

# **Elsenham Parish Council**

## **Playing Field Committee Meeting held at 7.00pm in Old Franks, Elsenham on Wednesday 2 August 2023**

### **MINUTES**

**Present:** Mrs. S Waite (Chair SW), Mr. P Jarvis (PJ), Mrs. F Lambert (FL),  
Mr. J Minor (MJ), Dr. G Mott (GM) and Mrs. L Johnson (LJ).

**Members of the public:** Mr. A Hathaway (AH).

**1. Apologies for absence** – Mrs. B Donald (BD).

**2. Declaration of Interests** – None.

**3. Open to the public**

AH explained that, unfortunately, the only way the Memorial Hall could have Wi-Fi connection was to remove one row of blocks at the right-hand edge of the new path in Leigh Way, allowing a fiberoptic cable to be laid. A trench would then be dug into the grass for the cable to reach the Memorial Hall. Gigaclear will be sending LJ a legal contract waiver, asking permission from EPC to carry out this work. Wi-Fi connected to the Memorial Hall would allow anyone using the Memorial Hall or near the hall access to free Wi-Fi.

SW to change the order of the agenda.

**9.4 Dig up Leigh Way path to allow Gigaclear to lay their cables for Wi-Fi for the Memorial Hall.**

There were concerns about digging up the new path, which had cost residents over £11,000. The contract from Gigaclear must state that the whole area, including the Leigh Way path, will be put back to the standard it was before. Photos will be taken before, during and after. AH will oversee the work, which should only take 2 – 3 hours. If EPC are not happy with the standard of the path after Gigaclear have finished, AH said he will either personally make it acceptable or ECA will pay for a builder to put it right.

**Proposal:**

SW proposed that with the proviso that the contract waiver states, *'all work will be put back to the standard it was before work commenced'*, EPC give permission for the work to be carried out. The vote was carried unanimously.

When the contract waiver is received, LJ to circulate it to all Councillors.

**4. Approval of the minutes held on 17 July 2023.**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2023 were agreed and signed by SW.

**5. Items brought forward from previous meeting.**

**5.1. RoSPA** – Item 7.

## 5.2. Teen Shelter – Still ongoing.

### 6. Budget.

Playing Field General Maintenance	£3,167
Playground general Maintenance	£1,897
Playground new equipment	£1,000
Isabel Drive	
Playground general Maintenance	£1,000

### 7. RoSPA Report.

#### Isabel Drive.

- **Agility – Balance Trail** – Ground erosion, consider adding grass matting as grass is worn on the embankment, middle post, grass has worn away topsoil and has dried out, post is loose in ground. Risk level low. **This piece of equipment is to be either removed or re-positioned during the play area's refurbishment.**
- **Climber – Net** – Cap Missing. Risk level low. **LJ to try and source cap, ongoing.**
- **Slide – Embankment** – Ground erosion present, consider adding grass matting, extend grass matting up sides, new turf to be laid. Risk level low. **This will be addressed during the play area's refurbishment.**
- **Slide Tower** – This item is not compliant with the requirements of the relevant standards. Extend grass matting around item, 1500mm required. Finger entrapment, blank-off holes. **The holes have been filled. The extra matting will be addressed during the play area's refurbishment.**

#### Play area on the Playing Field.

- Clatter Bridge - Timber has decayed. **It was agreed that the bridge was not dangerous. LJ asks Mick to treat the timber and then monitor any further decay.**
- Multiplay – Toddler - The item is noisy in operation. **Oil has been added.**
- Rocking Horse - Boards are loose and timber x 1 is splintered at front of horse. **New timber has been added, the boards have been tightened.**
- Roller Barrel – The item is noisy in operation. **Oil has been added.**
- Slide embankment – Ground erosion present. Consider adding grass matting to prevent wear. **It was agreed not to add matting, LJ to monitor.**
- Junior swings – Some chain wear. **LJ to monitor.**
- Toddler swings – Some chain wear. **LJ to monitor.**
- Talk Tubes – can be lifted and rotated. **The tubes are now secure.**
- Pirate ship – **All bolts have been tightened.**
- Senior Multi Play – Hard or sharp edge points are not permitted within any accessible part of the equipment. Low Brackets on supports stick out in a way that may be struck by users. **Dania has installed 135 doughnut bolt covers.**

### 8. Football Club EYFC.

LJ had contacted Ricky Lambourn, Chair of the Football Club, asking if the Football Club would be prepared to pay the solicitors fees for drawing up the legal agreement. Ricky Lambourn had replied confirming he would ask the Football Committee at the next meeting being held on 14 August. However, he suspected that the committee would want a 50/50 agreement with EPC.

EPC's internal auditor had advised EPC that the Football Club should pay all the solicitors fees.

## **9. Playing Field.**

### **9.1. Reinstating the basketball stand.**

The application for the grant funding had been submitted. Still waiting on the outcome.

### **9.2. Hiring out the playing field.**

After a lengthy discussion, it was decided to take a decision on applications to hire the playing field when they were presented. Members could then take into consideration whether the field was being hired as a commercial enterprise or a charity event, whether it was a village organisation or outside of the village. Consideration would be given to the Football Club's schedule.

#### **Proposal:**

SW proposed EPC charge £75 per hour for hiring the Elsenham playing field. The vote was carried by 3 votes in favour, 2 votes against.

It was agreed that the village fete could be held on the playing field on 22 June 2024.

### **9.3. Selling coffee from the car park.**

A request had been made by a vendor called Tart Au Citron to sell coffees, teas and cakes in the playing field car park in line with the Football Club's opening times on Saturdays and Sundays and occasionally mid-week. The vendor has all the necessary documentation.

#### **Proposal:**

SW proposed that Tart Au Citron may sell coffees, teas and cakes from the playing field car park on Saturdays and Sundays only and in line with the football operating times.

The vote was carried unanimously.

## **10. Isabel Drive Play area.**

So far some members of the Playing Field Committee have met up with two play equipment companies at the Isabel Drive play area, Kompan and Timotay. The closing date for tenders is 27 August 2023.

## **11. Any Other Business.**

**11.1.** At the end of June there were several emails to EPC regarding suggestions for improving the playing field facilities. GM asked if the residents had received a reply. LJ said she had replied to each email, thanking the resident for taking the time to write and all suggestions had been forwarded on to the Playing Field Committee to consider.

**11.2.** The knee-high boundary fence around the field has been damaged again. SW said the damage had been caused by a coach dropping off people to the Bowls Club. SW is to give the coach company details to LJ, so payment for the damage can be sent to the company.

**11.3.** A request from a resident had been received, asking if dogs, always kept on their leads, could be allowed to walk from the Leigh Gate entrance along the path to the

Station Road access, but never being allowed on the field or children's play area. However, the resident has then gone on to say people with dogs could then watch their children playing football and get a coffee.

**Proposal:**

SW proposed that EPC do not allow this and the whole of the playing field remains a no dog zone.

The vote was carried by 3 in favor and 2 against.

The reason 3 members voted not to agree to this was, irresponsible dog owners, dog waste being put in the playing field public bins, which Mick Burke, who is employed as a litter-picker, would have to empty. It was also thought that once dogs were allowed inside the gates of the playing field the situation could easily escalate with dogs going on the actual field.

The reason 2 members voted to agree to this was that EPC has no lawful authority to stop dogs going into the playing field since dog control orders are unenforceable.

- 11.4.** On Tuesday 1 August an employer from Surfacing Standards carried out a feasibility study on the Elsenham Playing Field. One of the things this involved was placing wooded marker pegs in the ground which were a trip hazard to the children playing on the field and if EPC's grass cutter had mown over one of these pegs, he would have damaged his mower. EPC had not been advised of any study taking place and had therefore not given any permission. LJ phoned the Surfacing Standards to ask them to stop work until who ever authorised this study phoned her and explained what was going on. Surfacing Standards were not helpful they phoned back saying they could not get hold of anybody, and it was a public field so they could do whatever they liked on it.

PJ said he would investigate the matter. PJ thought it was possibly in connection with Threadneedle Columbia and Stansted Airport. Elsenham Football club lease some land from Stansted Airport to play football on, the land is now being taken back by the airport for development. As this land is being taken away from the use of sport, Stansted Airport must give something back to sport in the area. They are providing a 3d football pitch at Stansted School and the feasibility study was probably to see how the Elsenham playing fields could be improved.

- 11.5.** FL said she had seen a lady in the playing field children's play area looking at the play equipment, she then asked FL directions to the Isabel Play area. FL hoped this lady may have been from Essex Playing Fields and EPC may receive an award.
- 11.6.** FL said there were some agendas and minutes missing from the Elsenham Website. LJ to investigate.

The meeting finished at 8.50pm.

The next meeting is to be held on 27 September 2023 at 7.00pm.