

OPEN SESSION: There was one member of the public present, who wished to speak.

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

Held on Wednesday 7th September 2005 at 7.03 pm

PRESENT: Cllr N W Light (Chairman)
Cllr N J Chard (Vice Chairman)
Cllr Mrs B Charlton
Cllr D E Cracknell
Cllr M F J Daly
Cllr Mrs V A Sullivan
Cllr Mrs N Wood

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr T R Simpson, Town Clerk

OS/4668 ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr D E Cracknell and Cllr L C Ford.

OS/4669 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Light declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in agenda item 8, Open Space at The Mount, as the owner of a property on this estate.

OS/4670 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 6th July 2005, having been circulated, be approved and signed as a correct record.

It was agreed that agenda item 8 would be taken as the next agenda item.

OS/4671 THE MOUNT

The Committee considered the Town Clerk's report (Annex 'A') and noted the results of the consultation with residents on The Mount estate and expressed disappointment at the low level of response. It was also noted that revised maintenance arrangements for the open space were in the process of being implemented. Whilst the majority of residents supported disposal of the small area of land, there was no overall majority for any of the options offered to residents.

RESOLVED: that, pending a review of the effects of the revised maintenance arrangements being implemented at The Mount, no action be taken at the moment for the disposal of a small area of open space at the Mount.

OS/4672 THE BICKERLEY AND POCKET PARK

The Committee noted that the application for a grant to the Big Lottery Fund had been placed on the reserve list. The application would only be considered if other schemes were

withdrawn. The Big Lottery Fund had, nonetheless requested completion of a detailed project plan. The Town Clerk explained that even the completion of a project plan would not allow for the scheme to be considered for a grant unless there was a withdrawal of another scheme. In the circumstances, he did not believe that valuable staff resources should be used on the preparation of a project plan which may not even be considered and the application had therefore been withdrawn. The scheme would continue to be worked up and grant support for the works would be sought from other sources.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the action taken to withdraw the Big Lottery Fund application be approved, and
- (2) that Tony Harris, the landscape architect, be invited to attend the next meeting.

OS/4673

RELOCATION OF FLOWER TUBS

Members were advised of the difficulties with maintenance of the two flower tubs outside the Visitor Information Centre. The Committee was also asked whether it wished officers to investigate the cost and location of additional flower tubs throughout the town as part of the budget process.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the two flower tubs at the Visitor Information Centre be removed and further consideration be given to relocating them at Fridays Cross and Southampton Road as part of the budget cycle;
- (2) that further investigations be carried out into the provision of additional planters in the Market Square and other locations in the town including Southampton Road, Poulner;
- (3) that members advise the Town Clerk of any further locations that should be considered when the budget is being prepared, and
- (4) that investigations be undertaken into alternative planters for use in the town.

OS/4674

OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY

The Committee noted that PPG17 required the District Council to undertake an Open Space, Sport & Recreation Study. Consultants had been appointed for this purpose. The Consultants had requested that town and parish councils nominate three main issues in their area for consideration by the consultants.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the three issues to be identified to the consultants be:-
 - (a) the development of the river front open space alongside the Bickerley and Pocket Park;
 - (b) the development of land at Long Lane into a major out-of-town centre for sporting excellence, and
 - (c) the development of Carvers as a dedicated Town Park.
- (2) that one member be authorised to attend the next meeting of the Public Open Space Liaison Group to be held at Appletree Court on 9th September and that his/her travelling expenses be paid.

**OS/4675
COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS PLAN FOR HAMPSHIRE**

RESOLVED: that the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee, responds to the survey issued by Hampshire County Council.

**OS/4676
CARVERS RECREATION GROUND**

(a) Repairs to children's play area

The Committee noted that, as a result of wear and tear, repairs are needed to the safety surfacing in certain parts of the play area.

The original contractor for the scheme had been approached to undertake the work together with an alternative contractor. As a result, the alternative contractor's quotation provided a saving of almost £500.

RESOLVED: that the negotiated quotation from Redlynch Leisure in the sum of £1,050 for repairs to the wetpour areas be approved.

(b) Hard Tennis Courts

Members considered the report by the Town Clerk, (Annex 'B'), previously circulated and noted the arrangements for tennis club usage of the hard tennis courts during the winter and the request made by the Ringwood Lawn Tennis Club for club nights this winter. It was also noted that currently there are few public hirings of the courts during the winter. The Recreation Centre, which deals with public use hiring on behalf of the Town Council would be looking at encouraging public usage in future programmes.

The Committee also noted the request from the Tennis Club for additional signage at the Recreation Ground.

Members were concerned that the Club did not pay any rental for use of the hard courts but simply contributed to overall maintenance expenses. It was believed that these arrangements should be reviewed in future years.

RESOLVED:

(1) that for the period 1ST October 2005 to 30th April 2006 the request from the Club for usage of the hard courts as set out in Annex 'B' be approved, subject to (2) below;

(2) that the usage by the Club be reviewed by the Committee at its meeting in January 2006;

(3) that the Recreation Centre be requested to keep a more detailed record of use of the hard tennis courts by the public and the number of occasions that the public has been denied usage as a result of Club bookings;

(4) that discussions be undertaken with the Club with respect to the method of payment for use of the courts for the 2006/2007 financial year;

(5) that in calculating the maintenance costs, proper regard be taken of grounds staffs' time in keeping the courts clean, and

(6) that the Ringwood Lawn Tennis Club's request to affix an additional sign to the existing notice board at Carvers Recreation Ground be approved, subject to the wording and design thereof being submitted to and approved by the Town Clerk.

**OS/4677
ALLOTMENTS**

The Committee considered a report, (Annex 'C'), setting out proposed amendments to the Allotment Rules, together with a further amendment relating to the provision of compost heaps.

Members were invited to consider whether a deposit should be charged in order to recover the cost of reinstatement when a tenancy was terminated and the plot was not up to a standard suitable for re-letting. An alternative means of encouraging tenants to maintain their plots properly would be to fully enforce the Allotment Rules.

RECOMMENDATION:

(1) that a deposit be not introduced at the present time but that the licence conditions be fully enforced, particularly with reference to non-cultivation of a plot in the proper manner, and

(2) that the revised Allotment Rules, including the additional clause relating to compost heaps, as attached as Appendix 1 to Annex 'C' to these Minutes, be adopted and implemented with immediate effect.

**OS/4678
GRASS CUTTING IN THE TOWN**

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that he had been informed that the District Council was inviting tenders for grass cutting areas under its responsibility within the town. Whilst he did not believe the Town Council should consider grass cutting of verges and similar areas, he believed there were advantages to the town generally if the Town Council took over responsibility for some open space areas, for example the Rotary Picnic area and one or two open spaces on housing estates.

These areas could be dealt with as part of the Town Council's existing routine maintenance schedule.

RESOLVED: that the action taken by the Town Clerk in investigating taking over the maintenance of certain open space areas in the town be approved.

**OS/4679
URGENT BUSINESS**

The Millstream

The Town Clerk reported that during discussions on other issues, the Ringwood & District Angling Association had indicated that it would wish to purchase the Fishing Rights on the southern section of the Millstream.

The offer was the same as that submitted previously when the whole of the Fishing Rights were offered for sale. The Association had indicated that it preferred purchase to a further rental arrangement.

RESOLVED: that further investigations be undertaken into the possibility of the Southern Section of the Millstream Fishing Rights being leased to an Angling Association and a further report made to the next meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.50 p.m.

REPORT TO RECREATION, LEISURE AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE
7 SEPTEMBER 2005

LAND AT THE MOUNT

1. Members will recall approving arrangements for a public consultation exercise on the possible disposal of a small area of open space on The Mount, which was being used as a rubbish tip by residents. Attached, as Appendix 1, is a copy of the consultation papers sent to all properties on The Mount with a reply paid envelope. 52 replies were received from the 117 issued.
2. The responses produced a divergence of views. There is no overall majority for any one solution. The overall response taking the respondent's first choice answers were as follows:-
 - a) Retain as is - 12
 - b) Divide and offer to adjoining to landowners - 21
 - c) Dispose of as building plot - 13
3. In addition, three residents supported as their equal first choice the disposal of the land and either options b) or c), whilst three others wish the Town Council to retain it and set it out as a car park for residents. Indeed a number of residents who supported proposal a) commented that if the land was sold as a building plot they would no longer be able to park their vehicles in front of it and disposal would thus reduce the amenity available to them.
4. Despite providing all residents with reply paid envelopes, less than 50% appear to have strong views as to the future use of the land. Clearly of those who responded, an overall majority were in favour of disposal of the land. However, its sub-division and sale to adjoining property owners would not realise a significant capital receipt that would provide a major benefit in achieving the overall open space requirements for the town. In order to achieve best value from disposal, sale as a single building plot is the most appropriate way forward.
5. Since commencing the consultation exercise, some changes have been made to the way in which this and other areas on The Mount are maintained. It is believed that the change in maintenance arrangements already implemented could also lead to a general improvement in this area and reduce the amount of rubbish deposited on this site. Full details of the overall arrangements for improving the maintenance of The Mount are being prepared for consideration by Members at or before the preparation of next year's budget.

6. Since there is at present no clear majority for adoption of any of the options previously considered, it is recommended that pending a review of the overall maintenance arrangements for The Mount, no action be taken to dispose of the area of open space adjoining number 54 The Mount.

For further information, please contact:
Terry Simpson
Town Clerk

Tel: 01425 473883

REPORT TO RECREATION, LEISURE & OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE
7 SEPTEMBER 2005

HARD TENNIS COURTS, CARVERS RECREATION GROUND

1. Members will know that these hard tennis courts were constructed on a partnership basis between the Town Council, Ringwood School and Ringwood Lawn Tennis Club. However, the capital cost of the scheme was met by the Town Council and the school, together with grants from The Hampshire Playing Field Association and the Lottery Fund. It does not appear that the Tennis Club or the Lawn Tennis Association provided any capital funding for the scheme.
2. The original Management Agreement, which has now been varied by the removal of the Management Advisory Committee, made provision for the use of the facilities by the school, the public and the Tennis Club.
3. The school's usage was determined as being:-
 - a) Within the terms of the school year, 195 days; and
 - b) Taken only on week days, Monday – Friday inclusive; and
 - c) From 8am – 5pm except Wednesday, when the time would be 8am – 4pm and for other days by agreement between the parties.
4. The agreement also provided that the Lawn Tennis Club would submit annually its required hours for use of the tennis courts, subject to the school having priority during the periods referred to above. In return for usage, the Club agreed to pay the Council an annual amount towards maintenance. The agreement further provided that the courts would be available for public hire outside school time unless required by the Club. In the event it seems that the recharges have been relatively small, last year this amounted to £250 being half the cost of the repairs to the sunken area of the courts.
5. The latest known allocation of time between Club and community use is shown in the Appendix to the report. Public bookings are made through the Recreation Centre and the charges made shared between the Centre and the Town Council. For evening bookings, any hirer also has to pay for the floodlights. The Tennis Club does not pay any hiring fee but simply reimburses the Council with the cost of the lighting tickets for the floodlights. As Members will note, the Club does have a considerable amount of time allocated to it for which there is no return on the capital invested by the Town Council.

6. Under the terms of the original agreement, the Tennis Club is required to seek the Council's approval for its proposed use of the hard courts for both the summer and winter periods. The Club has now requested usage during the winter period of 1 October to 30 April as follows:-

Monday	2 courts	Junior coaching	6pm-7pm
Tuesday	3 courts	Adult club night	6pm-8pm
Wednesday	2 courts	Beginners only/coaching	6pm-8pm
Thursday	3 courts	Adult club night	6pm-8pm
Saturday	3 courts	Club session	1.30-dusk
Sunday	3 courts	Open club session	10.30am-2pm

7. This usage will leave very little time available for general public use. However, during the winter period there are very few public hirings of the hard courts.
8. The Town Council has provided a general notice board advertising the facilities at Carvers. The Tennis Club would wish to provide an additional sign below that provided by the Town Council at Southampton Road giving more information about contacts for the Tennis Club. The new sign would match the existing signage and there seems to be no reason why the request should not be approved subject to the wording being submitted to and being approved by the Town Clerk on behalf of the Town Council.
9. Members are now requested to consider the requests made by the Tennis Club and the terms upon which they should be approved.

For further information, please contact:

Terry Simpson
Town Clerk

Tel: 01425 473883

RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL**TENNIS COURTS MANAGEMENT****COMMUNITY/CLUB HOURS OF USE**

- (a) Until further notice the Community will have full use of the old hard court facility seven days per week.
- (b) The summer season will run from 1st May to 30th September.

Club use will be:

Monday	2 courts	6.00 pm to dusk
Tuesday	3 courts	6.00 pm to dusk
Thursday	3 courts	6.00 pm to dusk
Friday	3 courts	4.30 pm to 7.30 pm

Community use will be:

Monday	1 court	6.00 pm to dusk
Wednesday	3 courts	4.00 pm to dusk
Saturday	3 courts	9.00 am to dusk
Sunday	3 courts	9.00 am to dusk

- (c) The winter season will run from 1st October to 30th April.

Club use will be:

Tuesday	3 courts	7.00 pm to 9.00 pm
Wednesday	3 courts	4.00 pm to 6.00 pm
Thursday	3 courts	7.00 pm to 9.00 pm
Saturday	3 courts	1.30 pm to dusk
Sunday	3 courts	10.30 am to 2.00 pm

Community use will be:

Monday	3 courts	6.00 pm to 9.00 pm
Tuesday	3 courts	5.30 pm to 6.30 pm
Wednesday	3 courts	6.30 pm to 9.00 pm
Friday	3 courts	7.30 pm to 9.00 pm
Saturday	3 courts	9.00 am to 12 noon
Sunday	3 courts	3.00 pm to 9.00 pm

During School holidays (dates to be notified by School) the Community will have additional hours normally reserved for the School.

REPORT TO RECREATION, LEISURE & OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE – 7th Sept '05**PROPOSED CHANGES TO ALLOTMENT RULES**

The current Allotment Rules have been in place for a number of years. Two small amendments are necessary to bring them up to date – such as deletion of the word “he” throughout the document when referring to an allotment tenant and the opportunity has been taken to carry out a wider review of the Rules in order to clarify certain aspects of the tenancy arrangements.

The two main new changes proposed are as follows:

DEFINITION OF THE PERSONS ELIGIBLE TO BE TENANTS OF THE ALLOTMENT GARDENS

2. (a) *Allotments are provided for any resident, over the age of 18, within Ringwood Town Council's boundaries, subject to availability. A chronological waiting list will be kept and allotments will only be let to residents, over the age of 18, of neighbouring parishes if there are no suitable residents within the Ringwood Town Council boundaries on the list. Whilst there is a waiting list, a tenant may not be allocated more than one full allotment plot.*

- (b) *For the purposes of this clause, the Council, acting through its Town Clerk, may determine that a resident shall not be deemed to be a “suitable resident” if he/she has previously held an allotment, the tenancy of which was terminated as a result of non-payment of the rental or a failure to comply with any of the General Conditions set out in Clause 4 of these Rules.*

Clause 2(a) is suggested to reflect the number of people from outside the parish who are on the waiting list.

Clause 2(b) is self-explanatory.

PAYMENT OF DEPOSIT

7. *A deposit is payable along with the annual rental charge. The deposit will be held by the Council and refunded when the tenancy of the allotment is terminated PROVIDED that the allotment can be re-let without any maintenance work having to be undertaken by the Council.*

This clause is used by some Councils (Hythe & Dibden Parish Council's deposit is £50) in order to defray the cost of their groundsmen reinstating allotments to return them to a standard suitable for re-letting. Our groundsmen frequently have to clear non-compostible rubbish from plots and, on occasion, have strimmed them. If a plot is very overgrown and will require a good deal of work to bring it up to a suitable condition for planting, we allow new tenants to have a “free year” or part of a year.

Members may feel that to charge a worthwhile amount of, say, £50, would discriminate against those on a low income. It may, however, encourage those who give up their allotments to leave them clean and tidy ready for the next tenant.

It is **RECOMMENDED** that, subject to determination of the proposals relating to eligibility and the payment of deposits, the new Rules be adopted and implemented with immediate effect.