

Unattached Land

The Council considered a Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr Steve Harden under Standing Order 10 (1) on the topic of unattached land:

“This Council resolves to write to the local Member of Parliament and to the Chancellor to raise concerns regarding the management and maintenance of unattached land, and to request appropriate support and guidance.

This Council also resolves that the Policy and Project Advisory Board be requested to consider, and report to Cabinet on:

- the feasibility and associated costs of undertaking an urgent review of all parcels of unattached or unregistered land within the Borough, in order to confirm the appropriate owners and clarify responsibility for their maintenance
- the extent of emergency works needed to address neglected areas, and the funding requirements for this
- the projected costs, resource implications, and legal considerations of the Council assuming ongoing responsibility for maintaining such areas on a permanent basis
- proposals for the establishment of a formal working partnership with Crown land authorities, Hampshire County Council, and other relevant bodies including, where appropriate, Rushmoor agencies to coordinate land management and ensure clarity of ownership and responsibility.”

In PROPOSING the Motion Cllr Harden advised that the borough was plagued by unattached land, which in some cases was unsightly and dangerous due to landowners refusing to take responsibility for its upkeep. Through the proposed Working Group, members would be able to draw attention to unattached land in their areas, and the Group could liaise with landowners to determine ways forward for each area to protect residents from harm due to lack of responsibility. In SECONDING the Motion, Cllr Allen advised that the inconsistent and piecemeal approach wasn't working effectively, and this Motion could enable a better route for dealing with the issue.

In discussing the Motion, Members spoke of the complaints that they received regarding damage caused by trees on unattached land that weren't maintained properly, and the overgrown nature of the sites which caused an eyesore in their communities. Potential outcomes for the pockets of land going forward were discussed: these included creating areas to encourage biodiversity, making areas into community assets and selling pockets to residents who live adjacent to unattached land for a nominal fee. However, it was noted that, financially, there was little the Council could do to maintain these areas going forward, but the Council could act as a facilitator between residents and landowners.

The Motion was put to the meeting. There voted FOR: 32; AGAINST: 0; ABSTAIN: 2 and the Motion was **DECLARED CARRIED**.