

## **Gnosall Parish Council**

### **Minutes of the Open Spaces Committee meeting held on Wednesday 7 December 2011 at 7.30pm**

Present   Cllr T Simkin   Cllr R Greatrex   Cllr D Willetts   Cllr P Boston  
             Cllr M Deegan   Cllr J Tomkinson   Cllr K Abbott   Jayne Cooper

And Tony Barrow, Gnosall Allotments Association representative

#### **PUBLIC OPEN FORUM**

Nothing raised

#### **1. To receive apologies and record absences.**

Apologies received from Cllr Wilkes-Mellor, Cllr Cook, Simon Whittick

#### **2. To receive and confirm the minutes of the meetings held on 18 October 2011**

Subject to one minor spelling mistake, the minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.

#### **3. To consider any matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda**

- Memorial Bench - ready for collection. The local collection raised almost £300 which will be put towards the cost of the bench and plaque.
- Bus stop on Brookhouse Road - panel still broken. Clerk to chase
- Additional bollards - JWH Ground Maintenance to arrange with the Clerk.
- Crushed aggregate at allotments - Clerk to liaise with Cllr Greatrex and make necessary arrangements.
- Water pipe project - Cllr Greatrex reported that there had been one small problem when a Severn Trent Inspection had condemned the pipe work from trough 1 to trough 2 as the pipes were not deep enough. Therefore a variation order had been raised to lay new pipes under the path on the field rather than relaying the condemned pipes which would have impact on sheds and fences on managed plots. Open Spaces members had been notified at the time the problem was reported and agreed that a new variation order be raised for £500.00. The project was now complete. Cllr Greatrex was thanked for overseeing this work.
- Following an inspection of the redesigned Chippy jumps the ROPSA report had been received and was satisfactory.
- Mapping Software - Cllr Abbott had reviewed this software and reported that a database of parish council assets could be created on a simple excel spreadsheet giving the same information as this software would. It was also noted that Ordnance Survey mapping system is free to local authorities which would be useful for parish council projects particularly the Acres project. Cllr Abbott and the Clerk to work on the list of assets

#### **4. To receive an update on The Management of The Acres project**

Members received a report giving an update on Phase 1 as detailed in the attached report (Appendix 1). This was discussed in detail. Once tenders had been approved at the Council meeting on 12th December, contractors would be notified and it is hoped, weather permitting, that work on tree felling would start during December and be carried out by GPC's approved grass cutting/tree work contractor, JWH Ground Maintenance. Work on the wetland project and board walk would commence in January. Cllr Deegan and Cllr Simkin were thanked for working on this project and for securing funding.

**5. To receive any correspondence received in relation to Open Spaces**

None received

**6. To confirm the time and date for the next meeting -**

- Full open Spaces Committee meeting to be held on 7.2.12
- Meetings of the working group re Management of Acres to meet as and when required during phase 1 of the project.

*To exclude the press and public whilst confidential information is discussed*

**To consider quotations received for:**

**A) the supply and installation of a boardwalk**

Three quotations had been received for the supply and installation of the boardwalk from:

Fletchers Limited, Goplastic Ltd and Bright Frog

All quotes were discussed and it was agreed to offer the contract, subject to Council approval, to Fletchers Limited. This was agreed by all members.

**b) for the wetland project**

Three quotations had been received for the wetland project from

Foxley Earthworks, WR Arblaster and Mark Stubbs Contractors

All quotes were discussed and it was agreed to offer the contract, subject to Council approved to Foxley Earthworks. This was agreed by all members.

**The Acres Project - Phase One Update.**  
**December 7<sup>th</sup> 2011 - Mike Deegan**

***Funding Confirmed***

Following a final presentation to LEADER, our full application was endorsed and the Parish Council has been awarded the full £45k. It's likely there'll be an underspend on our initial £90k budget and Leader have kindly imposed a caveat so the Parish Council do not have to contribute all of our £10k this year, but safeguard most to contribute to phase two in the next financial year (we are likely to need just £1.5k towards this financial years project).

A contract/funding agreement will be sent by LEADER next week and subject to our agreement, Jayne & myself will attend a meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> of December to sign off the paperwork. The Environment Agency (EA) will also be sending a partnership agreement contract for us to sign for their £35k, which they are expecting to confirm today.

***PR***

We can't proceed with a full press release until we have the above agreements completed. I will put together a new public notice and a handout/leaflet will be ready by next Monday for distribution by staff & councillors. A separate project-brief will be provided for all staff, councillors and project partners.

A preliminary Public Notice has been posted on the Parish Council & Allotments Association (GAA) websites/notice boards and printed in the GPN. The posters from the Consultation Day will be on-hand at the office for public viewing and Bob Johnson has kindly helped to produce updated aerial photographs. Simon Whittick (GAA) is helping with the linked blog to the Parish Council website.

***Schedule***

The preliminary tree-felling should start next week and hopefully be finished by Christmas. Weather permitting, the wetland works will commence in early January and ideally also take three weeks. The boardwalk installation should be able to slightly overlap and start in late January and be completed by mid-February.

***Tree felling/Surgery***

Tree felling will be required in four locations. The main area will involve removing hybrid poplars that were planted 25 years ago to screen and drain the brook. These have limited wildlife value, so 50% will be removed in December and the remaining 50% felled the following winter. British species such as willow and native black poplar will be re-planted in the future. The dead trees close to the path will also be reduced (for safety reasons) and diseased alders (infected by *Phytophthora*) next to the brook coppiced (to try to stimulate re-growth).

Elsewhere, trees are being removed to make way for the silt-trap pond and the route of the bund. A separate contract will be produced to manage the felling through a separate contractor. The trees for attention have been marked-up, a brief spec developed and two quotes have already been received for the work, which is likely to cost between £3.5 and £5k.

***The Wetland Works***

Flood Consent has been approved by EA this week. Three sealed tender offers have been opened and a recommendation from the Open Spaces Committee on the 7<sup>th</sup> will be made for Council's approval at its December 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. The successful applicant will then be informed of the decision and sent a copy of the final contract. Matt Jones of Staffordshire Wildlife Trust will be managing the contract in close liaison with myself on behalf of the Parish Council.

The work will focus on creating a new pond to trap silt from the Hollies Brook, re-profiling the brook channel, re-creating river habitats and removing the spoil bund/levy on the western bank. A number of items will be acquired such as a dam for the silt trap, a water control structure for the ditch on the fen and logs/root plates for the deflectors to create the meanders (unfortunately poplar can't be used as it will take root).

A major part of the works will include building a new soil bund around the allotments to help impede

floodwater. The project will incorporate the Western Power field around the electricity sub-station (subject to final approval from their Environment Officer who is investigating an oil spill which occurred during theft of metal fittings) and excavated material will also be used to protect the sub-station. Any surplus material will be taken off-site to be deposited on the Village Green - for use in future landscaping (this has also been approved by EA).

Severn Trent Water (STW) has provided definitive maps of their service pipes under the Acres for use by our contractors. Likewise, all contractors will be made aware of working procedures for the electricity lines and underground cables.

The fence around the abandoned allotments and along the main access track will be removed. A separate contact will be required towards the end of the project to install new fencing. This will include fencing around the new pond (and double-gates installed to allow maintenance of the silt-trap), between the allotments/wetland and around the main fen (to impede uncontrolled access). Gates will be installed where necessary and a kissing gate provided to allow easier pedestrian access to the allotments.

### ***The Boardwalk***

Flood Consent for this structure has been approved by EA this week. As with the wetland contract, three sealed tender offers have been opened and a recommendation from the Open Spaces Committee on the 7<sup>th</sup> will be made for Council's approval at its December 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. The successful applicant will then be informed of the decision and sent a copy of the final contract. I will manage the contract on behalf of the Parish Council.

The boardwalk will be approximately 275m long and follow a sinuous route. It will incorporate at least two dipping platforms, three benches and motorcycle exclusion bollards at each end. To conform to disabled-access criteria, passing places for wheelchair users will be required every 60m, though the dipping platforms can also be used for this purpose.

The route across the brook will be closed during the period between when the culvert is removed and the boardwalk crossing installed. STW has been asked for the use of their locked compound to store materials during installation.

### ***Other issues***

Mike attended a meeting with EA and STW regarding pollution into the brook from two sources: -

- Pollution from the sewage chamber - STW will investigate the possibility of putting a new manhole cover that cannot lift and cause pollution to the brook. The chamber can't be modified or reduced in size as it will restrict its capacity. However, it seems the main cause of surcharging sewage is not from excess water but due to blockages caused by grease & fat (from kitchen sinks).

Incidents were confirmed by EA reports, but the Parish Council needs to report all incidents to EA. We could also highlight the issue of disposal of grease and fat as part of the educational part of our project.

- Surface water outfall - polluted water is entering the brook from the culvert outfall nearest the A518 road. The likeliest cause is a misconnected dishwasher or plumbing from a recent extension/development. STW confirmed that this is not their asset and is more likely the responsibility of the County Council (who own the culvert). EA will check for any misconnections/ongoing investigations relating to this outfall – any help from the Parish Council to try and establish the source would be appreciated.