

## OPEN SESSION:

There were five members of the public present. A group of three people wished to comment on Cemetery Regulations (*see minute OS/5026*). One member of the public wished to speak on Allotments (*see minute OS/5027*).

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

### Held on Wednesday 1 October 2008 at 7.00pm

The Chairman welcomed the new Student Advisors, Jessica Osborne-Lax and Maisie Jenkinson, to their first meeting.

#### Apologies

The Town Clerk reported that apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Cole and Cllr Chambers.

#### Declarations of Interest

Cllr Ford declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in The Bickerley – Provision of a Seat (*see minute OS/5028*).

Cllr Wiseman declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in Allotments (*see minute OS/5027*).

PRESENT: Cllr N J Chard (Chairman)  
Cllr L C Ford  
Cllr G J O'Reilly  
Cllr B H Terry  
Cllr M J Urwin  
Cllr A C Wiseman

IN ATTENDANCE: Terry Simpson, Town Clerk  
Claire Perrens, Meetings Administrator  
Jessica Osborne-Lax, Student Advisor  
Maisie Jenkinson, Student Advisor

### **OS/5025**

#### **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 September 2008, having been circulated, be approved and signed as a correct record.

*As members of the public wished to speak regarding Cemetery Regulations (Agenda Item 2) and Allotments (Agenda Item 4), these items were considered next.*

### **OS/5026**

#### **CEMETERY REGULATIONS**

A request had been made to install a new kerbstone within the Lawn Cemetery. As stated in the Town's Clerk's report, although the original plot, purchased in 1991, permitted a headstone and kerbs, since then new regulations mean that replacement of kerbs is not allowed (*see attached report Annex 'A'*).

Linda Thorne, as spokesperson for the family concerned, stated that the family's wish was to replace the headstone and kerbs with a more robust type of stone. They felt strongly that this should be allowed and that the kerbstone was essential for flowers as they are a large family. They were not aware prior to their recent bereavement that this would be disallowed and also felt that other people with plots with kerbstones should be informed of the fact that new kerbs were not allowed.

The Town Clerk stated that whilst very sympathetic to the family's plight, if an exception to the regulations was made, it would mean a precedent would be set for others. Unfortunately, economic pressures make the upkeep of kerbstone style cemeteries unrealistic.

Members asked further questions and debated the issue. The Chairman expressed sympathy to the family and thanked them for attending but said the Town Council could not compromise on policy, but they are welcome to replace the headstone, and reinstate the original kerbs.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the request to install a new kerbstone within the Lawn Cemetery be not agreed, but that permission be granted for the original kerbstone to be reinstated in accordance with the Cemetery Regulations; and
- 2) That the Town Council inform other families, who have headstones with kerbs, and also local undertakers, of the situation with regard to prohibition of new, or replacement of existing, kerbs.

<b>ACTION</b> Christine Smith
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**OS/5027  
ALLOTMENTS**

*Councillor Wiseman declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in the Allotments Item as her daughter rents an allotment.*

**a) Complaint Regarding Re-allocation of Allotments (Agenda Item 4 iii)**

Members considered a complaint that had arisen from Mr Kevan Reilly, who had joined the allotments waiting list in March 2007, regarding the procedure of relocating existing allotment holders from the Town Council's Hightown Road site to either Southampton Road or Long Lane. Mr Reilly was of the opinion that these people had 'jumped the queue' and it was unfair to himself and other people on the allotment waiting list.

The Town Clerk commented that the waiting list is a fair and simple system and that the only preference given is that of priority to Ringwood residents and to existing allotment holders who may have to be moved from their current site. In addition, many of the allotment holders who had been relocated had kindly accepted half plots, thus freeing up spaces.

Mr Reilly insisted that the allotment holders in question should have been moved onto the waiting list instead of being allocated alternative allotments and that the Town Council had behaved unethically.

The Town Clerk defended the actions of the Town Council and asserted that the procedures were fair and ethical, especially as some tenants at Hightown Road had been allotment holders for over 20 years. None had wanted to move and it was not appropriate to expect them to apply for a new allotment when they were being moved against their wishes. Members supported this position and the Town Mayor commented that the decent thing to do was to provide alternatives to allotment holders who had had to be moved from allotments which they had, in some cases, held for many years.

**RESOLVED:** That the procedure used to relocate allotment holders from the Hightown Road site to other allotments be supported.

**b) Clearance of site on Southampton Road (Agenda Item 4 i)**

An area on Southampton Road had previously been made available for use as a compost heap. This had now built up to an unsustainable level and it appeared it was being misused. Members considered whether to clear the area, which would cost up to £2,000, and replace it with a new allotment. The potential high cost of clearance was due to the fact that much of the material would be subject to Landfill Tax charges. It

was agreed that given the fact there are a large number of people on the allotment waiting list, it would be good to approve this measure as soon as possible.

**RECOMMENDED:** That Policy & Finance Committee be requested to approve expenditure of £2,000 to be met from reserves, if virement cannot be found within the Committee's budget, to clear the site on Southampton Road and create two half size allotment plots.

**ACTION** Martin Townsend / Terry Simpson / Claire Perrens

#### **c) Amendment to Allotment Rules (Agenda Item 4 ii)**

Members considered whether to approve an amendment to the allotment rules to provide that: "gates to allotment sites shall be locked and all allotment tenants shall be required to keep the gates locked. Failure to lock gates will be deemed a transgression of the allotment rules and could lead to loss of entitlement to an allotment." It was noted that when gates were left open, allotment holders' produce and property was put at risk and there could be unauthorised access and rubbish dumping.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That a lock be provided at the Southampton Road allotments and allotment holders be issued with a key on payment of a deposit; and
- 2) That an amendment be made to the allotment rules to ensure gates be kept locked by tenants.

**ACTION** Christine Smith

#### **OS/5028**

#### **THE BICKERLEY – PROVISION OF SEAT**

*Cllr Ford declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in this item.*

As a District Councillor, Cllr Ford is allocated a sum of £500 by the District Council to address the local needs of the community of her District Ward. Cllr Ford has decided that all residents, including those in her Ward, would benefit from the provision of a new seat adjoining the path on The Bickerley, which is a popular recreation area for residents of all ages.

After consulting with the Working Party appointed to approve seat designs, an attractive style of seat had been selected and photographs were shown to members. The seat is suitable for use by elderly people and the same design could be used for other Ringwood seats in future, for consistency. As the cost (including delivery and fitting) of one seat, exceeds the £500 available, Cllr Ford requested that members authorise additional funding of approximately £150.

Members fully supported this item and the Chairman expressed the Committee's thanks to Cllr Ford for making this contribution.

**RESOLVED:** That, subject to approval from the District Council of the expenditure of Cllr Ford's £500 allocation, the sum of £150 be authorised from the Committee's budget for purchase of the seat for The Bickerley.

**ACTION** Martin Townsend / Cllr Ford / Christine Smith

#### **OS/5029**

#### **CARVERS RECREATION GROUND**

The Town Clerk reported that the previous sum of £1,000 for the provision of a secure container for equipment at Carvers had been underestimated. The expected price would be in the region of £1,250. As it

is a temporary structure, the container will not require planning consent. The current concrete base is large enough to accommodate it and it will be painted green.

**RESOLVED:** That the sum of £1,250 be authorised for provision of a secure container at Carvers Recreation Ground.

**ACTION** Martin Townsend / Christine Smith / Clive Wentworth

**OS/5030  
RINGWOOD FOOTBALL CUP PROPOSAL**

Members considered a proposal by Ringwood Athletic Football Club for a new football tournament for adult local teams. There are now ten different adult teams in the Ringwood area and the proposal would bring them together for an interclub tournament at the Town Council's Ten Acre Field. The Town Council would be asked to provide a trophy or cup. It was noted by members that all the organisation, insurance and FA permissions would be handled by the Clubs and that further details would be needed.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That, in principle, the use of Ten Acre Field for a new adult pre-season Football Tournament be approved; and
- 2) That Ringwood Athletic Football Club be requested to carry out further investigation and submit a detailed proposal to the Committee for further consideration.

**ACTION** Terry Simpson

**OS/5031  
MAINTENANCE OF RINGWOOD JUNIOR SCHOOL PLAYING FIELD**

Members considered approving a tender submission for the Town Council to provide grass cutting for the Junior School and Rugby Club. The Town Council grounds staff would maintain and cut the grass. This could bring in between £4,500 and £5,000. It is important for the Town Council to maximise its income due to increased operating costs due to rising energy costs.

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council submit a tender for undertaking maintenance of Ringwood Junior School and Rugby Club Playing Field initially for a maximum period of two years.

**ACTION** Martin Townsend / Clive Wentworth

**OS/5032  
NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY RECREATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

Members considered the Town Council's response to the Consultation on New Forest National Park Authority's Recreation Management Strategy. The Town Clerk commented that the Strategy excessively controls use of the New Forest and that recreational horse riders, dog walkers and others are extremely concerned about many of the proposals. The New Forest has been successfully preserved for centuries and does not require major interference in its management. Cllr Wiseman commented that most people do not walk further than about one mile from the car parks and it seems likely that much of the Forest is not subject to over-use.

**RECOMMENDED:** That the responses (*as shown in Annex 'B' attached*) to the Consultation on the NFNPA Recreation Management Strategy be approved.

**ACTION** Terry Simpson / Sue Godwin

**OS/5033  
RED DIESEL**

Members had been previously alerted to the risk of a major increase in the cost of red diesel used by the Town Council for maintenance of its cemetery, open spaces and recreational areas. No response was yet forthcoming from the County Council or National Association of Local Councils on whether the increased tax on red diesel would be applicable to local councils. Members therefore considered making contingency arrangements to mitigate the effects of recent legislation if it is found that any of the Council's vehicles are not permitted to use red diesel. The Town Clerk recommended the acquisition of a new storage tank for white diesel (c. £900-£1,000) to help defray these potential costs if it were necessary to switch to white diesel for some vehicles.

**RESOLVED:** That Policy & Finance Committee be requested to authorise funds for the acquisition of a storage tank for white diesel in the sum of approximately £1,000, if this should prove necessary.

<b>ACTION Claire Perrens / Martin Townsend</b>
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**OS/5034  
EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC & PRESS**

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 'C' attached*).

**OS/5035  
TREE SAFETY**

The Town Clerk reported that five sites continued to require a continuous programme of inspection for tree safety: the Cemetery, Castleman Way, Ringwood Church, Kingfisher Way and Folly Farm. An estimate had been received and this appeared good value.

**RESOLVED:** That the Tree Safety programme be renewed.

<b>ACTION Terry Simpson / Clive Wentworth</b>
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There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.32pm.

**Note: The text in the Action Boxes above does not form part of these minutes.**