

Girton Parish Council

Robert Stone
Clerk to the Parish Council
telephone: (01223) 472181
email: clerk@girton-cambs.org.uk

The Pavilion
Girton Recreation Ground
Cambridge Road, Girton
Cambridge CB3 0FH

Minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held at Cotton Hall on 3rd November 2008 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs de Lacey, Ford-Smith (Chairman), Gordon, Seaber, Clift, Martin, and Robin Hodgkinson, & George Thorpe (from Item 08/90 to 08/91(iii)) **Action**

In attendance: Robert Stone (Clerk); and Tony Sursham who was co-oped.

08/81 To receive apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Colin Carr.

08/82 Members' declarations of interest for items on the agenda

None.

08/83 That Standing Orders be suspended for an Open Session for the public

No members of the public were in attendance, therefore standing orders were not suspended.

08/84 That Standing Orders be reinstated and the Council meeting resumed

No members of the public were in attendance, therefore standing orders were not suspended.

08/85 That the minutes of the meeting held on 6th October be signed by the Chairman as an accurate record

The minutes of the meeting of 6th October 2008 were signed by the Chairman.

08/86 Matters arising from minutes

It was agreed that the Clerk would act on the matters arising.

08/87 To receive a report of points arising from the Environment Committee walk from the Co-op to the Traveller's Rest on Sunday 2nd November to view the need for works to improve this part of the village

Cllr Gordon said that Cllr de Lacey and himself had inspected this route by bicycle. Their findings were:

- i) Junction of Wellbrook Way and Girton Road – The grass and shrub area on the right on entering Wellbrook Way is owned by Girton Town Charity but currently maintained by Wimpey which is using it for temporary advertising boards. When these are removed a bench should be installed together with a second tub planter. Clerk – to note for future action.
- ii) Public Space in Wellbrook Way – this is tidy but the rubbish bin is overflowing. Does SCDC know this should be emptied? Clerk
Also it was not clear who cut the grass, Wimpey, the Parish Council, or one of the residents. The Planning agreement needed to be checked, and if appropriate a letter should be sent to Wimpeys. Clerk
- iii) Cycle track – Who cuts the grass? Some of the newly planted trees have not survived, and will need replacing. The hedge will need cutting back each year. Clerk
- iv) Balancing pond area – Waste bin required? Water at the end of the road does not drain into the pond, and causes problems after rain when it becomes a large puddle. Clerk
- v) Girton Corner – the hedge outside the corner house is overhanging the path, and needs to be cut back. Matt Pickering of Cambs CC has been approached by to paint the words "Bus Stop" some distance around the corner to ensure bus drivers do not impede cyclists. Cllr Clift is hoping to arrange a site meeting with Clerk

- SCDC's safety officers to discuss the issue. Once this has been resolved consideration can be given to siting the bench purchased for this area.
- vi) Girton Village Road Sign – to be changed from “Girton reduce speed now” to “Welcome to the village of GIRTON”. The Clerk advised that the wording of signs was currently under review. Numbers of words, and phrases that could be used were to be limited. We should be advised on the outcome of the review in the near future. It was noted that this may require changing the wording of the equivalent sign at the Oakington end of Girton.
 - vii) Weavers Field Play Area – the latch on the gate needs to be replaced, and one of the ariss rails on the fence needs to be hammered back and made secure.

Clerk

08/88 To review the Environment Committee expenditure for the 2008/09 financial year, and to identify and review underspend if applicable.

The Environment Budget for 2008/09 of £14,630 was largely underspent in that some £12,000 remained to be committed. A number of expenditure items were identified:

- the design of a “black squirrel” logo to highlight Girton's separate identity from Cambridge;
- the use of “uv” glass on the village noticeboards to help reduce fading of the village map, and statutory notices; and
- employing an architect to draw up plans for the redesign of the frontage of the recreation ground.

Following discussion it was agreed that at least two designs were needed based on forecast costs ranging between £10,000 and £20,000. In view of Nick Twitchett's design work on the adjacent Cotton Hall it was agreed to arrange a site meeting with him prior to the next meeting of the Committee.

Cllr Gordon

08/89 To review the proposed budget for 2009/10 following comments from the Finance and Budget Committees

It was noted that no significant changes were proposed, and that the 2009/10 budget had been confirmed at £19,230.

08/90 To receive a report from the Parish Council Chairman on the likely affects of current planning proposals on the green belt around Girton

Cllr de Lacey reported that correspondence from Gareth Jones of SCDC referred to sites for an additional 20,000 houses needing to be found within the district. It was proposed to place 9,200 of these in Histon, Impington and Girton. To achieve this another 920 houses would need to go on an “extra” development on the NIAB site. The effect of this would be to reduce the greenbelt at this point between Girton and Cambridge to two narrow fields. The public consultation had started on 3rd November, and would extend until 12th December.

This would have a disproportionate affect on Girton and surrounding villages in that only 7 to 8 sites would suffer from extended development rather than the 15 to 16 that were considered. There was also the related issue of ensuring that the developer provided sufficient facilities for this enormous new development. Cllr Martin considered that this was not a balanced development in that it would worsen the congestion problems on the Huntingdon Road. He also questioned whether it was necessary. The Chairman raised the possibility of seeking the assistance of the CPRE to fight the planning proposal in view of their publicity expertise.

It was agreed to invite a representative of SCDC to give a presentation on the new developments to the Parish Council, and to alert members of the village to these proposals, and to encourage responses to the public consultation.

Clerk

08/91 To receive reports

1. Recreation Ground working group: No report.

2. Open Spaces:

i) Smithy Green (See Report at Appendix 1)

George Thorpe reported that the shape of the trees adjacent to Mr Peacock and Mrs Morrison was poor, and was unlikely to permit lopping. Removal was likely to be the only option. Cllr de Lacey said he would discuss with Acacia.

Parish
Chairman

Discussion followed on the state of Mrs Morrison's boundary fence; re-establishing the grass, and planting the hedge once the issues with trees had been resolved.

Cllr Gordon

Cllr Gordon said he would review the ownership and replacement of the fence with Mrs Morrison.

A query had been received about using a metal detector on the site prior to works commencing in case any interesting metal work lay just underneath the soil. The Committee discussed. As the former smithy had been established less than 200 years ago it was unlikely to produce any thing of archaeological interest. The Chairman proposed leaving the site in its current state, and not undertaking any investigation at present. This was seconded by Cllr Gordon. Four Councillors voted for the motion, and one abstained.

ii) Town End Close

The Parish Chairman reported that the Parish Council was under an obligation to Natural England to carry out works in accordance with the current management agreement. Cllr Clift and himself had met with a NE Officer to review the site, and to discuss applying for additional grant monies. This had been very helpful with agreement being reached on the hedgerows, bird boxes, and water trough. It should be possible to make this a very attractive area. The application for grant would need to be made by 15th November, with an additional contribution being needed from the Parish Council. Works would need to be completed between November and February subject to agreeing boundary fencing with the neighbouring farmer. Proposed by Cllr de Lacey, and seconded by Cllr Seaber. Unanimous.

iii) Footpaths

Tony Sursham proposed that a new public footpath be created between Washpit Lane, and the brook at the lower end of Girton Golf Club's car park. Permission would be needed from the golf club and other land owners. At present there were not many public footpaths in Girton. This would be an asset to the village in that it would provide a circular walk, and provide another way to reach the lower end of Dodford Lane.

Cllr Gordon queried how many bridges, stiles and fences would be required. Mr Sursham was not sure but did confirm the route whilst passable was very overgrown. Cllr Clift asked about the ownership of the land. Mr Sursham thought it was Chivers Farms. It was agreed that this would need to be determined. Cambridgeshire CC could advise on rights of way.

Clerk

iv) Actions arising from report of 30th August 2008

- Repair of Mayfield Road bus shelter. This was still outstanding. Cllr Gordon will meet James Wells.
- Green open space in Mayfield Road. The rose bed maintained by Mr Hewitt needed to be replaced. Cllr Martin said that the County Hall yellow roses were attractive as well as long lasting and worth considering. The positioning and maintenance of a new rose bed will be discussed with Mr Hewlett.
- Weavers Field. The shrubs needed to be cut back. Multiple quotes may be needed.
- Winter planting of village containers. Cllr de Lacey would be writing to Wimpeys to ask if they would fund.

Cllr Gordon

Cllr de Lacey

3. Street Furniture: A bollard had been knocked over in Girton Road, and would be reported.

4. Tree Warden's report: No report.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm.

Report to Environment Committee, Girton Parish Council

Smithy Green

Description of site

Shape and size

A blunt nosed triangular piece of land bordered by Cambridge Road to the east and Church Lane to the west, a fence to the south and a paved path to the north.

Approximate size 30m long x 6m wide at Cambridge Road tapering to 3 m wide at Church Lane.

Existing trees

5 trees standing, only one of which is in really good condition and shape.

1. Field Maple, approx 5m from Cambridge Road – very close to the adjacent house and the fence. Straggly and considerable overhang of the adjoining house.
2. Field Maple, approx 15m from Cambridge Road – very close to the fence. Straggly and poor shape
3. Field Maple, approx 18m from Cambridge Road – very close to the fence. Straggly and poor shape
4. Ash, approx 25m from Cambridge Road – very close to the adjacent house and the fence. Quite large, straggly and half of the crown overhanging adjoining garage.
5. Field Maple, approx 28 m from Cambridge Road and more or less at the end of the plot near Church Lane. Excellent condition and shape with only slight overhang of adjoining garden.

4 small (approx 1.2m) beech saplings are in place near the Church Lane end

Fencing/furnishing

Fence is in varying degrees of condition. Towards Church Lane there is a low wall and about 6m of high quality fencing with concrete posts and settings. The rest consist of fencing panels which vary from new and untreated (two panels) to new and painted black (two panels) and original panels which have deteriorated significantly. Hence the appearance is a bit of a hotchpotch. There is a bench at the site which is covered in green algae and has several slats missing from the back and a little rot on the back of the seat.

Landscaping

The land is relatively flat with a pronounced rise in level towards the fence, this being wider at the Church Lane end than the Cambridge Road end. The soil looks in remarkably good condition considering the previous vegetation, presumably due to the years of leaf mould built up under the hedge.

Proposal

Trees (as soon as possible)

Remove all but the Field Maple at the Church Lane end. Remove lowest overhanging branches on the remaining Field Maple.

Fencing (as soon as possible)

If funds allow, replace all old fencing with that matching the 3m stretch nearest Church Lane using concrete fittings for durability.

Replace old bench with new one

Planting (now and next Autumn)

1. Create a slope from the fence about 1m in width
2. Plant native hedgerow at the base of the slope to include e.g. hawthorn, field maple, spindle, beech, hazel, ?box (from Girton College) which can be trimmed to a height of approximately 2m once per annum
3. Leave a 1-1.5m strip between the hedge and the path and mulch in year one to prevent weed growth
4. Plant the strip with bulbs and native hedgerow plants to give year round interest next Autumn
5. Sow the remainder of the site up to field maple with grass to allow easy cutting
6. Underplant area around field maple with low maintenance shade tolerant grasses (e.g. carex and luzula)
7. Consider planters around the edge of the whole site containing low maintenance shade tolerant shrubs (e.g. hydrangea quercifolia)

Colin Carr
George Thorpe
1st November 2008