

GASKELL RECREATION GROUND MUCH WENLOCK

Registered Charity no. 1116940

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held remotely by video-conference
at 6 pm on Thursday, 11th June 2020

Present:

Cllrs Daniel Thomas (in the chair), Mary Hill, Marcus Themans, Duncan White – Much Wenlock Town Council
Chris Bowden – Wenlock Estates
Bill James – Much Wenlock Cricket Club, Colin Wildblood – Much Wenlock Bowling Club, Mike Bainbridge – William Brookes School, Mac Bardsley – Wenlock Olympian Society, Ian Dadswell – Wenlock Olympian Athletics Club

In attendance:

Trudi Barrett – Secretary and Treasurer

1) Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

He noted his pleasure at the completion of the new path and thanked everyone who had helped with this.

2) Apologies

None. (Apologies were received following the meeting from Andrew Scott – Wenlock Warriors Football Club)

3) Declarations of interest

None.

4) Impact of Coronavirus (Covid-19) Outbreak

a. It was noted that the Gaskell Recreation Ground was open, but the play area remained closed and taped off to prevent use and reduce the risk of the spread of coronavirus.

b. It was noted that the restrictions regarding sports had been relaxed and that it was now permitted to play some sports so long as recommended procedures were followed (see agenda item 7).

5) Minutes

The minutes of a meeting held on 28th April 2020 were considered for approval. **It was AGREED that the minutes be APPROVED, signed and ADOPTED as a true record.**

6) Treasurer's Report

a. Members noted income and expenditure to the end of May 2020:

Balance b/f at 1 st April 2020	12,748.70
Expenditure to 31 st May 2020	1,109.14
Income to 31 st May 2020	0
Balance as at 31 st May 2020	11,639.56

Mike Bainbridge drew attention to the fact that the 2020/21 budget contribution set for William Brookes School had not been discussed with the school prior to its approval by the Gaskell Charity.

It was noted that some budget figures might need to be amended to reflect agreed contributions to maintenance by user groups.

It was noted that any alteration to the budget would need to be agreed by the Gaskell Charity. The meeting of the charity scheduled for June had been cancelled due to the current circumstances, but an extraordinary meeting could be called in due course, if necessary.

b. It was **AGREED** to approve payment of the following invoice:

Date	Supplier	Item	Net £	VAT £	Total £
31.05.20	Spacecare-Shropshire	Grounds maintenance May 2020	454.55	90.91	545.46

- c. Members were pleased to note that Zurich Insurance had provided the Gaskell Recreation Ground with an additional three months of insurance cover free of charge, as part of their support to charities and social groups during the coronavirus pandemic. This represented a saving of around £300.

7) Sporting activities on the Ground

It was noted that restrictions relating to sporting activities had been eased and user groups provided an update on their activities:

- **Bowling Club:** at the last meeting of the Bowling Club it had been decided that there would be no competitive bowling for this season, which would run until September. There would possibly be no practice. The club was just maintaining the pitch for the time being. Members had been very pleased with the new path and gate.
- **Cricket Club:** the Shropshire County Cricket League was likely to be abandoned for this season. If restrictions relaxed, there might be some friendly games in August/September. It was permitted to do nets practice with two people, which could increase to six people, but there was little enthusiasm at present. If any games were to be played, these would probably be on the all-weather pitch. The club continued to maintain the ground.
- **Wenlock Olympian Athletics Club:** the club was considering starting again with small groups. The coaches believed that this would work if the groups were separated on the field, Windmill Hill and railway line, making allowances for members of the public using the field. The Club hoped to start around 20th June with a small number of athletes. Little change was envisaged throughout the summer, with no competitions, but possibly more activity from September.

Concern was expressed about loose dogs on the field; it was noted that this issue had been included in the risk assessment produced by the Athletics Club. Access to the cricket pavilion facilities was offered, when restrictions eased further.

It was AGREED to permit the use of the Gaskell Ground by the Athletics Club as outlined above, providing all necessary measures were taken to minimise risk.

- **William Brookes School:** no planned usage until September

8) Reports from User Groups

Members noted reports from the following user groups:

- Bowling Club**
Nothing to add to the above.
- Cricket Club**
Nothing to add to the above.
- Wenlock Olympians**
Nothing to add to the above.
- Wenlock Warriors**
Not present.
- William Brookes School**
It was noted that the school would be opening up to some year 10s and 12s from Monday, 15th June. However, it was very unlikely that there would be any sporting activities on the Gaskell Ground.

9) Drainage

- The Cricket Club had raised concerns about sinkage of some drainage channels due to the dry weather. Chris Bowden and the Secretary had met the consultant, Alan Lewis, on site to check the ground. Alan Lewis had determined that there had been some animal digging which needed topping up. Alan had suggested that around 1 tonne of rootzone should be purchased for this purpose to be used as and when necessary. The new top trench had suffered from some sinkage and Dan Shotton would be returning to re-top this drain to bring it back to the correct height. A date for the work was awaited. Other drainage channels had not sunk, but the grass had not grown, so the channels were still visible.

The Cricket Club disagreed with this view and it was acknowledged that the drainage channels would feel different to the other ground underfoot, even if the levels were the same.

Some concern was expressed that the appropriate soil mix should be used for any topping up required. The Secretary was asked to check whether additional seeding were required and to seek information on the soil mix.

- b. There were no other drainage issues arising.

10) Water Meters

Installation of the new meters had been requested and a date for the work was awaited. The location of the stop tap for the Bowling Club had been identified.

11) Grounds Maintenance

- a. It was noted that a slightly reduced rate of £5,000 had been negotiated with Spacecare for grounds maintenance from May 2020 to March 2021 due to the missed grass cuts in April 2020.
- b. It was noted that Kevin Mears of Spacecare had requested discussion about access and routes for working following the installation of the new path – Chris Bowden agreed to make contact. The contractor had also indicated that he would be prepared to cut and maintain some small areas at no additional charge, such as the edge of the field by the Shropshire Council path alongside the school. The contractor should be asked whether he could also maintain the area by the freshly cut hedge, adjacent to the play area.

Alan Lewis had recommended that as part of the annual maintenance the newly drained area should be aerated with a verti-drain type machine with heave, which would help to lift the trench areas and encourage root growth. It was noted that Spacecare did not undertake such work. The Secretary was asked to obtain quotes for this work, which might be overseen by Spacecare. Mike Bainbridge offered to check when the next verti-draining of the pitches at school was scheduled to see whether the work could be combined.

12) User Agreements

It was noted that the Council's Administrative Assistant was working on the user agreements. A first draft had been prepared for voting members of the committee to review. Following review, copies would be sent out to all users and individual meetings arranged. Information on when and how the user groups used the field would be gathered to inform the agreements.

Mike Bainbridge, Mike Mowling and Councillor Marcus Themans left the meeting.

13) Path and Access Project (LEADER)

- a. Members noted that construction of the path had been completed, apart from seeding of the margins. The contractor would return to do this when weather conditions allowed. Committee members were very pleased with the work.

It was noted that the old drainage channel went under the path and was running well. The path surface was porous tarmac, except for short sections of hard tarmac along the front of the cricket pavilion, to reduce damage by spiked shoes, and near to the long jump pit, to allow a vehicle to cross if necessary. There was a camber on the path to drain water off the surface which should then run down to the nearest drain point.

On behalf of the Cricket Club, Bill James raised concerns about use of the path alongside along the cricket boundary. This would be considered when the user agreement was discussed.

- b. **It was AGREED to sign the Certificate of Completion for the path.**
It was noted that during the work a bolthead had been cut off a drain cover and this would need to be replaced, if it were necessary to lift the cover.
- c. With regard to access times for the gate through from William Brookes School, it was noted that car parking on the school site during the day might be an issue as the car park was usually quite full. This would not be a problem at weekends for athletics events and similar.
Councillor Daniel Thomas would discuss access times further with Mike Bainbridge. It was noted that access from 4.00pm would be preferred.

Ian Dadswell left the meeting.

- d. It was noted that when Shropshire Council had offered the Scout hut to the Town Council, there had been discussion about using the area outside of the hut for car parking. This had not been progressed as the Town Council did not take on ownership of the building. It was **AGREED to explore use of the space outside the Scout hut for car parking with the Scouts and Shropshire Council.**
It was noted that the ground outside the Scout hut had been reinstated after use by the contractors.

Colin Wildblood left the meeting

It was AGREED to allow use of a drone to take an aerial photograph of the Gaskell Ground to provide a record of the current facilities with the new path and drainage in place.

- e. Members considered an official opening for the new path and gate. **It was AGREED to plan an official opening event for September when, it was hoped, things would be back to normal.**

14) Tree and Hedge Management

- a. **It was AGREED to defer consideration of tree placement locations on the field, pending clarification.**
- b. It was noted that the temporary fencing around the newly cut hedge adjacent to the play area had been removed.

15) Linden Gate

- a. It was noted that the Linden Gate had been damaged and a temporary repair had been carried out.
- b. The Secretary was asked to obtain prices for a replacement of the gate for consideration at the next meeting.

16) Play Area

It was AGREED to approve the cost of the 2020 RoSPA inspection in the amount of £80 + VAT.

17) Next Meeting

It was AGREED to hold the next meeting on Thursday, 9th July 2020 at 6.00pm

- 18)** The Secretary was asked to check whether any grants might be available for the Gaskell Ground in connection with coronavirus. It was noted that it might be more appropriate for sports clubs to apply for funding.

The meeting closed at 8.00pm.

Signed
Chairman

Date.....