HEDGE END TOWN COUNCIL – MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RECREATION AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE HELD 9TH APRIL 2025

Cllrs present: Cllr Paul Carnell, Cllr Leigh Hadaway, Cllr John Jupe (Chair), Cllr Dave Kinloch, Cllr Derek Pretty

In attendance: Sarah Jelley – Town Clerk
Brett Athow – Operations Manager
Six Residents of Nelsons Gardens

The committee held one minute silence in memory of the late Cllr Jane Welsh

R544 Apologies Cllr Margaret Allingham

R545 Minutes and Matters arising

Minutes of the meeting 12th March 2025

R543 Cllr Derek Pretty noted he had spoken to the HEWEB Local Area Manager reference the possible funding for fencing at Norman Rodaway and that an application needed to be summitted.

The minutes were signed by the chair as an accurate record.

R546 Correspondence

None received.

R547 Nelsons Gardens Design Consultation Responses

Some residents expressed dissatisfaction with the consultation process for the new play area, citing poor communication and a lack of awareness. They felt excluded, particularly those without children, due to the survey's wording. Cllr Leigh Hadaway confirmed that last September/October he had personally delivered letters to 400 households from Terrier Close to Martley Gardens, which included all the residents of Nelsons Gardens. Cllr Derek Pretty noted as well as the letter delivery, information had been placed on noticeboards, the website and social media. Cllr Derek Pretty recounted the rationale for the original play area and its provision for young children without having to cross Maunsell Way.

The Operations Manager clarified that there is no statutory requirement to consult the public on the installation of a new play area. However, the Council made a conscious decision to seek community input in order to understand residents' views and preferences.

Councillors invited those present to share their specific concerns. Residents indicated that the primary issue was not the play area itself, but its proposed location and the potential problems it could bring. The Operations Manager explained that reinstating the play area in its previous location was not feasible due to the presence of a high-pressure pipeline and associated easement restrictions.

The discussion also addressed antisocial behaviour (ASB). It was noted that in other parks—specifically Drummond, Woodhouse, and Rodaway—working in partnership with the police to increase visibility had led to a noticeable reduction in ASB. The importance of promptly reporting any instances of ASB to both the police and local councillors was emphasised, as this would help ensure timely and effective action. Residents asked whether the installation of CCTV could be considered as a preventative measure.

Councillors reviewed feedback from the public consultation on three proposed designs. A total of 22 responses were received, with 13 respondents selecting Design B, and 16 expressing a preference for natural colour schemes. A few residents voiced concerns that the new play area might attract older youths and lead to ASB. They specifically requested that benches not be installed—particularly wooden ones—and expressed a preference for no direct entrance from the footpath opposite houses on Nelsons Gardens. A request was also made for additional landscaping to provide screening while maintaining adequate visibility.

Taking these concerns into account Cllr Dave Kinloch proposed that Location B screened by the hedge be selected as the preferred option. That ideally the equipment would be for younger children and kept to a modest height. That benches are not installed at the time of initial construction, with the option to revisit this decision depending on the level of ASB observed. That no entrance be created directly onto the pavement opposite the houses on Nelsons Gardens. That additional landscaping be considered after installation to enhance screening and support community concerns.

RESOLVED: Councillors agreed to proceed with Location B as the preferred site, with no entrance from the pavement. They will work with the supplier to ensure the equipment remains low-level and suitable for younger children. Benches will not be installed initially, with the situation to be monitored for ASB before reconsidering their inclusion. Additional landscaping will be reviewed following installation.

R548 Locke Road Design Consultation Responses

Councillors reviewed the design principles for the proposed play area, following the conclusion of a public consultation that presented two design options. A total of 13 responses were received. Of these, 12 respondents expressed a clear preference for Design B. Regarding the colour scheme, 7 respondents indicated a preference for bright colours over more natural tones.

Additional feedback included requests for increased seating within the play area and the inclusion of inclusive play equipment, specifically an inclusive swing seat.

In response to this feedback, Councillors discussed the benefits of establishing a smaller, fenced-off area to ensure a clear separation between

children using the play area and other park users, including dog walkers. It was agreed that this design feature would enhance safety and usability for families.

Councillors also considered the request for an inclusive swing. While a traditional inclusive swing seat had not been incorporated into the design, the inclusion of a basket swing—which is suitable for a broad range of abilities without drawing attention to individual differences—was considered a more inclusive and appropriate alternative.

RESOLVED: Councillors agreed to proceed with Design B, as it offers an enclosed play space that enables children to play safely, separated from dog walkers and informal ball games. The play equipment will be provided in bright colours, in line with the majority preference. Additional seating will be installed

R549 Operations Manager Report

The report contained the following updates:

- Albert Road Cemetery
- Allotments
- Conservation Volunteers
- Cricket
- Football
- Graffiti and Vandalism
- Local Nature Reserve
- Paddling Pool
- General Updates

Cllrs commented on how good the report was.
Cllr Dave Kinloch asked when the paddling pool would open for the upcoming season. It was confirmed that the aim was to open it in May.

R550 All members of the public and press are requested to leave the meeting Public Bodies (Admission to Meeting) Act 1960

Exempt Business

R551 Nelsons Gardens Tender Evaluation

To receive tender evaluations for Nelsons Gardens Play Area

R552 Locke Road Tender Evaluation

To receive tender evaluations for Locke Road Play Area

There being no further business to conduct the meeting closed at 8.33pm