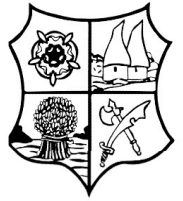


ALTON Town Council



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Town Clerk: Mrs Leah Coney

Town Hall
Market Square

Alton
Hampshire
GU34 1HD

15th November 2021

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to a **meeting of the OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE** in the Town Hall, Market Square, Alton on **Wednesday 24th November at 7.00 pm** when the under mentioned business will be transacted.

Whilst members of the public are very welcome to attend in person and speak at the meeting, we continue to encourage written representations in advance where possible as the chamber only allows for a small number of members of the public with social distancing. Masks are advised.

A zoom link will also be available upon request for those members of the public wishing to join virtually.

Yours sincerely

LConey

Mrs Leah Coney
Town Clerk

To: Members of the Open Spaces Committee

Councillor Suzie Burns (Chair)
Councillor Graham Hill (Vice Chair)
Councillor Ginny Boxall
Councillor Gideon Cristofoli
Councillor Paul Crossley
Councillor Sharon Cullen
Councillor Lewis Jones

Copied to: All other Councillors for information

**ALTON TOWN COUNCIL
OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE – 24th NOVEMBER 2021**

AGENDA

- 1 Chairman's announcements
- 2 Apologies for absence
- 3 Minutes of previous meeting held on 25th August 2021
- 4 Declarations of Interests
- 5 Declarations of Interests & Requests for Dispensations:

Councillors are reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest which they may have in any item of business on the agenda no later than when that item is reached. Unless dispensation has been granted, you may not participate in any discussion of, or vote on any matter in which you have a pecuniary interest. You must withdraw from the room when the meeting discusses and votes on the matter.
- 6 Pump Track presentation and public consultation.
- 7 Questions from members of the public.
- 8 Grounds Team Report
- 9 Allotments Report and minutes of Sub Committee Meeting
- 10 Landlords consent for signage at Anstey Park.
- 11 King's Pond and Flood Meadows Management Plan review.
- 12 Current Projects
 - a. Flood Meadows – Storage Facility
 - b. Will Hall Farm Lower Fields
 - c. Holybourne Pond
- 13 King's Pond
 - a. Review of Feeding and rat control
 - b. Signage
 - c. PSPO
 - d. Access for people with disabilities.
- 14 Friends of King's Pond Meeting Minutes
- 15 Friends of the River Wey Meeting Minutes
- 16 Barrier at Anstey Park
- 17 To Receive Minutes from:
 - a. Minutes of Walk Alton & Walk Alton AGM 20th October

ALTON TOWN COUNCIL
OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE – 24th NOVEMBER 2021

ITEM 6 PUMP TRACK

FOR DECISION

Matt Stevens and Bill Farrington who are community representatives on the Pump Track Task and Finish Group, will be attending the meeting to make a short presentation on the community benefits to the pump track.

Members will also be asked to approve a change in proposed location of the Pump Track to Anstey Park (as shown on the map enclosed in Members bundles) prior to the launch of a public consultation early in the New Year. It was felt that the location at Greenfields presented a number of potential constraints to the project including lack of parking and being aesthetically not suitable for a tarmac engineered track (being on the slope of the field bordering open countryside). It was felt that Anstey Park would be a better location in terms of site security, accessibility and proximity to other local leisure and recreational facilities with ample parking.

Having spoken to a number of potential contractors the cost of the project is likely to be in the region of £60,000 to £80,000. The Town Council earmarked up to £40,000 from reserves for this in the budget setting process for the current year. A council officer has been liaising with British Cycling and they may be able to contribute up to £15,000 towards the project and the Town Clerk has identified this potential project with Sports Officer Kirsty Cope at EHDC as suitable for District CIL funding for 2022, subject to a successful application process.

Once the public consultation has been completed and comments analysed, it is anticipated that an invitation to tender will be published in Spring 2022 with a view to submitting the project plan, including appointment of a contractor and funding sign off to Full Council between May and July.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to approve the change in proposed location “in principle” to Anstey Park subject to public consultation and to invitation to tender process. The project and funding approval to be referred to Full Council in Spring/Summer 2022

ITEM 7 PUBLIC SPEAKING – WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS FOR INFORMATION

1) Correspondence from a local Environmental Scientist

Good afternoon, as a resident of Alton, I would like to congratulate you on this year's mowing regime in our green spaces!

I think the way that the Flood Meadows are maintained both for people and wildlife to use is exemplary. This year, I'm also very happy to see that the fenced off meadow around the water works by the Flood Meadows was not cut too often, allowing the summer flowers to fully blossom and seed and thus providing a great food source for our insects, bats and birds.

I was also extremely pleased with the approach to the meadow area at Kings Pond this year. It's a bold decision to keep an area like this, which is heavily frequented by humans, as wild as it has been kept this year. There has been a marked increase of insects and with that came more swifts, martins and bats feeding above it - a joy to watch! I look forward to seeing this meadow managed for wildlife like this in the future!

I'm aware that the council probably often only hears from people who have something to complain about, so I wanted to share this positive feedback!

I'm happy to see that the idea of creating space for nature has been brought to fruition like this in our town and I hope that this approach will be maintained and built upon in the future.

ITEM 8 GROUNDS TEAM REPORT

FOR INFORMATION

8.1 Grounds Team Personnel:

The grounds team have been operating at full strength throughout the summer months subject to normal annual leave commitments.

8.2 Vehicles & Machinery:

8.2.1 The new tractor has now been delivered.

8.2.2 All grounds machinery and vehicles are being serviced in line with the vehicle/machine's relevant service history with all mowing equipment having their annual services booked in now that the growing season has ended.

8.2.3 A demo of a 2021 Ex-Hire Amazone GHS2100 Drive Flail Collector with a 2.1 working width 3,500L hopper capacity with high tip 40kph running gear with road lights was arranged for the week commencing 8th November - this is for a tractor mounted version, which is better suited to large areas. This will be put forward at Budget Workshop for consideration by councillors.

8.3 Projects:

8.3.1 Flood Meadows

The Alton Society Friends of Flood Meadows continue to support the council's work at Flood Meadows with the gravel re-charge project being carried out as part of Rivers Week organised by Surrey Wildlife Trust with Glen Skelton playing a leading role. All materials were funded by Alton Town Council.

A new metal storage container has been purchased by the Town Council and has been installed at Flood Meadows who are extremely grateful as they now have a secure storage facility on site which will assist them greatly with having hand tools and equipment to hand when carrying out their scheduled works on site.

Aquamaintain will be commencing the riverbank and path repair works at Flood Meadows the week commencing 22nd November with a site compound location agreed on Monday, 15th November which will be off the central avenue path (on the higher ground). Advance notification that the riverside pathway will be closed for approximately three weeks were erected on Tuesday, 16th November. The works to reinforce the pathway and bridges was delayed due to the company's availability to start on site having been appointment as principal contractor in September.

8.3.2 Kings Pond

Surveillance monitoring continues to be undertaken on the weir with the Grounds Team undertaking scheduled clearance three times a week with ad hoc clearance as and when depending on the prevailing weather conditions. All paths have been swept

in accordance with planned work. New “resting perches” have been installed along the railway side of the pond utilising the trunks of several of the trees which had been felled. All hedges have been cut under contract again in line with planned maintenance schedules. The extensive tree works have been completed although ad hoc works already scheduled will be undertaken over the course of the next 4/6 weeks. Overhanging branches on the public highway (Ashdell Road) have been commissioned to be trimmed back to ensure sight lines are not obscured.

All temporary signage, not relating to feeding has been removed from bins and signs. The Town Council is awaiting quotes for clearing of the blocked drain and soak away/silt trap at the railway bridge end of the site.

8.3.3 Public Gardens

The council is still awaiting the contractor to undertake the installation of the second phase of the new fencing approved for the Public Gardens. This project having been delayed due to supply issues but phase 1 of the fencing was undertaken in September but we are still awaiting materials to be available to the contractor for phase 2.

All scheduled maintenance work continues to be undertaken in line with schedules for the site.

The drinking fountain has been fully serviced and is now operational following issues around the corroding of the taps with the contractor having fitting new taps, but will re-furbish the old ones so that stocks are held. This remains an on-going issue related to the hard water supply in the area.

Disappointingly vandalism and anti-social behaviour continue to affect the Dementia Friendly Garden area but it is hoped that with the changing of the clocks in October this will diminish given the darker evenings.

Park House has confirmed that the access gate to their premises from the Public Gardens is locked every evening and re-opened at 8.00 a.m. in the morning.

8.3.4 Greenfields Amenity Land – Northanger

Preliminary discussions have been undertaken on a potential “pump track” facility for this location and a focus group established with representation from users. Officers are awaiting a decision by councillors as to whether to progress this project subject to funding being secured.

The grazier will be removing the cattle from site in mid-November although ground conditions remain dry currently and more than adequate grazing still available. Grazing has recently been undertaken in the Conservation Field. Repairs to fencing and kissing gates are to be done by the grazier once all of the cattle have been taken back to the farm.

8.3.5 Windmill Hill

The Topscope agreed at the last meeting will be installed in the spring now, when grounds conditions are better.

8.4 Pitch Provision:

The planned and scheduled pitch maintenance programme for Anstey Park in collaboration with the Rugby Club has been successfully completed again this year with the Rugby Club continuing with its' financial contribution to the project. The ground conditions are much improved given this is the third year of Anstey Park being verti-drained and then sand applied.

Similar works at Jubilee have been undertaken with verti-draining undertaken at the end of September and then 250 tonnes of sand spread across the 5 football pitches during the 3rd week of September in readiness for the football season. Manor Colts, Alton FC and Alton Cricket Club have all agreed their proportionate financial contributions to this project.

8.4.1 Football & Rugby

8.4.1.1 The rugby and football seasons are in full swing and both Jubilee, Anstey Park and Diggers are fully utilised. Collaboration between the two football clubs continues to ensure that all teams can be accommodated with flexibility being shown on kick-off times.

8.4.2 Cricket

8.4.2.1 The cricket season has closed with all wickets being “put to bed” for the winter.

8.4.3 MUGA Facility at Anstey Park and Skate Park at Jubilee

8.4.3.1 The MUGA has been very well utilised during the summer period. The tennis nets have now been removed – disappointingly earlier than planned due to their being vandalised on two occasions despite the grounds team undertaken repairs after the first instance unfortunately they were unable to complete further repairs following the second instance given the extent of the vandalism to the winder mechanism. Netball training is continuing mid-week and Sunday mornings. One of the local football teams now train there on a Tuesday evening.

8.4.3.3 The Skate Park at Jubilee is continuing to prove very popular and floodlights programmed to come on at 4.00 p.m. and go off at 8.00 p.m. Following a failure of the lighting sensors, the contractor's engineer has been out and the lighting sensor which tells the system when it gets dark has broken. A replacement is on order (5th November) but has a 3-week lead time. A short term fix has been created by putting the lights onto motion sensor mode: they will come on if someone walks under them between 4:00pm and off at 8:00pm. This temporary measure means that the lights will only come on “with motion” but will enable skaters to use the site until the new lighting sensor is installed.

8.5. Maintenance of Open Spaces

8.5.1 Tree & Hedge Cutting Works

- All planned hedge works have been completed in line with scheduled maintenance works - at Anstey Park, Jubilee, Kings Pond, Windmill Hill and Holybourne.
- The tree works on the avenue of Lime Trees at Treloar Heights has been completed.
- Further tree works at Kings Pond are scheduled to be undertaken during the second and third week of November to include

- To fell the dead and dying twin stemmed Ash at 1 King's Pond (John Sadler's)
 - To fell the one leaning Alder stem over the apartments at King's Pond
 - To lift trees and clear back undergrowth to improve sight lines along Lower Turk Street/Ashdell Road
 - To fell the dead Elder adjacent to the footpath to the rear of the Ashdell Road bungalows.
- Maintenance work at The Butts to prune the Ash which overhangs the highway by removing some of the weight from the over-reaching bough.
 - The reinstatement of hedging at Anstey Park (following the completion of the new junction) is scheduled for the winter growing season and Hampshire County Council Arboriculture Team are co-ordinating these works as part of the project.

8.5.2 Grass Cutting

Grass cutting is currently continuing on all of the council's open spaces due to the exceptional mild autumn weather which includes both Anstey Park and Jubilee. End of season cut and collects undertaken at Flood Meadows & Kings Pond.

8.5.3 Hard Standings and Paths & Fencing

- The proposed path improvement works at Flood Meadows will remain under review by the Open Spaces Committee.
- Remedial tarmac works to The Drive (i.e. access road into Anstey Park from Anstey Road) has been completed by contractors to Hampshire County Council (HCC). These works were carried out under a mutual agreement between HCC & ATC. However, further works will be required to The Drive and a budget request will be taken forward to the Budget Workshop for 2022/23.
- The introduction of a "fixed" barrier by way of planters at Anstey Park was approved by the Open Spaces Committee but has, unfortunately, been hit with a car trying to cut through. Police involved and badly damaged car has been removed by them.

8.5.4 Fertilizer and Weed Control

- The Council's Contractor undertook fertilizer and weed control at Anstey Park and Jubilee during October 2021 in accordance with the Council's planned maintenance schedule.
- Additional weed control spraying was undertaken in the Market Square and High Street during October.

8.5.5 Open Spaces and Pavilions

General:

- Anti-social behaviour continues to cause concern at Anstey Park, Jubilee Playing Fields and the Public Gardens. The Police have confirmed that regular patrols are taking place and as is usual at this time of the year, with

the clocks having gone back, all parties are hopeful that such behaviour will reduce during the autumn/winter months as is the trend.

Pavilions – Anstey Park & Jubilee

- Littering and broken glass continue to be a problem at Anstey Park and the Council's tenant at the Finnimore continues to raise incidents directly with the police.

Windmill Hill

The trees planted by the WI have established well at each location within the site and the grounds team have undertaken strimming around each of the trees in line with its commitment to do so.

Barley Fields

The Community Orchard; a project agreed between Alton Town Council, the residents of Barley Fields and ALFI is to see the first phase of the two phased planting of a Fruit Tree Orchard undertaken on Friday, 26th November. Dr. June Chatfield is kindly providing expert opinion on Phase 2 of the project and recommends that we use old-fashioned strains as part of the Heritage Trail. This means that buds from Wisley can be grown on rooting stock but this process takes up to two years before planting hence the delay before implementing for Phase 2. If we use the Heritage trees for phase 2 we can apply for training for pruning and after care of the orchard which could be offered to both local residents as well as ALFI. The bare rooted dwarf trees for Phase 1 have been secured by ALFI funding and have been locally sourced from Blackmoor. The orchard will see a variety of native fruit trees incorporating both apples and pears.

Proposed fruit trees for the 12 fruit trees for Phase 1 may include, for example:

Pinova apples

Discovery apples very sweet

Russet apples

Cherry plum

Conference pear

Charles Ross: this can be an eater or a cooker.

Images of the area at Barley Fields



8.6 Play Areas:

All play areas are regularly inspected by the council's independent contractor on a monthly basis and the annual inspections by The Playground Inspection Company have just been completed (having been delayed from June due to Covid restrictions which resulted in a

short delay). The newly refurbished Holybourne Play Area whilst having passed its post install inspection will undergo its annual inspection before the end of the year.

The new swings in the Public Gardens have been included in the PI inspection for the Public Gardens having only recently been installed and again passed its Post Instal inspection.

In addition to the external inspection regime, the grounds team also undertake weekly inspections across all sites.

8.7 Town Centre:

The limited Town Centre winter planting has been undertaken on the Crown Hill railings and around the wall of the Assembly Rooms in readiness for the Remembrance Service on Sunday, 14th November. All planters throughout the town centre have received their tidy up following the ending of the flowering season for the perennials.

The Market Square seating area with the provision of circular tables have proved to be highly successful throughout the season but they will be temporarily moved to accommodate the themed Saturday markets which will be taking place in the Square from 20th November to 11th December.

8.8 Benches & Litter Bins

The grounds team have undertaken a number of installations of new litter bins and benches throughout the spring and summer and details were provided in the last Grounds Team report.

This report is for noting.

ITEM 9 ALLOTMENTS REPORT REPORT BY THE ALLOTMENTS OFFICER

FOR INFORMATION

Enclose in Members bundles are the most recent minutes from the Allotment Sub Committee meeting held earlier this month.

As part of Alton in Bloom each of the site representatives were asked to nominate their top three plots. These were judged by the Town Mayor, Deputy Town Mayor, Senior Groundsman and Allotments Officer. This year's winner was Philip Simpkins (Borovere) and runners up were as follows:-



Borovere - Janice McAndrew and Anne Gregson
Hawthorns - Paul Bretherton, David Cleeve and Rita Osgood

Spitalfields - Mary Denman, Simon Jenkins and John Sopp
Whitedown - Glyn Jones, Andrea Ballard and Ken Smith
Wooteys - John Muir, Jeremy Wood and Robert Armstrong

Green waste collections commenced on the 1st October on the Borovere site and concluded on 12th November on the Wooteys sites visiting the following sites:-

Friday 1st October to Monday 4th October - Borovere
Friday 8th October to Monday 11th October - Whitedown (Queens Road end)
Friday 15th October to Monday 18th October - Whitedown (Butts School end)
Friday 22nd October to Monday 25th October - Hawthorns
Friday 29th October to Monday 1st November - Spitalfields (Spitalfields Road end)
Friday 5th November to Monday 8th November - Spitalfields/Wooteys (middle gates)
Friday 12th November to Monday 15th November - Wooteys (Edward Road end)

It has been agreed by the Senior Groundsman that if any of the sites require the trailer to revisit the Site Representative needs to advise the Allotments Officer and a mutually convenient date would be agreed.

The monthly inspections concluded on Wednesday 20 October. There has been a marked improvement to the condition of the plots this season with only a handful of tenancies being terminated through ploholders not maintained throughout the season.

Allotment Renewal Notices and membership for the Allotment Association will be sent to all ploholders by the end of November via email where possible requesting payment by the end of December. Payments not received by that date will result in tenancies being terminated, as per the Tenancy Agreement.

This report is for noting.

ITEM 10 LANDLORD'S CONSENT SIGNAGE AT ANSTEY PARK FOR DECISION

Members are asked to consider giving landlord consent to Energique for new signage on their building in Anstey Park.

Chris de Silva Business Development Manager has submitted the following:

"I would like your help regarding a new sign for our club. Currently we have a sign very high up on the building which aesthetically is not pleasing and has no practical purpose apart from naming the business.

As you are also no doubt aware, the lighting in the car park and certainly around the entrance to the building is not fit for purpose as there is a small step to both doors. In addition there is a bike rack that has no illumination and we have had issues with local youths hanging around in a very dimly lit car park. We would like to do something to improve the entrance for the safety of members, the general public and our staff. As you can also appreciate with the new café, footfall has increased and we are concerned with the nights now drawing in as well.

Our proposal has a number of advantages in that it will remove the old sign from the top of the building and also illuminate the area around the door.

Hence please see the proposal that we are requesting permission for:

To replace old sign with an illuminated sign just above the door. This would then throw down light to cover the entrance area and also make the building more pleasing on the eye. The lighting will

come on at 6am and go off at 10pm. There will be no light pollution to local residents and in fact residents further down the road are subjected to floodlights from the playing fields.

Please see below the specification and dimensions of our request.

Front entrance, LED illuminated 2-part tray sign with customised artwork measuring 2800 x 800 mm.

Sign lighting output - 380 lumens per meter, total of 6 meters of LED required

Proposed total output of light would be 2280 lumens, this will be sufficient enough to light up the immediate ground area to enhance safety to the public.

In terms of the environmental impact, this unit has been designed to have a low energy consumption whilst giving the best light coverage for the main entrance. Keeping the signage low (just above the main entrance) will reduce the impact on residents although based on the output we see no concerns.

I hope we can get a favourable and swift response on this, as the winter is now drawing in. Look forward to hearing back from you and thank you.

A visual is included in Members bundles and Mr De Silva has also been advised that if landlord consent is secured, he will still then need to make an application for advertising consent for the signage with EHDC Planning due to the size of the sign.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to consider granting landlord consent for the illuminated sign at Energique as detailed above.

ITEM 11 KING'S POND AND FLOOD MEADOWS MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW

FOR DECISION

An invitation to tender was prepared after the last Open Spaces Committee meeting for this work, to commence in April 2022. A copy of the invitation to tender is included in councillors bundles together with a supporting statement from each company (labelled for members reference with the name of the company and defined as company A and company B)

Both companies have worked with Alton Town Council before with contracts at both sites.

Company A £3,000

Company B £7,244

Since the invitation to tender was published, the Town Council has taken ownership of the area of open spaces by the source of the River Wey near Will Hall Farm. In discussion with the Friends of the River Wey it is thought appropriate to create a management plan for this site and the group have suggested that an extension to the contract for the appointed company to undertake the management plan reviews be offered to enable a plan to be prepared for this relatively small site. The funding for this to be taken from the commuted sum set aside for the management and maintenance of this site.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to approve the appointment of:

- 1) Company A to undertake the King's Pond and Flood Meadows Management Plan review commencing in April 2022.
- 2) Subject to cost agreement, to extend the contract to enable the appointed company to create a management plan for the land known as the Lower Field, (Will Hall Meadow.)

ITEM 12 CURRENT PROJECT

FOR INFORMATION

a. Flood Meadows – Storage Facility

As noted in the Grounds report (above) new metal storage container has been purchased by the Town Council and has been installed at Flood Meadows who are extremely grateful as they now have a secure storage facility on site which will assist them greatly with having hand tools and equipment to hand when carrying out their scheduled works on site.

Riverside Walk.

Aquamaintain will be commencing the riverbank and path repair works at Flood Meadows the week commencing 22nd November with a site compound location agreed on Monday, 15th November which will be off the central avenue path (on the higher ground). Advance notification that the riverside pathway will be closed for approximately three weeks were erected on Tuesday, 16th November. The works to reinforce the pathway and bridges was delayed due to the company's availability to start on site resulting from delays to material availability having been appointment as principal contractor in September.

b. Will Hall Farm Lower Field

To confirm that the transfer of the land to Alton Town Council has now completed. Redrow will be permitted access to the site for remedial tree planting works over the winter and to remove the advertising hoardings next year. A grant of £500 was presented to the Mayor before the last Full Council meeting from the Alton Buildings Preservation Trust towards the cost of boundary hedge planting which will be undertaken in the New Year and we would like to convey our thanks to them for this generous donation.

c. Holybourne Pond

To confirm that as a result of the tree survey undertaken, consent has now been granted from the Tree Officer at EHDC for the works to proceed. Quotes are currently being obtained for the works, to be undertaken over the winter using the funds previously approved by Members.

ITEM 13 KING'S POND

FOR DECISION

a. Review of Feeding and rat control

At the Open Spaces Committee meeting in August, following complaints from both members of the public and attendees at the recent BioBlitz and in line with Alton Town Councils legal obligation to Environmental Health, Members invoked a temporary feeding ban for the wildlife whilst the issue of the increasing number of rats was addressed with pest control. (minute 106.1.1 refers)

In putting this measure in place, which was stated as "expected to last several weeks", there was an expectation that if pest control could successfully start to reduce the numbers of rats on site to a manageable level, then feeding on the water only, could resume before winter.

It was stated at the time that the impact of the measures, which included pest control contractors and use of the EHDC Environmental Enforcement Team would be review by the Open Spaces Committee at its next meeting. Given concerns over the moratorium on feeding, an interim review was undertaken by the Chair and Vice Chair of the Open Spaces Committee 8 weeks after the original decision to see if there was any chance that feeding could be reintroduced whilst leaving all other measures in place for members to review at this committee meeting.

At the date of the interim review 11 rats had been captured and 4 out of the 8 contracted days on site undertaken by EHDC Enforcement. With this number of rats caught it was felt that feeding in a controlled way just on the water from feeding stations, combined with continuing pest control measures and educational enforcement was felt the most appropriate way forward. It would also give members the opportunity to review the impact of reintroducing feeding at feeding stations to see what affect this has, one month on.

The pest control contractor has reported that since the middle of October no rats have been caught, despite several photographs and reports from residents of rats still in occupation on the site.

EHDC have now concluded their contracted visits to the pond. A sample report from last month is included below:

*Thursday 28th October 2021 Officer: EE26 East Hampshire District Council
Arrived at 11:55am Left at 14:15pm*

Whilst on patrol around the pond it's self I only noticed walkers and bird spotters. The majority were elderly folks enjoying the fresh air. I few had dogs with them but all were on leads and under control.

On my first patrol I witnessed no one feeding the wildlife or any signs of vermin.

Around 12:30pm a large contingent of vulnerable adults and their carers arrived using the picnic tables. This caused an increase in commotion with the birds flocking towards the group giving them a time of joy and unbridled excitement.

A further patrol around the pond was undertaken where again the vast majority of the clientele were only observed using the time to walk around the pond whilst at their lunch breaks.

Only one individual was noted however throwing vast amounts of bread into the water on the other side of my position. It did appear that he threw a whole loaf into the water.

However, by the time I got over to where the incident took place all the matter had disappeared.

Unfortunately, I did come across a young lady feeding the swans by hand along the path. I asked her to stop and to only feed the wildlife on the water as indicated by the various new notifications. She knew they had been provided but ignored them anyway!

Several more episodes were encountered during my patrol where I spoke to each individual or group in question. Highlighting the issues located around the area.

Even as I left the vicinity and drove away, I witnessed a group feeding the wildlife whilst sat on a bench throwing crisps onto the path in front of them.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to review the measures to determine if any further action is required

b. Signage

Following a complaint in respect of temporary signage at King's Pond, the Chair agreed to remove any laminated signage not related to the current messaging at King's Pond pending a review at this meeting. Subsequently a complaint has been received about the resulting lack of signage, so it is clear that a balance needs to be struck. It has been suggested that either two or three noticeboard boards be installed at the key entry points to the pond combining the details of the permanent messaging which needs to be conveyed with temporary or seasonal messaging and details of happenings at the pond.



Another suggestion received as been in respect of having permanent metal signs dotted around the pond, again with messaging contained within. Two residents have suggesting signage types, as shown below:



Life span
Breeding info
Habitat info

Only feed the wildlife in the water
Please keep dogs on a lead
To protect the wildlife from injury fishing is not allowed
Please do not chase the birds
The pond is their home, you are the visitor



Councillor Langley has also offered to repaint the dark wooden entrance signage to King's Pond as a "Friends of King's Pond" task this weekend so the wording can be highlighted.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to approve either the placement of up to 10 permanent fixed metal signs around the site or the installation of up to 3 man-made timber notice boards at the main entrances to the sites, asking the Friends group for their views on preferred design.

c. PSPOs

EHDC have now confirmed that their PSPO has now been approved and can be found at <https://cdn.easthants.gov.uk/public/documents/Public%20Space%20Protection%20Order%20-%20Dogs.pdf>

As a result, the Town Clerk has now written to EHDC to formally request, under a scheme of delegation, that the PSPO be altered specifically in respect for the inclusion of King's Pond as an area where dog must be "on Leads or Under Close Control". A response is awaited.

d. Access for people with disabilities.

Paula Langley and Councillor Cristofoli have highlighted an issue in respect of access to the pond from Waterside Court for those with scooters/wheelchairs and pushchairs due to the metal barrier which was installed some years ago. This was also highlighted as a concern by the Wey Walk Group when the route was being confirmed in 2018 as prohibitive for cyclists. Members are requested to consider approval of the removal of the barrier between Waterside Court

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to approve the removal of the metal barrier subject to necessary consent from relevant stakeholders at the entrance to Kings Pond by Waterside Court.

ITEM 14 FRIENDS OF KING'S POND MEETING MINUTES FOR INFORMATION

The minutes from the First Friends of King's Pond Group Meeting and amended Terms of Reference are included within Members bundles. Given the number of issues raised, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee met with Councillor Cristofoli and Paula Langley in advance of this meeting on the 17th November to address a number of the items raised.

It was agreed that this meeting was an excellent way of overcoming concern over how regularly King's Pond is considered under the committee meeting regime and that a meeting every 6 weeks between the Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Councillor Cristofoli and the Friends of King's Pond Chair, once appointed, together with the Town Clerk would be added to the diary. A similar offer would be made to the Friends of the River Wey.

There was a considerable dialogue over the maintenance and inspection schedules for the Pond. Councillors confirmed that it is not within their remit to be involved with day-to-day operational matters but were reassured that the Town Hall has all routine tasks for grounds covered as well as monthly inspections. Paula Langley correctly stated that the work of the Friends volunteer working party is not to undertake grounds tasks but to undertake additional tasks and with improved dialogue it was felt that this balance could be easily achieved.

In respect of the terms of reference for the group, it was discussed that whilst the Town Council had presented the group with an initial draft set of ToRs, as a community group the group was free to alter these as they choose.

The concept of setting up a “not for profit” group to assist with funding for projects as well as any potential designations which may unlock grants. Both concepts were enthusiastically received and Councillor Cristofoli will look into this further.

The meeting considered the task list for the Friends working party and how this was created around the routine work of the grounds team. Councillor Cristofoli will identify each month if there are any additional tasks which he can see may need addressing “on the ground” and liaise with Town Hall staff in advance to ensure this doesn’t duplicate scheduled work and if not, add it on to the rota. Councillor Cristofoli also offered to take on the monthly list of volunteers to reduce the burden on Town Hall staff. Councillor Cristofoli will then maintain and update the list for insurance purposes.

It was also noted and accepted that Grounds Team members are not contracted to work on Sundays and as such, following the initial sessions are not scheduled to be involved with the Friends working party. It was discussed that when larger working party projects are scheduled which would benefit from grounds team assistance then these could be moved to a Wednesday mid-week to help with their availability.

It was noted that the Friends had politely declined the use of a storage facility, similar to that installed at Flood Meadows. However, given the Environment Agency suggestion of locating this so that hand tools for clearing the weir were readily accessible and grounds team concurred that they would happily make use of the facility, it will be procured. There will remain the option that if the Friends wished to reconsider its use in the future they could do so.

In concluding the meeting, it was felt that a number of concerns had been addressed and with continued dialogue in these meetings every 6 weeks, positive progress will be made.

ITEM 16 BARRIER AT ANSTEY PARK

FOR DECISION

At the last meeting, Members approved the installation of planters to replace the barriers in place at Anstey Park to provide a semi-permanent closure of the through road at Anstey Park. This was undertaken in advance of the reopening of the Anstey Road, Anstey Lane junction following the installation of the traffic lights.

Following the re-opening of the junction, the concern over levels of traffic waiting and thus seeking to use Anstey Park as a “rat run” have not been realised and the junction is running efficiently and seemingly without any lengthy queues. Both the Rugby Club and Football Club have raised concern that emergency services are accessing the park via Anstey Lane and then having to turn around to go out and around and given the lack of traffic, if it would be possible to revisit the decision.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to approve the removal of the barrier planters but with the option to revisit their reinstatement should traffic levels increase at a later date.