

**NOTES: Shurnhold Fields (former George Ward Playing Field)
Recreation Development working party held on
Monday, 4 June 2018 at Melksham Town Hall, Melksham at 10.00am**

Present:

Cllr Richard Wood	Melksham Without Parish Council
Cllr Alan Baines	Melksham Without Parish Council
Cllr John Glover	Melksham Without Parish Council
Cllr Paul Carter	Melksham Without Parish Council
Cllr Adrienne Westbrook	Melksham Town Council
Cllr Jon Hubbard	Melksham Town Council
Cllr Terri Welch	Melksham Town Council

Officers: Teresa Strange (Clerk) Melksham Without Parish Council
Lorraine McRandle (Committee Clerk) Melksham Town Council

10. To elect the Chair of the Working Party meeting (from Melksham Town Council):

As it has been agreed to rotate the Chair between both councils and Councillor Richard Wood had chaired the first meeting, it was:

RESOLVED: That Councillor Adrienne Westbrook take the chair of the working party meeting on 4 June 2018.

11. To Note Apologies and any Substitutes:

Apologies had been received from Councillor Richard Wood who was invigilating exams. However, he hoped to get to the meeting as soon as he could. Therefore, Councillor Alan Baines had agreed to substitute in his absence.

Apologies had also been received from Clare Harris, Deputy Town Clerk, Melksham Town Council, with Lorraine McRandle substituting.

Councillor John Glover arrived at 10.03am.

12. To Approve as an Accurate Record the Minutes of the Last meeting held on Wednesday, 9 May 2018:

The minutes of 9 May 2018 were moved by Councillor Paul Carter and seconded by Councillor Terri Welch.

RESOLVED: To approve and sign the minutes of 9 May 2018.

13. To receive feedback from Actions undertaken since the last meeting and consider next steps

- a) Contact Wiltshire Council Highways department and get on the list as a community project for the receipt of plainings from future local highways work for free of charge materials for the car park surface**

Correspondence had been received from Andy Cadwallader, Area Engineer, Highways West Wiltshire stating: *“the contractor does place restrictions on deliveries which he would check. One of the main restrictions was that the delivery vehicles needed to access, top and exit a site easily, without any difficult manoeuvres.”*

Andy Cadwallader went on to explain one delivery was roughly 20 tonnes. The work also needed to be within 5 miles of the delivery address and pointed out there would be a lot of plainings coming off the A350 works.

Andy asked if the group could let him know the exact amount required and provided information on how to work out the group’s requirements.

The Group acknowledged that it was too early to say how much was required at present but would bear in mind the information provided by Andy.

- b) Obtain indicative costs for paths, car parks etc. to inform project plan and funding requests (externally and from both councils). Cllr Carter had already obtained some indicative costs from local contractors of £35,000 for 1,000m of footpath that was 4” of hardcore with a top 2” layer of Mendip Dust (similar to footpath construction in Conigre Nature Reserve and the Riverside Walk).**

The meeting was informed this had not been actioned as yet, as still awaiting an indicative layout to be able to obtain costings.

- c) Contact Persimmon to arrange a meeting to expediate any land transfer in time for tree planting, with the enticement of a great PR exercise as part of the tree planting project. To also discuss with Persimmon the possibility of them undertaking groundworks on site for the car park and footpaths, whilst their heavy machinery was still on site.**

It was noted Clare Harris was speaking to Chris Minors, Persimmon and Teresa Strange had made Sarah Holloway and Mark Hunnybun at Wiltshire Council aware of the timescales for the land transfer in time for tree planting.

Lorraine informed the meeting there was no update as yet, but would ask Clare to chase this up.

d) Chase answers from the various stakeholders contacted by Dr Vicky Farwig to ascertain where certain items have to be – or not be – located; and any specific type or species of trees. To take up offer of site meeting and arrange.

Teresa stated Mark Marlin, Forestry Commission was happy to come along to a site meeting and discuss using trees as natural flood management and was available in early June.

Aly Maxwell from the Environment Agency was also keen to attend a meeting, but unfortunately was not available until July.

The meeting agreed it would be useful to approach Mark Marlin in the first instance for a site meeting.

Councillor Baines explained it would be good to get things started as soon as possible, as he understood potential funding could be available.

Teresa explained she had contacted Danny Everett, Wiltshire Council's Senior Drainage Officer regarding the size of the attenuation pond and he had responded to say "the bigger the better." Teresa stated she had gone back to him to say the group were considering a modest attenuation pond on this site.

It was agreed it would be useful to have Danny and Mark Marlin at the same meeting, as they could do a complete modelling of the area to ascertain what would be suitable.

It was explained Atkins were looking at modelling a flood alleviation scheme for the Shaw/Whitley and Shurnhold area and whilst measures on their own did not achieve much, putting them together would result in significant results and any attenuation adjacent to Southbrook would help flooding issues in Dunch Lane in particular. Atkins had indicated that any attenuation pond should be able to hold as much volume of water as it would allow.

Councillor Hubbard raised a concern that a lot of money could be spent on created a large pond, which people would only be able to walk around, with not a lot else being available on the site.

It was felt important that the balance needed to be right between what the group wanted to achieve and what would provide adequate flood alleviation for the area.

RESOLVED: For Teresa to contact both Mark Marlin and Danny Everett for their availability and let members know when they were both available. It was felt important as long as a representative from each council was available it was important to fit around their availability rather than the other way around.

- e) **Contact the commercial arm of Wiltshire Wildlife Trust (recommended by Wiltshire Council Countryside Officer) to arrange a meeting to discuss prices for pulling all the aspects of the project locations together and coming up with a plan of the proposed project using their expertise.**

It was noted no response had been received so far. This was the same for f) below.

RESOLVED: For Clare to chase up Wiltshire Wildlife for a response.

- f) **Contact Wiltshire Wildlife Trust to obtain prices for undertaking a baseline ecological survey to establish what wildlife, plant etc assets were already on site and to see if there are any issues that need addressing (eg. Blackthorn thicket on site, which had to be dealt with at Southwick Country Park)**

(See above comment)

- g) **Officers have delegated powers to write a positive press release for the Melksham News, Wiltshire Times and social media with the project name, vision, calling for volunteers to join the “Friends of Shurnhold Fields” and that more information will be available at the next Area Board meeting.**

The meeting noted the press release had already been done and as a response 2 volunteers had come forward. It was hoped more would come forward in the coming days and following the presentation at the Area Board meeting on 6 June.

- h) **Officers to contact the Melksham CEM, Rhys Schell, to request that a project update have a 5/10 minute slot at the next Area Board meeting.**

The meeting was informed that the group had a slot at the Area Board meeting on 6 June.

- i) **Officers to submit a pre-planning application to see if planning permission is required. It was noted that the fields were already designated as Public Open Space (under planning application 15/11656/FUL) but perhaps the car park would need a new permission? <https://unidoc.wiltshire.gov.uk/UniDoc/Document/Search/DSA,858064>**

Teresa explained that originally planning permission was given for a car park when the rugby club were going to move to this site. However, since then a new application for designation as a public open space (without a car park) had been approved in 2015.

A Pre-planning application had been submitted to see if planning permission was required for the list of planned works, including the car park and were awaiting a response.

Teresa had explained that Melksham Without Parish Council had requested a car park with the public open space application, however, it was understood whilst the planning

officer had recommended no car park, it was understood the planning permission said different. Teresa explained that unfortunately Wiltshire Council's planning system was down and she had been unable to check whether this was the case.

The group felt quite strongly that unless car parking provision was provided, there was little point in continuing with the scheme. The group did not want to see a scenarios, whereby visitors parked in nearby streets.

It was noted that Persimmon had been made aware that the trees for planting were coming in November, however, until the group had taken on the land concerned the trees would not be able to be planted.

Councillor Paul Carter showed the group a sketch of a small country park in Hawkeridge which had been created as part of a Section 106 Agreement for a housing development on Slag Lane. He explained he was hoping to contact Westbury Town Council to ascertain who maintained the area.

He had also observed that no safety fencing had been installed around the open water. It was agreed that consideration needed to be given to any design, an idea was suggested any attenuation pond could be graduated with bull rushes planted around the outside.

RESOLVED: For Teresa to check the terms of the planning permission for the Public Open Space application and to approach Westbury Town Council to ascertain who maintained Hawkeridge Country Park.

Councillor Hubbard to chase up Wiltshire Council with regard to how far the pre-application had gone.

- j) Tree planting could be done by the local community and also be part of the Melksham Remembers project on Saturday 10th November, with refreshments back at the Town Hall with the Melksham Remembers exhibition for participants. To discuss with Melksham Remembers team**

The meeting was informed the Melksham Remembers Project Group were happy with tree planting taking place by the local community as part of the Melksham Remembers project on 10 November with refreshments being available afterwards at the Town Hall.

Councillor Richard Wood arrived at the meeting at 10.36am.

- k) Officers to investigate model constitutions/lease for the future "Friends" group.**

Teresa explained that she had several examples of model constitutions which the group could look as well as leases.

RESOLVED: For officers to draft a lease and constitution for the future 'Friends' group and forward on to lawyers to look at.

l) Officers to investigate with Wiltshire Council if there are any rates payable on the fields and what opportunity there is for discretionary rates relief as community amenity land

Teresa explained it would appear following investigations that this site does not have a separate rate value and is still attached to the George Ward Gardens site. Therefore Wiltshire Council were looking into this and would provide a separate rateable value in due course. This would require a visit from Wiltshire Council and then the independent Valuation Office.

Regarding discretionary rate relief, Wiltshire Council were unable to answer this at the present time; however, they had confirmed that no rates were payable for Southwick Country Park.

Teresa explained once Wiltshire Council had looked at the separate rateable value they would forward this on to the Valuation Officer to look at.

RESOLVED: Teresa to contact Westbury Town Council regarding what, if any, rates were payable on Hawkeridge Park and to bring back any findings to a future meeting.

m) Officers to investigate any impact on rates payable if their respective councils took on the land from Persimmon as the lead council on the project. Pending further information on this, both parties were happy for Melksham Without Parish Council to be the lead council and take the land ownership as long as the share of costs was defined.

Teresa explained this matter had been raised with Melksham Without Parish Council and they had stated if there was an increase in their rates they may not wish to take on this project.

The parish council had noted if this area were to be leased to a community group, they would be responsible for the rates. Concern was raised if this group were to disband any costs would fall back on the parish council.

As an aside Teresa explained she had contacted Fiona Waind at Wiltshire Council to ascertain how often the grass was cut in this area. Fiona had explained the area was classed as 'rough grass' therefore, it was only cut twice year, in April and September.

14. To Agree information, format and presenters for public engagement exercise at Melksham Area Board on Wednesday, 6 June at 7.00pm (Seend Community Centre)

Discussion ensued on what information and format the presentation at the Area Board on 6 June should take.

It was felt important that in order to get 'buy in' from the local community that they should be part of any public engagement exercise and invited to join the 'Friends of' group.

Therefore, it was agreed to draw up some leaflets to distribute to residents of Dunch Lane and George Ward Gardens and to make them available for the Area Board meeting. Councillor Carter volunteered to hand deliver any leaflets.

Teresa explained that Shaw were holding their Summer fete this Saturday and therefore, there was a possibility to promote the 'Friends of' Group at this event.

It was suggested that it would be worthwhile having a representative of the CAWS Group at these meetings, which was agreed.

RESOLVED: For Teresa to draw up some leaflets to distribute at the Area Board meeting and to collate information for a Powerpoint presentation. For Councillor Westbrook and Wood to make a joint presentation.

Both Councillor Westbrook, Paul Carter and Teresa Strange volunteered to hand out leaflets at Shaw Summer Fair informing people of the 'Friends of' meeting on 21 June.

To invite both Councillors Alford and Aves, as Wiltshire Councillors for the north area of Melksham Town and Melksham Without Councils to the meeting on 21 June.

15. To agree Date and Venue of Next Meeting

It was suggested the next meeting should take place on Thursday, 21 June from 7.30pm-8.30pm for the main meeting, with 'Friends of' meeting taking place afterwards from 8.30pm-9.30pm.

Councillor Hubbard stated due to other meetings he would find it hard to attend evening meetings going forward, therefore, he asked if the group could seek an alternative Town Council representative.

RESOLVED: For Teresa to ascertain a suitable venue in this locality for a meeting.

To invite Councillor Pat Aves to sit on this group as both a Town Council and Wiltshire Council representative.