

OPEN SESSION: There were 2 members of the public present, who wished to speak. The Open Session ended at 7.05 pm.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RECREATION, LEISURE AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

Held on Wednesday 7th April 2004 at 7.05 pm

PRESENT: Cllr N W Light
Cllr N J Chard
Cllr Mrs B A Charlton
Cllr Mrs L C Ford
Cllr M H Thierry
Cllr N Wood
Cllr Mrs B J Wright
Cllr S C Wright

IN ATTENDANCE: Terry Simpson, Town Clerk
Lyn Wickens, Personal Assistant to Town Clerk

The Chairman welcomed Cllr Wright back to Committee meetings after his recent stay in hospital and wished him better health for the future.

OS/4489 ABSENCE

An apology for absence had been received from Cllr D E Cracknell.

OS/4490 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Cllr Thierry declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 5, as he is the Portfolio Holder for Environment at the District Council. Cllr Ford declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 7, as she is a member of New Forest District Council's Leisure Review Panel.

OS/4491 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 10th March 2004, having been circulated, be approved and signed as a correct record.

In view of the public interest in agenda item 9, the Chairman agreed that this item be taken next.

OS/4492 WAR MEMORIAL GARDENS

(1) Wreaths on the War Memorial The Town Clerk reminded members that the stone War Memorial itself was the memorial to the fallen and the laying of wreaths on Remembrance Sunday marked a special occasion in the year. At present, members of the Ringwood Branch of the RBL checked the wreaths weekly and removed those they felt were past their best. However, as the poppies were now made of a different material which did not cause the dye to run, the wreaths continued to be in good condition for longer. He asked for guidance from members as to when the poppy wreaths could be removed from the War Memorial Gardens.

Cllr Thierry said that as the War Memorial and Gardens were in the ownership of the Town Council, it was the Council's responsibility to decide when the wreaths should be removed. He suggested that the weekend nearest to the 31st March each year would be an appropriate

time to remove any remaining poppy wreaths. With regard to the personal funeral wreaths of ex-service members of the RBL, he suggested that they be allowed to remain on the War Memorial for a shorter period, if they were in good condition. Cllr Thierry also felt that there should be a time, prior to Remembrance Sunday, when there were no wreaths on the War Memorial. He suggested that all wreaths should be removed by 30th September each year. After discussion, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that wreaths laid on the War Memorial on Remembrance Sunday should be removed by the weekend nearest to 31st March each year;
- (b) that personal funeral wreaths should be removed after two months; and
- (c) that all wreaths should be removed from the War Memorial by 30th September each year.

(2) Purchase of Copper Beech The Town Clerk informed members that the Town Council was required to replace the felled Cherry tree and the District Council's arboriculturalist had also recommended that a Copper Beech be planted towards the back of the Gardens. The Royal British Legion had agreed to pay for one tree up to a cost of £30.00. He wished to have the committee's approval for the purchase of a second tree and also to know whether the committee would like to invite the President of the Ringwood Branch of the British Legion to plant one of the trees.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Town Council purchase a Copper Beech tree at a cost of £28.00 and also a Sorbus Commixta at an estimated cost of £25.00;
- (b) that the RBL's offer to pay for one of the trees be accepted;
- (c) that the President of the Ringwood branch of the RBL be invited to plant one of the trees, the Town Mayor to plant the other and
- (d) that the Town Clerk make arrangements with the British Legion for a tree planting ceremony.

OS/4493

ACCESS TO OLD MILL FLATS

The Clerk asked for two committee members to represent the Town Council at a meeting with Hampshire County Council and residents of Old Mill Flats regarding the maintenance of the track across the Bickerley. Cllr Chard said that it was entirely up to the residents of the flats to maintain the track and the Town Council should resist pressure to contribute to its upkeep.

RESOLVED: that Cllrs Chard and Cracknell be appointed as Town Council representatives to attend a meeting with Hampshire County Council and the residents of Old Mill Flats regarding the maintenance of the track across the Bickerley.

OS/4494

DOG FOULING NOTICES

A request had been received from a resident for the erection of No Dog Fouling Notices at The Bickerley. The Clerk reported that the District Council had agreed, in principle, to the Town Council taking on an agency role in the enforcement of the No Dog Fouling Order and he felt that it would be premature to erect notices until all the arrangements had been completed and our groundsmen had the authority to enforce the Order.

RESOLVED: that the resident be advised of the current situation and that the Town Clerk pursue the agency role for the Town Council as a matter of urgency so that the public could see that the Council is taking a positive stance with regard to dog fouling on its open spaces.

OS/4495

PROPOSED SALE OF LAND AT THE BICKERLEY

The Clerk informed members that the proposed disposal of this land had been advertised for two consecutive weeks in a local newspaper and no formal representations had been received during the statutory period. He wished to consult further with Messrs Woolley & Wallis regarding the sale of this piece of land either separately, or together with the Fishing Rights.

RESOLVED: that since no formal objections had been received against the proposed disposal,

(a) the piece of land between the disused railway line and the Millstream be offered for sale and

(b) that the Town Clerk consult with Messrs Woolley & Wallis on whether the land should be sold separately or together with the Fishing Rights.

OS/4496

SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS

Members discussed the report and recommendations prepared by Cllr Clarke following a meeting of New Forest District Council's Leisure Review Panel (see Annex A to Planning, Town & Environment Committee dated 2nd April 2004).

The Clerk reported that, whilst he supported the recommendations, there would be resource (manpower) implications in the implementation of a Town Plan, for which there was no budget and it would be appropriate, therefore, to defer commencement of this work until later in the year. In the meantime, he would ascertain whether Developers' Contributions would be available to fund the preparation of the Town Plan. Members concurred with this view and recalled that when this topic had been considered previously, it was expected that preparation of a Town Plan would cost in the order of £10,000.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that Cllr Clarke be thanked for his very informative report.
- 2) that the Town Clerk obtain as soon as possible, the exact amount of developers' contributions held by the District Council in respect of Ringwood.
- 3) That the Council press New Forest District Council for a full and timely discharge of the Protocol for Developers Contributions, including a current statement of account and regular update on additional contributions flowing from planning decisions that generate Section 106 contributions.
- 4) That a simple schedule of charges and indicative permissible developments be produced for the information of Councillors in general and for the Planning, Town & Environment Committee in particular.
- 5) That the Council, once the quantum of our Developers Contributions is known, actively develop a list of schemes suitable for funding via this fund.
- 6) That the Council convey to New Forest District Council its willingness to participate in any review of Public Open Spaces as required by PPG 17 and to agree a timetable for carrying out such a review.
- 7) That the Council should commit itself to starting the process of a Town Plan to ensure that any proposals for funded schemes for Public Open Spaces are placed in the context of town wide views.

With the permission of the Chairman, Cllr Thierry left the meeting at 7.45 pm.

**OS/4497
CEMETERY TOILETS**

The Chairman informed members of the recent vandalism at the Cemetery. This had been reported to the Police, who had advised that the toilets should be closed at night for the time being.

RESOLVED: that the toilets be left open over the Easter period and that opening/closing of the facilities after Easter be left to the discretion of the Clerk.

**OS/4498
CARVERS PAVILION**

The Clerk reported that children had been climbing onto the roof of the pavilion. He wished to deter this practice and had obtained some information on various deterrents.

RESOLVED: that it be left to the discretion of the Town Clerk to obtain some suitable deterrent to prevent children from climbing onto the roof of Carvers pavilion.

**OS/4499
SITE VISITS (1) NORTHFIELD PLAY AREA (2) POCKET PARK**

The Clerk advised members that funds were available to upgrade the Northfield Play Area. Work was also needed at the Pocket Park following removal of dead and dangerous trees. A visit to both sites would allow members to decide how best to utilize the resources and carry out appropriate development.

RESOLVED: that members meet first at 5.00 pm on Wednesday 14th April 2004 at Pocket Park and then visit the Northfield Play Area, prior to consideration of development proposals at the May meeting.

**OS/4500
NORTH POULNER PLAY AREA**

(1) Use of play area for organised team sports and training The Clerk reported that this was an underused grassed area which could be marked out for team sports. Members discussed the proposal and it was proposed by Cllr Wright and seconded by Cllr Mrs Charlton that the area be marked out for team sports. The use of the site would need to be monitored.

Cllr Ford and Cllr Chard wished it to be noted that they had severe reservations about this proposal, as they felt the area should remain as a casual use area only.

RESOLVED: that the Council's land at North Poulner Play Area be marked out for team sports and charges made accordingly for hire of the pitches.

(2) Damaged fence adjoining footpath to school The Clerk reported that every time the fence was repaired it was broken down again. He felt that it was now time to remove it altogether. Members concurred and it was agreed that if the school wished the fence to be reinstated, then they should bear the cost.

RESOLVED: that the damaged fencing adjoining the footpath to the school is not replaced, and that it be removed.

OS/4501
URGENT MATTERS

(1) Report of rats at the Southampton Road allotments. Tenants at the Southampton Road allotment site had reported the presence of rats and had asked for the Rodent Control Officer to attend. The Clerk informed members that the officer had been called out three times last year at a cost of approximately £60 a visit, which meant that the expenditure incurred on this service alone took almost all of the income received from the allotment holders. It was apparent that some tenants were adding kitchen waste to their compost heaps, which attracted the vermin.

RESOLVED: that the tenants at the Southampton Road allotment site be advised that if they wished the District Council's Rodent Control Officer to attend to the problem of rats at the site, then the costs involved would have to be recovered through rent increases.

(2) War Memorial Gardens – gate A fax had been received from a resident concerning an incident she had witnessed in the War Memorial Gardens when a child had run through the gap in the hedge at the rear of the grounds. She felt that, for safety reasons, a gate should be installed. The Clerk reminded members that the Council had decided not to fill in the gap with a gate, as it was felt that it would not be shut by the users of the Gardens. The gap led to a footpath and not directly onto a road.

RESOLVED: that the current arrangement of an entrance/exit at the rear of the War Memorial Gardens without a gate should remain.

(3) RDA – Poulner Lakes The Clerk informed members that he was still in touch with the District Council with respect to the access road at the site.

(4) Bollards/Dragons Teeth – the Bickerley The Clerk advised members that there was a concrete bollard available for them to view. However, he was of the opinion that this was too smooth and not suitable for use on The Bickerley and he would try to obtain another for them to view which was more "rustic".

(5) Former Gravel Pit, North Poulner Lakes The Clerk circulated a letter which had been received from the Environmental Health Department of the District Council advising that as from April 2004, a charge of £80 per visit would be made for monthly gas monitoring. In recent years the monitoring had been carried out at no charge, but ever increasing workloads had forced the District Council to charge in future. Members agreed it was inappropriate to receive a letter on 1st April advising of an immediate charge of £80 per month when there had been no time to budget for the service.

RESOLVED: that (a) the Clerk write to NFDC requesting that the District Council pays for the monthly monitoring during the current year; and (b) that the Environment Agency be approached with a view to either the surrendering of the licence or a reduction in the number of checks per annum required.

There being no further business, the chairman closed the meeting at 8.25 pm.