

## **HARTING PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the meeting of **Play and Open Spaces Advisory Committee (POSAC)** held at **7.30 pm** in the **Congregational Church Hall, South Harting** on **Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2019**

**Present:** Mr Shaxson (Chairman) (AS) Mr Stuttaford (HS), Mrs Dawson (SD), Mr Bonner (TB), Mr Gladwyn (BG), Mrs Bramley (SB), Mr Claydon (JC) and Mrs Gammon (DG).

In attendance: Mrs Walker (Parish Clerk) (TW).

There were no members of the public in attendance

**1. Apologies for absence:** Mr Palmer

**2. Declarations of interest:** None.

**3. Minutes from Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2018**

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

**4. Updates on POSAC matters**

### **4.1. Tree work in South Gardens and The Warren**

AS outlined the work undertaken by the Tree Working Group (TWG). All trees, on the Council owned land, that were identified as unsafe in the two tree surveys have now been felled or lopped. A further survey will be required in summer 2019 and a continued assessment of the Ash Dieback situation will be required to ensure the Council satisfies the public liability insurance cover. It was noted that TW is sourcing the two trees to replace the felled Horse Chestnuts were being progressed.

AS suggested that the TWG continues until the next Council elections in May 2019, at this time POSAC should take responsibility for the tree works.

### **4.2. Purchase of Furze Meadow**

AS gave an update on the purchase of the Play Area at Furze Meadow in Nyewood. Hyde Housing had agreed to sell the area to the Council for the sum of £1 subject to a number of conditions. The sale was then put on hold by Hyde as they were taking an audit of all the land that had been transferred from CDC to identify potential housing sites. This audit was due to have been completed at the end of December, but it is now believed to be January 2019.

It is hoped that the sale will be able to progress once this has been completed as the area at Furze Meadow is registered as an Open Space.

### **4.3. Play equipment replacement and maintenance**

At the December meeting the Council agreed to replace the slide in South Gardens and to carry out the necessary repairs to the play equipment that were outlined in the 2018 Play Equipment Inspection.

This work will be delayed until later in the year to ensure the ground conditions are right.

## **5. Outstanding Issues**

### **5.1. Dredging of the ponds**

Following the previous POSAC meeting AS and HS had spoken to the contractor, Johnny Glover, about the method of improving the middle pond by moving the spoil behind barriers. However, this method would be too expensive, and the size of the pond would be dramatically reduced. It is also unlikely that Natural England would agree to this work.

Johnny Glover had also suggested reducing the size of the northern pond, but this would be difficult as the pond is full of leaf litter and decaying wood. There was also some concern whether one of the sluice boards had been removed, hence the lower level of the pond.

The main problem affecting any pond work is the movement of the spoil, and without any local farmers agreeing to take it on their fields, the cost is too high.

JC has been removing some of the crayfish from the middle pond, but believes there are still more.

AS referred to the recent Ecology report, which had been commissioned by the Woodland Trust, as it implies that carp are not very good for the ecological system of the pond. The report will be circulated not only to Councillors but also non-Council members of POSAC

It was felt that a Working Party could clear some of the weeds and vegetation from the pond.

The members agreed to think about the options for the ponds and to bring suggestions to the next POSAC meeting for further discussion.

### **5.2. Safety equipment for the ponds.**

TW had investigated possible options for the provision of safety equipment for the two ponds in South Gardens. The life belt that previously hung on the pole by the northern pond has constantly been thrown into the pond and is very difficult to retrieve.

Research shows that life belts and ropes encased in a holder are less likely to attract the attention of vandals. The suggestion was to purchase a life belt case containing a left belt and 30 metre throw rope, and that this should be attached to a metal pole concreted in the ground at some point between the middle and northern pond. The life belt and rope are not fixed to the casing so can be removed and thrown to anyone in need.

There will still be a risk that the equipment will attract the attention of vandals, but this is less likely if the casing is used.

It was suggested that a notice should be displayed on the life belt giving the location of the defibrillator.

*The following recommendation was agreed:*

*that the Committee agree to recommend that the Council should agree to the purchase and installation of a Lifebuoy Housing unit containing a 600mm life belt and a 30 metre throw line with the cost not exceeding £350.*

### 5.3. South Gardens Sign

The detail required on South Gardens sign was discussed and it was suggested that perhaps there should be two signs:

- one saying "South Gardens" which might perhaps be a wood carving provided by a local resident
- the second would be more generic and would have symbols or pictures to demonstrate the "do's and don'ts"

It was suggested that members should take note of signs when they are visiting other sites and perhaps take a photo for reference.

Action point: SD to ask Jane Simmonds if she might be willing to carve a sign.

TW to check signage adverts in the Local Council publications.

### 6. Getting POSAC up and running again

AS outlined that POSAC has responsibility for tasks that need to be carried out as a result of procedure and insurance requirements, and those which need be carried out by sub committees and working parties to tackle one off projects or periodic maintenance tasks.

TB checks the play equipment in South Gardens on a weekly basis.

It is important that POSAC is active and keeps the momentum to improve the area in The Warren and South Gardens. It was agreed that one of the first projects could be to have a Saturday morning working party to clear the area around the ponds, this will take place on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2019 at 9.30am in South Gardens. Notices will be put up at the entrance to South Gardens and in the village shop asking for volunteers.

Action point: SD to create draft notice, TW to check it

TW to draw up risk assessment

*The following recommendation was agreed:*

*that the Committee agree to recommend that the Council:*

- note that a Working Party will take place, to clear the area around the northern pond in South Gardens, on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2019 at 9.30am.*

### 7. Fences and gates

AS reported that most of the timber recently cut by contractors was removed by individuals, without the Council's permission, in late autumn. It was suggested that this situation might be avoided in the future by improving the barrier at the southern entrance to The Warren, and by creating a barrier using 2 concrete posts and a linking metal bar with some banking on either side at the eastern entrance opposite the road junction.

The boundary of the Council's land on the western side also needs to be marked with a series of concrete markers.

*The following recommendation was made:*

*To requests quotes, to be considered at the next POSAC meeting and thereby enable a proposal to the March Council meeting, for the work to mark the western boundary and to secure the entrances to The Warren by installing barriers.*

**8. Long-term maintenance and tree felling**

An ecology report, commissioned on behalf of the Parish Council by the Woodland Trust, had recently been received and had some very useful information about the future management of The Warren and, to a lesser extent, South Gardens.

The Council has a 5 year felling licence which enables the a 30% thinning of the trees in The Warren. This needs to be considered as an option, particularly with the amount of ash die back which is evident in the area.

It was agreed that the long term situation should be discussed in greater detail at the next POSAC meeting.

It was noted that the tree wardens were still happy to carry out their duties, but these need to be formalised. TW will meet with them to organise the necessary risk assessments are completed, and to agree which area of The Warren each of them might cover.

**9. Date of next meeting**

Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2019 at 7.30pm in the Congregational Church Hall