

BLOXHAM PARISH COUNCIL – ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT BLOXHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL, BLOXHAM ON THURSDAY 18 OCTOBER 2018 AT 7.30PM

PRESENT: Chairman, Nick Rayner, Vice-Chairman, Councillor Steve Craggs; Councillors David Bunn and Gloria Lester-Stevens.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE (non-voting): Patricia Hopkins, Warden at The Slade Marie Jones, Des Jones, Footpath Warden and Theresa Goss (Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer).

APOLOGIES: Parish Councillor Mary Groves submitted her apologies because she had another appointment, the apology was accepted and the absence authorised.

Parish Councillor Stephen Phipps also submitted his apologies.

16/18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – There were no declarations of interest.

Members were reminded that advice on declarations of interest should be sought from the Clerk prior to the meeting, as advice could not be given to Councillors at Committee meetings.

17/18 MINUTES - The minutes of the meetings held on 7 June 2018 were taken as read and duly adopted.

Resolved that the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman.

18/18 MATTERS ARISING – There were no matters arising.

19/18 TERMS OF REFERENCE – Prior to the meeting, the terms of reference had been circulated to the Committee. The Committee felt that a significant update was required to the Term of Reference and that they should be updated by the Clerk and Chairman of the Committee.

Recommended that the Terms of Reference for 2018/2019 be re-drafted by the Clerk and the Chairman of the Committee and circulated to the Committee for comments. **Action TG**

20/18 EMERGENCY PLANNING - The Committee discussed the issue of Emergency Planning for the village, however it was felt this was a wider project which needed to be discussed by the Parish Council as a whole, possibly setting up a small Working Group, involving members of the community.

The Clerk reported that she had loaded onto the Parish Council web site, the Emergency Planning leaflets and the Boys Brigade had agreed to deliver any leaflets the Parish Council wished to circulate.

Recommended that:

- 1) the Parish Council appoints a Working Group, including members of the community to investigate Emergency Planning for the village; and

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- 2) Councillor Steve Craggs to make initial investigations into Emergency Planning and report his findings to the Parish Council/Working Group. **Action SC**

21/18 THE SLADE – Marie Jones, Warden at The Slade, attended the meeting and reported that since the last meeting of the Committee on 7 June 2018, there had been five work parties during which the following tasks had been completed:

- Cleared vegetation from all pathways and boardwalks.
- Litter collection.
- Preparation for opening event.
- Meadow cut family event.
- Installed six bird and six bat boxes.
- Surveyed bird and bat boxes.

Other Activities – There had been two instances of teenagers having a fire at The Slade, were reported over the summer. There was an opportunity to educate the local villagers on some environmental issues such as wild fires, dog fouling, dogs worrying livestock etc. etc.

The grand opening event went smoothly and was well attended. Thanks was passed to all volunteers who helped out before, during and after the event. The children's activities went particularly well thanks to our expert volunteers.

2018 Planning - The next two work parties would be held on 4 November and 2 December 2018.

Marie would like to support the Bloxham Scout Group in a new event on 2 December 2018 "Santa at The Slade". Marie had already publicised this because she needed to meet the deadline for the Broadsheet. The event would involve a fairy-light lit walk through The Slade with a visit to Santa at the end. The Scouts would be running a BBQ and selling hot chocolate to raise money for their funds.

Marie would like to start up a Facebook page to publicise the work at the Slade and also set up a Youth Group within the village that would be based at The Slade.

Future suggested expenditure was a camera trap at £500, scything training at £200 and small mammal trapping equipment at £700.

Marie was thanked for all her work at The Slade.

Recommended that:

- 1) the report be noted;
- 2) before expenditure for a camera be approved, investigations be made into borrowing a camera for tracking wildlife at night; **Action MJ**
- 3) a new youth group, 'Wild about Bloxham' be set up in conjunction with Warrier School, the Parish Council and the community; **Action MJ**

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- 4) a Facebook page and web site/web page be set up to publicise the Group; and **Action MJ**
- 5) a schedule of future expenditure and plans for 2019 be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee. **Action MJ**

22/18 FOOTPATHS IN BLOXHAM – Des Jones, Footpath Warden attended the meeting and discussed publishing a leaflet regarding the locations of all of the public rights of way in the village, whether the footpaths from The Ridgeway to Warriner School and the 'Coffin Walk' from the Pest House in the Slade to St Mary's Church, should be included in the Circular Walk and how to keep the public rights of way clear from overgrowing trees, hedges and vegetation.

The Clerk gave to Des Jones, the signs which she had ordered for the permissive footpaths, which stated that dogs must be kept on their leads.

Following a discussion, it was felt that additional directional finger post signs were required along the Circular Walk and Des Jones would erect the signs. The Clerk would order these from Oxfordshire County Council. There would also be signs at both ends of the Water Lane Bridleway.

Recommended that:

- 1) Tom Smith be advised that the signs asking owners to keep their dogs on a lead along the Circular Walk have been purchased and Des Jones will be erecting them shortly; **Action TG**
- 2) Des Jones to advise the Clerk if posts are required for the signs; **Action DJ**
- 3) eight finger posts be requested from the County Council to be sited along the Circular Walk, at The Slade and at both ends of the Water Lane Bridleway; **Action TG**
- 4) a link be created from the Parish Council web site to the County Council web page which shows the locations of all of the public rights of way in the village; **Action TG**
- 5) the inclusion of the footpath from The Ridgeway to Warriner School in the Circular Walk be discussed once the process for extending the Walk has been investigated;
- 6) Patricia Hopkins to investigate exactly where the 'Coffin Walk' is located (believed to be from the Pest House in the Slade to St Mary's Church) before consideration is given to it being included in the Circular Walk; and **Action PH**
- 7) to keep the public rights of way clear from overgrowing trees, hedges and vegetation, a Work Group be established around Easter 2019, which could include local organisations, such as the Boys Brigade, Scouts etc; **Action TG**

23/18 MAINTENANCE PROGRAMMES – The Committee discussed the maintenance programme for the Gascoigne Way hedge.

Recommended that Nigel Prickett be asked to cut the hedge in Gascoigne Way and that he adds this to his schedule to be cut annually. **Action TG**

24/18 AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY – Prior to the meeting, the areas of responsibility had been circulated to the Committee. These were the specific areas of the village which were monitored by Councillors for issues with street furniture, the highway etc.

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Recommended that following the two recent resignations from the Parish Council, the Chairman should draft the areas of responsibility again. **Action NR**

25/18 CHRISTMAS TREE/LIGHTING – The Chairman reported that issues with conversion of the street lamps had been resolved, however there had been an issue with the power packs to the village green for the Christmas tree lights. A solution had now been found and the owner of the house opposite the Joiners Arms, would kindly be supplying the power and David Andrews would be carrying out all of the necessary work.

There had been a meeting with the Vicar with regard to an external weather proof box next to the Church tower, which could be used to power the uplighters. Bloxham School would also be contacted about supplying the power for uplighters on its grounds.

The Chairman had also been looking into the cost of a Christmas Tree and asked Councillors to feedback if they were able to view any trees or had a preference.

It was also noted that the colour white had been the preferred colour for the Christmas lights. However, after this first year, investigations could be made into changing the colours if this was required. It was hoped that the lights 'switch on' could be scheduled for Saturday 1 December 2018.

Recommended that the report be noted.

26/18 BULB PLANTING FOR 2018 AND 2019 – The Chairman reported that with regard to 'Purple for Polio', the Gardening Club had suggested that a mixture of crocuses and daffodils for Marie Curie, would work well on the triangles of grass at the end of Tadmerton Road, opposite the Esso garage and at the end of Courtington Lane, opposite the entrance to Bloxham School.

The Chairman advised that 3800 bulbs were required and it was suggested that Martyn Casey could be asked to plant the bulbs in the triangle of grass at the end of Courtington Lane and the Boys Brigade be asked to plant the bulbs at the end of Tadmerton Road.

Recommended that:

- 1) the expenditure of £470 for the crocuses and daffodil bulbs be approved; and **Action TG**
- 2) Martyn Casey be asked to plant the bulbs at the end of Courtington Lane and the Boys Brigade be asked to plant the bulbs at the end of Tadmerton Road. **Action TG**

27/18 GRITTING PROCESS AND GRIT BINS – The Clerk reported that the grit bins would be refilled by the County Council before the winter. After that, any further refills would need to be carried out by the Parish Council. Bloxham School had kindly assisted with this last winter and it was hoped they would assist again.

At the County Council depot day, there had been mention of signs which could be located on the grit bins, asking people to use the correct amount of grit. It was suggested that Paul Wilson would be able to assist with this.

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The Clerk also reported that the a company based in Middleton Cheney offered a number of services, which included filling and monitoring of grit bins, snow clearance with a snow plough and grit spreading on roads.

The Clerk also suggested that the winter volunteers be contacted again to establish whether or not they would be willing to assist this winter, should the need arise for gritting of footpaths.

Recommended that:

- 1) the report be noted;
- 2) Paul Wilson be contacted for grit bin signage advising how much grit is required for a footpath;
- 3) a quote be obtained for the services of filling and monitoring the grit bins, use of a snow plough and spreading of grit; and **Action TG**
- 4) the Winter Volunteers be contacted to establish whether or not they are willing to assist for gritting again this winter. **Action TG**

28/18 WALSINGHAM CLOSE AMENITY AREA – This item was deferred to the next meeting of the Parish Council.

29/18 TREE SURVEY/TREE MAINTENANCE – The Committee discussed how to progress the quotes and advice which has been received regarding the Tree Survey and whether the Parish Council should accept the offer of a free sapling and commemorative plaque to support the Trees of Remembrance Project in Oxfordshire.

Following a discussion, it was felt that Paul Barnes should be contacted about the Tree Survey to discuss how it could be more specific with regard to the work which was required. It was also felt that Alex Watson, from Cotefield Treecare should be approached to carry out the work to the trees which was required to be completed within 6 months, with a view to offering a rolling contract for continued monitoring of the Parish Council's trees.

The Committee felt that the offer of a free sapling should also be accepted.

Recommended that:

- 1) contact be made with Paul Barnes with regard to the Tree Survey and whether the requirements could be made more specific; **Action TG**
- 2) contact be made with Alex Watson to discuss how to approach the work within the Tree Survey, where it is deemed work is required within 12 months;
- 3) a meeting be held with Ben Acreman and Alex Watson to discuss an on-going tree management contract over a 2 to 3 year period; and **Action NR/SC**
- 4) the offer of a free sapling and commemorative plaque to support the Trees of Remembrance Project be accepted and it be located in Greenhills Park. **Action TG**

30/18 BENCH SURVEY – Prior to the meeting, Councillor David Bunn circulated a survey of the benches in the village. The Committee felt that bench on Courtington Lane which had been damaged and the end removed, should be claimed through the insurance. In addition, two new benches should be purchased to replace the benches on the corner of Courtington

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Lane/Tadmarton Road by the Primary School and also on the corner of Tadmarton Road/Winters Way.

Recommended that:

- 1) an insurance claim be made for the damaged bench on Courtington Lane; and **Action TG**
- 2) two new benches be purchased to replace the bench on the corner of Courtington Lane/Tadmarton Road by the Primary School and the bench on the corner of Tadmarton Road/Winters Way. **Action TG**

31/18 BOYS' BRIGADE – The Committee discussed whether it would like to put forward a project for the Boys' Brigade to undertake. The Boys' Brigade would be requested to plant the 'Purple for Polio' and Marie Curie bulbs as discussed earlier in the meeting.

Recommended that the report be noted.

32/18 ENVIRONMENT BUDGET 2018/2019 – Prior to the meeting, the Clerk had circulated to the Committee, the budget from 1 April 2018 to 18 October 2018.

Recommended that the report be noted.

33/18 DATE OF NEXT MEETING – To be confirmed.

(The meeting ended at 9.25pm)