



Stockton Heath Parish Council

Stockton Heath Library, Alexandra Road, Stockton Heath WA4 2AN
Telephone / Fax: (01925) 210558 Email: clerk@stocktonheathpc.org.uk
Web: www.stocktonheathpc.org.uk

Dear Councillor

**YOU ARE SUMMONED TO ATTEND A MEETING OF THE LAND ASSETS COMMITTEE
TO BE HELD AT STOCKTON HEATH LIBRARY, Alexandra Road, Stockton Heath on
TUESDAY 21 March 2023 COMMENCING AT 7.00PM.**

Lara Jacob
Clerk to the Council 15 March 2023

AGENDA

L22/048 Apologies

To receive and accept apologies.

L22/049 Declarations of interest

Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda no later than when the item is reached. Declarations are a personal matter for each Member to decide and the decision to declare, or not, is the responsibility of the Member based on the particular circumstances. Dispensations on any declarations of pecuniary interest made either before or during the meeting to be then considered by the Parish Council and any dispensations documented accordingly.

L22/050 Public Participation

In accordance with Standing Order 3 (d,e,f,g,h,i) - The meeting shall be adjourned for a maximum of 30 minutes for Public Participation. Speeches will not last more than 3 minutes. No elector will be allowed to speak more than once on any one subject.

L22/051 Budget

051.1 **To note** the payments made and balances across the budget headings over which the Land Assets Committee has oversight (to follow).

051.2 **To note** the budget headings and allocation for financial year 2023/24 (enclosed)

051.3 **To consider** the Draft Action Plan for financial year 2023/24 (enclosed)

L22/052 Ackers Pit

052.1 **Updates** – the open glade area has been strimmed; the pathways have been brushed and the edges hoed to remove weeds; the hedging and trees on the Mill Lane footpath side have been cut back; the area around the mill stones has been strimmed to prepare for planting; the metal palings on the Ackers Lane side have been refurbished; the overhanging trees on Ackers Road have been trimmed; the new perspex has been installed on the information board; a report of damage to trees was received during mid-February.

052.2 **To consider** the quotations for the works recommended during the asset review (quotations enclosed).

052.3 **To consider** the recommendations made by the pest control contractor. (Confidential paper enclosed)

052.3 **To discuss** any other issues arising.

L22/053 Mill Lane

053.1 **Update** – a report of graffiti on one of the benches was reported and a request from a resident for them to be cleaned and stained.

053.2 **To discuss** a wildflower sowing plan, including feedback from letters sent to residents regarding the potential to site a wildflower area on the banking parallel to Brookside Avenue.

L22/054 Stockton Heath Allotments

054.1 **To note** that the new contact at Taylor Rose had been contacted and had suggested an alternative lease document, however it had been concluded that this was not suitable and the original lease was better fit for purpose.

054.2 **To discuss** any other issues arising.

L22/055 Biodiversity

055.1 **To consider** the quotation for providing a long-term planting plan for Ackers Pit and Mill Lane (to follow)

055.2 **To consider** areas suitable for the introduction of bulb planting and discuss a planting scheme

055.3 **To discuss** any other issues arising.

L22/056 Trees

056.1 **Update** – the Jubilee Commemoration Oak tree had been planted close to the brook on Mill Lane and dedicated at a short ceremony on Thursday 2 March 2023.

Two crab apples trees had been planted at Ackers Pit on the Ackers Lane side.

056.2 **To discuss** any other issues arising.

L22/057 Events

057.1 **Update** - the Bird box making event was oversubscribed, with all tickets booked within 4 days of being made available. Five sessions with up to five groups were held on Friday 24 February and a total of 19 bird boxes, 6 bat boxes and 8 bug boxes, as well as 15 simple kits for younger children, were completed on the day. Volunteers from the community, the parish rangers and councillors supported the event.

057.2 **To discuss** arrangements for the Bat Walk event.

057.3 **To discuss** any other issues arising.

L22/058 Reports from attendance at outside groups

To receive reports from attendance at outside bodies and to discuss any issues arising.

L22/059 Publicity

To discuss any items for inclusion in the next newsletter or for publicising through appropriate media outlets.

L22/060 Matters for next agenda

To receive requests for items for the next agenda.

Matters for discussion in closed session

Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s.2

A body may, by resolution, exclude the public from a meeting whenever publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for some other special reasons stated in the resolution and arising from the nature of that business of the proceedings; and where such a resolution is passed, this Act shall not require the meeting to be open to the public during proceedings to which the resolution applies.

L22/061 Date and Time of Next Meeting

TBC – June 6, 20, 27 suggested



Stockton Heath Parish Council

MINUTES OF THE LAND ASSETS COMMITTEE held at Stockton Heath Library on
TUESDAY 17 JANUARY 2023 AT 7.00PM.

Present: Councillor H Dutton (Chair)
Councillors Barlow, Jones, North and Todd.

Attending: L Jacob – Clerk; M Monks, no members of the public

L22/035 Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Dean and A Young.

L22/036 Declarations of interest

No declarations were made.

L22/037 Public Participation

Mr Monks, representing Warrington Angler's Association contributed to items on the agenda.

Cllr North arrived at 7.03pm.

L22/038 Budget

038.1 The payments made and balances across the budget headings over which the Land Assets Committee has oversight were noted.

L22/039 Ackers Pit

039.1 The following updates were noted – the back of section of hedging parallel to Swanage Close had been cut at the request of the resident to allow access to maintain the garden fence on the boundary; the Perspex sheet had arrived and will be installed when the weather is milder; pest control visits resumed in January.

039.2 The quotation of £960 for the refurbishment of the metal palings alongside Ackers Lane was considered.

Resolved to accept the quotation.

039.3 Pricing information was discussed. The works had been outlined to the contractor and included the establishment, planting and maintenance of the open glade area, the establishment of a flowering area close to the weir; the weeding and maintenance of the pathways; works to the hedging area to the Ackers Road end of the Mill Lane footpath and the invitation to provide quotations for works identified during the asset review.

Resolved that the quotations are accepted.

Further information on pricing for plants, two additional bench refurbishments and replacement of a gatepost would be obtained for consideration at full council.

039.4 The trimming of overhanging branches on trees on Ackers Road, specifically trees which block the solar panel of the Speed Indicator Device and trees which overhang the telephone wires was discussed. Agreed to seek quotations for undertaking the works and, if quotes were below £1,000 that the work be instructed to take place before the nesting season. If quotations are above £1000, the decision

will be referred to full council.

039.5 White willows in the far corner of Ackers Pit will be coppiced by the Warrington Angler's Association in the coming weeks.

L22/040 Mill Lane

040.1 The following updates were noted – a tree which came down at the edge of Mill Lane, partially blocking Mill Lane itself, was removed by Holly Oak Tree Services at a cost of £80; the wildflower planting on the lower field continued to flourish into the winter months.

040.2 **To discuss** any other issues arising.

L22/041 Trees

041.1 It was noted that a ground level tree survey on Mill Lane Fields and Ackers Pit had been carried out on 20 December 2022 and observations had been communicated to the committee by email. Broken boughs on a willow tree close to Lumb Brook on the north west corner of lower Mill Lane Field had been referred to Holly Oak Tree Services and the advice was that, at present, no action was required, the tree being away from public pathways. No other issues of concern were identified. The next scheduled tree survey will take place in mid-June 2023.

Trees at Red Lane Allotments will be checked in the next week.

041.2 The Jubilee Commemoration tree (on Mill Lane) and the two crab apple trees (Ackers Pit) will be delivered to Northwich Town Council's depot this week.

It was agreed that the crab apples would be planted on the Ackers Lane side of the Pit and that one would have a memorial plaque attached at the request of Cllr. Jordan.

041.3 It was agreed that advice would be sought on securing a contractor to provide a long-term planting plan for Ackers Pit and Mill Lane.

L22/042 Stockton Heath Allotments

042.1 It was noted that Taylor Rose had been contacted to establish the contact for continuation of the lease matter, as the previous contact had left the firm. An email had been sent to the new contact but no reply had been received to date.

042.2 No other issues were raised.

L22/043 Events

043.1 Arrangements for the Bird Box event were discussed.

It was agreed that the date of the event would be Friday 24 February.

043.2 Approval for the purchase of additional bird box kits and miscellaneous supplies for the Bird Box event, up to a maximum cost of £500 was agreed.

043.3 The possibility of providing swift boxes was discussed. It was agreed that the boxes would present challenges in both making and installing by both the parish council and members of the public and therefore they would not be part of the Bird Box making offer on this occasion.

L22/044 Reports from attendance at outside groups

No reports were received.

Cllr. Barlow highlighted that the Wild About Stockton Heath group would be meeting to discuss their annual action plan and that suggestions would be welcomed.

L22/045 Publicity

The Bird Box event will be publicised through the usual channels.

L22/046 Matters for next agenda

Long-term tree planting plan; wildflower planting; bulb planting.

L22/047 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Tuesday 21 March 2023 at 7pm.

The meeting closed at 8.13pm.

Item 51.1 and 51.2 – Budget to date and Allocation for 2023/24

LAND ASSETS	Budget set for 2022/23	Spent to date	Balance remaining	Budget set for 2023/24
Ackers Pit Maintenance costs				
Hedge cutting	700.00	1005.00	-305.00	600.00
Tree maintenance (Ackers Pit)	1000.00	0.00	1000.00	0.00
Grass and verge maintenance	1000.00	1045.00	-45.00	1800.00
Pest control	1000.00	520.00	480.00	1800.00
Water Easement	120.00	120.00	0.00	120.00
Assets maintenance (Ackers Pit)	1500.00	41.49	1458.51	300.00
Renewal of bench slats	300.00	160.00	140.00	300.00
Repairs to banking	2500.00	0.00	2500.00	0.00
Biodiversity Fund	1500.00	0.00	1500.00	500.00
Ackers Pit Purchase of Assets				
Marginal Planting	600.00	0.00	600.00	0.00
Floating Island	2000.00	0.00	2000.00	0.00
Signs	0.00	125.16	-125.16	0.00
Trees	600.00	80.00	520.00	70.00
Total Ackers Pit	12820.00	3096.65	9723.35	5490.00
Mill Lane Maintenance costs				
Tree maintenance (Mill Lane)	1000.00	0.00	1000.00	0.00
Grass cutting	750.00	482.40	267.60	780.00
Verge maintenance	400.00	305.00	95.00	400.00
Wildflower Planting	2500.00	90.00	2410.00	1000.00
Assets maintenance (Mill Lane)	1500.00	31.92	1468.08	300.00
Mill Lane Purchase of Assets				
Bluebell wood	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
New bins	500.00	897.00	-397.00	0.00
Table tennis table	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Item 51.1 and 51.2 – Budget to date and Allocation for 2023/24

New bench	350.00	15.00	335.00	0.00
Total Mill Lane	7000.00	1821.32	5178.68	2480.00
Other Land Assets				
Red Lane allotments	1000.00	0.00	1000.00	0.00
Other	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Events	2000.00	654.60	1345.40	1000.00
TOTAL LAND ASSETS	22820.00	5572.57	17, 247.43	8970.00
EARMARKED RESERVE				
Repair/Renewal of structures on land (ER)	2500.00	0.00	2500.00	2500.00
Mill Lane Tree Works (ER)	1800.00	1045.00	755.00	755.00
Ackers Pit Tree Works (ER)	1800.00	1130.00	670.00	670.00
Play Equipment (ER)	2000.00	0.00	2000.00	0.00

Item 50.3 DRAFT Action Plan for Land Assets Committee

The purpose of the Land Assets Committee is to consider and to recommend action to the Parish Council on matters regarding the Parish Council's land assets, being Ackers Pit, Mill Lane QEII Jubilee Field and Red Lane Allotments. The Land Assets Committee has delegated responsibility and may authorise expenditure within its assigned budget headings of up to a maximum of £5,000. Any expenditure above this amount needs to be recommended to full council for a decision.

As a committee with delegated responsibility for spending, the following Action Plan for the Financial Year 2023 to 2024 is presented to Full Council:

Focus - what	Aims - why	Actions - how	Responsibility - who	Costs – how much (Budget headings)	Timeframe - when	Outcomes – so what
Ackers Pit routine maintenance	To maintain the planted areas and pathways around Ackers Pit so that they are accessible and safe for visitors and provide a diverse habitat for the benefit of non-humans	To have hedges trimmed on the outside of the Pit around July; to have all hedging trimmed around October; to have pathways hand weeded twice per year; to have grass verges trimmed every six weeks from the end of May; to have periodic pest control visits to keep rodent populations in check; to respond to requests for	Contractors: Parish Rangers; Warrington Anglers Association	Hedge cutting; tree maintenance; grass and verge maintenance; pest control; water easement	Ongoing	More compliments than complaints. Maintenance routines that work in harmony with the environment. and are responsive to safety needs. Pride in place

		clearance on pathways; to empty litter bins twice per week				
Ackers Pit Asset Maintenance	To maintain and enhance the assets at the Pit – bins, benches, wooden bridge, fencing, signs, noticeboard	To inspect fixed assets once per year and undertake any repairs; ; to continuously monitor asset condition for safety	Contractors: Parish Rangers; Warrington Anglers Association; councillors and office staff, members of the public.	Asset Maintenance; bench repair	Annual inspection in September; ongoing monitoring of assets	Safe and well-maintained assets that are appropriate for the setting. Quick response when issues are raised.
Mill Lane routine maintenance	To maintain and enhance the two areas of land on Mill Lane	To continue with WBC mowing regime; to have verges mown once a year; to monitor ground conditions and refill holes when necessary	Contractors, Parish Rangers	Grass cutting; verge maintenance	Ongoing	More compliments than complaints. Maintenance routines that work in harmony with the environment. and are responsive to safety needs. Pride in place
Mill Lane asset maintenance	To maintain and enhance the assets on Mill Lane field which includes litter bins, benches, log seating, wooden bridge; fencing and knee rails	To inspect assets once per year and undertake any repairs; to continuously monitor asset condition for safety	Contractors: Parish Rangers; councillors and office staff, members of the public.	Asset Maintenance	Annual inspection in September; ongoing monitoring of assets	Safe and well-maintained assets that are appropriate for the setting. Quick response when issues are raised.
Red Lane Allotments	To support the provision of	To agree a lease with the Stockton	Stockton Heath Allotments	General Reserve	Ongoing	The continuation of availability of

	allotments for residents of and close to Stockton Heath	Heath Allotment Association; to provide arms-length support to the Association in their management of all aspects of the provision of the allotments.	Association; parish council solicitors; councillors and office staff			allotments to those who request them
Biodiversity	To commission a long-term planting plan for Ackers Pit and Mill Lane that will provide diverse habitat for non-humans, including flowers, bulbs, trees and hedging	To secure a contract to deliver the planting plan; to continue the establishment of an open glade at Ackers Pit to continue to establish a perennial wildflower area on Mill Lane main field and to continue to provide an annual wildflower planting area on Mill Lane small field;	Contractors	Biodiversity	Plan by June 2023; spring preparation and sowing of wildflowers; autumn bulb planting; glade establishment ongoing; tree and hedge planting in autumn	Visible increase in insects as biodiverse areas are introduced; increase in flowering species; gaps in hedge reduced; new tree stock growing to provide replacement mature trees over time.
Trees	To maintain and enhance tree stock on Ackers Pit and at Mill Lane.	To carry out twice yearly visual inspections from ground level of all mature trees; to implement the	Contractors: Parish Rangers; councillors and office staff, members of the public.	Trees; Earmarked Reserves (Trees)	Inspections in December and June; ongoing monitoring	Increase in tree stock; safety of trees maintained; more compliments than complaints.

		recommendations in the long-term planting plan; to secure contractor for next qualified tree inspection; to respond quickly to any reports of issues with trees that might have safety implications				
Events	To hold events that encourage residents to connect with the natural environment	To continue to host the Bird box making and the Bat Walk; to investigate the feasibility of providing other events; to seek partnerships with other organisations to facilitate events	Councillors and office staff; Parish Rangers; partner organisations	Events	Bird box – Feb; Bat Walk – Sept and ongoing work with partner organisations	Successful, well-run and well-attended events; compliments; community engagement and raising awareness of environmental issues.

Quotations for work identified during Assets Review

	Contractor 1	Contractor 2
To sand and stain four older style benches at Ackers Pit	360.00	520.00
To replace rotten timbers at Ackers Road/Mill Lane end	Not provided – will ask in time for meeting	340.00
To remove gate leading into the little Mill Lane field	64.00	90.00
To repair rail close to Lumb Brook on little Mill Lane field	180.00	160.00
Repair chain link fencing on Brookside Avenue	160.00	No quote offered – contractor does not have equipment