

OPEN SESSION:

There were 8 members of the public present.

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

Held on 7th October 2009 at 7.00pm

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Terry Simpson, Town Clerk
Claire Perrens, Meetings Administrator
Maisie Jenkinson, Student Advisor
Vicky Leung, Student Advisor
Clive Wentworth, Grounds Foreman
Alice Harwood, District Council Landscape Architect
Neil Williamson, District Council Head of Environmental Design

The Chairman welcomed Student Advisors appointed for the year, Maisie Jenkinson, returning for a second year, and Vicky Leung. He also welcomed the Grounds Foreman, Clive Wentworth.

OS/5131 APOLOGIES

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

OS/5132 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr O'Reilly declared a personal and prejudicial interest in OS/5134 DEVELOPMENT OF DANNY CRACKNELL POCKET PARK, as she lives close by. Cllr O'Reilly made a statement and left the room after the presentation, taking no part in the discussions or decision made.

OS/5133 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd September 2009, having been circulated, be approved and signed as a correct record.

OS/5134

DEVELOPMENT OF DANNY CRACKNELL POCKET PARK (DCPP)

Cllr O'Reilly declared a personal and prejudicial interest in OS/5134 DEVELOPMENT OF DANNY CRACKNELL POCKET PARK, as she lives close by. Cllr O'Reilly made a statement after the presentation and left the room, taking no part in the discussions or decision made.

The Chairman welcomed the District Council's Landscape Architect, Alice Harwood, and Head of Environmental Design, Neil Williamson, who were there to give a presentation on the development of Danny Cracknell Pocket Park (DCPP). He welcomed the Deputy Head Teacher of Ringwood Junior School, who had brought two pupils, particularly to hear about the plans for DCPP.

Mr Williamson introduced Ms Harwood, the new Landscape Architect, who had now reviewed the project fully and taken on board various suggestions. Members were shown a comprehensive powerpoint presentation. The concept was to create a natural park with an emphasis on ecology and wildlife, for quiet enjoyment. Illustrations were shown to give an idea of how this would be achieved, by creating wet woodland, removing scrub to open up views and access to the Millstream, and adding bird, bat and insect boxes to encourage wildlife. There would also be a coppiced area and stag beetle loggery. A path, to match that on the main Bickerley open space, would lead down to the Millstream, with the part through the woodland boarded in timber as this was the safest and most cost-effective method in an area with substantial tree roots. The path would be suitable for wheelchairs and pushchairs. Revetments would be created at the river bank, forming steps for planting of reeds, and increasing safety by reducing the chance of children falling into the actual water. Having inspected the metal benches on Bickerley Common, the Landscape Architect suggested that wooden seating would be more appropriate in the natural park area. There would also be interpretation boards.

The initial estimated cost was £51,000, but Natural England would provide £8,000 and meet the cost of interpretation boards, as part of the Living Rivers Scheme, bringing the cost down to £43,000.

A number of additional items had been separately costed, to be added if required, and if funding could be obtained:

- Woodland floor specialist plants (could involve community in bulb planting day) £5,000-£10,000
- Picnic bench £1,850
- Access Track for local Farmer (to prevent erosion) £1,800
- Signage (depending on whether a simple sign or sculptural piece) £500-£5,000
- Bridge refurbishment £5,000-£10,000 (as the bridge was owned by Hampshire County Council, funding would be sought from them).

Cllr O'Reilly commented that, whilst supporting the overall scheme, the unclaimed triangle of land mentioned, which it was hoped would be incorporated in the coppice, had a main sewer under it and therefore should not be planted with trees. She also suggested that the provision of lighting in the Park would make it more user-friendly and help to deter vandals and troublemakers.

Cllr O'Reilly left the room.

Mr Williamson said that lighting was expensive and could add around 50% to the

overall cost of the scheme. The Town Mayor commented that in her experience wooden seating was likely to be vandalised. The Student Advisors were in favour of the scheme; Maisie Jenkinson commented that it would be a great improvement. The Deputy Head of Ringwood Junior School said her two pupils also liked the ideas and the fact that it would be a nature reserve.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) That the scheme for the development of Danny Cracknell Pocket Park at a cost of £51,000, subject to further discussions between the Town Clerk and the District Officers regarding funding, be approved;
- 2) That research into the possibility of lighting in the park be undertaken as a separate project, in order to avoid delaying implementation of the main scheme;
- 3) That funds for the woodland floor specialist plants, picnic bench and access track, shown as additional items, be requested from Developers' Contributions;
- 4) That funding be sought from Hampshire County Council to enable the bridge to be refurbished;
- 5) That at this stage no additional signage showing the name of the Park be included in the scheme;
- 6) That the Junior School and community be invited to join in a Bulb Planting Day; and
- 7) That offers from the public to sponsor individual elements of the scheme be welcomed.

ACTION Terry Simpson / Alice Harwood / Neil Williamson

OS/5135

BIRD-PROOF BIN FOR DANNY CRACKNELL POCKET PARK (DCPP)

Following litter problems attributed to crows raiding the bins for food, Members considered the need for bird-proof bins.

RESOLVED: That lidded bins fitted with bird deterrent 'flaps' be installed at DCP as part of the redevelopment scheme.

ACTION Terry Simpson

Cllr O'Reilly returned to the meeting.

Item 10 on the Agenda was brought forward as there was a member of the public wishing to comment.

OS/5136

CEMETERY PARKING

The Town Clerk reported on arrangements to restrict the use of the Cemetery car park by parents attending Ringwood Junior School. This practice was preventing genuine visitors to the Cemetery from gaining access and finding a parking space. There had also been complaints about children running across graves. Currently the gates were being locked at school opening and closing times to prevent inappropriate use of the Cemetery car park. In addition, parents were parking illegally and blocking the gates. The issue of parking at the School needed to be fully addressed by

Hampshire County Council.

A member of the public spoke on this item and asked for the gates to be left unlocked so that she could have access to the Cemetery, as it was very upsetting to be kept out. She queried why traffic wardens could not be on duty at the relevant times to discourage illegal parking.

The Grounds Foreman said that if the gates were not locked, genuine visitors would be unable to gain entry to the car park in any case, as all spaces were taken by parents.

Cllr Chard had received many complaints and suggested that creating one-way systems on the relevant roads or the use of wheel-clamping should be considered. The Deputy Head of the Junior School said she was concerned that the School's reputation was suffering due to a small minority of parents. A number of measures had been taken to discourage this behaviour, with no success. However, she stressed that the School was not responsible for activities outside the school gates.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the gates of the Cemetery be locked during the morning and afternoon to coincide with the school run, at times when it is clear the car park is being misused;
- 2) That the Town Clerk be authorised to relax the policy when he believes all the parents will use the car park in an appropriate manner; and
- 3) That New Forest District Council be strongly advised that a Traffic Warden is required during these times in the area around the Junior School.

ACTION Terry Simpson

OS/5137

DONATION OF TREES FROM RINGWOOD SCHOOL

Members considered an offer of fruit and nut trees for the Town from Ringwood School. As no details of the types of trees had been received, it was not possible to make any final decisions, but they might be suitable for Jubilee Gardens, DCPD and the Bickerley Common.

RESOLVED: That the possible donation of trees from Ringwood School be noted.

ACTION Terry Simpson

OS/5138

CROSSING FROM VICTORIA GARDENS TO HIGHTOWN ROAD

The Town Clerk reported on progress with the creation of a safe crossing place onto Hightown Road (*OS/5126 – 02.09.09 refers*). Investigations and consultations with both District and County Council were under way into the creation of a footpath from Victoria Gardens to the school entrance on Hightown Road.

RESOLVED: That action taken towards creation of a crossing from Victoria Gardens to the School on Hightown Road be approved.

ACTION Terry Simpson

OS/5139

GATE TO ALLOTMENTS AT SOUTHAMPTON ROAD

The Town Clerk reported on the trial allowing tenants to only lock the gate if they are last person on site, whilst continuing to close the gate when entering or leaving. Unfortunately, the gates were being left open whilst allotment holders were on site. Monitoring would continue to try to ascertain whether they were being locked at night and a further report would be made at the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That the report on the trial regarding the allotment gates be noted.

ACTION Christine Smith

OS/5140

SPONSORSHIP FOR SPORTING COMPETITION

Members considered sponsorship of a new Ringwood and Avon Valley League (*OS/5123 02.09.09 refers*). The Community Outreach Officer had confirmed that the schools involved would be New Milton, Ringwood and Fordingbridge and the only funds needed were for trophies. However, actual amounts were still not known.

RESOLVED: That a decision on the request to sponsor the competition be deferred until the costs are known.

ACTION Terry Simpson

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.18 pm.

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

RECEIVED & ADOPTED
28th October 2009

TOWN MAYOR

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN