

07/09

**Minutes of the meeting of the Gaskell Recreation Ground Board of Management held at 7.00pm on Thursday 25 June 2009 in the Guildhall, Much Wenlock.**

Present: in the Chair, Cllr Mr J Yeats.

Councillors: Mrs L Durbin, Mr E W Humphries, Mr T Lathe, Mr T Pinches, Mr D Turner, Mr P M Whiteman OBE

Messrs Mr C Bowden, Mr G D A Bowden, Mr T Childs, Mr D Davies (representing Wenlock Estates).

In attendance: Mr R D May - Clerk to the Board of Management, Mr M Harvey, Leisure Centre Manager.

14. Apologies for absence:

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs A Dugdale and Mr M Grace

15. Declarations of Interest:

Personal: None

Prejudicial: None

16. Election of Chairman: It was

**RESOLVED:** Cllr J Yeats continue as Chairman of this Board of Management for the ensuing year.

Cllr Yeats then took the chair.

17. Election of Vice Chairman: It was:

**RESOLVED:** Cllr Mrs L Durbin be Vice Chairman of this Board of Management for the ensuing year.

18. Minutes: The minutes of the meeting of 12 March 2009, having been previously distributed, were taken as read and confirmed

19. Matters arising from the minutes:

a. Dead-wooding of trees on the Gaskell Field: The Clerk read from correspondence with an Arboricultural Officer and a Parks and a Countryside Sites Manager at Shropshire Council. The advice was that there is only minor deadwood on the Gaskell Field and it doesn't require any action at this stage. The trees are surveyed on a regular basis and this will identify any significant sized deadwood that needs removal. Shropshire Council does and has removed some larger deadwood branches that are picked up by the ranger's monthly visits. This though, applies to the railway line land and the limes on that side. However, in practice, if deadwood is noticed on the Gaskell Field row of limes this would be reported to the Leisure Centre Manager. Shropshire Council removed a couple of larger deadwood pieces early this year from one of the limes just past the Linden gate. It was confirmed that individual deadwood branches that are of significant size are removed between the biennial surveys.

The Chairman stated that the Board needed to fulfil its duty of care. After further discussion it was agreed that Board Members and members of the public should report dead-wood problems to the Leisure Centre Manager or to the Town Clerk who would report them on to the Leisure Centre Manager. The Leisure Centre Manager will then inspect the tree and either commission remedial work or seek advice on whether action was required – and respond accordingly. The Leisure Centre Manager will keep a register of incidents and report action back to the Town Clerk, who will also keep a register of such incidents.

Approved

20. Correspondence

- a. The Clerk reported a letter from Much Wenlock Civic Society that asked the Board to give urgent priority to preserving the town's arboreal heritage, in particular the trees in the Linden Walk and others associated with William Penny Brookes, and to implementing a management plan to ensure the future health of the trees. Board members discussed the letter and agreed in principle with the letter but stated that they were currently constrained by the absence of a funded management plan and asked the Clerk to reply accordingly.
- b. The Clerk reported a letter from the Secretary of the Wenlock Olympian Society seeking permission to install permanent plaques at the sites of the commemorative trees for Queen Elizabeth II and Norman and Barbara Wood. The Board agreed with the request and asked the Clerk to reply accordingly.

21. Gaskell Field Management Plan – Health and Safety Section

Mr Chris Bowden introduced the item and thanked Board members for their review comments that had been reflected in the latest draft version of the document. After a discussion it was

**RESOLVED:** That the Gaskell Recreation Ground Board of Management - Management Plan – Health and Safety Section document be adopted subject to the following changes:

- Title: "Field" changed to "Ground";
- The "I's" and "we's" throughout the document to be replaced with "the Board" or "the Board of Management" as appropriate;
- Correction of the British Standard reference on page 14;
- Removal of the underlined sentence "Pedestrians should be segregated from moving traffic at all times" from page 15;
- In base-lining the document, "draft" references to be removed throughout the document.

Mr Chris Bowden advised the Board that it needed to conduct its own risk assessment of the Gaskell Field before the next Board meeting. He also advised that the Board should not assist users in carrying out their own risk assessments. After a discussion it was agreed that the Town Clerk should set a time and date for the risk assessment session – to be held within the next fortnight.

It was agreed that if Board members had any further review comments on the document they should be forwarded to the Clerk. Mr Chris Bowden advised that he would arrange for the document to be reviewed by an independent legal team.

22. Management of the Gaskell Field

Cllr Whiteman declared a personal interest in the item as a member of Shropshire Council. The Chairman advised the Board that the Town Council had agreed to send a delegation to Shropshire Council to discuss current and future operational and financial management of the Gaskell Recreation Ground – and asked Board members if they had any matters that they would like to be included in the agenda. It was stated that the Joint Use Agreement had not worked well and needed to be replaced or re-negotiated. It was noted that although the Joint Use Management Committee had been disbanded, nothing had been put in its place. It was also stated that the ground (including trees, pitches and bowling green) had been neglected and suffered from lack of proper maintenance and investment. The Board agreed that this was an opportune time to negotiate a new agreement with Shropshire Council.

09/09

23. Leisure Centre Manager's Report.

A copy of Mr Harvey's report had been issued to Board members before the meeting.

Children's Play Area: Cllr Durbin reported that the planting team continued to perform remedial work on the hedges surrounding the play area.

Wenlock Olympian Games: Mr Harvey reported that additional marshals would be deployed during this year's games and that the Society's risk assessment and parking proposals would be finalised in the following week.

bowling green: Mr Harvey said that he had not received any complaints about the condition of the green. He said that he would investigate the board edging around the green which was considered to be too high. Mr Harvey also agreed to investigate the dumping of grass cuttings near the bowling green.

CCTV and lights on the Sports Hall: Mr Harvey agreed to investigate.

School use of Gaskell Field: Mr Harvey agreed to report a complaint that some members of the public were concerned about not being able to use the Gaskell Field when children were playing on it at play times.

Football Pitch: Mr Harvey said that he would mark out the proposed boundary of the pitch which the Board had earlier agreed could be reduced – to the minimum for FA compliance.

Mr Harvey also agreed to investigate the provision of a practice goal.

Mr Harvey also said that he would consult his managers about the rabbit nuisance.

Mr Harvey said that he would provide details of his 2009/10 budget – covering grounds maintenance and remedial work.

24. Proposals for cleanliness of Gaskell Field and School Field

Mr Harvey introduced the proposals paper which included the siting of new litter and dog waste bins and a new litter-picking regime. Board members advised that the litter-picking needed to cover wind-blown litter and that the play area in particular should be checked for glass and plastic items before grass-cutting operations. After further discussion the Board agreed to accept the document in its entirety. Councillors also agreed to consider making a contribution towards the provision of a dog waste bin.

The Chairman thanked Mr Harvey for his report. Mr Harvey then left the meeting.

25. Gaskell Field: Area of Responsibility

The Chairman, referring to plans issued to Board members, stated that the Board needed to understand and agree the area and facilities that it manages. After a discussion it was **RESOLVED**: That the Clerk contacts the Land Registry with available documents and evidence to establish the process for voluntary registration of the Gaskell Field and identify and report back to the council if there are any issues or problems (eg re boundaries) that are likely to arise during the registration process.

Cllr Lathe left the meeting during the above item.

26. Gaskell Field: Estimated maintenance costs

The Chairman introduced the item referring to a spreadsheet of costs that he had created and which had been issued to Board members before the meeting. The Chairman stated that the Board should be working to the 1975 Agreement and that it should estimate costs for the Town Council each year to help create the annual budget. Board members discussed the need for and the appropriate timing of the production of a budget. It was stated that as this year's budget had been set by Shropshire Council, the estimates should be used for the production of a budget for 2010/11. After a discussion it was

**RESOLVED**: That the estimated maintenance costs be submitted to the Town Council with a recommendation that they be used to help prepare a budget for the Gaskell Field.

Approved

27. Gaskell Field: Signage

Cllr Turner introduced the item referring to a position paper that had been issued to Board members before the meeting. The Board discussed the paper and agreed to defer the matter until the completion of the Gaskell Field consultation exercise.

28. Gaskell Field: Opening times and controls

The Chairman introduced the item which was intended to enable discussion on whether the introduction of opening and closing times was appropriate as an aid to control anti-social behaviour and dog fouling. Board members discussed the merits of the proposals and related operational issues. The Board agreed to defer the matter until the completion of the Gaskell Field consultation exercise. The Board was also advised that Much Wenlock Bowling Club currently had an alcohol licence.

29. Gaskell Field: Tree Management

With reference to Cllr Durbin's report on Funding for Tree Maintenance that had been issued prior to the meeting, the Board discussed the need for vigilance in looking for wilt or die-back on rhododendrons and the related sudden oak death virus. The Board agreed that it would be prudent to send samples from the rhododendrons and oak trees on the Gaskell Field to the DEFRA laboratory at Alice Holt in Hampshire to establish if the virus was present. It was stated that a testing charge (of £40 or £70) would only be made if the tests proved to be negative. If the tests prove to be positive, DEFRA and Natural England will take charge of removing any infected plants and trees. After further discussion it was **RESOLVED**: That the Town Council be asked to approve expenditure to enable testing for the sudden oak death virus in the oak trees and rhododendrons on the Gaskell Field.

30. Date of next meeting

It was agreed that the date for the next meeting would be set by the Clerk.

Signed ..... Chairman

24 September 2009