



Benson Parish Council
Benson Parish Hall, Sunnyside, Benson, Wallingford. OX10 6LZ
Tel: 01491 825038 e-mail: clerk@bensonpc.org.uk

Recreation & Lands Committee

Membership:
Councillor Patricia Baylis (Chair), Councillor Robert Castelow-Sturges, Councillor Gavin McLauchlan,
Councillor Philip Murray, Councillor Roger Moore and Councillor Tom Stevenson.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BENSON PARISH COUNCIL RECREATION AND LANDS COMMITTEE HELD IN THE PARISH HALL ON THURSDAY 14th NOVEMBER 2024 AT 7.00PM

Present: Cllr Patricia Baylis (Chair), Cllr Gavin McLauchlan and Cllr Tom Stevenson

Nicola Copland – Clerk
Helen Spicer – Benson Tennis Club

Layla Johnston
20th November 2024

1. Apologies and absences.

Councillors Castelow-Sturges, Murray and Moore were absent.

2. Declarations of interest

None declared.

3. Public session

One member of the public attended to talk about item 16.

4. Minutes of the last meeting

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting of the Recreation and Lands Committee held on Thursday 12th September 2024 and sign as a true record of the meeting.

Item 16 was brought forward - Discuss tree pruning adjacent to the tennis courts

Helen Spicer attended and wanted to pursue the situation with the tree roots which she thought were obviously the cause of the disruption to the court surface. Cllr Baylis said the Council had sought an opinion from a tree consultancy, Sylva who were not of the opinion that the roots were the cause. It was suggested that the Tennis Club were given a copy of the Sylva report and could take it forward with them. The trees have TPOs on them so BPC would have to get permission to cut them down. Cllr Stevenson suggested that some of the lower branches could be removed but this would probably not solve the problem of the leaves on the Court due to the prevailing wind coming from the trees across the court. Helen said there was a medium term plan to replace the courts in the next 5 years.

Action – email the Sylva report and their contact details to Helen Spicer.

5. Actions from the last meeting.

Paving around Millstream – still trying to get another quote

Oxfordshire Together – awaiting reply

Bins – SODC have been informed of the new bins needed outside Co-op, Hale Rd and Rivermead. Awaiting reply. Query does BPC have to pay for them and also bin needed by the weir.

Grass cutting – Agreed at FC to extend

Pocket Patch - waiting for management plan



Benson Parish Council

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

Tel: 01491 825038 e-mail: clerk@bensonpc.org.uk

Recreation & Lands Committee

Membership:

Councillor Patricia Baylis (Chair), Councillor Robert Castelow-Sturges, Councillor Gavin McLauchlan, Councillor Philip Murray, Councillor Roger Moore and Councillor Tom Stevenson.

Skate Park – Quote for repair £400 and maintenance quote of £750 per day. Clerk waiting to hear about 10 year warranty.

Rivermead – WG reinstated. Cllr Baylis meeting Sarah Singleton to discuss professional help.

Awaiting quote for tree spilling.

History leaflet – c/f

Cuckoo Pen – redoing grant application. Tree pollarding completed. Possible further trees needing work.

The Cedars – getting professional advice. Have approached 2 companies.

Allotments – RFO advised that new accounting system will renumber plots. Query could there be a QR code with information about the allotment plots. **Action** B/f for a future discussion.

Hedging at St Helen's allotments – trees being delivered on 10th Feb and ready for planting 11th February 2025.

St Helens play area – zip wire mended. Awaiting paint for the equipment. **Action** - Fencing around the play area to be put on next agenda

Support for Basketball hoop on FB. Clerk and Cllr Stevenson had visited site and decided it should be turned around so play is away from allotments. Staff would be able to install the hoop.

Action – Clerk to research using the hoop at the Youth Hall. If we have to purchase – need a quote.

Aldridge Triangle – **Action** - benches b/f for next meeting (space for new bench). Tree canopy lift – Benson Tree Services or Jonny to do under supervision from Cllr Stevenson.

Towbar fitted on van. Still keen to get a trailer as it would be useful for transporting the reciprocating mower down at Warwick Spinney. There is money in next year's budget for a trailer. Storage of trailer is an issue.

Bike stations – deferred until mobility hub decision

Saltex – Darren and Ady attended

7. Skate Park

a. Update – maintenance as item 5,

b. Any issues

8. Rivermead.

a. Refurbishment project. – Meeting with Sarah Singleton on Tuesday 19th November.

b. Any issues

9. Allotments

a. Report from Allotments Manager. **Action** - Cllr Murray's form to be used for the allotment report. Getting skip to clear an allotment

b. To receive an update on the Allotment Association. – the letter was sent out but very few extra responses (in total 26 responses). As the response is mixed - suggested setting up an allotment Facebook group in the first instance and see where it leads. BPC FB can follow the allotment group page. **Action** – Cllr McLauchlan to set up the FB group.

c. Discuss the pruning of the oak tree at the Mill Lane site **Action** - agreed to cut down anything below head height. This can be done by the staff. The Hazel can be coppiced at the same time.

d. Discuss the installation of a water meter at St Helen's allotments.

Water meter needed to allow BPC to charge for water use at the Paddock. Original quote was for £1,500 to split supply between Cuckoo Pen and paddock but need to research alternatives?

Action – Clerk to research further and get quote. Cllr McLauchlan to take a photograph of his water meter for comparison. Consult with RFO.



Benson Parish Council

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

Tel: 01491 825038 e-mail: clerk@bensonpc.org.uk

Recreation & Lands Committee

Membership:

Councillor Patricia Baylis (Chair), Councillor Robert Castelow-Sturges, Councillor Gavin McLauchlan, Councillor Philip Murray, Councillor Roger Moore and Councillor Tom Stevenson.

- e. Update on possible bore holes – deferred
- f. Any other issues. – Chicken coups – must be moved to the tenants own plot. Allotment manager to speak to plot owner with two small, raised beds in the middle as neighbouring plot holders are not happy. Hedging at allotments – **Action** – to be communicated to village by Comms Officer ahead of the February planting.

10. Sunnyside

- a. Discuss a parishioner's letter regarding the overflow car park fencing – Clerk has talked to the parishioner and explained that the fence was not right by the edge and he appeared to be happy.
- b. Discuss complaints regarding the blue paint used by the Football Club – The Football Club only use the blue paint on Saturday mornings on match days. Furthermore, the paint is not toxic and is water soluble. **Action** – Ask the Football Club to put an announcement out on the Community Facebook to warn dog walkers and explain..
- c. Any other issues. Noted that some parts of the hedge along Watlington Road or into Hale Road have not been cut. **Action** – Clerk to speak to Jonny.

11. Play Areas

- a. Discuss the recent quote for the repairs to the swings at St Helen's Park – the grounds man has managed to fix 2 of the swings but it was felt that the cost of repairing the other swings was very high. **Action** – awaiting an up-to-date inspection report. In the meantime the swings need to be inspected and taken down if they are found to be dangerous by removing the chains and seats. Clerk to find the last inspection report. Check if frame is re-usable and look to possible replacement.
- b. Update on the hedging at St Helen's play area - mid February.
- c. Discuss planting at the Sunnyside Play Area – **Action** Committee agreed with the list of plants suggested by Imogen. Cllr Baylis would ask if she could produce a planting scheme.
- d. Any other issues. None

12. Waste and bins.

- a. Update – as discussed. Deferred.

13. General items.

- a. Discuss placing stones on the edge of the Aldridge Triangle to prevent damage – suggested getting some rocks from the stone worker, Martin Cook and placing them along the edge of the Aldridge Triangle. **Action** – It was agreed to take the following recommendation to Full Council **Recommendation to Full Council that as part of the installation of the Aldridge Triangle sundial, appropriate sized rocks are placed along the edge to prevent damage and parking**
- b. Update on the War Memorial – Planning permission has been applied for the dropped kerb and funding is in place. **Action** – Clerk to check progress with Cllr Pattison and contact OCC for update.
- c. Discuss the fence around the Millbrook Mead walkway – the fence around the viewing platform has not been re-installed. **Action** - Agreed this should be done and obtain quotes. Ask Maydencroft to quote. Cllr Baylis will meet a member of staff to talk through.

14. Cuckoo Pen

- a. Update – had to delay the grant application because allotments excluded. Cllr Baylis meeting RFO to discuss further.



Benson Parish Council

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

Tel: 01491 825038 e-mail: clerk@bensonpc.org.uk

Recreation & Lands Committee

Membership:

Councillor Patricia Baylis (Chair), Councillor Robert Castelow-Sturges, Councillor Gavin McLauchlan, Councillor Philip Murray, Councillor Roger Moore and Councillor Tom Stevenson.

b. Discuss possible allotments at the site - will not be able to get grant funding for allotments as they are considered a commercial enterprise. Either the Council takes on the cost or consider something else for the site. Possible put fruit trees in middle and allotments at the end. Requires more thought. Suggesting opening up to the brook. Apply for grant to clear larger area and cut out smaller area. Take back to Green Spaces WG.
Cllr McLauchlan to go back to OCC to tell them we will not be able to take the trees unless they can be stored.

15. Warwick Spinney

a. Discuss a possible crossing.
Cala unlikely to fund it. New landowner will probably not give permission as would not allow a permissive path on the land. **Action** - Defer to next meeting as Cllr Murray has the latest information on this.

16. Tennis Courts.

a. Discuss tree pruning adjacent to the courts – discussed earlier.

17. Items for Councillors to note or for the next agenda.

No items to note

18. Any other business.

Date of next meeting.

Thursday 9th January 2025