent to date.

Further questions were raised if the figures accounted for emergency works and planned works. The Chair advised that he will discuss this item with the Clerk to establish clarity. (the relevant item within the full financial document is attached)

Financial Statement for Wickersley Parish Council Financial Report to 01/12/2020	As at 01/12/2020	Committed to 31 Mar 2020	Total projected to 31 Mar 2021	Budget 2020-21	Surplus/-Deficit projection to 31 Mar 2020
Gorse - general	305.00	2195	2500.00	2500.00	0.00
Wood - general	1212.55	1287.45	2500.00	2500.00	0.00
Wood & Gorse Wardens	55.00	55	110.00	110.00	0.00
Common Bank Lease	0.00	100	100.00	100.00	0.00
Woodland Committee Events	0.00	300	300.00	500.00	-200.00
Total Woodland Management	1572.55	3937.45	5510.00	5710.00	-200.00

Resolved: that the budget is approved and the Chair will confirm with the Clerk if maintenance works is included within the budget figures.

370.2 To discuss budget requirement, projects and savings of 2021/2022

It was noted that at the full parish meeting, Chairs of Committee were requested to review budgetary requirements and identify savings were possible.

The Chair added that following on from above when clarity is established the base budget figures will be identified and during the course of the meeting any project bids may be identified, these are to be referred through for full parish budget discussions.

371. To discuss matters relating to Wickersley Gorse

371.1 Resignation of Gorse Warden - Graham Woodcock

The Chair reported that Mr Woodcock had resigned by letter due to an imminent house move. The Committee expressed their thanks for the input from Mr Woodcock over the years and the Chair will contact him to express this. All personal address details to be forwarded by the deputy clerk.

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371.2 Report from Gorse Wardens Paul Paddock

There is no report, in the absence of Mr Paddock who sent his apologies. Councillor Ellis updated the committee that there is a scheme to regenerate ponds in the South Yorkshire area and there is an existing pond in the Gorse that may benefit from this project. The project is to be investigated. Areas of concern from Councillor Phillips on the condition of footpaths and walkways within the Gorse, the deputy clerk advised the volunteers have worked on the top footpath last year and it is the intention to carry out further works on there and install steps down the slippery banking to the low path. The volunteers will also be concentrating on clearing young trees and reinstating the viewing point.

371.3 Update on signage for nitrous oxide capsules

The deputy clerk advised that a sign may be available from RMBC and she had been chasing this matter.

371.4 Update on Recommended Works form Management Consultant

The deputy clerk advised that three companies had been contacted two for the tree works and one for the grass cutting. Costs for the removal of the suspended limb on the oak and the grass cutting prices quoted were discussed and the deputy clerk to proceed. However, the costing for the felling of the poplar tree were significantly higher than expected and further clarity is required prior to authorisation. The poplar branch spread, and the narrow top path means that access is required for the land to the rear for safe working area. Further investigation is required.

Resolved: the works are progressed, and clarity on costs prior to Poplar works

372 To discuss matters relating to Wickersley Wood

372.1 Report form Wickersley Wood Warden – Katie Smith

A report was circulated via email – Katie added that the winds had died down and not many instances of ASB now the children had returned to school, however, there was an incident where the decorated xmas tree had been daubed with sauce and Abbie who looks after it had taken the baubles and angel washed and replaced them some baubles were broken too. Councillor Ellis asked if pupils from Willow School were involved with this tree, Katie advised that Abbie had done it since her children were small. There was concern raised about the pumpkins which were lovely when displayed and became unsightly when degrading and some plastic/metal from candles were littering the area. Comments were made that when the pandemic is over, and events organised this may not be an issue.

372.2 Update from Deputy Clerk on works in Woodland

It was reported earlier in the meeting that the volunteers had worked in the woodland in October and the parish handyman have tasks to complete for example tidying the middle entrance and general maintenance as part of their daily work. There had been no reports of dangerous branches recently and the leaves have fallen so less likely to cause damage.

372.3 To discuss the provision of post mounted signs

The deputy clerk advised that two quotations for signage were distributed in the meeting pack for illustration purposes and stated there are 9 signs required to cover all entrances to the wood and one for the Gorse. A lengthy discussion followed to establish if the signs were metal and robust enough. Signage in general was discussed to be informative and appropriate. The upgrade of notice boards was included within the discussion, it is noted that

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there is a policy for a consistent design, and colour for parish notice boards. The issue of what activities are prohibited and what are positive messages to be included on the signs and notice boards to be informative. In order to draw a close to the debate the chair suggested that Councillor Thirlwall investigate the options and present his findings at the next meeting, and added the Committee may consider a bid to the parish budget for this project.

372.4 Overhanging branches concerns for residents

The deputy clerk advised that two residents had contacted her in relation to overhanging branches, and the condition of the middle entrance to the wood. She added that works are ongoing with quotations for crown lifting of two branches and the parish handymen have clearing the area in hand. A discussion followed and attention brought to the Tree Policy adopted by the Parish whereby it outlines that residents have the right to prune trees at their own expense with prior approval of RMBC. It is suggested that residents are made familiar with this policy and information is given that the Management consultant identifies necessary works when required.

372.5 Update on Recommended works from Management Consultant

The deputy clerk outlined the costings for the works in the woodland, namely the crown lifting of the oak at the middle entrance, the removal of dead silver birch middle entrance and removal of fallen limb at bottom entrance on the submitted quotation.

Resolved: that works are authorised and progressed

373. To discuss and agree any actions for Woodland Committee Projects

373.1 Sculpture – update on Design and location to discuss

The deputy clerk circulated via email the images of the finished bench sculpture that everyone agreed was fantastic, she added that the sculptor would require assistance to get the bench in place with some ground preparation. Members of the committee offered to assist dependant when this is to take place. A discussion followed of the suitable location – it was agreed that it would go to the righthand side of the quarry near to where the footpath comes from Winthrop so can be utilised for a rest by wood users.

Resolved; deputy clerk to progress

373.2 Bridge Replacement

The deputy clerk advised this has been discussed and agreed that the Chair is to meet with the volunteers to discuss the design in more detail.

374. To discuss the planting of a memorial tree

The deputy clerk advised members that a request to plant a memorial tree with a plaque in memory of a former resident of Wickersley that had sadly passed away. Mr Boid was born and bred in Wickersley and even following his move to America, Wickersley had a special place in his heart. A discussion followed about the practicality upkeep ongoing maintenance of the tree and plaque. Following the discussion, it was agreed that the request would unfortunately be declined. The Chair and deputy clerk would respond to Mr Boid relatives.

Resolved: Chair and Deputy Clerk to progress

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375.To discuss Woodland Policies (Note Included)

The deputy clerk advised that the policy 'Works to Trees owned by Wickersley Parish Council' had been approved by full parish. This prompted discussion of this policy together with other approved policies that may have been approved at other committees and at full parish that may have an impact on Woodland matters. It was agreed that the Chair and deputy clerk investigate and review the approved policies and present a report to the next woodland committee with the findings and recommendations.

376. To discuss the Events schedule for 2021

The deputy clerk advised that a blank template for the events schedule had been prepared discussion followed and dates agreed providing that there are no government restrictions in place because of Covid-19

See Appendix 1

Resolved: Events schedule agreed

377. To discuss and agree risk assessment and insurance arrangements

This is a standard item on each Agenda included to ensure that all aspects are up to date. It is noted that prior to the projects a risk assessment is required.

378. To note the meeting schedule for 2021 Commencing at 6.30pm

Tuesday 23rd March 2021
Tuesday 22nd June 2021
Tuesday 28th September 2021
Tuesday 30th November 2021

Resolved: the date of the next meeting is Tuesday 23rd March 2021 at 6.30pm.

The meeting was closed at 8.35pm

Chairperson..... Councillor Mark Scott