

# Environment & Highways Committee

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016, 7.30pm

Catshill Village Hall, Golden Cross Lane, Catshill

**Members Present:** Cllrs M Shephard (Chair), M Ball, G Blackmoor, O Sweeting

**In Attendance:** Clerk R Powell

1. Apologies for absence Cllrs B McEldowney, N Ward and P Masters
2. Declarations of Interest None
3. To consider members' written requests for dispensation None requested
4. Adjournment of meeting for Public Question Time No Members of the public were present
5. To reconvene to consider approval of minutes of meeting held 15/09/16

The minutes of the meeting 15/09/2016 were approved and signed

6. Clerk's report, to include:

**6.1 Request for litter bin to be sited at the top of Milton Road**

The Clerk reported that, following concerns raised at the previous meeting regarding an increase in litter after the opening of the Co-op, a request had been logged with BDC and the dog waste bin at the top of Milton Road would be replaced with a normal waste bin with a sticker added to indicate the bin could also be used for dog waste.

**6.2 Other items reported to BDC/WCC**

The Clerk reported that the bin that the Parish Council had previously been informed was crushed was to be looked at this coming week by BDC Place Team. The Clerk had also received reports that a post at the start of the footpath at the bottom of Milton road was leaning dangerously. The Place Team had been to investigate but could not locate the post in question. The Clerk had agreed to visit the area and take a photograph to send to BDC.

**6.3 Progress with Assistant Clerk appointment**

The Clerk reported that the contract, all policies and the cover letter were all ready to be posted to the new appointment, following Cllr Sweeting and Cllr Baker's approval of the contents. The Assistant would hopefully be in post at the beginning of January.

7. To consider the tender process following the expiration of the current gardens contract at the end of February 2017. To include discussion and agreement of:

**7.1 Expectations for the Baptist Church Garden for addition to the contract**

It was noted that the area had now been weeded and bark had been put down so now looked much better. The plants that had survived were now growing well and those newly planted were hoped to deter people using the area as a thoroughfare. It was suggested that any modifications to the garden would be one off and it was therefore difficult to add to the contract.

**7.2 The specifications of the contract (document circulated)**

Members noted the supplied document and it was suggested that some of the wording be altered throughout the specifications to include the phrase 'in accordance with common horticultural practice' where appropriate.

It was noted by the Clerk that this document could be adapted to add a signature and act as a contract for the potential contractors.

**It was agreed** that once the suggested alterations were made to the wording, the specifications were accepted.

**It was agreed** to add a signature line to the specifications to create a contract.

### **7.3 The draft newspaper advert (draft document circulated)**

Members discussed the advert and suggested adding a little more detail regarding the number of gardens the contract involved. It was also suggested that local businesses be canvased by way of a letter in addition to the advert in the newspaper.

**It was agreed**, following the suggested alterations, that the advert was accepted.

**It was agreed** that the Clerk should canvas local contractors using a letter method, including Birmingham City Council and Singletons.

### **7.4 Key dates for the process**

Members discussed the dates involved in the process including advertisement, the closing date for tenders and the date of the meeting to review tenders, including the implications in relation to the contract.

**It was agreed** that the advertisement should begin early January with a closing date of Friday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2017 for tenders to be received and that these would be reviewed at a meeting to be held on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2017 then submitted to FPC at the end of February.

8. To consider the addition of a further dog waste bag dispenser on the opposite end of the Meadow to the current siting, as per a request from District Councillor Shirley Webb

The Clerk reported that the back area of the Meadow was particularly littered with dog waste to the extent that prior to children engaging in some planting in the area, the vicinity had to be 'poop scooped'. The cost of the new bin would be £94.80 including VAT with the additional costs of a post and fixings. It had been suggested that Worcester County Councillor Sheila Blagg may have some funding available to assist. The Clerk had contacted Ian Prust of the NWWA to ensure he was happy with the suggestion. There would also be a need for someone to fill up the dispensers as the lady who was carrying this out currently had moved from the area. The Clerk suggested that the Parish Council Litter Picker, who already fills the dispenser at Braces Lane, should be asked to take on the current bin at the Meadow and the new addition in her schedule of work.

Members discussed the issue.

**It was agreed** to assist with the installation of a new dog waste bag dispenser in the area.

**It was agreed** that the Clerk would investigate the possible availability of funding from WCC.

9. As per the request at the previous Environment and Highways Committee, opportunity to discuss:

#### **9.1 Traffic Calming**

Members discussed various concerns in the village in relation to traffic including speed and cars parking on pavements. It was suggested that cars parked on the road actually

formed a type of traffic calming situation. Members also discussed the recent speed reports from both Barley Mow Lane and Stourbridge Road that gave evidence against speeding in these vicinities. It was suggested that the Parish Council should push ahead with the request for the 20mph speed limit from the area surrounding the Co-op down Meadow Road, past the schools. The Clerk reminded Members that the application needed support and representation from Parishioners as well as businesses in the area, but approached in a way that did not raise false hope in residents of a successful application.

**It was agreed** to put an article in the next newsletter regarding the proposed 20mph limit application and request any responses from Parishioners.

**It was agreed** that the Clerk would add this to the next FPC Agenda as a reminder to the Council of the process.

Members took this opportunity to discuss some contact that had been made with Councillors regarding the height of bushes on the Ivy Cottage Garden area and the suggestion of reduced visibility.

**It was agreed** that the Clerk should ask the Grounds Maintenance Team, when in situ, to reduce the height of these bushes.

#### **9.2 Expectations of Commemorative Stones for Parish Gardens**

Members considered the stones suggested for each of the Parish Gardens.

**It was agreed** to delegate the decision to Cllr Masters, who was sourcing the stones, with the assistance of the expertise of the company he was to use.

#### 10. To receive an update from Councillors regarding progress with the following:

##### **Cllr M Ball:**

- **Contact with Social Club regarding the erection of Parish Council Notice Board in grounds (letter from Social Club circulated)**

The Social Club had sent a letter to the Council agreeing that this was an ideal place for a Notice Board to be sited. The Clerk would contact the Social Club once official quotes had been obtained and work was ready to commence. Members made the decision that this one additional notice board would be sufficient to allow coverage of the entire village in regards to information.

- **Corresponding with parishioner regarding 'walk' around village to identify problem areas for traffic speed and crossing (report circulated)**

Cllr Ball had submitted a report of the walk he had engaged in with a Parishioner who had attended a previous meeting and requested assistance with traffic due to him being blind. Cllr Ball admitted he was surprised by the amount of trouble the gentleman had when crossing roads.

The walk had also identified an issue with elderly and disabled being able to access the new Co-op store due to moving traffic and no identified access point other than across the car park. Cllr Ball suggested a walkway could be located across the back area of the car park, along the neighbouring properties border.

**It was agreed** that Cllr Ball would draft a letter to the Co-op suggesting the new pathway and that the Clerk would type it and add it to letter headed paper before sending.

- **Organisation of volunteer party for litter picking, clearance of the brook and pathways at the lower half of the Catshill Brook (between The Crown and the Motorway bridge)**

It was noted by the Clerk that this had been deferred until the spring and that the Lengthsman would be asked to assist, BDC would be approached for bags and litter pickers and that it may be advantageous to combine with the 'Clean for the Queen' campaign.

**It was agreed** that the Clerk would contact the appropriate people in relation to advice regarding any potential wildlife in the area and the best times to approach a clean-up of the area without disturbing them.

Members thanked Cllr Ball for all his recent hard work

#### **Cllr M Shephard:**

- **Ordering trees from woodland trust free tree programme**

Cllr Shephard reported that these need to be ordered in the Summer, before the end of August, and are delivered by the end of September. Therefore, this would now be looked at next year, which will allow time to consider how the Parish Council will carry the process of planting out. The area is not in very good condition for growing and digging so there may be a need for a mechanical digger and definitely for a working party to assist, including possibly the Scouts and the gentleman who had previously expressed an interest.

- **Consideration of further landscaping to Balance Pool area - research into hardcore path and wildflower planting**

It was noted that there was a naturally developing path from the Balancing Pools and that this is the area that should be paved in some way. It was felt that bark would not last and that further investigations should be made into a suitable surface for the area. It may be a project suitable for the Tesco Bags Grant and any funding that could assist with costings should also be investigated.

A wildflower bed was discussed but it was established that these are not easy to create as they need a vigorous program of maintenance including grazing and cropping. It was suggested that the area may naturally develop some flowering patches.

- **Research into Emergency Plan with a view to the Parish Council providing a simplified version**

Cllr Shephard reported that he was still working on this action and attempting to reduce it down to a manageable document. This was proving very difficult. An Emergency Committee would be needed to review the document and it was suggested that this be the Full Parish Council. Cllr Blackmoor volunteered to assist Cllr Shephard with the process.

#### **Cllr P Masters:**

- **Obtaining quotes for commemorative name stones in Parish Council Gardens**

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

#### **Cllr O Sweeting:**

- **Evaluation of the bus shelter outside Catshill First School to establish if the peeling paint is a manufacturing fault**

Cllr Sweeting reported that this was not a fault and that the damage was through vandalism. A knife had been used to cut through the layers of paint right back to the galvanised metal. The damage could be repaired but would never be as good as the original.

**It was agreed** that the Clerk should ask Nigel Williamson to repair the area and that the supplier should be approached for the correct colour paint.

**Cllr G Blackmoor:**

- **Co-ordination of documentation for submission to the next round of Tesco Bags Grant Funding, suggested previously to be a project related to 'Route 5'.**

It was established that there was no longer a time scale for application and that the funding opportunity was open constantly.

**It was agreed** that the Clerk would inform Cllr Blackmoor of the contact for the applications so that the documentation needed could be established. The Clerk suggested this included permission from the land owners, photographs of the site, and a suggested budget for work to be completed.

**Members noted current outstanding actions from the Clerk:**

- Quote for two new Parish Council Notice boards
- Quote for place name signs for Catshill and North Marlbrook Parish
- Letter to Bromsgrove Hotel regarding steps near Miu Miu restaurant
- Bench at Ivy Cottage Gardens
- Investigations into adoption of land at end of Beehive Close

11 Date, time and venue of the next meeting

9<sup>th</sup> March 2017; 7:30pm, Committee Room Catshill Village Hall

This meeting ended at 21.27hrs.

Agreed as a true record of the meeting held 08/12/16

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Chairman, Environment & Highways Committee  
Catshill and North Marlbrook Parish Council