

## BENSON PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Hall, Sunnyside, Benson, Wallingford. OX10 6LZ

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### Benson Parish Council Recreation and Lands Committee meeting to be held on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> August 2017 at 7:30PM in the Committee Room

**Present:** Cllr P Baylis (CPB) (Chair) Cllr J Fowler (CJF)  
Cllr P Murray (CPM) Cllr D Olley (CDO)  
Cllr T Stevenson (CTS)

**Proper Officer:** D Brooks (CLK)

#### MINUTES

1. **Apologies.** Cllr S McCann (CSM), Cllr P Peers (CPP),
2. **Declarations of Interest.** – There were no declarations of interest
3. **Public Session.** There were no members of the public present
4. **Village Centre**
  - a. *“Improving the state of Benson Village – John Sharman”*

Prior to the meeting Mr John Sharman met with Councillors to explain his concept of a small group of volunteers working together to tidy up the village. He would envisage asking others to specify tasks and would plan an activity, on a regular basis, about once a month. He has set aside the first date as Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> September from 10-1pm. The focus on this day will be to smarten up Bob’s Corner. Mr Sharman will produce some leaflets and advertise the events in the Benson Bulletin. The Parish Council will provide existing equipment and resources plus high vis jackets for the volunteers if required.
  - b. There were no other maintenance issues.
5. **Rivermead:**
  - a. Cllr Baylis reported that unfortunately a lady fell at the entrance to Rivermead causing her substantial injury. Some signs were immediately erected stating that the path was uneven and advising members of the public to enter via the gate further along. Various suggestions were discussed on how the entrance could be improved. Action: Clerk to approach 3 contractors to obtain advice and quotes for the work. **CLK**
  - b. A request has been received to place a memorial bench at Rivermead and pay for the bench and its installation. All agreed the most appropriate action will be to replace the bench currently under the willow tree which is in a poor state. Clerk to liaise with the resident to source the bench and oversee the installation. **CLK**
  - c. CTS reminded the committee that the willows will need trimming later in the autumn.
6. **Allotments.**
  - a. There is still a waiting list for allotments.
  - b. The skip at St Helen’s allotments needs to be removed. **Action:** Clerk to remind Grundon again **CLK**
7. **Play Areas:**
  - a. No dates have yet been received for the site inspections for the new play equipment

CLK

- b. Wicksteed have been in contact with the clerk regarding the refurbishment of Sunnyside but no date has yet been confirmed.
- c. The latest play area inspection report from Cllr Fowler highlighted some cracks in the wet pour tiles at Green Close. The annual play area inspection has been ordered so any work needed will be contained in the formal report.  
(Cllr McCann is due to complete the play inspection for August).
- d. The end of the low wall in the Green Close play area has collapsed. The clerk has engaged Ernie Crockett to do the necessary repair work.

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

- a. Heritage Tree Services have provided a comprehensive report and risk assessment on the willow tree at Bertie West Field. (Clerk to circulate report and quote). Work needs to be completed on the willow prior to the start of the Forest School.

Recommendation to Council:

**Recommendation that Benson Parish Council spends no more than £645 + VAT on important remedial works to the large willow on Bertie West Field per the report and quote from Heritage Tree Services dated 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2017.**

- b. The fence and gate at the entrance have now been replaced. CDO suggested that the gate should be called Reg Blizzard's Gate, at least informally, since it was donated by him!

9. **Sunnyside.**

- a. There is no update on the infill trees; this work will take place in the autumn.
- b. The 2 recycled plastic benches to replace those lost by the kicking wall and at the entrance to Hale Road have now been sourced and costed out.

Recommendation to Council:

**Recommendation that Benson Parish Council spends no more than £1200 + VAT on replacing the two benches (including fixtures and fittings) already removed from Sunnyside; one by the kicking wall and one by the entrance to Hale Road.**

- c. There were no other maintenance issues.

10. **Benson War Memorial.**

- a. Correspondence has been received, from the War Memorials Trust, confirming the successful award of a grant of up to £920 for work to the Benson War Memorial.
- b. To receive an update on registration of War Memorial with InMemoriam. Deferred to next meeting
- c. There have been no volunteers to maintain the war memorial garden. Next steps are to approach the RAF and to keep Mr Sharman's volunteers in mind as a standby.

CLK

Cllr Olley expressed concerns about the size of the lettering on the plaque at the cemetery gate and wondered if it could be replaced?

11. **Benson Brook.**

- a. A further 10m of the boardwalk has been replaced; there are two more sections in need of replacement/repair. These will be done as soon as possible, in the meantime, the boardwalk should be monitored and any urgent repairs needed,

- reported. ALL
- b. Some hogweed has been missed in the last treatment. **Action:** clerk to contact company involved. CLK
12. **General.**
- a. Two more complaints about parking have been received; one concerning overnight parking of HGVs in St Helens Avenue and the other parking along the narrow slip road by Rivermead and blocking entrances to property. Unfortunately, the Parish Council has no powers with regard to parking and can only refer to Oxfordshire Highways. It was decided after lengthy discussion, a polite approach to the hauliers concerned may be effective. CLK
- b. Green spaces in new developments – this was discussed by the Finance Committee and agreed that the preferred option would be to transfer maintenance of new green spaces and play areas to the Parish council with a 15-year maintenance agreement. However, each situation would be treated on a case by case basis. CLK
- c. Kissing gates – no progress
- d. CTS reported no further ragwort in sight.
- e. An extra litter bin has been purchased for Rivermead and SODC are to add an extra waste collection at the Weir end footpath.
- f. Chain-link fence – the chair and clerk are to organise a site visit to agree the best solution. CLK/CPB
- g. Anti-dog fouling measures – it had been decided to concentrate on Sunnyside and one sign had already been erected. CJF expressed some concern over a proliferation of signs around the village and requested that it be kept in check; preferring the continued use of the pink spray.
- h. Natural Management Signs (i.e. explanatory information at Aldridge Triangle, Millbrook Mead (boardwalk), etc) **Action:** CTS to explore possible types of sign and the costs. CTS
- i. *“Buglife – action on pollinators in the Parish”* – deferred until spring.
- j. The current grass - cutting schedule as agreed in principle, however, CSM and the clerk are to discuss possible extra cuts which may be requested by Benson Football Club. CSM/CLK
- k. There were no other issues.
13. **Any Other Items to Note or for the Next Agenda**
- a. CDO brought up the problem of outdated advertising signs which are still on display. Cllrs were reminded that there is a policy that out of date signs may be removed and returned to their owners or destroyed, as appropriate. CLK
14. **Date of Next Meeting.** 14<sup>th</sup> September 2017

Dianne Brooks, Parish Clerk  
18<sup>th</sup> August 2017