

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE

Wednesday 1st February 2017

Present: Cllr Dean (Chair), Cllr Stanley, Cllr Allardyce, David Oversby and Sharon Amos

Two members of the Public

Apologies – None

Minutes of the Last Meeting – Approved

Declarations of Interest – Cllr. Dean as she lives close to Woodlands Walk

Amenity Contracts – Update.

All contracts seemed to be progressing well and there were no issues arising. Cllr. Allardyce commented that he had walked along the A20 and was impressed with the work being done.

Tree Survey Woodlands Walk

It was agreed that Sharon Amos would approach Jeremy Ault a tree surgeon contact and Cllr. Dean would also approach a reputable tree surgeon to update the last Tree Survey with a view to getting quotations for any urgent work. It was hoped this could be reported back to the Council at the February meeting.

Cllr. Allardyce proposed the permitted footpath between the agricultural land and The Shaws be abandoned and allowed to return to nature. This footpath is currently blocked at the Court Lodge Road end by a large concrete block so in any event is unusable. It was agreed that maintenance of this footpath included in the Amenity Contract takes account of nesting etc., and covering this area there should be no change.

Pilgrims Lake

Although not on the agenda it is related to Woodlands Walk There is a problem with unpleasant smelling algae as soon as the weather starts getting warmer. Last summer was particularly bad. Speaking to various environmental experts it would appear that the best option is to dredge it to remove years of leaf mould that has collected on the bottom. This in turn creates the algae due to the high nutrients the fallen leaves produce as they rot down. However apart from being very costly this presents a problem as there is nowhere to put the silt once it is out of the lake. One suggestion is a friendly farmer might allow us to deposit it on his land free of charge because of the high nutrient content. Additionally access to the lake would be difficult if not impossible for large tankers.

Another solution is Aquaplancton which is highly recommended; safe for all forms of wildlife and is used in fish farms. However, this is also expensive and we would need to buy 80 bags at £29.20 per bag for in the region of a 2 acre lake. Then someone has to spread it over the surface of the lake. It is a powder that then sinks to the bottom and destroys the silt which feeds the algae. The cost for

this would be £2,336 inc VAT. The manufacturer of Aquaplancton advise that depending on how bad the algae is, it may be necessary to repeat the process the following year.

A third option is grass carp which are a non- native species but can be purchased here. These fish eat weed and algae but would not eat the iris's that are round the edge of the lake. The Environmental Agency information on these fish is that if lakes have a grille to prevent them from migrating into waterways then these would be permitted.

These fish need a water temperature of 23 degrees or more to breed ad therefore do not breed in this country. A Kent based fish farm imports them from Israel. The cost per fish is approx. £15 for an 8 inch fish which could then grow up to 2 feet depending on how much there is to eat. They only feed once the weather gets warmer and I assume lay dormant once the algae has died down in the winter. The life span of these fish can be up to 50 years.

It was agreed to recommend to full council we investigate the possibility of the Grass Carp being put into the lake. Cllr. Dean offered to ask the supplier to view the location to establish any potential problems and advise exactly how many fish would be needed

Dog Bin Replacement

Two members of the public were at the start of the meeting to give their insight into the problem of Dog mess around the village. They made suggestions as where any new possible dog bins should be sited. Depending on costs obtained by the Clerk we recommend purchasing.

It was also suggested that we approach both Barratts and Crest Nicholson to supply bins on their developments. This is something the Planning Committee in conjunction with the Clerk can take forward.

It was further suggested that our Borough Councillors make representations to MBC about their disastrous decision to remove dog waste bins throughout the borough.

It was agreed we would continue to use Network Magazine and FaceBook to encourage people to report anyone they see allowing their dog to foul public places. In effect – name and shame and reminding offenders they may be taken to Court, fined up to £1000 plus costs and receive a criminal record.

Another suggestion was to approach the school to allow someone (perhaps our PCSO) give a lecture to the children asking them to design a suitable poster on the subject and if they have a dog speak to their parents. Posters could then be reproduced and placed around the village.

Items for discussion at the next meeting: Update on Woodlands Walk Tree Survey

Update on Algae on the Lake

Date of next meeting: To be confirmed.