

BENSON PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Hall, Sunnyside, Benson, Wallingford. OX10 6LZ
Tel: 01491 825038 e-mail: bensonparish.council@virgin.net

Benson Parish Council Recreation and Lands Committee meeting held on Thursday 12th February 2015 at 7.30pm in the Committee Room

Present: Cllr D. Rushton (Chair of Recreation and Lands)
Cllr J Fowler Cllr E Leppard
Cllr D Olley Cllr P Peers
Cllr T Stevenson

Proper Officer: P Eldridge

There were no members of the public present.

Minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 13th November 2014 were approved at the Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 27th November 2014.

1. **Apologies.** Cllr T McTeague
2. **Declarations of Interest.** There were no declarations of interest.
3. **Public Session.** To allow members of the public to ask questions and address the Chairman. There were no members of the public present.
4. **Village Centre.**
 - a. Any issues:
 - i. Email from Griffith & Partners re parking across the driveway leading to the back of the estate agents. Cllr D Rushton noted that there was a white line parking restriction along the road in front of the driveway. However this is not an issue Benson Parish Council can resolve as they have no powers to enforce illegal parking.
Action: Clerk to inform Griffith & Partners that the issue should be reported to the Neighbourhood Policing Team and to follow up each additional incident with a further report.
 - ii. Cllr Rushton reported:
 - 1) That currently the Millstream toilet was being locked by councillors and the clerk on a 4 weekly rota. Clerk is in contact with 2 firms that may be able to provide an automatic lock.
 - 2) The proposed rose garden at the Millstream toilet would be cleared ready for planning when the Unpaid Work Team is allocated back to the village for work.
 - 3) The foliage covering the finger post sign to the Millstream car park and public toilets would be cleared as soon as possible.
 - 4) The technical and facilities manager at SODC has been emailed with a view to relining, including the moving of the disabled bay and dropping the kerb at the Millstream car park. Work to cover the grating to give better access to wheelchair users will be on a self-help basis.
 - b. Any maintenance issues. There were no maintenance issues.

5. **Rivermead.**

- a. To receive an update on Footpath No 8. Cllr Rushton reported that there had been no further progress on the work required on the path since he had been informed that it would be done as soon as the land was dry enough for the contractor to get on site.
- b. To receive an update on the installation of new gates along the Thames path at Benson Marina. Cllr Rushton had nothing to report.
- c. Any maintenance issues. Cllr Rushton explained that he had sourced 'Plaswood' to repair the broken seat in the Rivermead shelter. He continued that the materials cost £60 and initially carriage was £105. After further discussion with the retailer the cost of carriage was reduced to £50 by using a courier service. Cllr Rushton finished by informing members that the order of the materials had been placed. Cllr T Stevenson asked if the brickwork would be repaired. Cllr Rushton answered that currently no further damage had occurred. It was agreed that the clerk should monitor the situation.
- d. Any other issues. Cllr Rushton noted that we are still waiting for a response on the repair of the paddling pool.
Action: Clerk to ask Monson for an update.

6. **Allotments.**

- a. Allotment allocation update and report. Cllr Rushton reported that at her last report the RFO said that currently there are no unallocated allotments. He continued that the Halls Manager had agreed to take over allotment management.
- b. Any issues. It was noted that there is still a requirement for more compost at the St Helens allotments.
Action: Clerk to contact Agrivert and request compost replenishment.
- c. Any maintenance issues: There were no maintenance issues.

7. **Play Areas.**

- a. To note the refurbishment of play equipment in the St Helen's and Green Close play areas. Members noted the refurbishment.
- b. Any issues. In answer to a question Cllr Rushton noted that currently play area equipment was not included in the insurance, however there is liability cover. Cllr E Leppard noted that previous council policy was not to cover play equipment. Cllr Rushton said that he felt the most expensive items of play equipment should be covered and that it would cost £618 per year with a £250 excess.
- c. Any maintenance issues. There were no maintenance issues.

8. **Bertie West Field (BWF).**

- a. To note the meeting held between the parish clerk and a representative of the Benson scouts on the clearance of foliage and general maintenance of BWF. Clerk gave a brief report on the meeting with the scout's representative.
- b. To discuss the work requested by the scout representative at item 8.a.:
 - i. Trails cut to the corners of the field and a joined up trail around the large tree in the centre of the field. Clerk noted that trails could initially be cut with a 'brush cutter' and black thorn roots pulled using a root puller. Cllr T Stevenson noted that the external contractor would need a 'brush cutter certificate' to carry out the work,
Action: Clerk to arrange brush cutter course and certification.
Action: Clerk to purchase root puller.

ii. Clear a central area for the possible erection of a marquee to support a ‘Gang Show’ event. Members discussed the idea of a ‘Gang Show’ on BWF and agreed that it was an inappropriate location and that there are better facilities on Sunnyside field or at the youth hall for this type of event. It was agreed that should the scouts ask to run a ‘Gang Show’ event they should be offered alternative locations, possibly along with a small grant to cover additional expenses of hall hire etc.

iii. There was a discussion about camp fires events on BWF. There was a discussion on the range of activities considered acceptable, and it was agreed that traditional activities would be appropriate. It was agreed to monitor the arrangements and review after the summer.

iv. It was agreed that the existing Conditions of Use (dating from 1982) should be amended and submitted to Council as a new basis for use of the field.

Action: Cllr Rushton to draft BWF Conditions of Use and Circulate

Recommendation to full Council that the amended Conditions of Use be issued to Groups intending to use BWF.

c. Any issues. Cllr Peers gave a brief progress report on her continuing investigations into the legal issues with BWF noting that nothing could proceed until the legal issues are resolved. Cllr Rushton said that he would produce a update to the original conditions for the use of the BWF and circulate it around the members of the committee ready to bring to the next Benson parish council meeting for approval. It was agreed that Cllr Rushton draft an updated set of conditions.

d. Any maintenance issues. Cllr Rushton commented that the clerk was trying to get a quote for the removal of the large tyre on BWF and additionally would be draining the water out of the large water tank next to the school allotment.

9. Sunnyside.

a. To discuss the quote provided by Azalea Landscapes to carry out maintenance on the Sunnyside hedge along the Watlington Road adjacent to the Parish Hall car park. It was agreed to make a recommendation to full council for the work to be carried out as soon as possible and before the bird nesting season starts:

Recommendation to full council that the Azalea Landscapes be engaged to remove the elder trees in the hedge bordering Sunnyside car park adjacent to the Watlington Road and plant new hawthorn in the gaps at a cost not to exceed £830 + VAT.

b. Any other issues.

c. Any maintenance issues.

10. Millstream Public Conveniences and Store.

a. To receive a report on the installation of disabled access ramp, safety rail and moving of the Millstream car park disabled parking bay. Cllr Rushton noted that this had been dealt with at item 4.a.ii.4).

b. Any issues. There were no other issues.

c. Any maintenance issues. There were no maintenance issues.

11. General.

a. To note the progress with the pollarding of the Willow trees along the brook adjacent to the allotments and Cuckoo Pen. Cllr Stevenson noted that the work had been completed to a satisfactory standard. He continued that a section of wooden walkway had been damaged and this appeared to have been caused by the passage of a wood shredder. There was still some

work to be done to 'sheep fence' the surplus logs and it was planned to carry out this task with the Unpaid Work Team once they are available for work in Benson.

Action: Clerk to arrange the work with Unpaid Work Team coordinator.

b. To discuss a request from a parishioner that the whole of Aldridge Triangle grass be cut including the area set aside for wild life. A detailed debate followed:

i. Cllr Stevenson remarked that he did not understand the comment on the height of the wild life area impairing vision of the junction. He continued that it was the duty of public authorities to support biodiversity and Benson Parish Council should have a biodiversity policy. With regards to other locations the only other suitable location was the Millbrook Mead which was already used as a biodiversity site. Cllr Stevenson concluded that with perseverance the Aldridge Triangle site should improve over time.

ii. Cllr D Olley commented on the length of the trial period and that appeared to ongoing without any consultation with the residents around the triangle. He continued that the triangle should be maintained as a community area.

iii. Cllr Peers said she did not see a problem with the wild life area and areas like the one on the Aldridge Triangle are needed to encourage bees and butterflies and maintain preservation of nature.

iv. Cllr Olley noted that despite the area being left as a wild life area for several years it was still not fully established and not many wild flowers growing. Cllr J Fowler asked how long it will take for the area to mature. Cllr Stevenson answered up to 15 years. Cllr Fowler then asked how long the project had been going. Cllr Stevenson answered 3 years.

v. Cllr Fowler suggested that another possible area for a wild life area could be the strip of land off Green close adjacent to the Green Close play area.

vi. Cllr Rushton noted that the opinion of the committee members appeared to be in the majority of keeping the Aldridge Triangle area as a biodiversity site.

vii. Cllr Stevenson reiterated his earlier statement of the Benson parish council's public duty to support biodiversity and the requirement for a policy.

viii. Cllr Rushton concluded the debate by stating that as the keeping of an area off the Aldridge Triangle as a wild life area was not unanimous an article should be drafted for the Benson Bulletin asking parishioners for their views on the biodiversity site on and for suggestions for other sites around the parish.

Action: Cllr Rushton to prepare an article for Benson Bulletin and for R&L to review the trial in the light of the responses.

c. To receive an update on the installation of a set of brown 'Tourist Signs' pointing to Benson village facilities from the A4074. Cllr Rushton showed final design of the new signs received from the OCC Senior Traffic Technician.

Action: Clerk to process payment to OCC Highways.

12. **Items to Note.**

a. Cllr E Leppard noted that she had been informed of an issue with parking along St Helen's Way. Also that a tree had been planted in Castle Close that was cramping parking for a neighbour. Both issues had been passed to Cllr M Gray.

b. Cllr E Leppard noted that she had been informed of an issue where Hollyhocks were growing over the footpath along the back of Littleworth Road.

Action: Cllr Rushton to investigate overgrown Hollyhocks on Littleworth Road Footpath.

c. Cllr P Peers asked what progress there was with the replacement bins around the village. Cllr Rushton said the new SODC bins were being processed and the Benson Parish Council Bins order is being processed.

d. Cllr Rushton noted that the County Transport Plan had been passed to the Transport Advisory Group (TAG for review).

13. **To consider any other items brought to the meeting:** No other items were brought to the meeting.

14. **Date and location of next meeting:** Thursday 9th April 2015.



Peter Eldridge
Parish Clerk
18th February 2015

Annex A
Actions for Receptions and Land Meeting as at 12th February 2015

Serial No	Action	Assigned To
1.	Investigate condition of Play Area dog fouling signs and replace as necessary. Review locations for new metal dog fouling signs <i>New signs to be fitted. Item closed</i>	Clerk Parish Staff
2.	Purchase Flat Hose and Trolley. <i>Requirement cancelled. Item closed.</i>	Clerk
3.	Inspect pavement kerbs for height at The Cedars, report excessively high kerbs to OCC Highways. <i>Item closed.</i>	Clerk
4.	Clerk to get quotes for signs and posts for BWF. R&L Minutes dated 23rd May 2013 (9.c.i). <i>In progress.</i>	Clerk
5.	Clerk to get quotes for gates and posts R&L Minutes dated 23rd May 2013 (9.c.ii). <i>In progress.</i>	Clerk
6.	Clerk to contact the owner of the owners of Willow Tree overhanging board walk to remind them that work is required on tree, R & L Minutes dated 20th June 2013 (7.b.ii). <i>In progress.</i>	Clerk
7.	Produce an agreement for users of the Collage Farm Electric Socket. R & L Minutes dated 18 th July 2013 (4.a.). <i>In progress.</i>	Clerk
8.	Create a notice to parish hall hirers requesting that they do not use play areas. R & L Minutes dated 17 th October 2013 (7.a.). <i>Item cancelled. Item closed.</i>	Clerk Halls Manager
9.	Clerk to write to the Millstream centre. R & L Minutes dated 20 th February 2014 (5.b.). <i>Item out of date. Item closed.</i>	Clerk
10.	Clerk to report cracked manhole cover at scout hut to Thames Water. R & L Minutes dated 20 th February 2014 (8.b.i.). <i>In progress</i>	Clerk
11.	Clerk to write to St Helens Avenue resident about gate installed on fence adjacent to St Helens Avenue play area. R & L Minutes dated 20 th March 2014 (7.b.iii.). <i>Resident contacted. Item closed..</i>	Clerk
12.	Clerk to inspect signs at Chapel House and Crown lane. R & L Minutes dated 20 th March 2014 (12.a). <i>Inspection complete. Item closed</i>	Clerk

13. Clerk to write to B&DAS. R & L Minutes dated 17th April 2014 (5.a). **Clerk**
Contact made with B&DAS. Item closed.
14. Cllr Stevenson to identify location of tree and write letter of thanks. **Cllr T Stevenson**
R & L Minutes dated 17th April 2014 (12a.).
Item closed.
15. Clerk to write to the manager of the Co-op about the obstruction caused by ‘A Boards’ placed outside the store. Minutes dated 19th June 2014 (4.b.ii.). **Clerk**
Item closed.
16. Clerk to arrange for quotes for refurbishment of the shelter and look into the possibility of using recycled material planks for seating.. **Clerk**
Minutes dated 19th June 2014 (5.b.i.).
Plaswood ordered. Item closed.
17. Clerk to arrange for the repair of the fence and the reinstatement hedge at St Helens Way. Minutes dated 19th June 2014 (6.a.). **Clerk**
Work complete. Item closed.
18. Cllrs Rushton and Peers to liaise on the application for a grant on the Sunnyside Sign. Minutes dated 19th June 2014 (12.b.). **Cllr D Rushton**
Cllr P Peers
Item closed.
19. Cllr Rushton to discuss school allotment with head teacher. Minutes dated 11th September 2014 (8.b.). **Cllr Rushton**
Discussion held. Item closed.
20. Clerk to replace BWF entrance sign. Minutes dated 11th September 2014 (8.c.). **Clerk**
Sign replaced. Item closed.
21. Clerk to discuss use of the playing areas with Benson United officials. Minutes dated 11th September 2014 (9.c.i.). **Clerk**
Discussion held. Item closed.
22. Clerk to arrange to clear foliage from sign. Minutes dated 13th November 2014 (4.a.). **Clerk**
In progress.
23. Cllr Rushton and clerk to investigate seating materials for the Rivermead shelter. Minutes dated 13th November 2014 (5.c.). **Cllr D Rushton**
Clerk
Seating purchased. Item closed.
24. Clerk to investigate the installation of an automatic timer lock and set up a roster for the manual locking of the toilets. Minutes dated 13th November 2014 (10.b.). **Clerk**
In progress.
25. Clerk to get a quote for the hedge to be reduced to around 5 feet high. Minutes dated 13th November 2014 (12.a.). **Clerk**
Quote obtained. Item closed.

26. Clerk to inform Griffith & Partners that the issue should be reported to the Neighbourhood Policing Team and to follow up each additional incident with a further report. Minutes dated 12th February 2015 (4.a.i.). **Clerk**
Griffith & Partners informed. Item closed.
27. Clerk to ask Monson for an update on quotes for the swimming pool. Minutes dated 12th February 2015 (5.d.). **Clerk**
Monson contacted. Item closed.
28. Clerk to contact Agrivert and request compost replenishment. Minutes dated 12th February 2015 (6.b.). **Clerk**
Agrivert asked for resupply. Item closed.
29. Clerk to arrange brush cutter course and certification. Minutes dated 12th February 2015 (8.b.i.). **Clerk**
In progress.
30. Clerk to purchase root puller. Minutes dated 12th February 2015 (8.b.i.). **Clerk**
In progress.
31. Clerk to arrange the work with Unpaid Work Team coordinator. Minutes dated 12th February 2015 (11.a.). **Clerk**
In progress.
32. Cllr Rushton to prepare an article for Benson Bulletin and for R&L to review the trial in the light of the responses. Minutes dated 12th February 2015 (11.b.viii.). **Cllr D Rushton**
In progress.
33. Clerk to process payment to OCC Highways. Minutes dated 12th February 2015 (11.c.). **Clerk**
Payment Processed. Item closed.
34. Cllr Rushton to investigate overgrown Hollyhocks on Littleworth Road Footpath. Minutes dated 12th February 2015 (11.c.). **Cllr D Rushton**
Investigation complete no issue found. Item closed.