

OPEN SESSION: There was one member of the public present, who did not wish to speak.

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

Held on Wednesday 3rd May 2006 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Cllr N W Light (Chairman)
Cllr N J Chard
Cllr D Cole
Cllr D E Cracknell
Cllr L C Ford
Cllr M F Daly
Cllr Mrs V A Sullivan

IN ATTENDANCE: Cllr M H Thierry
Mr T R Simpson, Town Clerk
Mrs L A Wickens, P A to the Town Clerk

**OS/4756
ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs B A Charlton and N Wood.

**OS/4757
DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

**OS/4758
MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 5th April 2006, having been circulated, be approved and signed as a correct record.

**OS/4759
FOOTPATH BETWEEN RINGWOOD CEMETERY AND RINGWOOD SCHOOL**

The Clerk reminded members that the Town Council was not responsible for the boundary between the cemetery and the adjoining land. However, the Council had erected a fence a short distance from the boundary in about 1932. Under a Licence, which the School had held since 1962, pupils had used the land between the fence and the boundary of the council's land as a footpath to get to the school playing field, rather than take the longer route around the roads.

A section of the fence, which the Council had erected in 1932, had now collapsed. The Clerk had suggested that as a permanent repair, the section of fence would need to be replaced with the remainder of the existing fence being supported by concrete posts to avoid it also falling over.

The Clerk had felt it was beneficial to retain a separation between the pathway and the cemetery and the School also wished for the fence to be retained. He had therefore been in negotiation with the School over the possibility of sharing the cost of replacing the damaged portion of the fence on a 50:50 partnership basis as the fence provided significant benefits to the School, as well as the Council.

However, a letter had now been received from the Chair of Governors stating that the School did not have spare funds available to contribute to the cost.

Members felt it was not unreasonable to expect a 50 per cent contribution from the School, bearing in mind that there was no absolute need for the Council to retain the fence. Members expressed the view that the Council was under the same financial constraints as the School.

With the permission of the Chairman, Cllr Thierry a Governor of Ringwood Junior School, addressed the Committee. He believed the Town Council needed to be reminded of its responsibility to the community. The fence had been erected by the Town Council many years ago in order to enclose its Cemetery and it was right and proper for the Council to continue to maintain the fence. There would be public outrage if the footpath was closed off and pupils were forced to walk around the roads to the school playing fields.

Cllr Thierry said that the School had a fixed budget according to the number of pupils attending the school. This budget would be overspent this year and the Governors could find no money saving in order to fund these works. The Town Council could increase its Precept to cover the cost. Cllr Thierry felt that the Council should think carefully of the action it takes.

Cllr Light thanked Cllr Thierry for attending the meeting and putting forward the view of the Governors of Ringwood Junior School.

Other members, whilst supporting the Council's role in the community, did not accept the proposition that it was the Town Council's responsibility to provide facilities for the School. These facilities were required to ensure safety of children during school time and the County Council had a responsibility to support the school on this matter.

The Town Clerk advised members that, whatever decision was taken about replacing the fence, the Council's solicitors had advised that the situation would need to be regularised by the negotiation of a new Licence to Hampshire County Council for use of the land (footpath) by the School.

After further discussion, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) a further quotation be obtained for repair of the broken section of fence,
- (b) that the Town Clerk continue negotiations with the school over the possibility of sharing the cost on a partnership basis of replacing the damaged portion of the fence,
- (c) that Hampshire County Council Education Department be approached for a contribution towards the repair, and
- (d) that a formal arrangement be entered into to allow school pupils to continue to use the footpath.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Policy and Finance Committee be requested to approve a supplementary budget to cover the cost of the repairs to the fence.

OS/4760

PLAY PARKS/SKATE PARK – WEEKEND/BANK HOLIDAY INSPECTIONS

The Town Clerk advised members that the Council had received an increase in complaints from the public about glass, needles and general litter to be found in the Council's play parks, especially Carvers and the skate park after the weekends and Bank Holidays. Whilst the Council employed a temporary litter picker during the school summer holidays, no additional litter picking had previously been carried out at weekends. The cost of introducing extra

weekend and Bank Holiday working from April to September by the Council's groundstaff amounted to £1,800 p.a. based on an average three hours' work each weekend.

In response to a question by Cllr Ford, the Clerk said that he had been advised only the day before that the County Council's Community Safety Officers would be back in Ringwood on Friday and Saturday evenings and one other day each week. Members felt that this might act as a deterrent to any problems.

RESOLVED: that at the present time, and to see if the situation improves with the reintroduction of part-time Community Safety Officers to the town, no action be taken to introduce weekend and Bank Holiday litter clearance at the Council's play parks and skate park.

OS/4761

PROPOSED PLANS FOR RINGWOOD JUNIOR SCHOOL PLAYING FIELD

The Town Clerk advised Members that several complaints about the proposed plans had been received from members of the public who lived adjacent to the school playing field. These had been forwarded to the School and Ellingham & Ringwood Rugby Club. The Clerk also reported that he believed the Heads of Terms between the parties had been virtually agreed enabling the plans for the site to move forward.

Cllr Chard expressed concern that not all residents living close to the playing field had been apprised of the School and Rugby Clubs' intentions. The Town Clerk said that, as far as he was aware, residents had had an opportunity to view a public display of the plans and make comments. Cllr Chard asked if the Clerk could find out exactly which residents had been contacted directly about the proposals.

RESOLVED:

- (a)** that the Town Clerk's update be received, and
- (b)** that the Town Clerk ascertain which residents had been contacted directly regarding the proposed plans for Ringwood Junior School playing field.

OS/4762

LONG LANE

The Clerk reported on a recent meeting with New Forest Rangers Youth Football Club. The Club had been advised that they would be the main, but not necessarily the only users of the new pitches at Long Lane. The pitches would be let season by season, under the same arrangements as were currently in operation at Carvers. It had also been emphasised to the Club that, as owners of adjoining properties in the area were concerned about the effect of the additional usage on their quiet enjoyment of their properties, it was in the Club's own interests to make sure that it used the facilities in a proper and orderly fashion.

RESOLVED: that the Clerk's report be noted.

OS/4763

THE BICKERLEY – WATER SUPPLY

As a result of a complaint from a member of the public, Bournemouth & West Hampshire Water Company had checked the condition of the Council's standpipe on The Bickerley. This had been found not to comply with current legislation and new plumbing works were required to update the water supply.

Most of the remedial work had been carried out, with all the pipework now underground. A non-return valve had been fitted which would prevent foul water getting back into the system. The total cost of the works was estimated to be £400 - £500.

Cllr Ford queried whether the same remedial works would need to be carried out to the standpipes at the Council's allotment sites.

RESOLVED:

(a) that the Town Clerk's actions in updating the Council's water supply on The Bickerley be approved, and

(b) that the Town Clerk ascertain whether the same remedial works would need to be carried out to the standpipes at the Council's allotment sites.

OS/4764

CARVERS RECREATION GROUND – TENNIS CLUB PAVILION

The Town Clerk updated members on the situation regarding the blocked foul water drainage pipe to the tennis pavilion. A company had been requested to put a camera down the pipe in order to discover the extent of the problem. The cost of unblocking the drain and the remedial work involved had been estimated to be between £800 and £1,800. A second quote was being sought.

Cllr Cracknell queried whether it was necessary to retain the tennis pavilion as adequate facilities were available in the Council's pavilion on Carvers field.

RESOLVED: that the Town Clerk meet with representatives of the Tennis Club to discuss the appropriate action to resolve the problem.

OS/4765

URGENT BUSINESS

There was none.

OS/4765

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED: That under Section 100 (A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information. (Annex 'A').

OS/4766

LONG LANE

The Clerk reported on progress with the possible acquisition of land.

RESOLVED: that the Clerk's report on the progress made for the provision of recreational facilities at Long Lane be received and the action taken approved.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.12 p.m.