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**MEMBERS OF THE SPORTS & RECREATION GROUNDS COMMITTEE**

Met on Wednesday 18th June at 7.30pm 2025 at Marshalswick Community Centre

**PRESENT:** Councillors:Graham Leonard, James Lambert, Mike White, Carol

Chalkley, Raihaana Ahmed

Public Member: Chris Cooke

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor Jenny Roberts

Public Member: Jez Cox

**OFFICERS**: Simon Thwaites, Clerk, Rebecca Pannese

Project, Amenities & Community Engagement (PACE) Officer

**ABSENT:** -

**629 Disclosures of Interest and Dispensations**

There was none.

**630 Election of Chair**

Councillor Lambert was nominated by Councillor Chalkley for Chair. This nomination was seconded by Councillor Ahmed before it was unanimously;

**Resolved**

To elect Councillor Lambert as Chair for the coming year.

**631 Election of Vice Chair**

Councillor Leonard was nominated by Councillor White for Vice Chair. This nomination was seconded by Councillor Chalkley before it was unanimously;

**Resolved**

To elect Councillor Leonard as Vice Chair for the coming year.

**632 Review and approve the Terms of Reference (TOR)**

The TOR for this committee are reviewed as required annually. It was agreed that the TOR be re-adopted for the coming year.

**633 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Sports and Recreation Ground Committee held on 17th March 2025, having been previously circulated, were reviewed before it was:

**RESOLVED**

That the minutes be approved and signed as a correct record.

**634** **2025/26 Capital Works Update**

The following updates were provided to the Committee:

Harness Way Open Space

The two new in-ground trampolines are due to be installed in the coming weeks, along with the wetpour surfacing around the entrance gate (the latter being from the 2024/25 budget).

St Leonard’s Open Space

The wooden panels on the slide have now been replaced and new swing seats installed (both from the 2024/25 budget).

Following on from the committee decision on the 4th April this year, a new table tennis table has been installed, replacing the dilapidated one that was beyond repair. The cost of the new table along with installation was £3,495. The Committee was asked to ratify this expenditure.

It was therefore:

**RESOLVED:**

To ratify spend of £3,495 on a replacement outdoor table tennis table for St Leonard’s Open Space, funds having been vired from the Spencer Meadow Playground budget following a decision not to proceed with the climbing frame upgrade.

Spencer Meadow Car park

Repairs have now been carried out on the car park, with the total cost being £2,590. There is a saving on budget of £11,410.

Members were reminded of the capital budget for this Committee for 2025/26:

**Harness Way** - £12,000

**Jersey Farm Adventure Playground** - £10,000

**Spencer Meadow Playground** - £17,500

**Spencer Meadow carpark** - £14,000

**Total** - £53,500

Allocated spend so far;

£21,085

**635 William Bell Playground – Replacement Swing Set**

Following on from the playground safety inspections, the following notification was received:

*“This notification is being made in the interest of safety. Wicksteed "BallTop" Swings with single stud head castings produced between 1947 and 1964 are now beyond the end of their service life. Wicksteed Leisure recommends that these swings be removed from service as soon as reasonably possible and replaced with a modern equivalent. It is no longer possible to source replacement parts and the effects of corrosion within the structure of these swings cannot be accurately assessed. Therefore the only viable safe option is to remove these swings from service.”*

A quote was obtained to replace the swing set with two options;

Option A

1 cradle seat and 1 You and Me seat (The You & Me swing seat encourages play and interaction between different generations) – £5435.00

Option B

2 cradle seats (replacing like for like) - £4635.00

The Committee discussed the two options and settled on option B.

It was therefore;

**RESOLVED:**

To proceed with option B, (replacing like for like) at the earliest opportunity, with funds being vired from the Spencer Meadow capital budget.

**636 Second Mini Football Goal at Sherwood Park**

Following the successful installation of the new mini goal in 2024, groups playing football have been seen using the goals at one end and bags/jumpers at the other. Investigations were made into the cost of installing a second goal, which would be IRO £3000. Given the savings on capital budgets so far, and the success of the existing goal, members recognised the benefit a second goal would bring. It was therefore:

**RESOLVED:**

To proceed with the installation of a second mini goal at Sherwood Avenue Open Space, using vired funds remaining in the Spencer Meadow capital budget.

**637** **Spencer Meadow MUGA entry system**

The PACE Officer has been further researching the process of changing the current booking system for the MUGA’s, following the decision at the previous committee meeting to carry out further investigations. A report was circulated with further details of what this would include and discussions ensued. It was then:

**RESOLVED**

To formally note the report and discuss further at the next meeting.

**638 Padel Court request**

The Parish Council were approached by a representative of “One Padel”, a company that rents spaces for Padel courts, requesting that it considers the possibility of installing two Padel Courts at Spencer Meadow. Discussion ensued and it was established that more research and information are required before any decision could be reached on whether there is a need for a Padel facility in the parish, and if so, where it would be best situated. It was therefore:

**RESOLVED**

To create a working party of Councillors Lambert, Ahmed and Leonard, who will present a report to the Committee at the September meeting.

**639** **Graffiti Artwork to the Skate Ramp Update**

Following the decision at the last committee meeting to proceed with a full mural painting and co-design with local residents and involve the community in the painting, Parish Officers met with Mandy Johnson to arrange the timeline of the project. The timeline is as follows;

* Design workshop at Jersey Farm Community Centre was held on the 29th May
* Feedback on the proposed design was held on the 5th June at Jersey Farm Community Centre
* Painting of the ramp is scheduled to commence on Saturday 5th July (10am-4pm), and 12th July (10am-4pm).

Mandy has requested that painters book a slot on either 5th or 12th July, and information on how to book has been shared on our social media pages.

**640 External Funding of Spencer Meadow Pitch Improvements**

The Clerk is in correspondence with the Chair of Sandridge Rovers Football Club regarding potential external funding of specialist pitch maintenance over a six year period. The Committee agreed that any enhancements to the pitch are favorable, and agreed for the officers to proceed with supporting Sandridge Rovers with their grant application, assuming no further funding will be required from Sandridge Parish Council.

**641** **Duke of Edinburgh Park Ranger Scheme**

The following report was received from Councillor Adam Twidell in respect of the Duke of Edinburgh Park Ranger Scheme.

“Last year, as part of a trial initiative, we introduced a Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) volunteering opportunity focused on helping our teenage participants contribute to the upkeep and monitoring of our local play parks and open spaces. We were pleased to welcome eight volunteers at the start of the year and grateful for the enthusiasm and time they brought.

Over the course of the year, we found that only two participants remained consistently engaged. The project relied on the teenagers organising themselves to visit sites independently, and we have now learnt that this self-directed approach does not work well for this age group. Feedback suggests that young people respond better when provided with set times, locations, and supervised activities, rather than being left to structure the work themselves.

While the feedback gathered on the play areas was welcome, the Parish Council was not always in a position to act promptly on suggestions. This may have contributed to some volunteers feeling their efforts lacked immediate impact or recognition. In addition, for this type of project to be successful, it would require a dedicated adult volunteer to act as the DofE lead—providing guidance, maintaining momentum, and attending visits.

We believe it was a worthwhile and well-intentioned initiative and appreciate those who took part. However, we recommend that the project is not continued in its current form next year. That said, we remain open to revisiting the idea in the future—should a more structured and better-supported opportunity arise.”

The Committee discussed the initiative and agreed with Councillor Twidell’s recommendation.

It was therefore:

**RESOLVED**

To discontinue the DofE Park Ranger scheme, with a view to reintroducing it in the future when resources allow. It was recognised that more support needs to be made available to the participants to increase the likelihood of successful competition. Councillor Twidell was thanked by the Committee for his hard work and contribution to the scheme.

**642** **5 year plan**

Members reflected on the feedback received from Wheatfields Council’s questionnaires and Facebook, and discussion ensued regarding future installations in the parish playgrounds. It was noted that there are some ideas for new play equipment for the short-term future, however, alongside capital works each year, more budget is required for increasing maintenance costs. It was resolved to decide at the September meeting a figure for inclusion into the 2026/27 budget.

**643** **Matters of Note**

* The surface of the Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) in Sherwood Park adjacent to the tennis courts has been painted and has new, clear lines for basketball and football.
* A new graphic has been ordered to replace the current damaged one on the “Welcome to William Bell Open Space” sign.
* The annual play inspections have been completed, and the reports are due imminently.
* Two new duel recycling bins are due to be installed in Sherwood Park and Spencer Meadow. These will replace “landfill only” refuse bins and will be collected by John O’Conner and the recyclables taken by Veolia.
* Repair work has been carried out on the skate ramp ahead of the painting. Two Skatelite panels have been replaced, and new side panels have been installed.
* Two new basketball boards have been installed in Court 1 (tennis court) in Spencer Meadow.
* Two new football nets have been installed on the goal posts in Harness Way Open Space.

**644** **Any other business**

Councillor White requested that basketball nets be installed onto the three hoops in Sherwood Park. The PACE Officer will organise this, with funds from the General Playground Expenses budget.

**645 Matters Arising Since the Circulation of the Agenda**

There was none.

**646 Suggestions for Future Meetings**

* Further discussion on the 5 year plan
* Report from the Working Party researching the Padel court to be included into the September Committee meeting
* Budget planning for this Committee

**There being no further business the meeting concluded at 9.12pm.**

**Date of next meeting – 7:30pm Wednesday 17th September 2025 at Marshalswick Community Centre**

Chair …………………………………..

Date……………………………………..