

**PARISH ENVIRONMENTAL
ASSETS & PATHS COMMITTEE**

Met at Marshalswick Community Centre
on Tuesday 15th November at 7.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Jenny Roberts (Chair)
Councillor June Reid
Councillor Geoff Churchard
Councillor Janet Churchard
Councillor John Foster
Public Members - Frances Leonard, David Healey,
Anne Thomas
Julian Thornton (Hertfordshire County Council)

Absent: -

Officers: Rebecca Pannese, Project, Amenities and Community
Engagement Officer
Emma Hostler, Deputy Clerk

867 TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mary Ternouth, Bernard Lusby, John Newton-Davies and Mark Carter and accepted by the Committee.

868 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

There were no disclosures of interest or dispensations given.

At this point in the meeting Cllr Jenny Roberts welcomed Anne Thomas as a new Public Member of the Committee.

869 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 12th July 2022, having been previously circulated, were taken as a correct record and it was unanimously:

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 12th July 2022 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

870 MATTERS OF NOTE

- The Parish Council has taken delivery of the new Kubota ride on mower and the trailer has been adapted for loading purposes and transportation.
- The JFWP Management Committee has reported no sightings of breeding skylarks this year and therefore will discontinue its policy of installing protective fencing across the meadow grass footpaths.
- UK Power Network have been in contact with regard to the overhead cables at Spencer Meadow. Their appointed contractor met with officers and members of SYSCA and the cricket club to discuss their proposal to bury the cables underground. It is hoped to do so in the next year.
- The tree planted in St Leonard's Open Space to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee has died.
- Following investigation through the Sports and Recreation Committee into the feasibility of installing land drains at Harness Way Open Space, estimated costs have proved prohibitively high and therefore alternative plans for improving conditions in the area should be considered.
- Some general tree works have been carried out in St Leonard's churchyard and Marshalswick Community Centre and library car park.

- Mark Carter will be cutting back some trees that border a house from between Sherwood Avenue and the Sherwood Park Open Space following a request from the resident.

871 HCC REPORT ON FOOTPATHS AND RIGHTS OF WAY

Julian Thornton, Herts County Council (HCC), provided a verbal update on footpaths and rights of way relating to the parish. Members were informed about the following:

- Julian Thornton has met with the new SADC Highways/Trees officer to walk the length of Jersey Lane.
- BW9 will be included in the HCC winter schedule for scrub clearance and general vegetation cutback.
- HCC volunteers have cleared and explored the pond adjacent to BOAT3 and will complete further works removing two deceased ash trees and cutting back vegetation.
- An HCC enforcement officer has met with the landowners of the field through which FP55 runs to ensure unhindered public access is available. The Rights of Way working group has written to Cllr Brewster HCC regarding possible funding towards constructing a safer exit point onto House Lane. See item 872. Frances Leonard will follow up.
- Drainage issues at the junction between BOAT3 and Jersey Lane remain a problem. Julian Thornton to discuss options for improving the current drainage system with SADC.
- There was some discussion regarding scope for collaborative volunteer projects between HCC and Sandridge Parish.

872 THE RIGHTS OF WAY WORKING PARTY

Mary Ternouth, who was not able to attend the meeting, provided a written report updating Members on the progress of the Rights of Way Working Party regarding:

Rifle Butts path

Footpath 55 (off House Lane)

Twin Fields

Bridleway 48

Some discussion on each of these followed.

873 A REPORT CONCERNING THE LOSS OF GREEN HABITAT ALONG JERSEY LANE

Cllr Jenny Roberts shared a report from SADC Cllr Lorraine Kirby concerning actions undertaken to address concerns regarding the loss of green habitat along Jersey Lane. Members noted key recommendations as follows:

- Strengthening the importance of green spaces within the Local Plan and designating Jersey Lane a 'Linear Green Space'.
- Improving preservation and conservation by identifying a selection of 10-20 key tree specimens for TPO applications.
- Register key trees with evidence of wildlife eg bats or nesting birds with the Herts Environmental Record Centre
- Promote community engagement with Jersey Lane as a green space.

874 A PROPOSAL TO LAY HARD SURFACE PATHS AT TWO ENTRY POINTS TO HARNESS WAY

Following the site walkabouts undertaken in July 2021 Committee Members identified potential to improve the access to Harness Way during the winter by laying two hard surface paths from Jersey Lane onto the green space and this was incorporated into the Management Plan for Harness Way. Members were informed that an estimated cost of £2,000 has been included in the 2023-24 activity schedule to undertake this work. The Project, Amenities and Community Engagement will obtain quotes. It was proposed by Cllr June Reid and seconded by Cllr Geoff Churchard that the Committee reaffirm its commitment to undertake these works and following discussion it was;

RESOLVED

To proceed with plans to install two hard surface (granite) access paths to Harness Way from Jersey Lane as part of the 2023-24 schedule of activity at a cost of approximately £2,000.

875 2022-23 EXPENDITURE

The Committee noted that expenditure to date from the 2022-23 budget is £4,110 which includes second stage footpath surfacing works in Skyswood and routine maintenance works undertaken by the warden Mark Carter. The Committee discussed ideas for best use of the remaining £1,890 available in the budget, some of which will be used for continuing maintenance works and wildflower planting. It was agreed to proceed with additional whips and shrub planting in the following green spaces: William Bell; Harness Way and St Leonards, including a replacement oak tree for the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee in the latter (see Matters of Note).

876 2023-24 BUDGET AND SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITY

Members reviewed the draft Schedule of Activity for 2023-24 which has been put together based on 2022-23 schedule and the individual management plans for the following green spaces: Skyswood; Damson Way; Harness Way; and William Bell. Also included is St Leonard’s Open Space although this does not currently have its own management plan. Apart from the capital works laying new paths in Harness Way, the programme largely comprises maintenance works and new plantings. These activities, factoring in a potential rise in costs from suppliers for materials, total £4010 and is the sum which has been included in the Parish draft budget for 2023-24, already agreed by the Finance Committee and due to be submitted for approval by Full Council at the December meeting. It was, unanimously;

RESOLVED

To ratify the draft budget and schedule of activity for the PEAP Committee for 2023-24 which totals £4,010.

877 VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME

Members were informed of the schedule of volunteer activities for the following few months:

- 4th December – Spencer Meadow hedge laying
- 8th January – Skyswood tree planting
- 5th February – Sherwood Open Space wildflower planting
- 5th March – Jersey Farm Woodland Park tbc

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING – Tuesday 24th January 2023 at 7.30pm at Marshalswick Community Centre.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.45pm.

Chair

Date