

Minutes of the Open Spaces and Play Parks Committee Meeting
Held in Colburn Village Hall on Monday 11th November 2024 at 5.30 pm

Present

Chair:- Cllr Wayne Garbutt

Councillors: Miles Burnham, Angela Dale & Akuila Tutora

In attendance: Barry Robertson Ground Maintenance *Michelle Dunning*

Clerk: Philippa Graves

1. **Apologies for absence** – Cllr Andrea Crowe
2. **To receive Councillor “Declaration of Interests** – none received
3. To discuss **Matters Arising** from the Minutes of 14th October 2024
Result of Site meeting held on 18th October -

Overgrowing trees at 32 Horseshoe Close – it was agreed that trees would not be felled or cut back unless they were diseased and in need of being removed for safety. The woods were mature when the owner of the property surveyed the site prior to purchasing the property and whilst he has every right to trim back branches overgrowing the fence, he should not enter the woods to cut back main branches. Clerk to write to owner.

Wetpour issues Piper Hill – wetpour separation is an ongoing maintenance issue. Last remedial work done July 2019 by RTC Safety Surfaces at a cost of £7966 +VAT which had an expected lifespan of 5 years. It was agreed to ask RTC Safety Surfaces to walk around the necessary sites with the Groundsman and submit a quote to the Town Council. Figure of £10,000 to be put in the Precept budget.

A long-term **Strategic Plan** was needed for funding the required replacement of play equipment which had an average lifespan of 12 years so many of the Play Parks were nearing the end of this period. Awards for All grants would be necessary for match funding from the Town Council

4. To receive an **update from the Groundsman** on progress addressing yellow issues in the **Annual Inspection** by RoSPA in September. Cllr Garbutt to adapt the report to be a shared document for One Drive which could be circulated regularly as the Groundsman updated and could be printed out for meetings.

VAS sign now working again. Christmas Tree has been selected and the invoice for £140 approx will be sent to the office before collection (did not appear quite as big and bushy as last year?).

All hedges in Chase 1&2 have been cut, also berberis in Bridge Close and Grange Park vegetation. Water bowser has been emptied and prepared for winter garage storage.

Raised beds on Broadway – Barry/Nicky had carried out weekend work cutting back the overgrown trees and bushes. Not finished but the area is too busy during weekdays to be able to work with chain saws, collection bags and trailer for disposal. The big trees would be pollarded to create a good shape long term.

Councillors were very grateful for Barry and Nicky doing this work and wished to express their gratitude for the enormous improvement.

M Dunning
18/11/24

Parking on The Broadway – it was noted that the car park was full during the week but the shops were not particularly full so what was the source of all the cars?

Councillors noted the staff from the doctor's surgery, library and surestart events all used the parking spaces daytime and some residents appeared to park overnight. To be monitored.

5. To discuss cost of removing unsafe tree in Colburn Sidings Woods. The clerk confirmed £3000 had been put in the draft budget as an annual figure. One tree had been identified as needing removal. Winter thinning was required to allow light into the area and encourage plants and flowers and this had been advised by the Buglife advisor and the Land Trust. Site meeting to walk through the woods with Groundsman arranged for **Fri 15th December at 11.30 am** so councillors could be shown the work plan.
6. To discuss the current arrangements for the **Christmas Tree Lights event** on Thurs 28th November at 5 pm. Poster has been produced together with donation letter requests for Lidl, Tesco & Co-op. Items covered – erection of gazebo, tables, cups, hot chocolate, hot water. Numbers of children needed confirming so selection boxes could be purchased by the Mayor – contact Primary School. Biscuits and cakes were more popular than mince pies last year.
7. To confirm plant requirements for the 3-tier planter at The Broadway. Agreed they were needed and would be combined with raised beds requirements.
8. To note **Litter Pick dates** - 16th November. No dates for December. Councillors who have reported fly tipping have had a speedy response from NYC staff in particular the large amount of rubbish collected in Piper Hill and brought to the Village Hall. A thank you letter to be sent to staff at Mercury House for their support and for the continued supply of litter bags which has made the litter picks possible.
9. **Biodiversity Action Plan** – to note any opportunities in future plans. The extended Wild Flower area has been seeded.
10. Date of next meeting – **Mon 9th December 2024 commencing at 5.30 pm**
Clerk requested that meetings are moved to first Monday of the month to give more time between Open Spaces and Town council meeting to start in 2025.
11. **Items for next Agenda and for inclusion in Precept discussion for 2025-26**
Discussion on Forward plan for Play Parks (see item 3) but also a **Strategic Funding Plan for all the Council owned Assets** – Sports Centre 3 year agreement ending 31st March 2026, Raised beds Broadway (currently needed to be emptied and soil replaced together with new plants and Colburn Sidings Woods.

Private discussion with Chair, Cllr Dale and Groundsman on length of agreed ongoing contract from 30th Sept 2025. It was agreed that the contract would run for 5 years from 1st October to 30th Sept 2030. Clerk to confirm dates in writing to Groundsman.

Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and meeting closed at 6.32 pm

W. Dunning
15/11/24