

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Assets and Green Spaces Working Group

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> July at 7pm via Zoom

Present: Councillors Barrie Spencer (Chair), Carole Spencer, Nicky Hopwood and Simon Rundell

1. To discuss the grass cutting contract – what is and is not included in the tender.

NH explained that she is not yet sure what is and is not *included* and what is and is not actually *being* cut but we are getting there. It is not clear whether the tender document included the DCC cutting element, which is the areas that DCC pays the PC to have cut. She and Barrie have been through all the maps of the parish, which was time consuming but should now all be correct and future-proofed so it won't have to be done again.

The contractor will be cutting on Wednesday and then she will work out what they have missed. After the second cut she and Barrie thought there were some bits missed but weren't sure whether they were DCC or PC sections and sometimes it has been difficult to tell what has been cut as the verges look messy afterwards. They have a meeting this Thursday with the contractor on Roborough Green and will talk it through with them.

Carole asked if Nicky was confident that the contractors quoted for the correct tender rather than the old version. She said that the previous contractors had done a good job and that it was a shame they needed to end that contract which was purely on a cost basis.

Simon asked if, after the meeting this week, we might have to consider a variation to the contract and whether this would mean a new price. It was agreed that this might be the case.

Nicky explained that, under the last contract, any potential problem areas were included in it at the outset. This meant that areas where residents had been complaining and which were obviously quite important were put on the contract regardless of who owned them.

It was agreed to check the tender documents to ascertain exactly what was contracted for. Barrie will send them out.

2. To discuss the overhanging trees on Tavistock Road, going north just beyond the entrance to Leat Walk.

Nicky thought that permission had been given within the last 3 years to lift the crown of the tree by 2m. At the time it was decided to take it up by only 1.5m but this was 2 years ago so it might be possible now to carry out the lift to 2m without further permission. She did not think we could get permission for another TPO so soon after the last one, though an initial search online for this did not find anything and this needs to be checked.

3. To discuss the ownership and removal of the ash trees at the rear of Clover Rise.

An email had been received requesting help with the removal of some large ash trees on a green behind Clover Rise, Woolwell. The ash trees are thought to have ash dieback.

Nicky checked the SHDC maps and the ownership of that land is unknown, though she thinks the area is included in the PC grass cutting contract. It was agreed that Barrie would direct the correspondent to SHDC to see if they can help as the PC did not want to set a precedent for tree works on land which the PC doesn't own.

4. To discuss the outstanding tree work on the Parish Plot.

A TPO was submitted to crown reduce one of the large trees which is overhanging the garden of No 42. There was some mix up at the time whereby SHDC approved part of the request but then, realising they had missed some of it, approved the other part retrospectively. Cllrs are not sure therefore how much of the work was carried out in accordance with the original application. The owners of No 42 have said that nothing substantial was done but the contractors fulfilled the job as requested. Plandscape carried out the work and it was inspected. The Clerk was asked to speak to Plandscape to find out what they did so that we can resolve this.

The tree is No6 on the Tree Plan. It is very large and councillors recognise that it does overhang the garden. Nicky said that it was so large, however, that TPO works were unlikely to make any difference to it. Carole asked what else

we can do as a PC and the answer is that we are constrained by the TPO and that the tree has been there since before the house was built.

5. To discuss the new website legislation.

An email has been received from Gov.uk digital services asking the PC to look at the security of the website domain and carry out some actions. Simon needs to clarify what they mean by domain registrar and find out if this is the person who originally registered the domain for us. The deadline is September and he is working on it. It was agreed to check the legitimacy of the email as many junk emails are received into the Parish Clerk email account daily. Nicky agreed to check this at SHDC.

The issues around people not receiving emails into their gov.uk accounts was discussed and Simon explained that the different levels of filter seem to be getting in the way. This is very complex because of the many layers of filter involved and he will speak to the mail host providers to see if they have any suggestions.

6. To discuss which risk assessments need to be completed before the opening of the Parish Office.

Carole explained that, before a new clerk arrives to use the office, it would be sensible to carry out a Covid Risk Assessment and put appropriate measures in place. She would be happy to do this. It was also agreed that the ordinary Risk Assessment is required and has not yet been done and Carole will also do this. In the meantime, it was agreed that the office would not be used by anyone.

7. To discuss the purchase of a new Parish Council laptop.

Barrie explained that the old PC laptop was very out of date and is now not working properly – the keyboard function has been lost and Simon suggested that this might mean that other functions were also compromised. He will arrange for a full backup asap just in case.

Cllrs discussed the need to buy a new laptop and the fact that it is not in the budget. The main issue is that the accounts database is presently on the old one and needs to be re-installed on a new unit. The Clerk explained that accounts can be kept using spreadsheets but Barrie said the he thought the Rialtas software was more professional and it is reasonably priced at £41pa. It could be installed on a personal laptop owned by the new clerk although it would take up space and this may not be acceptable.

Nicky thought that the decision to buy a new PC laptop should be postponed until a new clerk is in place and all agreed with this.

Councillor Barrie Spencer

Chair