

Turnpike Field & Playing Field Recreation Areas Working Group

Tuesday 7th July 2020

7.30pm, online via Zoom

Present: Cllr Steve Boyes – Chair (SB), Cllr Ralph Warburton (RW), Cllr Nigel Mottershead (NM), Judy Evans (JE), Adrian Leighton (AL), Neil Goodyear (NG) and Michael Cookson (MC). In attendance: Clerk – Mrs Belen (Bee) Lopez Bloor.

1. Public Forum – members of public to ask any questions re Turnpike Field

A resident attended requesting an update on the recent problem of sewage leaking into the brook. The Clerk said United Utilities (UU) and the Environmental Agency (EA) were contacted by residents and the Parish Council. UU and EA have since been working together to resolve the matter. UU attended on 20th June and a senior engineer has confirmed the repair went well. It should be a permanent solution providing they can protect it from further erosion when the brook floods again. They are now consulting with EA over this. The resident also mentioned a dying tree, close to the rising path between the canal and the mound and adjacent to the site of a recent tree which had to be removed. The group agreed that the dead tree should be removed and agreed to investigate if there is a water leak from the canal as the bank has still been wet despite very dry weather.

Action/s: NG and NM to inspect during his site visit on Saturday and report back to the group. If there is a water leak let the Clerk know so she can report it to Canal & Rivers Trust.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Lynette Hopkins (LH) and Steve Elliott (SE). Chair Cllr Steve Boyes (SB) informed the group Cllr David Higham has resigned from Audlem Parish Council (APC) and is no longer a member of the group.

3. Declaration of Interest

None received.

4. Notes of Previous Meeting 4th March 2020

MC proposed to accept these as a true and accurate record and NM seconded. All in favour.

5. Matters Arising

As below.

6. Current Issues

a. Chairmanship of TFWG.

SB stated that he would be happy to step down as Chair if somebody else wanted to take on the role. Clerk confirmed the new Chair will need to be a Parish Councillor as stated in the TFWG Terms of Reference.

Action/s: To be discussed at APC's July monthly meeting.

b. Regular maintenance plan for the field.

The tender advert was posted on AOL but no quotes were received. The Clerk confirmed that LH had organised for the hedge to be cut recently and a resident has reported it requires cutting further. The group discussed cutting the main grass paths, the paths to the picnic tables and areas around the picnic tables. NM mentioned a local contractor who would be interested in taking on individual jobs and a local

firm who may be interested in the maintenance contract. RW proposed to progress with the local firm, NM seconded.

Action/s: Clerk to liaise with LH regarding the hedge. Also, to speak to local contractor firm regarding cutting the grass paths. NG and AL will conduct a site visit with the contractor explaining what is required under the maintenance plan.

c. Update - Community Trust.

No update.

d. Car Park progress.

No progress. SB commented that APC had submitted ideas to Cheshire East Council (CEC) with regards to measures for social distancing for highways and open spaces and had suggested Turnpike Field could be used as a temporary car park during the summer, however CEC have not yet responded.

Action/s: Defer until next meeting.

e. Trees progress.

f. Tree invoice

Further clarification regarding the second invoice has been obtained by the Clerk and this was circulated to the group. RW proposed to recommend to APC that both invoices are paid, JE seconded. All unanimously in favour.

g. Update - Ponds.

i. Lifebelts and fencing.

The Clerk updated the group of the two quotes and pricing she has obtained for picket fencing 3 metres away from the pond to allow wildlife to thrive, with secure gates and life belts. The group debated the different options for fencing materials. NM stated he had not seen a specification for the type of fencing. SB stated the temporary fencing needs to be checked to ensure the safety of residents and children, particularly as the summer holidays are starting. The group agreed it should be inspected again to ensure all is in good order. AL reported there are signs of wildlife in the pond below the top field which now has dragon flies, beetles and plants growing around it. The other pond looks a bit dry but is ok. AL suggested to let nature grow naturally and giving both ponds a year to establish themselves.

Action/s: NM & NG will inspect the fencing during their site visit. Clerk to circulate the two quotes and photos provided by LH that were sent to contractors showing the type of picket fencing. Group to decide on a full specification. Clerk to check with Cheshire Wildlife Trust the contribution towards the fencing and health & safety requirements.

h. Turnpike Field benches enquiry.

APC moved two of the benches in July 2019 following a request from a resident and left one bench at Emberton Place. The handyman repaired the two benches before they were moved. SB proposed checking if the benches are worth repairing or replacing them if not. NM seconded. All unanimously agreed.

Action/s: NM and NG to inspect the benches and speak to the resident.

i. Requests to book the field.

None.

j. Searching the field with a metal detector.

Not to undertaken this year.

7. Current Position re suggestions for Turnpike Field Recreation Area

a. Current list / next steps.

The group discussed arranging another public meeting.

b. Arranging the next public meeting.

It is proposed this will be in September or October. Date to be decided at the next TFWG meeting.

8. Finance

a. Sources of funding.

MC has applied for grant funding from Calor Gas but no update as yet. Also looking at grant funding from Sport Aid for Britain.

b. Donations.

None.

9. Communications

a. Communication, Consultation and Engagement.

SB will provide an update on last year's progress with the field during his APC Chair annual round up which will be posted shortly.

The group discussed further public consultation is now necessary to garner public views on how to take the field forward.

Action/s: SB to liaise with Clerk to write a news item for AOL providing an update following this meeting and informing residents that the project will be revisited in September to see how to take the field forward.

b. Correspondence / Website.

A local business has emailed to ask about the current progress of the car park project. The group agreed to respond informing them that due to the Covid pandemic the project has not progressed and there is presently no update.

Action/s: SB to draft a response with the Clerk.

A resident has reported rubbish and dog mess being left by the picnic tables. They also reported a piece of wood has broken off one of the picnic tables.

Action/s: NM & NG to inspect the picnic tables and report back.

RW enquired whether a wildflower verge could be placed to the left of the path from Shropshire Street gate down to the pond area to encourage wildlife. AL commented that from an ecological point of view it would be better to intervene as little as possible in the first year and revisit this idea again next year.

10. Playing Field Update

No update as solicitor has been furloughed due to Covid pandemic. Defer until next meeting.

11. AOB

NM asked if an ex-Councillor could be an honorary member of the group. The Clerk confirmed the terms of reference state the group will consist of five members of the Parish Council and up to six co-opted members of the village community.

Action/s: Membership to be discussed at the next TFWG.

JE mentioned there is a large badger burrow where the brook passes under the canal which needs to be looked at so the bank does not collapse.

Action/s: NM and NG to inspect this during their site visit.

12. Date of Next Meeting – To be arranged

Wednesday 16th September 2020 at 7.30pm.

Action/s: Clerk to arrange a zoom call and send a diary invite.

SB declared the meeting closed at 8.45pm.