

# Thame Town Council

## Meeting Report: Open Spaces Working Group

Date: 23 March 2023

### Present:

Cllr Nigel Champken-Woods (Chair)  
Cllr Adrian Dite  
Cllr Helena Fickling  
Cllr Paul Cowell (Town Mayor)  
Mandy Sturdy (Town Clerk)  
Andrea Oughton (Operations Manager)

### 1. Apologies:

Action

Cllrs Linda Emery, Catherine Jones and Helena Richards

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### 2. Meeting – 18 October 2022

The report of the meeting held on 18 October 2022 was noted with no amendment.

### 3. Elms Park

S106 funds – with the developer's agreement, funds towards the refurbishment of Elms Park, including the MUGA will be transferred to South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) as soon as practically possible. Mandy has spoken to the SODC s106 Officer regarding the process of drawing down the funds. This can take between 4-6 months. Mandy will start the process following agreement at Community, Leisure and Recreation Committee (CLR) meeting on 4 April 2023.

MS

The working group propose to break down refurbishment of the park into two phases.

Phase 1: Removal of MUGA / installation of new MUGA (ideally concurrently), installation of footpaths and bollard style lighting, installation of 6m x 6m performance area, refurbishment of existing play area.

Phase 2: Installation of additional play area, consideration of pétanque court, additional planting and biodiversity areas – all funding dependent.

Mandy and Andrea have worked on draft timeline for the project and will draw up draft scope for the MUGA, paths and play area for discussion at the next meeting. Andrea to check legislation on fencing of age-appropriate play equipment, inclusive play provision.

AO

Agreed to write a report to next CLR meeting requesting to delegate responsibility to the OSWG for the delivery of the refurbishment of Elms Park within £300k budget, providing regular update reports to the Committee.

MS/AO

### 4. Thame Showground – Asset of Community Value

An Asset of Community Value (ACV) acts as the first stage in identifying and nominating buildings or other assets such as land that have a main use or purpose of furthering social wellbeing or social interests of the local community or could do so into the future.

#### 4. Thame Showground – Asset of Community Value (cont'd)

Once listed as an ACV with the local authority, the local community will be informed if the asset is listed for sale within a five-year listing period. The community can then enact the Community Right to Bid, this does not give the right of first refusal but does give them a moratorium period of six months to determine if the finance can be raised to purchase the asset.

There may also be an alternative method to register Thame Show Ground and an area of green and open space with importance for the whole community.

The working group agreed the area was of great importance to the community and that methods of protecting it should be investigated further. **MS/AO**

#### 5. Parkrun

There is demand for a Parkrun in Thame. As part of Mandy's CiLCA qualification she investigated areas within the parish that might be suitable for a Parkrun. There are strict rules around Parkruns, including the length – 3 miles (can be loops of same area), car parking and toilets.

One potential area might be Southern Road Recreation Ground (SRRG), including Cuttle Brook Nature Reserve. Mandy has estimates for laying a perimeter path in SRRG. Working Group agreed Mandy to investigate this and other venues further to enable a future recommendation to CLR / Council. **MS**

#### 4. Open Spaces Update

Project to open up Rycote Meadow: The project is now moving into Phase 2, the provision of the path and access to the meadow. A specialist has been appointed to draw up the specification for the path and access from Oxford Road. Alongside this Andrea and Becky Reid have met with a member of the Environment Agency to talk through plans for the path and seek their approval before a planning application for the path is submitted.

Planting at Hamilton / Marston Road: Planting has been completed (see attached plan). Residents overlooking the open space have volunteered to water the new trees. An Oak tree has been planted in memory of Queen Elizabeth II.

Planting at Queen Elizabeth Circle: Planting has been completed (see attached plan). Some of newly planted hedging has had to be replanted on a few occasions. It is unsure whether the disturbance is due to animal activity or vandalism. Volunteers from Thame Trees are monitoring the new trees and hedging.

Planting at the 'Triangle': A group of volunteers including staff from a local business have planted a double depth hedge along the boundary with Tythrop Way on a piece of Town Council owned land next the skate park. Hedging has also been planted to the rear of the area, along the boundary with sewage works. Hedge planting has also taken place in the skate park.

Churchill Crescent and Webster Close: Residents consultation planned to draw up planting schemes for both areas for presentation to a future meeting of the working group.

Discussion took place on the location of an oak tree to celebrate King Charles III coronation. It was agreed that either Churchill Crescent or SRRG are suitable and suggested contacting a local tree specialist for further advice.

## **7. Any Other Business**

It was noted the planning application for the proposed Community Youth building on SRRG had been registered and live on South Oxfordshire District Council website. If approved the lime tree nearest the existing changing rooms will need to be felled. The working group agreed that if permission is granted the tree is felled in autumn 2023 and at least three trees will be planted in a different location on SRRG.

**AO**

Dogs – it was proposed to display larger signage in Elms Park and SRRG encouraging dog owners to keep their dogs on leads. Positive messages to be used explaining why it is important to observe the By-laws. Messaging has already started with a piece in this week's newsletter and social media posts. Cuttle Brook Volunteer Committee to be contacted re signage in the Nature Reserve.

**AO**

Explore land for a dedicated dog walking area. Possibly referenced in revised Thame Neighbourhood Plan.

**MS**

## **8. Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 27 April 2023, 3pm in the Upper Chamber.

**AO**