

MINUTES FOR LEECHWELL GARDEN ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday 25th January 2017 6pm at the REconomy Centre

PRESENT: David Mitchell (Chair), David Martin, Marsha Cummings, Jeannette Willington, Shirley Prendergast, Frances Gilmore

1. APOLOGIES: Lu Overy, Keith Rennells, Jim Carfrae

2. MINUTES: The minutes of the meeting of the 19th October 2016 were approved.

3. MATTERS ARISING:

Dave said that while there had been no official committee meeting since October, the committee had had several informal meetings in the garden over the last few months to discuss aspects of the new play structure. As a result, most of the outstanding matters arising had either been dealt with or were on hold until an opening date had been decided.

4. FINANCIAL UPDATE

Shirley and Jeannette agreed to prepare financial statements for the forthcoming AGM (see below). There were two forthcoming bills to be paid – for the additional play structure features and for Keith's work, but there were sufficient funds in the Play Facilities account to pay these. Dave had paid the annual website fee of £24.96.

Action: Shirley and Jeannette to prepare accounts

5. PLANTING FOR SCREENING THE PLAY STRUCTURE

Keith has provided information about this (see attached note). It looks as though SHDC will be able to provide two trees and Alex will discuss the details on site when the inspection process is complete.

6. THE SANDPIT

No one was particularly happy with the current state of the sandpit cover, particularly the numerous white sand bags which would clearly be vandalised when the sand pit was opened. It was agreed that the committee would meet in the garden to discuss the matter on Wednesday February 1st at 2.30pm. David Martin agreed to investigate how easy it would be to open the fencing to gain access.

Action: David to investigate the fencing

Shirley wondered if the sandpit could be opened earlier than the main play structure. It was agreed that this might be a good idea if the main opening was delayed (see below). Keith and/or EarthWrights should be asked about this.

Action: Keith to investigate.

Shirley agreed to produce a notice for parents (to be fixed to a tree near the sandpit) based on Keith's draft.

Action: Shirley to draft a notice.

7. PLAY FACILITY REOPENING:

Given Keith's notes (see below) it was agreed that the opening would be delayed until early March, and a more likely date was likely to be closer to Easter (but during the spring school term if possible, so children from the Grove could attend). We hope to fix a date at the next committee meeting when the state of the new turf was clearer.

8. AGM DATE AND PUBLICITY:

It was agreed that the AGM should not be held before the play facility was opened, with Easter again the target.

AOB:

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Frances, Jeannette and Shirley are planning to plant a tree close to the wall behind the seating in the herb garden.

In response to a question about the effect of the very cold weather, Dave agreed to test the pumping system to make sure it was still working. **Action:** Dave to test

Dave mentioned the water quality test he had conducted on the Leechwell. While almost all the tests were satisfactory (copper, iron, nitrites, nitrates, pH, Hardness, chlorine, lead and pesticides), the bacteria test failed meaning that **"it is highly likely that potentially harmful bacteria were detected"**.

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting of the Committee will be on Wednesday 22nd February at 6pm at the ReEconomy building in Leechwell Street.

Action: Dave to reserve room (**DONE**)

From: Keith Rennells

Apologies again that I cannot attend this evening, but here as promised is a bit of an update on some of the agenda items, from my angle.

Play structure - safety inspection

I spoke to Mark Renouard from EW this morning. There are two inspection companies operating in this country, RoSPA and The Play Inspection Company. Earth Wrights decided to engage the latter as they are more experienced at assessing 'bespoke' play areas, such as we have at Leechwell Gdn.

The inspection was carried out on Monday, and went well by all accounts, no major problems. There is a small technical issue relating to the fall heights of the step up to the monkey rings, which EW haven't encountered before. Mark is waiting to see how it is reported before making adjustments on site. But nothing else.

We are expecting the safety report by the end of the week. When we have it I will forward it to Tim Pollard, Richard Ellingham (both Localities team) and Rob and Alex (assets team). Tim will set up a meeting on site with their insurance inspector (works for Allianz) to check through any issues of concern, and update the SHDC record. That site meeting will be attended by Richard Ellingham, the Totnes localities officer, as he will be inspecting the play structure on a regular basis going forward. Hopefully this process will be through in a couple of weeks, and they wont be calling Earth Wrights back in to make changes on site!

Sand pit cover

Fitted last week, but Mark says they have anchored in too many places, making it more difficult to roll out than it should be. He will go back and make a small adjustment so that it is easier to operate. I will send a separate email about the wording of the sign.

Landscape planting

I asked SHDC via Alex if they could buy a couple of 'standard' size trees to supplement the planting done by EW, and to help take the edge of the view of the slides from HWW. He said he'd see if he could find the funds, and wants to discuss it on site once the inspection process is complete, so maybe in a fortnight. He sounded positive. I'd be happy to plant them as a volunteer, in due course.

Opening date

Probably of more concern to EW than the inspection process is the current cold snap, which means that the new turf is sitting dormant. We cannot yet know how well it is rooting. We need warmer wetter weather in order to get it firmly established.

In particular we know that on the opening day, and for days and weeks afterwards, we will have a high footfall on the new area, a high level of interest and expectation. For this reason, we need to make sure the turf is well bedded in, or we could damage it, in which case the site would have to close again for a month or two whilst it is replaced and beds in again! Better to be sure....

So I think we need to be cautious, and if that means keeping closed another month, so be it, I'm afraid.

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Keith