

Cheddleton Parish Council

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC MEETING FOR CHEDDLETON PLAYING FIELD HELD IN THE COMMUNITY CENTRE, CHEDDLETON ON WEDNESDAY, 15th. AUGUST 2018.

ATTENDANCE - Vice-Chairman – Councillor M.T. Bowen.

Councillor - Mrs. D.A. Hartley, Mrs. B. Hine, H.R. Jennings, S. Scalise, H.J. Tunna.

24 Members of the Public and Police Sergeant Andy Bland and PCSO Laura Peacock

APOLOGIES - Councillor M.P. Worthington at Consall Parish Meeting & Councillor K. Harvey who is currently on holiday.

1 INTRODUCTION

Councillor Bowen explained that the Playing Field back in 1928 was raised by Reverend William Burgess and was for the benefit of the people of Cheddleton and was run by a residents committee. It was then taken over by the National Playing Fields Association in the 1970's which was a National Body. It is currently owned by Fields in Trust who have given the responsibility of managing it to Cheddleton Parish Council.

Over the years there has been an on-going problem of vandalism and arson with the Football changing rooms, Tennis club house, and Bowling green club house all being burnt down or so badly damaged that they had to be pulled down. This is the second arson attack on the zip wire since it was installed and over the years to keep replacing and providing new equipment it has cost well over £120,000 which is raised by precept by the Parish Council and over the last 6/7 years the Council has managed to keep the precept the same £70,000 a year but just to put it into context to replace the platform for the zip wire will cost a tenth of the precept to make you aware of what your money is being spent on.

It is very sad that the culprits are doing this damage deliberately as they are even bringing tools to destroy the equipment. Unfortunately, there is no evidence to prove who is causing the damage whether it be local people or people from out of the village. Not only is it the arson and vandalism there are issues with drugs, anti-social behavior and even orgies. What the Parish Council needs is that residents who witness anything especially lately with the fires being deliberately started to report these incidents to the Police. Arson carries a high penalty if caught and we need you as our eyes and ears to catch the culprits in the act to prosecute them. It is a difficult situation as people are afraid of repercussions of phoning the Police but we need to stop these people from getting away with this unacceptable behavior.

There is also a problem with dog fouling on the Playing Field and what I want to do is get a PSPO (Public Spaces Protection Order) which means that we have additional powers and people can be arrested more easily for some of the unacceptable behavior. Just to dispel any rumors that there is going to be houses built on the playing field. This won't happen while the Parish Council manages the land but if things don't improve and we hand it back to Fields in Trust as the owners it would be up to them what happens to it. The chances of it being sold off are unlikely. Councillor Bowen then opened the floor to questions and ideas.

2 **MATTERS ARISING THEREFROM**

- a) Cheddleton Rugby Club are wanting to use the football pitch to train young players as they require additional space to do this which would be good as we need to see good use of the field they too are experiencing problems on St Edwards Park with damage to the Summer House which is a Grade 2 Listed building.
- b) Could there be a designated area for walking dogs? It is a difficult one as again how do you police it and what we need is for all dog owners to be responsible and pick up after their dogs.
- c) CCTV. Very large area to cover by cameras and it isn't very well lit. Councillor Bowen raised the cost of £340,000 for SMDC to run CCTV a year and who would watch it? Not only that he mentioned that at festival park even though cameras were on very high poles some cameras were stolen.
- d) Volunteers walking round the playing field on a Rota. We used to have a group of volunteers and at this time it has reduced to just 3 people who are here this evening. It needs to be organized properly and enough volunteers to run without it turning into a vigilante group. Need to be careful and come up with a strategy as to who you are representing.
- e) Sergeant Andy Bland spoke as having grown up in Cheddleton that it has been a long-term problem but from the Police perspective he suggested that Local Council may be able to help with the Dog fouling issues. CCTV is a definite help but would require night vision cameras as most incidents happen at night but said that maybe residents who back onto the field who may already have cameras or looking to get them would be a start. Show that the field is being used is also a good deterrent. It is a common thing that these types of areas attract trouble as currently there are issues at Werrington and we have heard mention of St. Edwards Park but the main issue is that the Police need to be made aware that there is a problem by reporting it to us. He mentioned that when he checked the figures for Cheddleton that there had been a 150% increase in the figures from this time last year about arson as there was only 1 incident reported last year and 3 this but as for everything else it has decreased. For example, anti-social behavior but this could just be that people are not reporting it.
- f) He mentioned that he and his colleagues who are assigned to the area which is himself, 2 PC's and 3 PCSO's try to make their presence felt and that the modern way of Policing has changed rather than just locking everyone up they try to work with the youth. By starting with Acceptable Behavior Contract with either them or if a minor then their parents. Then if they continue to mis-behave we get a Protection Order which if they cause Criminal Damage can be fined up to £2,000. Under the new structure of the Police there will be more response patrols and more neighborhood patrols.
- g) People who witness incidents should contact the Police asap whether it be 999 or 101 for lesser incidents or if people have concerns about repercussions then they can contact Crime Stoppers as at least they get the correct details whereas if it is reported by an intermediary such as letting a Councillor know, the details of the incident could be lost.
- h) Are there no local resources for equipment and what do the children actually want as currently do they want a zip wire? The Parish Council Committee for the Playing Field is made up of 4 Councillors and 2 Members and these are the ones making the decisions so we need involvement like this meeting rather than just deciding what they think is best. Is it worth

replacing the zip wire as it is always broken? The main issue is mis-use and that any repairs have to be within the regulations for play equipment.

- i)** Pointon's Park is too far out of the village for the younger children but this is run and funded by Pointon's so is beyond the control of the Council.
- j)** Drug use isn't just an issue at night as one resident reported that her 11-year-old son had been offered Poppers during the day by a teenager. She had now stopped her son from using the Playing Field as she feels it isn't safe as she had confronted children before to get a string of abuse. She had also reported incidents to the Police but felt it was a waste of time.
- k)** Lighting the area or possibly certain areas such as the playground. Sound alarm that makes children disperse.
- l)** Local Business funding?
- m)** What do other authorities do to combat similar issues? Vandal proof equipment.
- n)** More Police visibility rather than PCSO's as they have no powers to arrest.
- o)** Surveillance everyone has a mobile phone to take photos/ video and phone the Police as it is important that we don't let them rule us. If it's an enforcement issue such as dog fouling let Councillor Bowen have the details and he will report it.
- p)** Could Fields in Trust help with funding? Check out the Crime Commissioners website for possible funding.
- q)** Councillor Mrs. Hine visits the Playing Field daily and talks to the children as the majority are very sociable so we need to encourage them to help us look after it. She had some help her weeding and they asked if they could help again. We all know that it is a minority spoiling it for the rest.
- r)** Councillor Scalise was pleased that so many people had turned up and asked that people come to the next Playing Field Committee meeting in October so it was discussed and decided to hold another Public Meeting on Wednesday 26th September in the Community Centre (Room Booking not confirmed) again to take some of the ideas forward and encourage some of the younger residents to attend the next meeting. It was agreed to advertise this on social media and perhaps get the School involved in letting parents know.

There being no further business the Vice-Chairman declared the meeting closed.