

Deputy Clerks Report

JUNE 2020

1. GROUNDMAN'S REPORT

Council agreed (Minute ref; F20/033) to reduce the maintenance to the Bowling Green to a minimal level to maintain the asset whilst a forward plan is determined.

03.06.2020 We called today at Westclyst Football Pitch and cut the pitch, steep banking and boundaries fencing line.

09.06.2020 We called today at the Bowling Green and we cut the sward also carried out visit to Westclyst.

16.06.2020 We called today at the Westclyst Football Pitch and cut the sward, banking and trimmed the boundary fence line.

23.06.2020 We called today at the Bowling Green and cut the sward.

2. THE TREE COUNCIL GRANT APPLICATION

The Tree Council is offering grants for UK tree planting projects across the community. Parish Councils can apply for funding tree planting projects for this Winter (Nov 2020 – March 2021), preferably during National Tree Week 28th November to 6th December 2020. The amounts of grant can be between £300 and £1,500 (excluding VAT) with certain criteria to be met.

This project also ties in with the Councils Emergency Climate Declaration that the council adopted June 2019. The trees planted will help to offset some of the carbon dioxide that is created, whilst improving the green areas in our parish for the future generations to come, whilst enhancing and encouraging more wildlife/insects to the area. Holly Close triangle and the Maple Rd green will be looked at to replacing /planting new hedges in these areas.

Tree planting locations will be –

- Holly Close triangle,
- the stripe of land above the top hedge of playing field (near the outside gym, roadside)
- green area on Maple Road.

The three different areas each need separate permission, with plans drawn up of species and location of trees to be planted as well as a detailed maintenance package. EDDC, Highways and National Trust have given permission to plant in these areas. Site meetings (whilst observing social distancing) will take place with EDDC and the lead ranger from the National Trust over the next few weeks.

The project will be open to the children of Broadclyst (with the help of an adult) to help plant a tree and to adopt it during National Tree week. The project will be shared on the website and Facebook pages to encourage children to come forward so we can monitor numbers. The National Trust are very keen to support this and will help with the tree planting event.

Recommendation: For council to delegate to the Deputy Clerk to apply for the grant and to manage the project.

3. COUNCILLOR ADVOCATE SCHEME

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner is asking for representatives from Councils to join the Councillor Advocate Scheme. The Councillor Advocate Scheme has around 150 nominated advocates and the OPCC office would like to increase this number.

The scheme works by offering:

- face to face discussions: access to quarterly meeting with the police at a local level:
- Access to Councillor advocate themed seminars each year:
- Access to a named contact within the commissioner's office
- Quarterly key topic briefing documents specifically for advocates
- Quarterly newsletter from the commissioner
- Notification of press releases issued by the police and commissioner
- Access to police campaign materials (e.g. posters and leaflets)
- Prior notification of and invitation to police arranged community engagement activities

The Deputy Clerk will be one advocate along with one Councillor.

Recommendation: For Council to nominate one representative from Broadclyst Parish Council to join the Councillor Advocate Scheme

4. PLAY PARK RE-OPENING

In March 2020, the government advised Council to shut all playparks and outdoor gyms until further notice. From the 4th July, Government has advised that play parks and outdoor gyms may re-open following the Covid-19 guidance. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-playgrounds-and-outdoor-gyms/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-playgrounds-and-outdoor-gyms>

"The guidance states a COVID-19 risk assessment must be carried out before reopening. Failure to complete a risk assessment which takes account of COVID-19, or completing a risk assessment but failing to put in place sufficient measures to manage the risk of COVID-19, could constitute a breach of health and safety law"

The initial guidance stated that:

Owners and operators need to take in to account:

- Social distancing measure such as signs to remind users of the existing guidance
- Advisory limit on the maximum number of people in the play park/outdoor gym at one time.

- Limit the number of users on each piece of equipment
- Limit the number of seats on equipment i.e. swings to encourage social distancing
- Set a time limit for using the park/outdoor gym
- Queues or waiting areas to be marked out using barriers
- Provide more waste bins and more rubbish collections
- Manage any potential risk for cleaning high traffic touch points frequently (cleaning regimes)
- Signs to encourage effective sanitation by users, parents, guardians and carers.

However, there has been much criticism of this advice from playground operators, noting that it is virtually impossible to enforce and expensive in terms of staff resources and sanitiser to apply. Many town and parish councils are not yet opening their playgrounds as they feel that the actions required to mitigate risk are not 'doable'.

The phrasing that high-traffic areas must be cleaned 'frequently', with no clarification of appropriate time schedules, is one that causes significant issues in managing the reopening and safe use of the playground.

We had originally intended to present Council with the RA and mitigations for sign-off prior to re-opening, however we understand that a revision of the guidance is likely to be undertaken, so feel we have no options but to recommend that:

the reopening of the play area awaits revised guidance and is delegated to the Chairman and Officers in consultation with the Council's insurers upon receipt and analysis of same, remaining closed in the meantime.

We appreciate that this will be disappointing for our community, many of whom have been eagerly awaiting the reopening, however the health and safety of playground users must be of paramount importance. We will post appropriate notification on site, as well as on the website and social media pages.

Outdoor Gym

The current requirement for cleaning high traffic touch points also applies to the outdoor gym equipment, so we feel that this also cannot safely reopen under current guidelines.

This concludes my report to Council.

Natasha Curwood,
Broadclyst Parish Deputy Clerk

30.06.2020