



Minutes of the Meeting of the Operations Committee Held on Thursday 21st April 2022 at 7pm on Zoom

Present:

Councillors:

Ian Hill (IH) - Chairman
Terry Jackson
Tim Horton (TH)

Officer:

Kristina Tynan (KT)

32/22 Apologies for Absence

Roger Beattie, Rob Smith, Alex Basden, Jenny Wilkinson.

33/22 Minutes of the meeting held on 17th March 2022 which were accepted by Council on the 10/4/2022 to be agreed as a correct record

Resolved: That these minutes were a correct record of this meeting and that they be signed by the Chairman.

34/22 Declarations of Interest

There were none notified.

35/10 Matters arising

There were none other than agenda items.

1. Main agenda items

- a. **Task 6 Removal for flower tubs from the Hill Road car park.** We agreed to leave the remaining one in the car park, but to plant it with something with a low requirement for watering. There are some plants in it and TJ to see if any more plants are needed and she will liaise with KT. Our caretaker will clear up weeds growing around it.
- b. **Task 25 Additional finger on the Town Hall fingerpost.** Quote received for finger post signs. We have had a request from a third party to add a finger to this post. It is not clear yet what they want on the finger. It was noted that there would be no room for another sign. The cast iron pole which was broken has now been repaired. TH will look at the wording.
Resolved: That we purchase the sign for the Icknield Way at a cost of less than £300. TH and KT will order this.
- c. **Task 26 Improvements to dangerous crossing at Pyrton Lane/Cuxham Lane.** A crossing has NOT been included in the Pyrton Lane works currently being commissioned. The original WAT A plan showed a crossing on Pyrton Lane and Cuxham Road. IH has contacted Bloor but as yet no response from them other than that the work will not be commissioned until more of the houses have been completed.
- d. **Task 30 Mansle garden improvements** – There had been a meeting with local residents on the 5th April 2022.
A resident had concerns about the gap in the fence and it was suggested that the spare fencing

could block of the gap until a gate is ordered. It was agreed that some tall flowering plants such as hollyhocks be used to mask the wall this year. The residents will set up a work party to do the planting.

TH said that he will replace the vines at his own cost. IH will check on planting requirements. We need to now get quotes for a second entrance into Mansle Gardens and IH to give KT the specification required.

- e. **Task 49 Footpath 36 / Little Orchard.** Ownership of the land has changed again, this time to a local resident. IH has had an informal meeting with them. They have been clearing weeds and planting wildflower seeds. They will be getting rid of the unsightly fence. IH will speak to them further later in the year.
- f. **Task 51 New signs for recreation ground.** We have agreed to place the order for signs with idsign, a Watlington based company, but first we need to get agreement from the sports clubs that they will meet their share of the costs. We have an email confirming that WTFC will loan WCC for their share, so the cost is split 3 ways. The signs will be now ordered.
- g. **Task 71 Gates to public conveniences.** We will need to get SODC approval. We have had two written quotes to date. It was agreed to defer this item.
- h. **NEW TASK 72 Watlington Drainage and Brook** – email was attached from Jamie Rafell at OCC – Need to make recommendation to Council if the proposal outlined is agreeable to WPC. There was discussion on this.
RECOMMEDATION TO COUNCIL: That Council agree with the proposal outlined and which is shown at the end of the Operation Minutes.

TJ said that OCC have previously put a camera down the drains and asked that KT request the video.

Other items

- i. **Task 7 Replacement of litter bins in town centre.** A list of bin repairs/replacements and suggestions for locations of new bins has been sent to SODC. No response as yet.
 - j. **Task 19 Dogs on the playing fields.** We have had requests for additional dog bins. As general waste bins can be used for dog waste it is not worth installing new dog bins. It was noted that dog bins need to be easily accessible for the collectors. An article has been written for the May Watlington Times on dogs on West Meadow. KT will put this on our Facebook page.
 - k. **Task 29 Grass cutting contract.** New contracts have started. Retender of gardening contract is underway.
 - l. **Task 42 List of significant trees in the parish** – This work is being done via the NPAB and their Locality grant.
 - m. **Task 66 New survey of hedges obstructing pedestrian pavements** – This is on hold.
 - n. **Task 70 Cuxham Road (triangle) roundabout needs attention.** County has been chased on improvements.
 - o. **NEW Task 73 Roundabout at the Industrial Estate** - It was noted that is looking very unkempt and dirty. KT will report via FixmyStreet.
2. Progress reports as needed
All other tasks are listed in the January task sheet distributed with this agenda. The lead for each task should report any developments on that task where they consider it necessary. If there are decisions that need to be made, especially with regard to funding, please let the Clerk and the Chairman know in advance.

Task 58 – Telephone Box in Car Park – TH is still working on this.

Task 65 – Footpath 13 to West Meadow – TH has had an email from Jackie Smith OCC and TH will continue to deal with this.

3. Subcommittees

1. **Allotments** – 4th April 2022 – Minutes attached

Compostable toilet

Resolved: That a compostable toilet to be put in at the allotments by the Hazel coppice and that this issue will be reviewed once it has been in place for one year.

A grant has been secured from the National Lottery so there is no cost to the WPC.

Work to Footpath at the end of Love Lane to the Allotments – The quote from Adam Clissold to take out part of the overgrown hedge put up some fencing and sorting out the footpath was looked at. It was agreed that this work be deferred and all committee members to visit the site.

Email from Kirsty and Josh re broken fence between the allotment and recreation ground – It was agreed that we need to block this gap with some robust fencing. This will need to be measured and costed.

2. **PSFC**

a) **Permanent Marking of Rec Car Park** – Email from Martin Gammie re tree roots has been sent to the Sports Clubs. It was agreed that this be sent to the PSFC.

4. Correspondence

1. **F. Paterson – Asking that the Council consider a Zebra crossing on Brook Street**

There was discussion on this and it was agreed that a crossing at the point which leads to Chestnut Place would be very useful as this is the natural crossing point for parents taking their children to the Primary School.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: That WPC ask OCC to consider a pedestrian crossing in this location.

2. **K Martinale – SID on Hill Road** –We have asked OCC to conduct a speed survey- Response has been sent.

3. **Mike Chadwick – Signs etc in Brook** – We have contacted Bloor regarding this.

4. **Steph Van de Pette – Asking for permission to put a recycling bin for her shop by the telephone box in the car park** – It was agreed that this be allowed on a one year trial . Our caretaker to undertake a clean of this area.

5. **I Woodcock – Asking for a pedestrian crossing on Britwell Road** – It was agreed that a crossing on Britwell Road was desirable but taking into consideration that the access to Red Kite Views will be changing it was agreed to defer further discussion on this until the next meeting.

6. **OCC – Footpath No 39 Modification Order 2022** – Johnson’s Alley Footpath – This was noted.

5. Any Other Business

Metal Bollard at Couching St/Brook Street – TH asked if this could be painted. KT said that she thought that it was damaged. TH will look at this.

THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8.06PM

Proposal of Management of the Brook

A. Open sections of the Brook:

The County Council agreed that the management work done on the upstream side of Barnacre by Watlington Environment Group volunteers (where approximately half the width of channel was cleared of silt), was sufficient and effective in both achieving increased water flows, whilst retaining the ecological benefits of the marginal vegetation, and a semi-natural appearance. Similar work was planned shortly on the downstream side of Barnacre in consultation with the householders. The next above-ground section below the "triangle" did not require any clearance at the moment. For these latter two sections the grilles where the brook goes underground again would be cleared regularly. All these sections will be regularly monitored as part of the monthly walkround that WEG has been doing for several years. On this basis, the County Council (subject to agreement of the Parish) were happy for local management of these sections by WEG and other volunteers.

It was noted that it was mostly the underground sections, both upstream and downstream of Barnacre, and below Brookside, which were the limiting factor on capacity, and led to the regular flooding of the road, especially when, as it seemed, they were partially silted up or otherwise blocked.

The particular issue with flooding at the end of Gorwell, even in non-exceptional conditions, was noted, and the potential existence, therefore, of a problem between there, and wherever that drain enters the brook.

B. Underground sections of the Brook and surrounding drains that feed into it:

We agreed that this needs OCC input as investigation and clearance of any blockages needs specialist equipment. There are several parts to this:

1. Sending a camera in to investigate the drains network, and locate any blockages, entering at the downstream end
2. Inspect the silt traps and find the additional trap mentioned by Glynn on Gorwell as part of the investigations
3. Undertake jetting and any repairs, potentially using a recirculating jetter, to clear blockages.

The work could not happen until the new financial year, but in any case, it would be best to wait until water levels were lower, because this would allow for more thorough camera inspection of the network. (Previous desilting has usually taken place at a time of high-water levels as an "emergency" measure without identifying the root cause.)

Also to be taken into account is the potential impact of a sudden volume of silt-filled water (that inevitably arises from desilting work) on the brook downstream - which would be greater when underlying flow is less. Mike would seek advice from a colleague about appropriate timing, so as to achieve the best balance between these factors.

It was noted that the underlying flow of the brook, being groundwater-fed, was seasonal, and typically reached its peak around April or May, although the size of that peak varied greatly between years (this year, levels are on the low side so far). Provisionally, therefore, the aim might be to do the work around June, but a review of water levels would be made around April / May to firm up the scheduling.

C. Wider Watlington drainage:

Clearly a lot of silt is ending up in the drains and the Brook, causing blockages. We discussed trying to do something to reduce the silt getting into the drains in the first place. It was entirely possible that much of it was being washed from roads outside town, such as Hill Road, Howe Hill Road and elsewhere, then carried in the drains to the lowest point where it then settles.

One idea was to try and relieve some of the pressure on the drains in the road, by recutting the grips [channels cut to drain water away from the carriageway and into ditches] on the affected outer roads. Clearly OCC are facing major budget pressures so the idea of volunteers was suggested.

OCC would not want grip maintenance to be undertaken by volunteers on roads where the speed limit is greater than 30mph - this has to be done by OCC contractors and professionals, but in 30mph limits, OCC are happy for volunteers to maintain grips.

It was suggested that OCC do the first 'cut' of all the grips in both the 30mph and derestricted limits, but then get a working group from local residents (rather than WEG) to maintain the grips in the 30mph limit going forwards. The WPC could help in coordinating some helpers.

END

