

OPEN SESSION: There were seven members of the public present.

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

Held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2009 at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Cllr B H Terry (Chairman)  
Cllr N J Chard (Vice-Chairman)  
Cllr D R Cole  
Cllr L C Ford  
Cllr G J O'Reilly  
Cllr A C Wiseman

IN ATTENDANCE: Terry Simpson, Town Clerk  
Claire Perrens, Meetings Administrator

### **OS/5152 APOLOGIES**

The Town Clerk reported that apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Chambers, Cllr Urwin, Maisie Jenkinson, Student Advisor and Vicky Leung, Student Advisor.

### **OS/5153 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

*Cllr Wiseman declared a personal and prejudicial interest in OS/5155 Allotments, as a close relative is an allotment holder. Cllr Wiseman made a statement and left the room whilst the item was discussed, taking no part in the debate or decision made.*

*Cllr O'Reilly declared a personal and prejudicial interest in OS/5158 – Footway Along the Bickerley and OS/5159 – Interpretation Boards at DCPD as she lives nearby. Cllr O'Reilly made a statement and left the room whilst the items were discussed, taking no part in the debate or decision made.*

*Cllr Cole declared a personal interest in OS/5158 – Footway Along the Bickerley and OS/5159 – Interpretation Boards at DCPD as he lives in the area.*

*Cllr Cole declared a personal and prejudicial interest in OS/5163 Accessway Across Bickerley Common, as he lives nearby. Cllr Cole left the room whilst the item was discussed, taking no part in the debate or decision made.*

### **OS/5154 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> November, having been circulated, be approved and signed as a correct record.

*Agenda Item 12 - Allotments was brought forward as members of the public wished to speak.*

### **OS/5155 ALLOTMENTS**

*Cllr Wiseman declared a personal and prejudicial interest in OS/5155 Allotments, as a close relative is an allotment holder. Cllr Wiseman made a statement and left the room whilst the item was discussed, taking no part in the debate or decision made.*

Following reports of an increase in vermin at Long Lane, Members considered the need for pest control contractors at all the Council's allotments and the need to review charges to allotment holders towards costs.

Seven allotment holders attended the meeting to make representations about the problems of rodents and rabbits at the Long Lane Allotments. Considerable damage was being done to crops but the major concern was the public health issue with regard to the increase in rats. After some debate, it was agreed that professional contractors should be appointed to deal with the problem, and that this would be an ongoing cost. The Town Clerk was already in consultation with Environmental Health officers; the costs were not yet available but could well be high. He stressed both land owners and tenants were responsible for pest control. The allotment holders present were unwilling to contribute towards the costs of pest control. However, the rent received from allotments did not meet the Council's existing running costs by a considerable margin; additional costs would require further subsidy from the Town Council.

It was noted that, as a leaseholder, the Football Club would be solely responsible for pest control on their site. The Town Clerk confirmed that all allotment holders would be informed of the situation.

**RECOMMENDED TO POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

- 1) That, subject to further investigation into costs, immediate action be taken to appoint pest control contractors for the Long Lane Allotment;
- 2) That under the review of fees and charges for 2010/11 (*Annex A Appendix C attached*) consideration be given to increasing allotment rent to help defray pest control costs and that this review be deferred until the next Committee Meeting.

**ACTION 1) Terry Simpson 2) Martin Townsend / Claire Perrens**

**OS/5156**

**COMMITTEE BUDGET 2010/2011**

Members considered the Committee's draft budget for 2010/11 (*attached as Annex 'A'*). The Town Clerk said that the cost for essential repairs to footpaths damaged by tree roots was now likely to be more than envisaged, and an extra £1,000 at least should be allowed. Members also considered fees and charges for 2010/11 as shown in *Annex 'A' Appendix C*. Members felt the proposed charges for overnight stay on the Bickerley seemed too low and further information was requested.

**RECOMMENDED TO POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

- 1) That new budget proposals for 2010/11 be approved and prioritised as shown in *Annex 'A' Appendix A*;
- 2) That the draft budgets be approved;
- 3) That a final decision on the new fees and charges for Allotments and Bickerley 2010/11 as shown in *Annex 'A' Appendix C*, be deferred to the next Meeting, pending further information on the costs of rodent control for allotments and number of caravans permitted at the Bickerley; and
- 4) That with the exception of Allotments and Bickerley, all other increases in fees and charges be approved as shown in *Appendix C*.

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

**OS/5157**

**LAND AT HIGHTOWN ROAD/YEW TREE GARDENS**

Members considered the offer of two areas of land at Hightown Road/Yew Tree Gardens for Open Space (*see Annex 'B'- shaded areas*). The northern area of land was previously considered unsuitable as it was totally enclosed by walls, but the District Council had agreed to remove the wall on the north east section. The Town Council would receive funding from developers' contributions for maintenance.

**RESOLVED:** That the areas of Open Space in Yew Tree Gardens as shown in *Annex 'B'* be accepted.

**ACTION Terry Simpson**

**OS/5158  
FOOTWAY ALONG THE BICKERLEY**

*Cllr O'Reilly declared a personal and prejudicial interest in OS/5158 – Footway Along the Bickerley and OS/5159 – Interpretation Boards at DCPD as she lives nearby. Cllr O'Reilly made a statement and left the room whilst the items were discussed, taking no part in the debate or decision made.*

*Cllr Cole declared a personal interest in OS/5158 – Footway Along the Bickerley and OS/5159 – Interpretation Boards at DCPD as he lives in the area.*

The Town Clerk reported on the delay in the County Council acquiring a strip of land alongside of the Bickerley for a footway, due to its status as a Common. The plans for enhancement of Danny Cracknell Pocket Park (DCPD) included bollards to be placed along the edge of the Bickerley. It was likely that these bollards would be damaged by a subsequent installation of a footway.

**RESOLVED:** That the installation of bollards as part of the DCPD project be deferred until the footway is created.

**ACTION Terry Simpson**

**OS/5159  
INTERPRETATION BOARDS AT DANNY CRACKNELL POCKET PARK (DCPD)**

Members considered suitable locations for two interpretation boards within DCPD.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That a general interpretation board be sited at the entrance to the DCPD;
- 2) That an interpretation board for the Millstream be sited at the riverbank by the footpath; and
- 3) That the precise location of each be determined as the scheme progresses.

**ACTION Terry Simpson**

**OS/5160  
GATE TO ALLOTMENTS AT SOUTHAMPTON ROAD**

The Town Clerk reported on the three month trial allowing for the gate to remain unlocked (but closed) whilst an allotment holder was on site. From monitoring undertaken by the grounds staff, it appeared that the trial was working reasonably well at present, with no reports of trespassers.

**RESOLVED:** That the regulation allowing the gate to Allotments at Southampton Road to remain unlocked (but closed) whilst there was an allotment holder on site be confirmed.

**ACTION Christine Smith**

**OS/5161  
FOLLY FARM**

A public notice had been issued regarding the lease of land at Folly Farm to the Shieling Trust.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That it be noted no objections to the lease of land at Folly Farm to the Shieling Trust had been received; and
- 2) That the arrangements for the lease to the Shieling Trust be confirmed.

**ACTION Terry Simpson**

**OS/5162  
FOOTPATH FOR DISABLED AT CARVERS**

The Town Clerk reported that the original contractor had been unable to proceed with creation of a footpath for disabled at Carvers Recreation Ground.

**RESOLVED:** That revised arrangements for appointment of alternative contractor for proposed footpath at Carvers Recreation Ground be approved

**ACTION Terry Simpson**

**OS/5163  
ACCESSWAY ACROSS BICKERLEY COMMON**

*Cllr Cole declared a personal and prejudicial interest in OS/5163 Accessway Across Bickerley Common, as he lives nearby. Cllr Cole left the room whilst the item was discussed, taking no part in the debate or decision made.*

Members considered a request from the solicitor of a potential buyer for a formal right of way across Bickerley Common for 1 Riverside Cottages, The Bickerley. The Town Clerk reported that as Case Law relating to Commons was complex, the advice of the Council's solicitors had been sought.

**RESOLVED:** That the request be noted and a decision be deferred until further information was obtained from the Council's solicitors.

**ACTION Terry Simpson**

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.43 pm.

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