

Minutes of the **Recreation Ground Users Group**
held at 7pm Tuesday 11th July 2023
in the Chamber, Council Offices, North Street, Ilminster

Attendees:

Cllr Sue Osborne, Ilminster Town Council
Cllr Paul Sellers, Ilminster Town Council
Cllr Matt James, Ilminster Town Council
Julie Earp, Deputy Town Clerk, Ilminster Town Council
Jason Fontana, Recreation Manager, Ilminster Town Council
Stuart Shepherd, Ilminster Education Foundation
Jonny Watkins, Vice Chair, Ilminster Youth Football Club
Dan Haines, Chairman, Ilminster Town Football Club
Tony Newman, Ilminster Angling Association
Sian Sainsbury, Safeguarding & Welfare, Ilminster Cricket Club Ltd
Dick Priddle, recreation ground user

1. Welcome and any Apologies

Apologies were received from:

Claire Oaten, Herne View CofE Primary School
Ben Jenner-Hurford, recreation ground user
Craig Rice, Chairman, Ilminster Cricket Club Ltd

2. To elect a Chair

Cllr Paul Sellers proposed Cllr Sue Osborne to be Chair. No other person was proposed. The group voted unanimously to accept Cllr Osborne as Chair.

3. To elect a Vice Chair

Cllr Sue Osborne proposed Cllr Paul Sellers to be Vice Chair. No other person was proposed. The group voted unanimously to accept Cllr Sellers as Vice Chair.

4. Re-adoption of Terms of Reference

There were no suggestions to change the Terms of Reference.

The lack of attendance of a representative from the police and a representative from Wadham School was raised. The Deputy Town Clerk advised the group that this was an issue for the Town Council as well, but she would continue to invite both parties to the meetings. The group were informed that the Partners And Communities Together Committee (PACT) was to be reinstated in the coming months.

5. Update about Open Spaces from the Town Council

The Deputy Town Clerk provided an update.

She informed the group that the Town Council had been awarded S106 funds of £74,094.90 for the refurbishment of the Winterhay Play Park. HAGS was the chosen provider for the new play equipment and the new fencing.

The Community Plan had been received and was due to go before the Town Council on Tuesday 18 July 2023.

There had been several reports with photographs from residents about vehicles parking on the recreation ground and starting to use it like a car park. The grounds

team have also found the pin on the driveway left down on several mornings when they came into work. This has now become a regular occurrence, and if this doesn't stop, the Town Council will need to reconsider access to the pin on the driveway.

Sian Sainsbury confirmed that this topic would be taken to the cricket club committee meeting week commencing 17 July 2023.

The lease negotiations between IEF, Ilminster Cricket Club Ltd and Ilminster Town Council are ongoing but it is hoped to be completed by September.

The recent vandalism on the recreation ground included 3 fires, one on the Sophie Louise (the barge), one by the garages on The Mead and one on Herne Hill, as well as 5 toilet roll dispensers being destroyed in the public conveniences. Schools and the police were now involved. It was suggested that a representative of the fire station may be able to visit the schools before the summer holidays began. Sian Sainsbury volunteered to contact the fire station to see if that was a possibility, and if so, would be in contact with the schools.

6. Draft Canal Management Plan

The Recreation Manager has produced a draft management plan for consideration. It included reports made in February 2023 regarding potential work required and the recorded depths of the canal at each peg point. The Angling Club representative spoke of the reinstatement of the path at the top of the bank to ensure walkers would not be harmed by the angler's rods and lines. Signs would need to be installed at either end of the canal warning walkers of anglers being in the area.

Dan Haines spoke of the water quality tests, and that a report had not been produced due to unforeseen circumstances. However, there is a company who is looking for case studies, who would provide free products in exchange for advertising on the recipient's webpage for example. Unfortunately, the Town Council website can not be used for advertising in this way, however, this could be an opportunity for the Angling Club.

To help with water flow and drainage from Britten's Field into the canal, Dan also asked if the Town Council would be willing to have the ditch, along the path between the Archie Gooch football pitch and the canal, dug out every couple of years.

The Ilminster Angling Association representative asked to take the draft canal management plan away to discuss with the Angling Association and will send their response to the Town Council office with their comments or amendments before the Open Spaces Committee Meeting on 3rd October 2023.

7. Football pitch layouts on Britten's Field

The Ilminster Youth Football Club (IYFC) requested a change to the pitches on Britten's Field to begin from September 2023. They would like to have 4 teams playing at the same time. The 9v9 pitch would be replaced by a 7v7 pitch and a 5v5 pitch which is between the Archie Gooch football pitch and the slope to Herne Hill. Currently, along the length of the Archie Gooch football pitch there is a 7v7 and a 5v5 pitch, and this would change to just one 7v7 pitch. The new layout was considered by the group and there were no objections from any of the attendees.

The Deputy Town Clerk will recalculate the pitch fees and send them to the IYFC for information only at this stage until it is agreed by Open Spaces.

8. Storage of nets

There was discussion regarding the damage to the mobile football nets during the off season by young people using them and the lack of storage for those nets. A few years ago, volunteers from the clubs would carry the posts and nets over to the Archie Gooch Pavilion and store them in the shipping container. This was no longer a viable option.

A suggestion was made for a concrete hardstanding to be put on each field with a storage container. Another suggestion was for the clubs to remove the nets from the posts which would deter young people using them and the nets can be folded up and put away more easily than the posts. The clubs agreed that they could try that next year during the off season.

It was finally agreed that the three clubs, Ilminster Cricket Club Ltd, Ilminster Town Youth Football Club and Ilminster Town Football Club bring a proposal to a future Open Spaces Committee Meeting.

9. Events held on Town Council land

The group noted the information provided regarding the responsibility of event organisers for waste removal, a £500 deposit and the restricted use of vehicles on the Town Council land.

10. Date/time of next meeting

January 2024 – date to be confirmed.

Recommendations for the Open Spaces Committee:

1. To note the Chair and Vice-Chair.
2. To note there are no changes to the Terms of Reference.
3. To consider and agree to getting the ditch, alongside the Archie Gooch pitch and the canal, dug out every 2 or 3 years.
4. To consider and agree to the new pitch layout on Britten's Field and therefore note the change in pitch fees for the Ilminster Youth Football Club.

Meeting ended: 20:45