



EAST WITTERING & BRACKLESHAM PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF THE ASSETS AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 19th NOVEMBER 2020 at 2.00PM VIA ZOOM.

Present:

Cllr. Brian Reeves (BR)

Cllr. Richard Ford (RF)

Also in attendance:

Sam Tate, Parish Clerk

1 x member of the public

Cllr. P. Kensington

Apologies:

Cllr. J. Salamon (JS)

Absent:

Emile Kott (EK)

Darren Banks (DB)

The meeting was not quorate so any decisions were made under the Coronavirus scheme of delegation.

20.12 **Apologies for absence**

None

20.13 **Declarations of interest**

None

20.14 **Minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2020**

These were agreed as a true record and signed

20.15 **Review of current financial statement and budget monitor**

Bracklesham Barn was again closed due to COVID restrictions and was not expected to be able to reopen until the New Year. On this basis, it was not anticipated that any significant additional income would be generated in the current financial year and that there would be a deficit of approx. £18,000 in the annual budget as a result. The Clerk explained that where possible, savings had been made on the annual running costs of the Barn and parks, but that a decision would need to be made at the end of the year on how to meet any shortfalls – this may require transfers from the general reserve, ear marked reserves, and/or virements from other budget areas. A report outlining recommendations would be prepared before year-end in March 2021.

*Due to the confidential nature of the next item, the committee **DECIDED** to exclude members of the public who were placed in the waiting room at 2.12pm.*

The committee discussed persistent aged debtors at the Barn. There were two accounts totaling over £2,000 that had been outstanding for a considerable period of time, with the oldest invoices dating back to August 2019. In line with government advice, the council had shown forbearance over the debt.

The Clerk recommended that the debtors be given until the end of the next financial

year (March 2022) to clear the balances via a monthly payment schedule to be prepared by the Parish Council.

Any bookings for these accounts from November 2020 onwards would be paid monthly in advance so that additional debt could not be accrued and the situation deteriorate further. Failure to make any of the agreed payments on the schedule or to pay in advance for new bookings would result in immediate forfeiture of all bookings at the Barn.

One of the debtors also had a significant amount of equipment stored at the Barn which they were not currently paying for. The Clerk had requested that this be removed as it is taking up storage space which could be re-let to other clients. The owner has declined to remove the items and has requested that the Parish Council allow them to continue to indefinitely store the items free of charge. The committee agreed with the recommendation of the Clerk that the owner be given until the end of January 2021 to remove the items, after which time they would be disposed of by the Parish Council.

*The committee **DECIDED** to accept the recommendations and directed the Clerk to write to the two debtors detailing the Parish Council's terms for payment and to request removal of the items from the Barn storage facilities by the end of January 2021.*

The members of the public were readmitted to the meeting at 2.30 pm.

20.16 **Bracklesham Barn Update**

The Clerk had applied for a Local Restrictions Grant from CDC to help cover some of the lost income – this is for £1334, payable for every four weeks that a business is forced to remain closed. The Clerk did not realistically anticipate that the Barn would reopen until the new year at the earliest.

The building had been made safe, with heating left on a trickle to avoid pipes freezing over winter and with the cleaners offering a daily maintenance check and caretaking service rather than cleaning – this meant that they were undertaking daily litter picks, weekly fire alarm tests, daily flushing through of pipes and systems, replacement of any missing tiles, etc. so that the property remained in good repair whilst it was closed.

20.17 **Bracklesham Park Update**

The Clerk had requested that the handyman remove the nest swing from the playground as it was fraying. It had not been replaced yet due to the ongoing COVID restrictions as it was felt that it could encourage mixing of non-household groups.

20.18 **Downview Update**

The grant monies for the pavilion refurbishment works had been received from CDC, although the contractor did not have any availability until after Christmas, so the work was expected to begin in the Spring. The Clerk was endeavouring to work with the football club in the meantime to ensure the improvements met their needs.

20.19 **Booker Green Update**

Nothing to report.

20.20

Urgent matters

The Council had received a request from the Manhood Heritage and Wildlife Group (MHWG) for a contribution towards an interpretation board at the wildlife pond at Hilton Park.

*The committee **DECIDED** to contribute £250 towards the costs of the board.*

Signed _____

Date _____