

**MINUTES OF PARKS' COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON  
Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2009 at 7:00pm in Suite B, Council Offices, Holsworthy**

Present: Cllrs. R. Kennedy, R. Buckingham, E. Squire, P. Johns, L. Latty, M. Barfett, B. Priddy and R. Brown  
Town Clerk in attendance

1. **Apologies for absence:** Cllr. Barfett apologised for being late.
2. **Declaration of Interests** The Chairman asked members to declare their interests for items on the Agenda as and when they arose.
3. **Minutes of last Meeting:** It was agreed that the Minutes of the previous Meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> February, 2009, having been agreed and ratified at the Meeting of the full Council on 4<sup>th</sup> March, 2009 were a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chairman, Cllr. Kennedy.
4. **Matters Arising:** There were no matters arising.

Cllr Kennedy proposed that Standing Orders be suspended for items 5 and 6, this was seconded by Cllr. Buckingham and agreed unanimously (4 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions).

**5. Planning Obligations – To discuss with Peter Kemp, Legal Assistant at Torridge District Council, how to maximise planning obligations.**

Peter Kemp introduced himself as the Legal Assistant for Torridge District Council (TDC) and as the Officer who deals with 106 Planning Agreements. He explained to the Committee that TDC's key work over the coming 12 – 18 months was the Community Infrastructure Levy. In effect this Levy is a roof tax that will be applied to every new house built in the local authority area. Councillor Kennedy queried who would receive the financial contributions received from the Levy. Mr Kemp explained that there will be multiple levels with many relevant bodies being involved from County, District and Town/Parish Councils to South West Water (SWW). TDC will be encouraging all bodies to think holistically about what is required in their areas for the next 10-20 years taking into consideration the Regional Spatial Strategy and the predicted number of dwellings to be built. Mr Kemp then gave an example that, on a local level one of the suggestions in the Regional Spatial Strategy, there should be an additional 700 houses built in Holsworthy. You then have to ask what sort of facilities and infrastructure you are going to require to support these houses. The principal is that you plan for the worse case scenario, say 700 houses, then you plan for this i.e., schools, sports, medical centre, etc., if you then end up with less, you can deliver the same facilities on a smaller scale.

Cllr. Squire asked who would be looking into the Holsworthy sewage problem as the system is already overloaded and you would be looking at a totally new build. Mr Kemp acknowledged that TDC had been encountering difficulties in getting SWW to work with them and confirmed that SWW are very reactive to issues.

Cllr. Barfett arrived at 7.09pm.

Mr Kemp advised that TDC would be giving SWW a “speak now or forever hold you piece” approach and SWW will have to carry out work to assess what they need for the future. Cllr. Squire commented that TDC had no actual powers to make SWW participate and Mr Kemp confirmed this.

Cllr. Kennedy asked how the Levy figures would be calculated, Mr Kemp explained that TDC would look at the whole package and exactly what was required and would then set the financial contribution needed to meet that. Rough figures were presently being estimated at £10,000 - £18,000 per house to meet all the facilities. In addition to this the developer would have to provide roads and affordable housing etc.

Cllr. Kennedy asked Mr Kemp what input TDC required from the Town Council. Mr Kemp said that TDC's view is that this is a joint piece of work and they do not see it as something TDC can do on their own. He added it is an immense piece of work. He also confirmed that it would be linked to the Local Development Framework and become one of the many documents that make up the Framework. Cllr. Squire asked if this would affect the whole of Torridge. Mr Kemp said yes, it was Torridge wide and being undertaken across the Country. Cllr. Latty asked if the worse case scenario is 700 houses, how many new extra homes are empty in Holsworthy at the present time. Mr Kemp

apologised as he did not hold this information as that would form part of the Core strategy which is a completely different area. The figure of 700 houses had been given to TDC as part of the regional Spatial Strategy. He added that TDC try to encourage a bottom up approach, however, their arms can at times be up their backs due to Government policy.

Mr Kemp went on to explain that as part of dealing with the present situation TDC recognises they don't always get the best out of developments. In order to rectify this TDC need to understand what the parish and town councils want to achieve from a Developer. To do this they would like to work with the Councils to adopt Supplementary Planning Documents that concentrate on smaller briefs in particular areas. Mr Kemp said he was aware that Holsworthy Town Council had been formulating a Recreational Strategy and with the consent of the Town Council, TDC would like to turn this into an adopted Supplementary Planning Document that could be used when a Developer approached them for planning permission. The Clerk confirmed that a great deal of work had been done, such as evidence of need, plans with costings and public consultation. It was just a case of putting it all together into an acceptable document. She confirmed that she would be happy to work with TDC to achieve this.

Cllr. Kennedy thanked Mr Kemp for attending the meeting and for his time. Mr Kemp then left the meeting at 7.29 pm and Cllr Kennedy invited comments. Cllr. Brown said he supported Mr Kemp and it was good to see TDC working with the Town Council rather than against it, and that the 700 houses that have been muted was the worst case scenario. He believed that it should be recommended to the full Council that the Clerk work with TDC officers to create the necessary documents.

Cllr. Kennedy proposed that a recommendation be made to full Council for the Clerk to work with TDC Officers to prepare a Supplementary Planning Document for the Recreational Strategy that can be adopted and used. This was seconded by Cllr. Buckingham and agreed (4 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions).

**6. Trees at Badock & Rowland Gardens and Stanhope Park – To discuss the remedial works and a long term plan for the trees at Badock & Rowland Gardens and Stanhope Park.**

Cllr. Kennedy confirmed that 3 trees located at Badock and Rowland Gardens were in the process of being felled and there were an additional 4 that still required to be felled within the next 6 months. He also confirmed that there were a total of 6 trees at Stanhope Park that needed felling. He explained that this tree work created several issues e.g. when will the work be done, how it will be funded and what to do about future planting.

The Clerk confirmed that Graham Rooke (Tree surgeon) had attended Badock Gardens on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> March and had commenced felling the three trees that urgently required removal.

The Clerk also explained that she had been communicating with Martin Beagley, Tree Officer at Torridge District Council. Prior to the three trees being felled, Mr Beagley had been sent a copy of the Tree Surgeons report and had inspected the trees. He confirmed in writing that he was in agreement that the trees must be removed. Had this course of action not been taken the Council could have been at risk of a £20,000 fine. The Clerk also confirmed that she had completed two TDC Tree Works applications regarding the remaining works needing to be carried out in both locations. This would need to be assessed by Torridge before any further action could be taken. On inspection of the trees, Mr Beagley commented that he may not agree with all the required works detailed in the report. He also expressed concerns that it appeared that one tree could have had its roots severed by the Midas development, which means it will need to be removed as the damage will make it unstable.

The Clerk explained that the smaller branches of the trees had been shredded for woodchip and had been left at Badock Gardens for Courtney Drew to use. The wood from the Sycamore that was felled would stay in a pile at Badock as a conservation area.

The remaining wood was being removed by the Dartmoor Tree Surgeon Operatives, as per the quotation. The Clerk had received several requests regarding the wood and had negotiated with the Tree Surgeons to leave some of the wood so that people who had asked could help themselves. The Clerk advised that although some of the wood had been affected by the fungus, the larger branches had not and she suggested that when the other trees had to be felled it may be worth investigating if the wood could be sold, thus off setting some of the costs incurred.

After discussion Cllr. Kennedy proposed the following:

- The Clerk to contact Sawmills to establish if they would be interested in purchasing some of the wood.
- The Clerk to start preparing a Tender Specification for the remaining remedial works. The Specification to include the chipping of all the smaller branches and to obtain two quotations, one to leave the wood on site and one to remove it.
- Write to Midas Homes regarding the damage to the trees and request financial contribution.
- The Clerk to issue, to all Councillors, a list of approved projects, so Councillors can begin evaluating the list to establish which projects could be cancelled.
- Place an item on the April Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting to assess projects that could be cancelled in order to direct funds to the tree works.

This was seconded by Cllr. Buckingham and agreed unanimously (4 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions)

Cllr. Kennedy proposed that the meeting return to Standing Orders this was seconded by Cllr. Squire and agreed (4 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions)

Cllrs. Priddy, Brown and Barfett left the meeting at 7.45pm.

#### **7. Stanhope Park - To discuss matters relating to Stanhope Park.**

The Clerk advised the Committee of the following:

- a) RoSPA had conducted their annual inspection, we should receive the report shortly.
- b) The spider climbing frame has had one of its legs fall off. She confirmed that she, together with Cllr. Buckingham and Andy Harper, a member of the Stanhope Park Community Group and a Play Consultant, all agree that it is beyond repair and needs to be removed from the Park. Mr Harper has kindly offered to remove it free of charge but he will not be able to do this until next week. Cllr. Kennedy proposed the spider climbing frame be removed, this was seconded by Cllr. Buckingham and agreed. (4 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions)
- c) An e-mail had been received from Andrew Waite confirming that the uplift on the Stanhope Park recharges would remain at 2.3%.
- d) Courtney Drew has provided a quote to carry out the following works in Stanhope Park:
  - Cut back the hedge and erect two small fences in the children's play area. This is to stop children climbing the bank and risk falling down the other side.
  - Rebuild the bank and hedge which has been eroded again, by people using it as a cut through to the Football Club
  - Clean out the drainage ditches.
  - Clean up all the leaves by the main gates.

The total cost for these works is £146.75 including material and labour. The Clerk confirmed there are sufficient funds in the 2008/2009 budget to have the work carried out immediately. Cllr. Johns proposed that Mr Drew be instructed immediately, this was seconded by Cllr. Squire and agreed. (4 For, 0 against, 0 abstentions). Cllr. Kennedy also recommended that the Clerk write to Holsworthy Football Club and ask them to remind their members and guests not to use the bank as a cut through. This was unanimously agreed.

- e) She had been approached by Mr Vanstone, a resident of The Vineyards, who wished to remove a tree located on the boundary bank of his property and Stanhope Park. Mr Vanstone had told the Clerk he would like to remove the tree as some of its branches overhang his garage. The Clerk advised the Committee that the tree had not been identified in the Tree Surgeons report as requiring any remedial action and circulated a photo she had taken of it. The Clerk confirmed she had advised Mr Vanstone that he could trim any overhanging branches, however its removal would have to be discussed by the Parks' Committee. After discussion, Cllr. Kennedy proposed that a letter be sent to Mr Vanstone advising him that in a recent Tree Surgeons report the tree had not been identified as

requiring any remedial action and, therefore, the Committee could not agree to its removal. They would, however, allow the Council's gardener, Mr Courtney Drew, to remove any overhanging branches of the tree and request that Mr Vanstone contacts Mr Drew direct. This was seconded by Cllr. Squire and agreed unanimously. (4 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions)

Cllr. Buckingham advised the Committee that she had received a request from the Cricket Club to store gang mowers in the back shed at Stanhope Park, as they wanted to cut the Cricket Outfield themselves. Cllr. Kennedy commented that in order to assess the request fully, the Cricket Club would need to write to the Council clearly outlining their proposal, including what action they would take regarding insurance on the mowers and public liability insurance regarding their usage. Cllr. Buckingham confirmed she would advise them accordingly.

**8. Badock and Rowland Gardens -To discuss matters relating to Badock Gardens and Rowland Gardens.**

The Clerk confirmed the following:

- a. she would be sending a Lease Agreement to The Chamber of Trade shortly to cover their Tea Party in Badock Gardens.
- b. Mr Drew had organised for some of the larger logs from the felled trees to be dotted around the gardens as seats.

**9. Community Event – To discuss a Fireworks’ Display in Stanhope Park as a possible Community Event.**

Cllr. Johns explained that it had been brought to her attention that several people in the Town felt that the Council were not doing anything for the Town. As the Town and Council have some excellent facilities at their disposal she thought it would be a good idea to utilise the Parks/Gardens for a Community Event. She had used a Fireworks Company for her daughters wedding and thought it would be good to have a fireworks display in Stanhope Park for Bonfire Night. The Company concerned conduct a free survey of a potential site and confirmed that they would look at Stanhope Park when they were next in Holsworthy. The Company had also confirmed that £1,000 would do a really good display.

Cllr. Latty suggested that the Lions or Rotary could be approached to organise a barbecue.

After discussion it was decided to leave the matter in abeyance until the Fireworks company had been to survey the Park and await any other suggestions from Councillors.

**10. Clerks Report – To receive a report from the Clerk**

The clerk had nothing further to report.

**11. Close:**

The meeting closed at 8.04 pm

**Signature .....**

**Dated .....**