

Sandridge Parish Council



JERSEY FARM WOODLAND PARK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Met at 7.30pm at Marshalswick Community Centre
on Monday 13th January 2025

PRESENT:

Parish Councillors - Jenny Roberts (Chair), Carol Chalkley, Adam Twidell, Maurice Wells,
District Councillors – Michael Jones, Raj Visram
Warden – Mark Carter
Public Members – Frances Leonard, John Forward, Johanna Houlahan, Carol Higgins

OFFICERS:

Emma Hostler - Deputy Clerk
Rebecca Pannese – Project, Amenities and
Community Engagement (PACE) Officer

ABSENT:

Public Member Jamie Burrows

691. TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors Mike White and Julie Oakley, and Public Member Anne Thomas.

692. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

Mark Carter declared an interest as a self-employed contractor for Sandridge Parish Council.

693. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 16th September 2024, having been previously circulated, were taken as a correct record and it was, unanimously;

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 16th September 2024 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

694. MATTERS OF REPORT

- Two trial pond pits have been dug by Parish volunteers and are being closely monitored for both filling and drainage of the water to ascertain whether the actual pond when constructed will need lining. A meeting with a pond engineer took place in early December to seek advice and a quote (see minute 697).
- Mark Carter and Anne Thomas have completed the tree thinning in the North Plantation (veteran tree programme – stage 2).
- Drainage works have been undertaken to divert water flow off FP27 away from St Helier Road and into the nearby woodland. To date, this appears to be successful. Having agreed to cover the shortfall in costs for this work from the funding provided by Full Council (£3,500) this totals approximately £1,000.
- The Parish Council received a positive report from the Green Flag Award 'mystery shopper' which was distributed to all members by email on 6th January.
- The meadow grass was cut and arisings removed by the local farmer in October.
- Mark Carter has undertaken a clean-up of the bird boxes on the Woodland Park and is happy to

report that all of them have been used (blue tits).

- There has been no outcome following recent reports of an intimidating male on the Woodland Park. The Parish Council made available up to 30 free security alarms to local residents.

695. UPDATE ON THE HEDGE INSTALLATION

Despite the adverse weather, and a last-minute decision to cancel the scheduled volunteer planting weekend, the native hedgerow whips were still successfully planted and mulched over three days due to the combined efforts of regular volunteers, committee members, local residents, and officers. Mark Carter and the PACE Officer provided a brief verbal update. Following complaints from a local householder (see minute 696), the extent of hedging was reduced by some 70-80 metres. The remaining whips will be planted elsewhere within the parish.

696. A COMPLAINT REGARDING LACK OF CONSULTATION ON THE HEDGEROW INSTALLATION

The Committee was asked to respond to a complaint to St Albans District Council (SADC) from a local householder regarding lack of consultation prior to installation of the hedgerow whips on the Woodland Park. This complaint has been suspended by the complainant until such time as the Parish Council has provided a response to the following concerns:

- Was there adequate consultation at the time the project was proposed?
- Was a risk assessment considered necessary and carried out?
- What is the plan for on-going maintenance specifically with regard to height?
- Does the Committee intend maintaining the open feel of the location?

The Committee discussed each of the concerns raised and will respond directly to the complainant. The Committee did not recognise the requirement for a consultation for the works but did concede that a more formal communication to the householder may have been a helpful courtesy. A risk assessment for a hedge installation is not considered necessary and has not been undertaken for similar works elsewhere in the parish. The height of the hedgerow within 10 years will be maintained at approximately 5 ft. The Committee values the open aspect of the Woodland Park.

697. UPDATE ON THE POND INSTALLATION PROJECT

Mark Carter and the Parish Officers provided an update on the recent meeting with Anne Thomas and the pond specialist on site at the Woodland Park regarding plans for a pond installation next autumn. In summary, having reviewed the proposed site, the pond specialist strongly advised increasing the scale of the proposed project to maximise the biodiversity benefits to the immediate environment. This will impact on funding requirements and enquiry should be made as to a nearby water source. The Committee was receptive to the proposal to increase the scale of the project but was of a view that natural water flow off the Woodland Park would be sufficient to fill the pond whilst also serving to alleviate flooding issues in the area. The Committee asked that this should be further investigated prior to agreeing to a larger scale project. The Deputy Clerk will make a request of the pond specialist to provide initial drawings of the proposed pond as a start point and seeking further water management advice from relevant experts on the basis of these. Anne Thomas to present any drawings or findings to the next Committee meeting.

698. REFURBISHMENT OF THE INTERPRETATION BOARDS

The PACE Officer informed the Committee that a new interpretation board had been ordered for installation in the vicinity of the Jersey Lane entrance to replace the deteriorated board adjacent to Jersey Lane which has now been removed. Replacement artwork panels have also been ordered as part of a renovation programme for each of the boards at the Chiltern Road and St Helier Road entrances. The PACE Officer will look at reconditioning of the other boards on site from next year's budget.

699. CURRENT EXPENDITURE AND MANAGEMENT PLANS 2024-25

Members noted that the current expenditure for this year's budget is £15,176 and were provided with a breakdown of this. Works still pending include continued hedge trimming, blackthorn clearance, and on-going general maintenance. Invoices are outstanding for both the meadow cut (£3,500) and drainage works on St Helier/FP 27.

700. MATTERS ARISING SINCE THE CIRCULATION OF THE AGENDA

Cllr Jenny Roberts updated Members on the positive response to the swift conservation evening in December as part of the Committee for Sustainability's wild bird conservation initiative and take up of subsidised swift boxes by local householders for installation in the spring.

The Deputy Clerk informed Members of an enquiry made on behalf of a local model engineering charity seeking a new site for a model railway track. The general view was that the Woodland Park was not an appropriate location for a track and there was no interest in following up further with this request.

Johanna Houlahan informed the Committee of the imminent launch of a new parkrun location at Oaklands College. It is expected that this will impact on numbers currently attending the Jersey Farm Woodland Park event. She also informed the Committee of collections made at the Jersey Farm event on behalf of St Albans foodbank prior to Christmas.

701. SUGGESTIONS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

There were no suggestions made for the next meeting.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the JFWP Management Committee will take place at Marshalswick Community Centre at 7.30pm on Monday 7th April 2025 with a prior walkabout on the Woodland Park at 6.30pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.52pm.

Chair

Date