THE FRANK MONTGOMERY PLAYING FIELD TRUST MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 OCTOBER 2017

Present: Linda Lodge
Caroline Rees
Charlotte Stewart
Lisa Crosbie
Marina Dunlop

Miss Chenice Sparkes, Clerk

5 Members of the Public

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
None

2. **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 18 JULY 2017**
The Minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

3. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**
L. Lodge reported that Vice-Chairman Laura Downes has resigned due to work and family commitments. L. Lodge proposed that C. Rees be appointed Vice-Chairman and C. Stewart seconded the proposal. This was unanimously passed.

4. **NOISE NUISANCE AND WAYS TO REDUCE THIS**
L. Lodge reported that since the new play equipment had been installed, the use of the playing field from residents and neighbouring parishes has increased which has resulted in some complaints regarding noise nuisance and anti-social behaviour being received.

To date, polite notices have been placed outside the entrance asking users to be mindful of neighbouring residents and to avoid using the playing field after dusk. In addition, a quotation has been received to purchase some acoustic fencing amounting to £67 per meter with an additional £2600.00 for installation. The supplier has warned they cannot guarantee the acoustic fencing will be effective and has suggested that an acoustic sound engineer is appointed to check the requirements. An initial estate for MRL Acoustics has been obtained from Jackson Fencing in the region of £300.00 to inspect the playing field and to produce recommendations. L. Lodge reported that she has not been able to speak to Matt Lawrence from MRL Acoustics to book in an appointment and is waiting for a return call. The new PCSO's Dodwell and Mullins have also been informed at the recent School fete.

L. Lodge suggested that an initiative in conjunction with the School and parents to promote quiet play may help to keep screaming to a minimum. In addition, more permanent signs are proposed for the playing field advising users to be mindful of neighbouring residents and that the playing field is closed at dusk.

One resident expressed they were pleased to hear that action is being taken and suggested that, as part of the quiet play initiative, a note be sent to parents of children at the School. L. Crosbie responded that the School would be happy to put notes in children's bookbags and reported that she raised the issue of noise disturbance at the last School Governor meeting, where a suggestion was raised that the Woodland Trust be approached to see if any more trees could be planted in the playing field to create more of a sound barrier. This suggestion will be put to the Parish Council for consideration.

One resident reported that an adult supervising children from the School encouraged the children to shout “off, off, off” when using the zip wire. The resident wished to express that they appreciate there will be some noise from the children when the School use the playing field, but they felt this was excessive, especially as some of the children are now shouting this when using the zip wire outside of School hours. L. Crosbie responded that she would report this back to the School.

Another resident reported that there had been a number of anti-social behaviour incidents near the proposed nature area where it is more secluded, in particular children throwing stones at their fence, urination, and young adults using the playing field after dusk drinking. Although the young adults do not appear to cause any noise problems, it is disconcerting being so close to their property. C. Rees reported that she hoped the new permanent signs informing users that the playing field is closed after dusk will deter young adults from using the playing field in this manner. The picnic table located in this area will also be removed to encourage socialising in the more open areas of the playing field.

The resident suggested that when the nature area is being progressed, that a number of large plants are planted along the fence line to prevent children being able to get too close to the fence. L. Lodge reported that plants have already been planned for this purpose. The resident also said they would be happy to contribute towards the cost of acoustic fencing if it would assist with raising the necessary funds.

A suggestion was raised by a resident to ban dogs from the playing field following noise complaints. L. Lodge reported that the Playing Field Committee had looked into this and contacted Canterbury City Council who informed them that a bylaw would need to be in place to ban dogs from the area.

The Playing Field Committee agreed to implement the suggestions of putting a note in children’s bookbags, moving the table by the nature area and proceeding with booking MRL Acoustics to produce recommendations for the acoustic fencing. It was also agreed that a note should be put through resident’s doors in the parish to encourage quiet play as well as publishing a notice in Church and Village. L. Crosbie reported that a message could be put on the School’s website. L. Lodge and C. Rees agreed to draft the note and circulate for approval after the meeting. L. Crosbie reported that if the Playing Field Committee would like to use the school photocopier to produce the notes, the School would require a donation as a recent audit inspection has highlighted the need to reduce printing and photocopying costs. L. Lodge confirmed that the Playing Field Committee would not be using the School’s photocopying facilities.

5. **ROSPA REPORT 2017 AND SITE CHECKS**

C. Rees reported that the recent RoSPA report has come back overall as very good, no immediate safety concerns were identified but a recommendation was made to re-cement one of the legs on the bird nest swing and tighten the zip wire. L. Lodge reported that shrinkage of the safety surfacing around the play dome was also identified but no action is required.
C. Rees reported that she is waiting on a date to be arranged for the bird nest swing leg to be re-cemented and that she and Steve Rees would tighten the zip wire as they have been shown how to undertake this.

L. Lodge reported that RoSPA recommend that a weekly visual check is undertaken to help identify any potential problems at an early stage. C. Rees reported she had obtained a template for the visual checks which will be circulated after the meeting and that a rota would need to be established.

L. Lodge also reported that the trees on the playing field have been inspected and any remedial work suggested has been undertaken.

6. **SIGNAGE ON PLAYING FIELD**

L. Lodge reported that temporary signs were put at the entrance to the playing field stating, “please could all visitors respect our nearby residents and leave the playing field at dusk”, following reports of young adults using the playing field after dusk. L. Lodge reported that two local farms who employ seasonal fruit pickers were approached by herself and Cllr Twyman who offered to speak to their staff to advise them, if they are sitting in the playing field in their free time, not to do so after dusk. Although these young adults are not causing any noise disturbance, a number of residents have expressed concerns at their presence. With the change in the weather and the season, it is likely that young adults will not be using the playing field in the evenings.

C. Rees circulated a picture of the Turners Orchard sign in Littlebourne as an example for consideration. A quotation has been received for £36.50 for each sign (two will be required) and £25.00 to design the artwork. The Playing Field Committee approved the quotation and agreed the sign was a good example. C. Rees volunteered to draft some text to circulate for approval after the meeting. The Playing Field Committee also agreed that the colour of the signs should be green with white writing, the same as the Turners Orchard sign, to match the Committee’s logo and to appear less obtrusive.

L. Lodge also suggested that some temporary signs be hung over the gate to target visitors not from the parish requesting they respect neighbouring residents. M. Dunlop suggested that “we promote quiet play” be added to the temporary signs. C. Rees agreed to draft text for the temporary sign.

7. **AMENDMENT TO BOOKING FORM**

M. Dunlop suggested amending the booking form to include for a box to tick if the application is for a change in date or a repeat application for an event applied for in the past. In addition, it was also suggested that the approximate length of time for a decision to be made should be changed to six weeks’ notice to allow for events to be published on the next agenda, allowing residents to make comments to the Playing Field Committee if they wish. It would also allow time for the Parish Council to meet should a decision need to be referred. M. Dunlop also suggested making it clear in the Conditions of Hire that the organisers of the event must not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs. The Playing Field Committee agreed with the suggestions and C. Rees agreed to draft a new Booking Form and Conditions of Hire for approval after the meeting.

One resident asked for clarification on the criteria for deciding whether an event should or should not be approved. L. Lodge responded that each event is decided on a case by case basis but assured the resident that “common sense” is applied to how many events are approved during a year. The Playing Field Committee is of the view that the playing field is first and foremost a playing field, not a venue for events. The playing field lacks the facilities necessary to hold large events (for example toilets) and this is taken into consideration.

C. Rees confirmed that the Playing Field Committee are looking to limit the number of events held on a Sunday to respect residents boarding the playing field, but do not want to commit to a particular number to allow for flexibility in making decisions.

C. Rees reported that she and L. Lodge discussed and agreed that all requests regarding events proposed by the School should be taken by the Parish Council to discuss and decide. This was as a result of recent unfortunate circumstances and that it was C. Rees’ view, echoed by L. Lodge, that all the current Committee members have links to the School and it may be seen as biased by residents for a decision to be made by members who could be viewed to have a vested interest, potentially resulting in complaints. L. Lodge also recommended that all proposed events on a Sunday also be devolved to the Parish Council to decide as Sunday’s seem to be more controversial.

The majority of the Committee were not supportive of this recommendation and were of the view that all members could make an impartial decision based on the merits of each application. Some Committee members also felt that by removing the remit to make decisions on applications from the School and on a Sunday limited the need for a Committee. The majority of the Committee felt that only applications where a decision cannot be reached should be deferred to the Parish Council. L. Crosbie also made the point that the Parish Council has four councillors who have links to the School, which could also be viewed as undemocratic by residents. C. Rees was asked to speak to Cllr Treacher, Chairman of the Parish Council, to obtain clarification of the situation as the Playing Field Committee is a Sub-Committee of the Parish Council. C. Rees agreed to speak to Cllr Treacher and report back.

L. Crosbie reported that the School would be looking to hold their next summer fete on a Sunday as this normally raises more money than events held on a Saturday. As the previous application for a change of date to a Sunday was not approved, L. Crosbie requested clarification on the criteria as a PA system would be part of a future application which has caused complaints in the past. A resident suggested that if the School could demonstrate they had communicated with residents surrounding the playing field and had taken steps to mitigate any concerns raised, including perhaps moving the PA system away from houses and limiting the number of hours in use, this is more likely to be looked at favourably. C. Rees confirmed that each event is judged on a case by case basis.

L. Crosbie also wished to clarify whether the School could apply for a second “reserve” date for organised events should there be inclement weather (such as a BBQ post the School Sports Day). C. Rees responded that applying for a second date would be sensible and agreed that a reserve date could be applied for.

8. **PROPOSED REVIEW OF TRUST DEED**

Cllr Lodge reported that she has contacted Aaron Spencer at Furley Page Solicitors to get some advice on updating the Trust Deeds for the Playing Field following a recommendation from Cllr Treacher. The main item that has been highlighted for updating is the list of village groups who should have representatives on the Committee. Cllr Lodge however noted that Item 7 in the Trust Deed allowed for this eventuality and states that the Parish Council can appoint members to the Committee should no representative from those groups be put forward. As there are costs involved in updating the Trust Deed, C. Rees was asked to speak to Cllr Treacher to clarify what needs updating before perusing the matter any further.

The Committee unanimously agreed that new members were needed on the Committee. It was agreed to carry out a targeted mail drop of residents, as previously carried out by the Village Hall Committee, and to place an advert in Church and Village. It was agreed that the Committee should meet once a quarter (four times a year) with extraordinary meetings being called to consider proposed events if necessary. L. Lodge and C. Rees agreed to draft and distribute an advert for Church and Village and residents.

9. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

(i) C. Rees confirmed that the current bank balance is £2471.72.

(ii) C. Rees reported that the Playing Field Committee has been requested by the Parish Council to consider a wish list of expenditure for the next two years which the Parish Council could fund or partially fund. There is no guarantee that funding will be forthcoming, but all suggestions will be considered. The Playing Field Committee decided to put forward potential expenditure for the acoustic fencing.

(iii) C. Stewart requested that the Committee Terms of Reference be reviewed at the next meeting.

(iv) M. Dunlop requested that future meetings be held at 7.30pm rather than 7pm due to difficulties in attending earlier meetings. The Committee unanimously agreed.

The meeting closed at 8.35pm

Signed……..... (Chairman)

Date…….....