



EMERSONS GREEN  
TOWN COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Open Spaces Committee

5 May 2020

Held via Skype due to Covid-19 restrictions

**Present** – Councillors: S Budd, S Hill, C Johnson, D Somers (Chairman), P Morgan & M Palmer

**Attendees** – PM - member of the public, Richard Hull - Committee Clerk.

### 103. Apologies for absence –

Apologies were received from Councillor J Adams  
Councillors S Bassett, R Nichols & C Wilkins were absent from the meeting.

### 104. Declarations of Interest under the Localism Act 2011

Cllr Somers declared that in respect of item 111d) the tenant asking for a rent-free period is a near neighbour but not a close personal acquaintance.  
No other interests were declared at this time.

### 105. Public participation (not to exceed 5 minutes)

PM had attended to talk about bee keeping at the allotments. The members agreed he could make comments during agenda item 109.

### 106. Minutes 3 March 2020

It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2020 are a true and accurate record of the meeting and these will be signed by the Chairman at the next opportunity.

### 107. Outstanding Items from these Minutes

Prior to the meeting the Committee Clerk had circulated the following list;

*64. Parking around the junction of Blackhorse Road and Elmtree Avenue.*

*To be brought back to Open Spaces for renewed discussion – partly in the light of a general discussion at the “Blue sky” meeting around parking issues.*

*75. Seeding Emersons Green common*

*Quotes to be obtained for sowing in the autumn.*

*77. Vehicles parking on Vinney Green common*

*To be consider at a subsequent meeting.*

*89. Wildflower seeding on some roundabouts and verges*

*Quotes to be obtained for sowing in the autumn.*

*91. Three small trees at Vinney Green common*

*Quote requested to remove damaged guard and for any other recommended work.*

*92. Trees in Green Lane overhanging properties*

*Planning permission and quotes to be requested.*

*101. Maintenance of bus shelters*

*To be considered at a subsequent meeting.*

### **108. Guidance from The National Allotment Society (NAS) on Covid-19 emergency measures such as plot allocations**

The members noted that it is good that the government has allowed allotments to remain open as this is beneficial for peoples' wellbeing. The Committee Clerk explained that a representative of the NAS had clarified that their statement about suspending lettings was more about non-essential travel than social distancing. It was **Resolved** that the vacant plots will be allocated.

### **109. A request to have beehives on a plot at Dibden Lane**

Prior to the meeting the Committee Clerk and circulated a document with objections from seven of the tenants to having beehives on a plot. The document included comments from PM who had asked for permission to put the hives on a plot. PM commented that in view of the objections this plot was not appropriate.

Members noted that the objections are diverse and are likely to occur whichever plot is considered. After much discussion Cllr Budd proposed and Cllr Hill seconded that the request is declined; this was unanimously **Resolved** and that PM can remain on the waiting list for a plot. The **Committee Clerk** will tell PM how many people are ahead of him on the list and an indication of the turnover of plots. PM offered to let the allotment tenants know the decision via their Facebook page.

### **110. Risk assessment for work not being done by Brandon Trust**

Cllr Hill reported that the grass at Rodway Common has been cut; there were only two workers who were the supervisory staff. Cllr Somers reported that the weed killing has been done at the allotments.

Prior to the meeting the Committee Clerk had prepared a risk assessment on the basis the almost none of the contracted work will be done because of Covid-19 restrictions, since then Brandon Trust have stated they will endeavour to do all they can to ensure any works that are missed are deferred to their post-lockdown schedule. It was **Resolved** that the situation will be reassessed at the next committee meeting and the **Committee Clerk** will include this on the agenda.

### **111. Dibden Lane allotments**

- a) Quote to hire a skip; the quote from Batemans was for £244 plus VAT – Cllr Palmer proposed the quote was accepted and Cllr Budd seconded, it was unanimously **Resolved** to accept the quote and the **Committee Clerk** will instruct the company.
- b) Requests to reduce the height of several willow trees; the trees are believed to be just outside the allotment boundary. It was **Resolved** that the **Committee Clerk** will try to find out who owns the land and pass the information to the tenants concerned.
- c) Members noted the National Allotment Society (NAS) guidance to postpone plot inspections.
- d) Members noted that some tenants will not be maintaining plots because of self-isolating. One tenant had requested a rent-free period; Cllr Somers had declared an interest and whilst he did not leave the Skype meeting he did not take part in the discussion. It was **Resolved** to decline the request and the **Committee Clerk** will inform the tenant.
- e) Members noted that in accordance with guidance from the NAS a toilet will not be hired

### **112. Management of Lyde Green common to protect it from development and further shrinkage**

Cllr Palmer stated the owner of the common had previously tried to de-register the common. Cllr Somers had found an old map that shows that originally the common was larger. Cllr Johnson stated that wildflowers cannot be put on the common. **Cllr Johnson**

had attended the Lyde Green Open Space (LGSO) group meeting in February and will circulate the minutes.

SGC have a scheme of management for the common and the commons officer is involved with the LGSO group. It was **Resolved** that the Town Council would not take any further action at this stage.

### **113. Contract with SGC for grass cutting and other localism services**

Cllr Hill explained that historically SGC removed dog bins but that the Town Council [at that time MRPC] decided to keep them and that SGC own the bins and will maintain them. The Committee Clerk explained that we hadn't received the notification, of the cost of emptying the dog bins, that was issued last September so when the contract was received last month this was the first we knew of the level of the costs. Cllr Hill confirmed that the costs had not increased significantly from the previous contract. It was **Resolved** to agree the costs of £8770.68, as detailed in the contract, apart from the £102.09 for cutting the hedge on the land at Westerleigh Road as the Town Council no longer owns this; the **Committee Clerk** will ask SGC for a revised contract and sign it on behalf of the Town Council pending signature by the chair of Open Spaces at the next opportunity.

### **114. Correspondence**

To receive and respond to correspondence as per the schedule.

1. An email from the Open Spaces Society explaining they give guidance on protecting local green and open spaces by means of Local Green Space designation and Asset of Community Value <https://www.oss.org.uk/what-do-we-fight-for/open-spaces/>.  
*Noted*
2. An email from a member of the public suggesting the Town Council invites StreetCare to a joint inspection of some of the cycle / footpaths in Emersons Green as he considers they are not being maintained to an acceptable standard. *It was Resolved that the Committee Clerk will report the concerns of the member of the public to South Gloucestershire Council.*
3. To note that information about Pocket Parks is not relevant to put on the Town Council's website whilst Covid-19 restrictions are in place. *Noted.*
4. To note that the Royal Pigeon Racing Association are not doing pigeon liberations during the Covid-19 restrictions and that consideration can be given to entering into a contract with them once the restrictions are lifted. *Noted.*

### **115. Items from Members to report**

Cllr Budd stated he had raised some issues by email which will be carried forward to the next meeting.

Cllr Palmer will email a Covid-19 poster, with help information, to the Committee Clerk to be put on the noticeboards.

Cllr Johnson reported there is graffiti on the notice boards at Rodway; the Committee Clerk has already asked our contractor for a quote to remove this.

Cllr Hill reported that SGC have been prompt in clearing fly tipping recently including from Lyde Green and Rodway commons.

Cllr Hill stated that there have been BMX tracks at Rodway common for a long time.

However, these have become more extensive and deliberately constructed recently. Cllr Hill informed some BMX riders that they should not be constructing tracks or digging up blue bells. A local Police Constable has confirmed that the Beat Team will pay passing attention to the area.

Cllr Somers reported a hedge near Hill View, Blackhorse Lane was overgrown and will inform Streetcare.

**116.Next Meeting**

7 July 2020 at 19.00 via Skype or in the Council Chamber of Emersons Green Town Council

The chairman closed the meeting at 20.30