



Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Minutes of the Fairground and Cemetery Committee held at Mortimer Methodist Church Hall on Thursday the 20th of July 2023 at 8.30pm.

Present:

Councillors:

Cllr. S. Hill (Chairman), Cllr. H. Geary, Cllr. M. Lock, Cllr. A. Marsden, Cllr. D. Morsley, Cllr. A. Noonan.

Officers:

Mrs. L Hannawin, Clerk.
Ms. B. O'Reilly, Assistant to the Clerk.

Public/Press:

There were no members of the public and no members of the press in attendance.

Part I

23/001 Public Questions (for agenda items only)

None.

23/002 To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr. G. Bridgman and Cllr. M. Shaw.

23/003 To receive any declarations of interest

None.

23/004 Minutes of Last Meeting

To resolve to **APPROVE** the Minutes of the Minutes of the Fairground and Cemetery Meeting of the 27th of April 2023.

RESOLVED unanimously that these minutes be approved for signature by the Chairman as a true and correct record of the meeting.

23/005 Update from Previous Committee Meeting(s)

To receive an update outlining actions taken following the meeting held on the 27th of April 2023, and other updates.

- Utility Square and Fairground Footpath: no further progress has been made. It was agreed for Cllr. Noonan to assist Cllr. Hill with looking at the specification and tender so that quotes can be obtained. Advice needs to be sought from West Berkshire Council (WBC) regarding the small strip that crosses Highway's land.
- Electricity Boxes: Ovo have been contacted regarding moving the electricity boxes and installing smart meters, but no response has been received to date.
- Dog Waste Bins: the bins are now being emptied regularly and no further issues have been identified.
- Memorial Bench: the Clerk has contacted the family of Mrs. F. Batten but no response has been received.
- Fairground Gates Remedial Work: this has been completed.
- Fairground Tree Work: only one quote has been received and another one is expected. Under delegated powers the Clerk, in conjunction with the Cllr. Hill, Chairman, will agree the contractor and issue a purchase order for the works.

23/006 Items to be taken into private session

To determine which items, if any, of the Agenda should be taken with the public excluded

Cllr. Hill proposed that agenda item 23/007 8. Cemetery Tree Survey, be taken with the public excluded.

Seconded by Cllr. Morsley.

RESOLVED unanimously.

23/007 Items for Consideration and Resolution

1. Cemetery Extension

To consider the draft layout and agree further actions to be taken.

Cllr. Noonan gave an update. The draft layout was considered, and the number of new plots reviewed. It was agreed that the design, in principle, meets the needs for the extension but, if feasible, the 30m exclusion zone should be reduced to 10m to increase the number of burial plots. Along with information received from the Environment Agency regarding second burials in relation to Foudry Brook, Cllr. Noonan and the Clerk will provide feedback to TGMS Ltd in order that the design can be finalised. Once design is formerly approved by the Committee, TGMS Ltd will seek contractors to undertake the landscaping/footpath work.

2. Memorial Permits for Non-residential Interments

To review the fees being charged and agree any changes for recommendation to Full Council.

The fees were reviewed and compared with those charged by other local burial authorities. Further to a discussion, the Committee agreed the fees should remain at the current charging rate. All fees will be reviewed as part of the 2024/2025 budget process.

3. Review of Earmarked Reserves

To receive the Budget Tracker and review the current levels of the following Earmarked Reserves to confirm amounts needed:

- Cemetery Extension - £40,555**
- Tennis Courts – £46,666.**
- Fairground Work – Conservation Boards - £1000.**

The earmarked reserves were reviewed, and it was agreed that they are an accurate reflection on what is needed.

4. Cemetery Policies

To review the policies and agree any changes to be made:

- a. Cemetery Regulations**
- b. Memorials in Stratfield Mortimer Cemetery.**

The policies were reviewed. It was agreed to merge both documents and, to assist with clarity and the management of the cemetery, to make other minor changes. Photos showing best practice will be included. The legislation referred to in the documents shall be checked to ensure it is still current.

5. Cemetery Memorials

To receive the Memorial Inspection Report and agree any further actions needed.

The Assistant to the Clerk presented the report and confirmed the inspection of the memorials had been undertaken for health and safety purposes. The report highlighted one memorial that needed remedial work and it was agreed a letter should be sent requesting the Exclusive Right of Burial owner for the plot undertake the work required. The inspection will be completed on an annual basis. The year of burial will be added to the report.

6. Play Area Maintenance

To receive the RoSPA Report and RoSPA Report Summary and resolve:

- a. The schedule of work and associated budget.**
- b. The Clerk seeks quotes for work identified.**
- c. The Clerk, in conjunction with the Chairman, places an order for the required work.**

The reports were reviewed. It was confirmed that some of the work identified from the RoSPA inspection had already been completed on health and safety grounds. It was agreed for further remedial works to be undertaken on the surface areas for the Rotating Titan and the Supernova – both rated as Medium/8. Cllr. Hill is establishing how often the mechanisms and bearings for the Swing Dome and Titan need dismantling and inspecting.

7. Lime Trees and Cherry Trees

To receive an update on the trees and resolve the replacement options and associated budget.

Cllr. Hill reported that one Cherry tree had been lost and one Lime tree is in distress – possibly due to infected wood chippings used at the base of the tree – and is not expected to recover. Cllr. Shaw is obtaining quotes for replacing the trees. The aim is for the trees to be planted October/November time.

8. Cemetery Tree Survey

To review the quotes received and resolve the contractor for undertaking the work.

Minuted at Part II.

9. Fairground Policy

To consider the need for a Fairground Policy and agree further actions to be taken.

It was agreed for Cllr. Geary to draft a policy to review at the next meeting.

23/008 Items for information only

- Emergency contact details: further to a recent incident on the Grazing Area, signs providing emergency contact information will be obtained for the gates.
- Fairground fence posts: Cllr. Noonan reported that strimming is causing damage to the fence posts. It was agreed to investigate attaching metal sleeves to prevent further damage. Cllr. Hill will inspect the posts to establish any that are rotten and need replacing.
- Youth shelter: Cllr Noonan reported that there are some rust patches on the Youth Shelter. The Custodian will be asked to address these and repaint where necessary.

23/009 Communications

To identify items for communicating.

None.

23/010 Future Agenda Items

To identify future agenda items

- Conservation boards.
- Cemetery Policy.
- Fairground Policy.

23/011 Exclusion of Press and Public

To pass a resolution to exclude members of the press and public from the meeting at Part II, items identified at 23/006 on the Agenda, due to the confidential nature of the information being discussed.

Proposed by Cllr. Hill.

Seconded by Cllr. Geary.

RESOLVED unanimously.

Part II

23/007 Items for Consideration and Resolution

8. Cemetery Tree Survey

To review the quotes received and resolve the contractor for undertaking the work.

The quotes were considered. The Clerk reported that the cost centre only had an allocated budget of £1,000 and any expenditure over this would need approval by Finances and General Purposes and full Council.

Cllr. Morsley proposed that, depending on additional confirmation, the contract be placed in the first instance with Sapling Arboriculture followed by Tree Frontiers.

Seconded by Cllr. Hill.

RESOLVED unanimously.

Close

The meeting closed at 21:05

Date of next meeting: Thursday September the 21st.