

Village Maintenance Advisory Group – Draft Notes
15th November 1pm to 2.20pm

**Present: Sue Ashwell, Chair,
Cllrs Anne Howell-Jones, Caroline Underwood
Village Group Member Betty Millard
Clerk Ramune Mimiene
Assistant Clerk Jessica Thomson (Group Secretary)**

Date was amended at short notice, consequently apologies were received from Cllr Madeline Fraser and Village Group Member Margaret Carter

No	Agenda Item	Who	Action/Status/Update
1.		SA RM	Everything that we asked for has been approved and will move forward in the budget. Adjustments for our group made by the VMAG Chairman in the light of new information included: - Increasing the budget for insurance based on the market movement, we have increased it from about 2k – 4k - Inclusion of annual cost of HDC contract - Blachere budget of £7k (Christmas light scheme) - Streetlighting – Ramune connected us with Utility Aid who have offered better prices than Drax. Action – <i>in January we need to explore deals for Diddington</i>
2.	Matters of Accuracy	All	We omitted that we had discussed ‘safeguarding training’ in the New Year. To be prioritised for JT & RM but available for others.
3.	Gardeners Shed	All	We agreed to proceed with the renovation of the Gardeners Shed, the quote from preferred contractor excluding water connection falls under £5k and be funded from Handymen’s Shed Earmarked Reserves. - Work is anticipated to begin in a couple of weeks once we have given the go ahead. - Ramune to organise fire extinguishers - Caroline to liaise with the Allotment group over whether they would like the two external CCTV cameras to cover the allotment car park / gates
4.	Handymen work update	SA/RM/JT RM	Flood shed has now been erected and attached to the concrete slab outside of the Gardeners shed. The padlock number will be shared with the flood action group and councillors by Cllr J Thelwall. Both Handymen have been reminded not to take instruction from villagers and that they must seek prior approval from RM or JT before doing any unscheduled work. It has been agreed that RM will remind them of the wildflower no-mow areas after reports that they have been mowed once again.

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5.	Christmas lights (High Street and Hunts End tree)	JT, RM	• JT met with David from Blachere a couple of weeks ago & amendments agreed: Quadrilles that were previously put up on the Vine were actually too low over the footpath (the problem is that the Quadrilles are too large and was an error on Blachere's side and not the way we had installed them) • David suggested that we either have new slightly smaller Quadrilles or we keep the larger ones and have our electrician put them up • We decided to have the smaller ones so that Blachere can install the whole scheme every year • David also informed me that the electrical cable over the road from the vine to the butchers is also lower than Blanchere recommends • Ramune and I spoke to the butchers and they are happy to pay for the electricity this year • JT spoke to Colum and he is happy to put up a new electrical point outside the Butchers – this is happening on the 17th November • Blachere will put up our scheme the week before the light switch on • Colum will support us on the 26th November with the switch on <i>Post-meeting Note: Lights installed on time. Cllr AHJ link to Buckden Community Events to coordinate lights switch on with their activities</i>
6.	Tommy Silhouettes update	CU	The Silhouettes will be moved from the churchyard to Hunts Green. Caroline to agree with the Tommy group where exactly the silhouettes are going to be relocated and then direct Nigel to install them in their permanent position.
7.	Crop cultivated on HDC land within Buckden	All JT	It has been noticed that someone has been cultivating a crop of courgettes on HDC land on the corner of Mill Road and Vineyard Way. It is agreed that we should report it to HDC Green Spaces team and leave them to decide whether any action is appropriate/needed
8.	Risk assessments	RM/SA	Need for additional risk assessments and maintenance of existing risk assessments to be reviewed before any more are written
9.	Ivy on Church Wall	RM	The Ivy growing on the wall between St Mary's churchyard and the Tower's Knot Garden appears to be causing damage and we were asked to investigate. Handymen instructed by RM that they were <u>not</u> to take any action in relation to the ivy. We believe the wall is part of the Listing of The Towers with English Heritage

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		RM	We initially sought advice from Richard at ProLawncare on options to deal with Ivy without further damaging wall. However, before any action can be taken also agreed to determine ownership of and responsibility of this wall between The Towers and the Churchyard. Anne Carter forwarded us the following from Barry Jobling (Buckden Local History Society): <i>This has been an ongoing problem for at least the last 20-30 years. There are no documents that I've been able to find relating specifically to that wall. Except.... in the Extract of Terrier of 24th April 1760 (which may now be in the Diocese archives, I found this info in the Norris Museum Archives 30 years ago), "Churchyard fence repaired on East, West and North by the Bishop" (i.e. the Palace/Towers.) "the wall on the South by the impropriator" (i.e. vicar/parish).</i> <i>N.B. The wall appears to have been built in 1852 when the vicar, at that time also the owner of the Palace, gave some of the Palace garden to the church to extend the churchyard westwards. The existing wall was demolished and the current wall was possibly made of the old bricks although this is uncertain.</i> <i>In my further research over many years, it would appear to belong to the Towers and after many 'discussions' they did acknowledge that they would undertake some repairs to it, e.g. where it is bulging and leaning into the churchyard. But no work has been done, and it will be very expensive. We've checked with the Diocese before but with no luck; though they may now be able to find something (hopefully that April 1760 Terrier for example), if their archives have improved.</i> In addition to this – Betty met with the Towers in the past and English Heritage had advised at the time that the Ivy should stay on the wall.
		RM	Action – to speak to the Towers and ask them to deal with this, to send them Richard's advice
10. .	Churchyard Mapping Update	JT	The Transcriptions have now been completed, Pear are ready for the next phase to begin imminently
11.	Second Euro Bin	RM	We have given the 3-month notice to cancel the bin contract now HDC emptying all village bins and removing waste. VMAG agreed meanwhile to allow the allotments to use the HDC bin for the next 3 months for general waste – NOT garden waste.
12.	Next VMAG	JT	The next VMAG will be the 17th January 2024 at 1pm