

## **SHERE PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Playground Committee Meeting held at 7.30 p.m. on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2012**

**Present:** Dr. C. Brooke (Chairman of the Playground Committee), Mr. R. Newman (Chairman Shere Parish Council), Mr R. Andrews, Mr. B. Cohen, Mrs. S. Nielson, Mr J. Tenner, 28 members of the public and the Clerk Mrs. L. Childs.

**Annual election of the Chairman of the Playground Committee** – Dr. Brooke was proposed by Mr Cohen, seconded by Mr Andrews and unanimously elected Chairman.

**Apologies for absence** were submitted on behalf of Mrs Taylor Cotter (a parish councillor but not a member of this committee).

**Declarations of Personal or Prejudicial interests** – Dr. Brooke declared a personal interest as she is a founder member of the Shere Village Nursery which uses the Shere Play Area on a regular basis.

**The Minutes** of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2011 were **APPROVED AND SIGNED** as a correct record.

**Financial Report** – The Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer **INFORMED** the Committee of the following:

Playground Projects - £12,741.63 held in the earmarked reserves plus £9,199.74 underspend on playground maintenance during 2011/12 giving a total of £21,941.37.

Playground maintenance - £6,000.

Grant Aid available from Guildford Borough Council until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014: Skate and ride project – 50% of the project costing up to £10,000; plus 8.84% in excess thereof to a maximum of £5,883 on a project costing £20,000 or more. Youth shelter (project on hold at present) £3,750 on an estimated cost of £7,500.

**Skate and ride facility** The Chairman gave background information regarding her involvement in other local projects. She stated that she was concerned that many members of the public had come to the meeting under the misapprehension that the Parish Council had already decided to install a small skate and ride facility. She gave assurance that whilst this was under consideration, no decision had been taken. Following representations from many local youngsters, plus a suggestion made by the Police Crime Prevention Officer, it had been decided that the subject would be investigated by a working group comprising of parish councillors, members of the public and youngsters. This working group was established last Autumn following an appeal in the parish magazine for volunteers. After consultation with young people in the area it was concluded that there was a strong preference for a skate and ride area, mainly for the use of BMX's and scooters. The Playground Committee is now to decide whether or not they will make a recommendation to the full Council that this wish be fulfilled. The Chairman pointed out that it is the Parish Council that will make the final

decision and before that decision is made the general public will be consulted. Finally she gave a power point presentation on the Playground Working Group's investigations.

**Short adjournment to enable the Public to raise any issue relating to an item on the agenda.**

It was apparent at the meeting that a number of those attending were opposed to the installation of such equipment. The main objections were that it would create noise disturbance, that it could attract an undesirable element resulting in antisocial behaviour, vandalism, litter problems and bullying etc. and, in their view, the installation of skate and ride equipment was therefore inappropriate in Shere or Gomshall. In addition, concern was expressed by several people that the project appeared to be a fait accompli, that the meeting had not been advertised widely enough, false hope had been given to the youngsters, and that some information submitted had not been passed on to the Clerk and Councillors as requested. Others however praised the Parish Council for their efforts and it was pointed out that it was working through a process and, until a proposal had been fully formed, a public consultation on this could not take place. However, everyone felt that there was a need to provide some sort of activity for young teenagers and several people stated that they would be willing to provide the Parish Council with further information regarding skate and ride facilities elsewhere and also other possible activities for this age range.

**The meeting restarted.**

**Skate and ride facility** - The Chairman again reiterated that no agreement had been made as many other factors had yet to be considered. The Committee then received the recommendations of the Playground Working Group and thanked Members of this Group for their time and effort. Committee Members stated that they would continue to explore the provision of a piece of skate and ride equipment but would also be pleased to receive suggestions and information on this and other possible activities from members of the public prior to further consideration at the next meeting. It was agreed that the Parish Clerk would seek information from other Parish Councils in Sussex and Surrey who have installed similar equipment.

**Tree climbing** – the Committee decided to **SEEK THE ADVICE** of ROSPA regarding children climbing on a 20' high tree on Goose Green as it was felt that this could be dangerous. The Committee was informed that one solution may be to carry out a crown lift of the trees in question.

**Risk Assessment** – the Committee **REVIEWED** the playground risk assessment and **AGREED** that no amendments were required. The risk assessment was then signed by the Chairman.

**Annual Inspection of Play Areas by ROSPA** – the report had only been received that day. However, the Chairman stated that there would appear to be no serious problems at any of the sites. The report will be considered fully by all Members of the Committee. The Chairman stated that she was very pleased that the newly installed safety surfaces had meant that there were very few safety issues highlighted in the ROSPA report.

**Date of the next meeting:** to be arranged.

