

**REPORT OF THE LEISURE AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON 27th May 2008 AT OLD MILL HALL, GROVE**

Present: Cllr W R Ackers (Chairman) Cllr C Phillips
Cllr S K Dexter Cllr J M Stock
Cllr M Mellersh Cllr H A Webb
Cllr F D Parnell

In attendance: 57 members of the public

Clerk: Mr G M Mundy

Prior to the start of the meeting the chairman informed the members of the public present that due to the high turnout for item 14, that not everyone would be allowed to ask questions. The chairman also informed the public and the committee that item 14 would be brought forward to allow a full discussion.

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillors I Caldicott, W Evans, K Jones, J Nunn-Price and I Woodbridge.

2 Declarations of Personal or Personal and Prejudicial Interests in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting.

Cllr Dexter declared an interest in items 6(f), 6(g), 8(a), 10(a) and 14. Cllr Webb declared an interest in items 6(a), 6(g), 8(a), 10(c) and 14.

3 Election of a Committee Chairman

It was **MOVED** Cllr Parnell and **SECONDED** Cllr Dexter that Cllr Ackers be elected Committee Chairman. There being no other nominations, Cllr Ackers was elected Committee Chairman.

4 Election of a Committee Vice-Chairman

It was **MOVED** Cllr Stock and **SECONDED** Cllr Ackers that Cllr Jones be elected Committee Vice-Chairman. There being no other nominations, Cllr Jones was elected Committee Vice-Chairman.

5 Sign report of committee meeting held on 1st April 2008

Cllr Stock said that her remark regarding visible screw heads on the toddlers climbing frame had been omitted from para 6 (a) (i) in the minutes. It was agreed to amend the minutes.

It was **MOVED** the chairman and **RESOLVED** unanimously

“that the minutes as amended be signed as a true record of the meeting”

Item brought forward

14 Further discussion on the issue of dogs on the Recreation Ground and Wasbrough Field

The Chairman reminded the meeting of the reasons, why this issue had been highlighted by the sports clubs using the Recreation Ground and Wasbrough Fields. They had written to the council and had an article published in the local press.

The Chairman also reminded those present that an ‘in principle only’ decision had been agreed at Full Council and that this decision was subject to finding an alternative location for dog walking and meeting all legal requirements. An article had been published in the Grove Parish Newsletter asking for views and suggestions for alternative walking areas.

It had been further discussed at Full Council and a recommendation had been made to restrict dog walking to the perimeter of the fields and for dogs to be kept on leads, this was also subject to legal requirements being met.

The Chairman said that many letters, both for and against a ban on dog walking, had been received from both the dog walking community and sports clubs. Cllr Parnell said that to date no reply had been received from Mr Wasbrough with regard to his views on the proposed dog control order.

Clerks note: Correspondence had now been received from the agents of Mr Wasbrough stating that he was unlikely to oppose the issue of a dog control order but wished to know, prior to making a final decision, how this would be policed and what would happen in the summer months when the pitches were not actually used.

The Chairman informed those present that Standing Orders were suspended to allow members of the public to ask questions. He asked that everybody stated their name so that the minutes would identify questions and questioners. Where individuals did not state their name the question and answer would not be recorded

Mr T Knight asked if the council had actually agreed to ban dogs from the Grove Recreation Ground and Wasbrough Fields? The Chairman reminded those present that the council had agreed in principle to ban dogs subject to finding an alternative location and meeting all legal requirements.

Natalie Allen said that the council must find a collaborative way for all parties to work together rather than criminalizing dog walkers.

Sue Haynes asked how many fixed penalty notices/enforcements had been made against dog walkers? Cllr Parnell informed the meeting the parish council had resolved to prosecute offenders, but as yet, due to lack of evidence, no one has been prosecuted

Richard Barbour suggested that the council could employ its own warden, who could be funded from the fines generated.

Dean Bateson said that current government legislation allows for dogs to be exercised in a natural manner, which means off the lead.

Jean Stacey asked if the Mably Way pitches could be used for dog walkers? The Chairman replied that the pitch areas would be fenced off from the start preventing dogs from entering the pitch areas.

Sandra Jenkins said that because the areas were designated for recreational use, this is meant for everyone. The Chairman replied that the legal issues concerning Grove Recreation Ground had still to be resolved and that both areas were designated for recreational use.

Sandra Jenkins added that the sports clubs needed to clean up the areas after their fixtures because at present sock-tape, bloodstained bandages and plastic teacups were left strewn across the fields. The Chairman agreed and said that this issue had already been raised with the clubs and that this will have to work both ways in future.

Michelle Lewis said that she had an interest on both sides; she did not want a ban because she is a dog owner, but also her son plays football for Grove Challengers FC. She commented that she could see both sides of the problem and that whilst she wanted her son to be able to participate in sport safely she wanted to be able to exercise her dog in a safe and relatively secure place as well.

Guy Brenchley asked why the council wanted to ban dogs? The Chairman replied that the majority of dog walkers clean up after their pets, and that the issue was with those who did not. Guy Brenchley replied and said that the council should not ban dogs for the sake of a small number of people who did not clean up after their pets. He commented that the vast majority of dog walkers did not want to see dog mess left on the pitches any more than the

sports clubs or the parish council. He suggested that rather than ban dogs a better approach would be for the parish council, the sports clubs and the dog walkers to work together to see if an alternative solution could be found.

Mr Markham said that because some dog walkers exercise their pets at unsociable hours (before 5am and after 9pm) a dog ban would not stop them.

Lisa Halsey asked what plans were being made for those people who litter the fields? The Chairman replied that all of the issues raised were noted and would be discussed at further meetings.

Jim Homer said that he could not excuse GRFC members for dropping litter etc but added that the majority of the waste was from teenagers who obtained their canned beer and bottles of alcohol from the supermarkets and not Grove Rugby Club.

Melissa Haynes said that rubbish should be treated in the same manner as dog waste.

Richard Barbour said that whilst he was walking his dog he came across discarded bandages that had blood on them.

Jackie Ryan said that her dog had cut a paw on discarded broken glass.

Dave Scrimshaw said that on occasions he had witnessed sports club members urinating in the hedge line surrounding the fields.

Paul Roberts informed the meeting that because of the amount of litter and food waste around the skatepark he had seen rats at the skatepark.

Dean Bateson asked how many times the issue of dog waste had been mentioned in the minutes of the GRFC committee minutes. The Chairman replied that this issue was often minuted in the Pavilion Management Committee minutes. Cllr Dexter added that there were two sets of minutes - GRFC Committee and the Pavilion Management Committee, that these should not be confused with each other.

Guy Brenchley said that everyone was in agreement to appoint a dog warden and that the fines generated would pay for the warden. The Chairman replied that the Leisure and Recreation Committee was not in a position to go ahead at this time and that further discussion was required. It would however be up to this committee to make recommendations to Full Council on this issue.

Cllr Parnell said that the council had made the decision but certain issues had still not been resolved. The Chairman suggested and it was generally agreed that a working party be formed from representatives of dog walkers, sports clubs and parish councillors.

The Chairman said that 4 or 5 dog walkers would be sufficient, plus one representative per club. It was also suggested and agreed that the first meeting take place shortly at the Grove Recreation Ground.

Clerk

It was suggested from those present that the following would be the representatives of the dog walkers:

Alex Adam, Sue Haynes, Guy Brenchley, Dean Bateson, Natalie Allen and Vicki Ruston. All agreed to act as representatives.

Cllr Parnell informed those present this issue would not be discussed at the next Full Council meeting because of insufficient time and may take several months to resolve. The working would have to meet first before this issue could progress.

The Chairman ended this issue by informing those present that all of their correspondence, comments and questions had been noted and would be considered, along with any findings from the working party, before any final decision was made. He thanked them for attending following which 54 members of the public left the meeting.

The Chairman re-instated Standing Orders.

It was generally agreed that working party be formed, consisting of the following people:

<u>Councillors</u>	<u>Sports Clubs</u>	<u>Dog Walkers</u>
Cllr Ackers	1 x rep from GRFC	Sue Haynes
Cllr Evans	1 x rep from Challengers	Guy Brenchley
Cllr Stock	1 x rep from Rangers	Dean Bateson
Cllr Phillips	1 x rep from the Bell	Natalie Allen
		Vicki Ruston
		Alex Adam

It was also generally agreed that the following actions be made as a matter of urgency:

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| Clerk | • Contact was made with and advice sought from the Kennel Club |
| Clerk | • Advice on covenants regarding Grove Recreation Ground and Wasbrough Fields |
| Parnell | • Meeting with Mr Wasbrough |
| Ackers | • Contact with Emily Allen from the Herald series |

6 Matters arising from the previous minutes

The following matters arising from the previous meeting were reported on:

- (a) Item 5(a) – Conditions of use. The Clerk confirmed that Grove Challengers FC had received the conditions of use document.
- (b) Item 6(a)(i) – Lifting carpet around the springer play equipment in the MGPA. The Clerk reported that the lifting carpet had not been reported in the latest Venturplay inspection report, but would still be monitored.
- (c) Item 6(a)(i) – Swing seats in the Westbrook play area. The Clerk reported that the swing seats were monitored regularly.
- (d) Item 6(d) – Millbridge Allotments Association. The Clerk reported that he had written to all of the allotment holders who were not members of the Association.
- (e) Item 7(a) – Request from Grove Rangers FC. The Clerk reported that he had replied to the requests from Grove Rangers FC.
- (f) Item 7(b) – Change of date for the GRFC rugby summer camp. The Clerk reported that Grove RFC had spoken to the organisers of the Folk Festival and a satisfactory agreement had been reached regarding sharing the areas.
- (g) Item 7(c) – Extension of playing season. The Clerk reported that he had informed all clubs of the extension to the playing season.
- (h) Item 7(d) – Request from Grove Scouts to use the recreation ground. The Clerk reported that he had informed Grove Scouts of the committee's decision.
- (i) Item 7(f) – Hebborns fair. The Clerk informed the committee that the fee for Hebborns fair to attend Wasbrough Field was increased from £350 to £360 last year.
- (j) Item 8 – Mably Way recreational area. The Clerk informed the committee that work had started on the new pitch areas at the rear of the health centre.
- (k) Item 10 – Grove Recreation Ground car park. The Clerk informed the committee that this matter was ongoing and that he was awaiting further quotations.

7 Nomination of members to the following outside bodies

It was agreed to nominate the following members to the following outside bodies:

- (a) Cllr Stock was nominated as the member for Grove JET.
- (b) Cllr Ackers was nominated as the member for the Pavilion Management Committee.
- (c) Cllr Ackers was nominated as the member for the OPFA.
- (d) Cllrs Mellersh and Ackers were nominated as the members for the Youth Advisory Committee.

8 Reports from the following outside bodies

- (a) Grove RFC Pavilion Management Committee – The Chairman informed the meeting that part of the discussion was regarding the proposed pitch layout for the 2008/09 season and that a suggested scheme had been proposed. He informed the meeting that Grove RFC was not happy with the layout and would bring their suggestions to another meeting on 2nd June. He reminded the meeting that unless a scheme that was acceptable by all clubs was agreed in writing by 30th June 2008 then this matter would be brought back to the Leisure and Recreation Committee for it to make the decision.
- (b) Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association – No meeting had been held.
- (c) Grove Village Hall Management Committee – The Clerk read out the note from Cllr Williamson with regard to the last meeting of the Village Hall Management Committee.
- (d) Youth Advisory Committee – The Youth Advisory Committee minutes of 28th February 2008 and the Sweatbox Union minutes of 31st March were both noted.

9 Items relating to play areas/allotments/open spaces.

- (a) Play equipment inspection reports:
 - (i) Summary of councillor reports – The summary was noted.
 - (ii) Venturplay reports for March and April – The Clerk was asked to obtain quotes for replacing the fence around the basketball court. The Clerk was also asked to look at the protruding nails at the basketball court.
- (b) Quotation for the inspection of council play areas from Record RSS – Following a short discussion it was generally agreed not to accept the quotation from Record RSS for play equipment inspections and remain with the arrangement with Venturplay.
- (c) Quotations for the footpath to the youth shelter in the Mary Green play area – Following a short discussion it was generally agreed to submit the quotations for a footpath to the youth shelter in the Mary Green play area to Grove JET.
- (d) Quotations for fencing the Mary Green play area – Following a short discussion it was generally agreed to seek a further quotation from Keith Pepler (a local fencer) and refer this item to the next committee meeting.
- (e) Funding for prizes for the annual allotments competition – It was **MOVED** the Chairman **SECONDED** Cllr Stock and **RESOLVED** unanimously

Clerk
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Clerk

“to award prizes for the 2008 allotments competition as follows:

2 x 1st and 2 x runner up prizes for the best allotment plots at Millbridge and Village Hall. A £20 voucher for each of the 1st prizes and 2 x £10 vouchers for the runners up at each of the allotment gardens”

Clerk

10 Grove Recreation Ground/Wasbrough Fields issues

- (a) Request from GRFC to plant a memorial tree on Grove Recreation Ground/Wasbrough Fields – Subject to confirmation of the location by GRFC, it was generally agreed to grant the request and allow the planting of a memorial tree.

Clerk

- (b) Correspondence from Diana and Leigh Donald – The correspondence was noted.
- (c) Terms of the lease for the Grove Challengers FC changing facilities – It was **MOVED** Cllr Dexter **SECONDED** Cllr Stock “**that the ground rent for the Challengers FC changing facilities be set at £100 per annum for the next 5 years**”

It was further **MOVED** Cllr Mellersh **SECONDED** Cllr Parnell “**that the ground rent for the Challengers FC changing facilities be set at £50 per annum for the next 5 years**”

Voting took place on the amended proposal by Cllr Mellersh as follows; 3 were in favour and 2 against. Therefore the amended proposal was carried.

It was generally agreed that the Clerk draft the terms of the remainder of the lease incorporating the ground rent and use the current leases from the GRFC club house and Scout Hut as examples.

Clerk

- (d) Request from Grove Scouts to hold their own key to the Memorial Gates – Following a short discussion regarding access through the Memorial Gates, it was **MOVED** Cllr Parnell **SECONDED** the Chairman and **RESOLVED** unanimously

“**to allow Grove RFC, Grove Challengers FC and the Grove Scouts to hold their own keys for the Memorial Gates to allow access onto the Recreation Ground in case of emergencies**”

The Clerk was asked to obtain two more keys and issue them to Grove Challengers and Grove Scouts accordingly.

Clerk

- (e) Correspondence from a Grove resident (name and address withheld by the Clerk) – It was suggested by Cllr Parnell and generally agreed that Cllr Ackers and Cllr Parnell meet with the resident to discuss the issues. The Clerk was asked to send the relevant points to all of the sports clubs. The Clerk was also asked to go through the letter and send the relevant answers and information to Cllrs Ackers and Parnell.

Ackers/
Parnell

Clerk

11 Mably Way Recreational Area

The Clerk informed the meeting that work on the Mably Way recreational area had started.

12 Trees

- (a) Free walnut tree saplings– The Clerk informed the meeting that he had received an offer of free walnut tree saplings. It was agreed that the Clerk accepts the offer and write a letter of thanks.

Clerk

13 Allianz Insurance - quotation for the council vehicle insurance premium

It was **MOVED** the Chairman **SECONDED** Cllr Stock and **RESOLVED** unanimously

“**to accept the quotation from Allianz Insurance for vehicle insurance for 2008/2009 at a cost of £3,875.21**”.

Clerk

15 Income and Expenditure for the year ending 31st March 2008

The Income and Expenditure sheet for the year ending 31st March 2008 was noted.

16 Chairman’s urgent communications

- (a) Millbridge Allotments Lease – The Clerk informed the meeting that the 5 yearly lease for Millbridge Allotments had expired a year ago and that this was an oversight on the part of Smith Brothers, not the council. Smith Brothers had been in contact with the Clerk and informed him that they were happy to continue with the lease for a further period of 7 years,

but commencing last year. They also informed the Clerk that the rent for the land would increase from £240 to £300 per annum, which would start from this year.

- (b) Damage to the cargo net in the Mary Green play area – Cllr Stock informed the meeting that a little while ago it was brought to her attention that persons unknown had tampered with the cargo climbing net in the Mary Green play area. The Clerk had been made aware of this and had contacted Wicksteed Ltd to obtain some spare parts. The Clerk informed the meeting that the cargo climbing net has been made safe by the maintenance staff and was still in use.

17 General correspondence

- (a) The Playing Field magazine was noted.

The meeting closed at 9.50pm

Confirmed: 8th July 2008

Chairman