

OPEN SESSION: There were two members of the public present. One member gave notice that she wished to speak on a specific agenda item.

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

Held on Wednesday 5th December 2007 at 7.00pm

Apologies

Prior to the meeting, the Town Clerk reported that apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Daly, Cracknell and Chambers.

Declarations of Interest

There were none.

PRESENT:

Cllr N J Chard (in the Chair)
Cllr D Cole
Cllr L C Ford
Cllr B H Terry
Cllr M J Urwin
Cllr A C Wiseman

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr T R Simpson, Town Clerk
Mr M Townsend, Finance Manager
Mrs L A Wickens, P A to the Town Clerk
Miss B Scrivens, Student Adviser

OS/4953

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 7th November 2007, having been circulated, be approved and signed as a correct record.

OS/4954

TERMINATION OF ALLOTMENT TENANCY – REVIEW

The Town Clerk, referring to his report on the reasons for the termination of an allotment in line with normal procedures at the Council's Upper Kingston site, reiterated that the tenant's failure to cultivate the allotment properly was depriving residents on the waiting list. She had also failed to reply to letters, resulting in the Council serving Notice by Recorded Delivery. The poor condition of the back of the plot and a pile of rubbish and weeds left there meant that the Council could not re-let the allotment until it had been cleared and ploughed.

The tenant, Mrs S Biggs, in reply agreed that she had not been able to cultivate the whole plot this year due to being out of the country on several occasions. She had agreed to rent half of the plot and, despite being unable to carry out any heavy work as she was waiting to have an operation, had dug over some of the half plot. She hoped to be able to resume cultivation of the allotment in approximately eight weeks time and undertook to keep the plot cultivated in a proper manner in future.

Members were very concerned at the poor standard of maintenance of the plot but felt that there were perhaps extenuating reasons and, on balance, agreed that Mrs Biggs could be allowed to continue renting half of the plot, subject to certain conditions and a review in September 2008. The Tenant should be required to remove the heaps of rubbish at her expense and allow adequate access for the Council's

contractor to plough the rear plot. She could be asked to contribute to the cost of bringing the rear plot up to a standard where it could be re-let, if the cost to the Council was excessive.

RESOLVED:

(a) That the Allotment Tenancy of Mrs S Biggs be not terminated and she be allowed to rent a half plot at the Upper Kingston site, the position to be reviewed in September 2008,

(b) that the tenant to be requested to remove the heaps of rubbish and provide adequate access for the Council's contractor to plough the rear plot and

(c) that the Tenant be required to contribute to the cost of bringing the rear plot up to a standard where it can be re-let if the cost to the Council is excessive.

OS/4955

COMMITTEE BUDGET 2008/09

The Finance Manager reminded Members that the Policy & Finance Committee had asked that the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee review its budget proposals for 2008/09 with a view to reducing them. The Committee's budget had been skewed by the inclusion of £40,000 for the construction of the extension to the Cemetery. Investigations could be carried out into obtaining other sources of external funding for the Cemetery extension as this expenditure could be treated as a special item. Members noted that the financial responsibility for cemeteries in most town and parishes in the New Forest belonged to the District Council which met all management, maintenance and improvement works costs. This was not the case in Ringwood, where all costs were met by the Town Council.

In these circumstances, Members believed that the cost of extending the cemetery should not count against the Committee's budget as it did not properly show that the Committee had allowed for only marginal but essential growth in expenditure.

It would also be possible to delete the purchase of strimmers and a water pump from the Revenue Budget as there were sufficient funds in Provisions for these items.

RECOMMENDATION TO POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE:

(1) that, in view of the exceptional circumstances relating to the capital works required to the cemetery, this item should be retained in full in the Committee's Budget but not be counted in any calculations relating to any increase in the Committee's spending bids; and

(2) that the budget be amended by deletion of two strimmers and a water pump which could be met from the Provision for replacement equipment.

Mr M Townsend, Finance Manager, left the meeting at 8.05pm.

OS/4956

CARVERS RECREATION GROUND

Slide in the Children's Play Area

The Town Clerk reported that the lowest tenderer for the removal and replacement of the slide now wished to revisit the site and review his quotation. In the circumstances, the Town Clerk indicated that the works should be re-tendered and a further report would be submitted to Members as soon as possible.

RESOLVED:

That the Town Clerk's report be noted and action proposed be approved.

OS/4957

FLORAL DISPLAYS

(a) Members noted that competitive quotations had not been sought for floral displays for several years and the Town Clerk enquired whether Members wished to invite tenders next year.

The Committee was very pleased with the present standard of display and did not believe that obtaining new quotations would achieve an improvement on the commitment shown by the current contractor or a reduction in costs. However, it was thought that quotations should be sought from the existing contractor on the basis of the current displays and an alternative one that had a low watering requirement.

(b) The Town Clerk advised that Hampshire County Council had agreed that the floral displays on the Town Centre roundabout could be replaced with herbaceous shrubs, for example heathers, which would give colour throughout the year, would also be less labour intensive and would save water. The trees in the middle of the roundabout were also in need of some attention to reshape them.

(c) The Town Clerk enquired whether Members wished to consider the establishment of a Floral Display Working Party, which would include members of the public. Miss B Scrivens said she would enquire whether Ringwood School might be interested in having a link with the Council with regard to the floral displays.

RESOLVED:

(a) that in view of the quality of the displays and the commitment shown by the existing contractor, competitive quotations be not sought in 2008, but that the existing contractor be asked to supply two types of quotation, one for supplying a conventional display and one with a low watering requirement,

(b) that a local Nursery be consulted regarding the planting up of the town centre roundabout with herbaceous shrubs, and

(c) that a Floral Display Working Party be not established at this time.

OS/4958

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED: That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it was advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded and they were instructed to withdraw (*Annex "A"*).

OS/4959

ACQUISITION OF LAND AT REAR OF WEST STREET

The Town Clerk updated Members on progress to eventually obtain a riverside footpath link between The Bickerley and West Street.

RESOLVED: that the action taken by the Town Clerk be approved.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the Meeting at 8.22 pm.