

**MINUTES OF ST CUTHBERT (OUT) PARISH COUNCIL
AS TRUSTEE FOR DULCOTE RECREATION GROUND
HELD REMOTELY ON MONDAY 21ST AUGUST 2023, 7PM**

Present: Cllrs J Baker; M Cooke; T Hathway; I Humphreys; M Mitchell; G Pettitt; J Reeves; J Zorab.

In Attendance: Ms Michele Exton (Administrator/Parish Clerk); 3 Members of the Public.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies from Cllr P Blatchford; B Conder; P Cannon; M Hayden; J Joseph.

Resolved: To approve the reasons given for Members' absence.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Clerk reminded Trustees that as they are also the Parish Councillors, any decisions they make at Board of Trustees' meetings, must be made in the best interests of the Charity and not the Council. All Trustees declared a PERSONAL interest as Parish Councillors.

3. Exclusion of the Public from Item 8

As there was not any commercially sensitive information in the Deputy Clerk's maintenance report, there was no need to exclude the Public from Item 8.

4. Approval and Actions of Minutes 6th February 2023

The Trustees were updated on the following action from the minutes 6th February 2023:

- Re investigating the possibility of installing a drinking fountain – Cllr Humphreys' contact is no longer available. One of the Residents who attended the meeting will send the Clerk the contact details of another Resident who may be able to help with progressing this matter.

Resolved: To confirm and sign as correct record the minutes of the Board of Trustees held on 6th February 2023.

5. Public Speaking Time

One Resident reported that more families are moving into the village. Another Resident reported that the Recreation Ground is well used and had spoken to other users and relayed the view that it is important to improve access for all. This Resident had provided a plan showing a suggested ramped pathway and explained that the existing rear access gate is not suitable for all as there are 2 gates to go through, no path across the grass and a steep downward gradient to reach the play equipment. The Clerk is to ask the arborist who undertakes the annual tree survey to find out if such works could be done without removing any of the trees. One of the Residents will try to have an informal chat with a local builder to ask if the ramped path is possible, and if so, quotes and funding can then be sought.

Other improvement suggestions included more swings and a picnic table. The T42 swing has not been reinstated as although repaired, someone to certify that it is safe for the public to use has not been found. The Clerk will investigate whether it is feasible for the swing to be reinstated but taped off and inspected during the independent annual inspection.

6. Administration

The Clerk reported that she had completed and submitted the Charity Commission's Annual Return for 2022 on 6th June 2023 and that on 1st August 2023, there was £104.52 in the Treasurers account and £1320.41 in the Business account.

7. Biodiversity

At the start of this item, it was made clear that although the Parish Council has a biodiversity duty under the Environment Act 2021, this duty does not apply to Dulcote Recreation Ground Charity. It was also highlighted that Trustees need to consider priorities and costs for the Recreation Ground and whether there is public interest in conserving and improving biodiversity. What biodiversity means and the benefit of wildlife corridors on land throughout the Parish was explained. When the new Assistant Clerk (who will have an environmental focus) is recruited by the Parish Council, the survey of the South Ward which includes Dulcote, will inform the Trustees of Residents' interest and priorities. The Trustees believe that committed volunteers will be needed to lead and take forward any biodiversity plan/actions.

8. Maintenance

The Deputy Clerk had provided a written report on maintenance issues from February 2023.

- All tree works identified in the annual tree survey 2022 have been completed and the Deputy Clerk is in the process of obtaining quotes for the identified tree works in the annual tree survey for 2023. The western boundary hedgerow is now included in the maintenance contract and the vegetation at the access steps is pruned monthly.
- Informal weekly inspections and formal monthly contractor inspections of the play equipment take place. Repairs for the seesaw and spinning pole were approved by the Council's Asset Management Committee 9th August. The concrete access at the top access gate was repaired in April. The next independent annual inspection is scheduled for the end of August.
- "No dogs" signage has been ordered.

Resolved: To accept the Deputy Clerk's maintenance report from February 2023.

9. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

Tba