

Great Waltham Parish Council

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Minutes of the meeting of the Recreation Committee held on Wednesday 12th July 2023 at the Pavilion, South Street, Great Waltham at 7.30pm.

1. Chair's Welcome.
Chair: Martin.
Cllrs. Jackson, Gilbert, Bradley, Palmer.
2. Apologies for Absence.
Cllr Jenkins.
3. Declarations of interests (existence and nature) regarding items on the agenda and to consider any dispensations required to transact the business on the agenda.
Cllrs Palmer, Jackson, and Bradley – Allotments.
4. Public Participation session with respect to items on the agenda or any items that they wish to bring to the Councils attention.
There were no members of the public in attendance.
5. Update on available plots on Brook Mead and Bury Lane.
Brook Mead x 2b, 2c, 2d, 1, 18A, 23.
Bury Lane x 2 (A/B/C), 3 (A), 5, 6, 7, 13.
The list is still current with no enquiries underway. It was noted that compared with previous years we have additional vacant plots. 5 or 6 plots need to be covered.

Resolution: New plot holders will uncover and the Council will store the covering.

Resolution: Recommendation to purchase more weed suppressant covering.

Resolution: Recommendation to purchase more metal hoops.
6. Report on Playground Inspections.
No additional issues have been raised. Reports are still a mix of hardcopy and softcopy but the recently purchased electronic system that operates with a tablet will in future ensure all inspections are recorded in one way. Training for the new process is underway.
7. Report from Allotments Supervisor.
Some issues with maintenance of the paths due to lawnmower issues were reported and it was confirmed that plot holders are responsible for cutting around their own plots.

Brookmead is already starting to re-grow from the recent cut back exercise. Bury does not look as bad but it was cut a couple of weeks after the Brook Mead plots.

Brookmead plot 9 – Issues with additional materials that are being kept off the plot. A deadline of 16th July had been proposed for the plot holder to move the items on to the plot.

Resolution: Clerk to write a letter to Plot holder of plot 9 both an electric copy and a hardcopy.
8. Updates on the Action Tracker - All.
9. Discuss the 2023 Annual Playground Inspection Reports for Great Waltham, Howe Street and Ford End, review the findings and agree proposals to improve routine maintenance. - Cllr Martin.

291 minor (Low/Very Low) defects were reported which is an improvement on previous years, probably as a result of improved maintenance and inspections. The Howe Street multi play replacement has since cleared 16 of these.

It was agreed that defects can be reduced further by a focus on preventative maintenance. It was also noted that several of the comments are advisory and relate to legislation changes via British Standards which are not retrospectively applicable.

A spreadsheet listing the defects has been created and will be used for clearance of these minor defects with allocation to different owners. Current issues will be added to the tracker as they are identified by the inspectors. Consideration will be given to focusing on one piece of equipment at a time to manage and clear the issues. The report will be kept live.

It was agreed that we need to make the areas look more inviting for user groups. Great Waltham currently looks cosmetically worse than the two other sites, mainly because of the aging wooden equipment.

Resolution: A process to be discussed and agreed.

10. Following the trial period, review the role of Playground Inspector and make any necessary amendments – deferred to the May meeting.

Cllr Palmer's certificate expires in September 2024. A discussion was held on the process of councilors carrying out the inspections which started as a trial. It was noted that the RPII certified course is expensive, especially with 3 certificate holders from the Parish Council. The benefit of freeing up the handypersons time was noted and it was agreed to consider expanding the role to other elected members so that a granular view of the equipment is spread through the Council. New software is coming online which will improve the inspection process.

Resolution: Cllr Palmer will discuss with Rospa an alternative training quote.

Resolution: The principle of 3 playground inspectors will continue.

11. Discuss the Great Waltham Recreation Ground play area project working group meeting planned for July 18th and agree objectives for the meeting.

Simon Carson from HAGS will run a meeting with the working group. The previous decision to move away from wood to more attractive modern units will be discussed along with funding options and the best routes to make the improvements.

After a site visit and discussions with stakeholders a 3D design will be created. There is a potential for a Community Trust Company to be created to undertake funding options across the spectrum of fund-giving bodies. All HAGS work will be free of charge but enables the possibility of a preferred supplier. Initial ideas included something similar to the Maldon area for a fully accessible area for scooters, bikes and skateboards which it was felt would be supported within the community. The potential may be for a 5-year plan with individual items being replaced each year. It was noted that young individuals may use equipment in a different way to how it's planned by adults.

12. Update on Pavilion maintenance work and storage container installation plans.

The magnolia walls were painted on Tuesday 11th July but have already been marked up by a user group. However, the new paint is washable and it is hoped the marks can be removed. The decorating materials are in stock and the white surfaces will be painted in two weeks' time.

The area for the container has been cleared by a local volunteer and the storage container is on order and will be delivered towards the end of the month. The green unit requested is in Southampton rather than London so additional costs were considered. It is anticipated the cost of providing power and lighting inside the container will cost around £80 in electrical parts using volunteer labour.

13. Review the installation of the replacement Multi Play unit at Howe Street Recreation Ground.

A volunteer working group was created with Cllr Jenkins, Palmer , Huggins, Jackson. Consultation took place via the Parish news – but no responses were received. 3 suppliers were approached for quotes as per financial regulations.

Installation via Premier Playgrounds of the HAGS unit took place over 3 weekends. The process of splitting the unit purchase from the installation has been successful on two occasions now so is accepted as the standard process.

The new unit was used thoroughly at the recent Howe Street annual big picnic. It was also noted that the see-saw was not really used. A write-up of the picnic and the new unit for the Parish News would be welcomed. The cost was around £20,000 and was in line with the budget agreed by the Parish Council.

14. Update on the path works at Ford End Recreation Ground.

Following the extension of the grant period by the EALC the quote for the path work from the gate entrance to the picnic area has been received from CAW and the works have been approved to proceed. The work will be undertaken before the end of August. The cost is £5,000 plus VAT.

The ECC Locality fund application has been approved for a seat to be installed at Ford End. A seat has been sourced from Glasdon and will be installed during the path works. The cost of the seat is £638. The committee is grateful for Cllr Steel's support for the application.

15. Confirm plans for autumn allotments open day.

Opens Days are seen as an opportunity to showcase the allotments. It was suggested it would take place around mid-September subject to the necessary grounds maintenance taking place.

16. Update on allotment maintenance role following the Parish Council decision to outsource the work.

An advertisement for the role has been placed in the Parish News. It is hoped that the role will be filled by mid-August.

Meeting Closed: 20.59
Will Adshead-Grant
Clerk to the Council.

Members – Gilbert, Martin, Jenkins, Palmer, Jackson, Bradley and one vacancy.