**MEETING OF THE RECREATION, PARKS & PROPERTY COMMITTEE**

**HELD ON 17th FEBRUARY 2025 AT 7.00PM**

**Present:**

Cllr U Arnold Cllr S Oldrieve

Cllr S Brooke Cllr L Robillard-Webb

Cllr E Kelly Cllr C West

Cllr H Mills Brown

**In attendance:**

Mr M Wells – Town Clerk

Cllr C Burton

2 members of the Residents Association

*The meeting was chaired by Cllr Kelly.*

**RP&P.25/01 Apologies for Absence**:

None.

**RP&P.25/02 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations:**

None.

**\*\*Public Participation:**

None.

**RP&P.25/03 Minutes**:

i) The minutes of the meeting of 9th December 2024 were confirmed as a correct record and approved (*\*copy previously circulated*).

ii) The following updates were provided:

**RP&P.24/40** – The hatched ‘no parking’ area in St Johns Lane Car Park is yet to be scheduled in conjunction with work being undertaken by the football club.

**RP&P.24/53** – Following a recent change of appointed Solicitor, the drafting of the lease document is still progressing.

**RP&P.24/64** – The deadline for Expressions of Interest has now passed and three organisations have registered. Currently, there is a live consultation seeking community input into the design of the new exercise equipment. This closes on 24th February.

**RP&P.24/66** – The Town Clerk is awaiting feedback from the District Council’s Estates Team and Car Parks Manager in relation to the appropriate siting of the bicycle maintenance station.

**RP&P.25/04 Standing Item – Climate and Ecology Emergencies:**

Members noted the Council Declaration and embedded the climate emergency declaration across all Council services, activities, plans and other relevant work, considering the environmental impact of decisions, ensuring a fully integrated approach to mitigating the impact of climate change.

**RP&P.25/05 Friends of Mill Marsh Park (FoMMP):**

Members received and noted minutes of the FoMMP meetings held on 07.01.25 and 04.02.25 (*\*copies previously circulated*).

Cllr Brooke updated members verbally, in relation to live projects:

i) The noticeboard in Mill Marsh Park has now been installed and the redundant noticeboard will be refurbished and installed in Heathfield.

ii) A future item will be brought to this committee in relation to trees in Mill Marsh Park, to consider local tree donations, future planting and an inventory of trees.

**RP&P.25/06 Management of Dogs – Mill Marsh Park:**

Members received and considered making a recommendation to Full Council to adopt a Policy for the Management of Dogs (\**copy previously circulated*).

**Resolved:** Following discussion, it was resolved to recommend to Full Council to adopt the Policy, with the following amendments:

1. Move the section relating to the Recreation Ground towards the end of the document.
2. Retitle Key Regulation 1, to rename it ‘Dogs under Control’
3. Key Regulation 1 – add a new clause ‘Need to be in control of your dog at all times’
4. Key Regulation 2 – amend the clause to read ‘except for registered assistance dogs’
5. Add contact details to the end of the policy, advising how reports can be made and to whom.

**RP&P.25/07 Use of Bullands Field and Mill Marsh Park - 2025:**

Members considered approving applications for the use of Bullands Field and Mill Marsh Park for 2025 (\**copy previously circulated*).

**Resolved:** To approve the booking requests as circulated with two amendments (i) a date amendment to Great Big Green Week which should be 14th June and (ii) Sunday Funday should be retitled as Grand Summer Fete.

**RP&P.25/08 Memorial Safety Testing, Bovey Tracey Cemetery:**

Members received a report on memorial safety testing from the Assistant Town Clerk and considered the recommendations within (*\*copy previously circulated*).

**Resolved:** Following discussion, members resolved to:

i) Note the contents of the report, best practice standards, and legal requirement to carry out memorial safety testing, and provision of records to be able to carry out future checks.

ii) Approve the appointment of a memorial safety testing contractor (D - £3.75 per memorial) to complete a quantified review and assessment of all memorials simultaneously to ensure compliance to the updated standards and best practice.

iii) Make a recommendation to the FR&GP Committee to secure appropriate funding to proceed.

iv) Delegate authority for any subsequent urgent remedial works expenditure jointly to the Committee Chair and Town Clerk.

**RP&P.25/09 Highway Verges – Grass Cutting 2025:**

i) Members considered proceeding with the continuation of highway verge grass cutting on behalf of DCC for 2025 and if approved, to authorise the Town Clerk to sign the agreement (*\*copy previously circulated*).

ii) Consider agreeing the cutting frequency.

**Resolved:**

i) Approved the continuation of the highway verge grass cutting on behalf of DCC for 2025 and authorised the Town Clerk to sign the agreement.

ii) Agreed to the grass cutting frequency of up to six cuts per year and to take part in ‘No Mow May’.

**RP&P.25/10 Recreation Ground, Newton Road, Bovey Tracey:**

i) Members considered a request on behalf of Bovey Tracey Cricket Club for a contribution of £1,200 towards groundworks to the Recreation Ground (*\*copy previously circulated*).

ii) Members received and noted meeting minutes from the Project Group in relation to the tennis court, cricket net and car park redevelopment (*\*copy previously circulated*).

**Resolved:**

i) Following discussion, it was resolved to not support the request for funding on the basis that it could set a precedent. Furthermore, the request conflicts with the environmental ‘best practice’ guidance issued to all clubs in 2022, which recommends users

1. Seek to manage its green spaces in a manner that promotes and protects the environment and enhances biodiversity throughout the parish.

2. Commit to developing a plan to reduce and stop altogether the use of pesticides/herbicides on all land management and horticultural activities.

**RP&P.25/11 VE Day Celebrations – 8th May 2025:**

Members discussed involvement in the VE Day Celebrations for 2025.

**Resolved:** The Town Clerk to liaise with ‘Churches Together’ to ascertain if there will be ringing of the Church Bells and to light a beacon in accordance with the shared national celebrations.

**RP&P.25/12 Matters brought forward by the Town Clerk & Councillors**: (*for information)*

**The Town Clerk** referred to the recent complaint published in the Mid Devon Advertiser about the condition of the Cemetery and advised members of the actions that have been taken following receipt of the concerns raised.

**Cllr Brooke** formally thanked the Grounds Maintenance Officers for their perseverance and dedication to adapt their working processes during the current time with the use of temporary vehicles whilst the Council consider a replacement vehicle for the future.

**Cllr Robillard Webb** advised that there will be a planting event on Saturday 15th March at Heath Close in Heathfield as part of a wider community event.

**Cllr Robillard Webb** advised that Cllr Morgan (District Councillor) has now become a trustee of Heathfield Community Centre.

**Cllr Oldrieve** referred to the recent Youth Café report, which refers to concerns raised around anti-social behaviour and the use of drugs in Mill Marsh Park and the lack of any timely response from the Police.

Meeting Closed: 7.51pm