

OPEN SESSION:

There were two members of the public present.

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

Held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2010 at 7.00pm

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Terry Simpson, Town Clerk  
Claire Perrens, Meetings Administrator  
Christine Smith, Office Manager (*until 7.30pm*)  
Maisie Jenkinson, Student Advisor  
Vicky Leung, Student Advisor  
Alice Harwood, NFDC Landscape Architect (*until 7.45pm*)

*The Chairman welcomed members of the press and Alice Harwood, New Forest District Council Landscape Architect.*

### **OS/5173 APOLOGIES**

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

### **OS/5174 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

*OS/5176 – Allotments at Long Lane. Cllr Wiseman declared a personal and prejudicial interest in OS/5176 as her daughter is an allotment holder. Cllr Wiseman made a statement and left the room, taking no part in the debate or decision made.*

*OS/5179 – Pest Control At Allotments. Cllr Wiseman declared a personal and prejudicial interest in OS/5179 as her daughter is an allotment holder. Cllr Wiseman left the room, taking no part in the debate or decision made.*

*OS/5181 Danny Cracknell Pocket Park Cllr O'Reilly declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item as she lives close by. Cllr O'Reilly made a statement and left the room, taking no part in the debate or decision made.*

*OS/5185 Bowls Club The Chairman, Cllr B Terry, declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item as a member of the Bowls Club. He made a statement and left the room, taking no part in the debate or decision made.*

*OS/5191 Bowls Club The Chairman, Cllr B Terry, declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item as a member of the Bowls Club. He left the room, taking no part in the debate or decision made.*

**OS/5175**  
**MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2010, having been circulated, be approved and signed as a correct record.

*The Chairman brought forward the Agenda items relating to allotments, as the Office Manager, who manages the allotments, was present to answer any questions.*

**OS/5176**  
**ALLOTMENTS AT LONG LANE**

OS/5176 – Allotments at Long Lane. Cllr Wiseman declared a personal and prejudicial interest in OS/5176 as her daughter is an allotment holder. Cllr Wiseman made a statement and left the room, taking no part in the debate or decision made.

Members considered further action required to minimize opportunities for rats to become established at Long Lane (*Annex 'A' attached*). Recent photographs of allotment plots were projected to show examples of inappropriate debris, broken glass and old carpet on some plots. The carpets and some of the compost bins were attractive to rats for cover/nesting. Members noted that the poor weather conditions in December and January could explain to some extent the lack of action in response to the letter sent on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2009 (*see Annex 'A'*) requesting that the allotments be cleared of carpet etc. The Town Clerk commented that although a number of allotment plots were not being kept in good condition, there were plenty of examples of well-maintained plots also. Cllr Cole suggested that a skip be provided at Long Lane for rubbish that could not be burned. However, the Town Clerk said that previous experiences at the Southampton Road site had been that this idea had led to a major problem with the allotment becoming a dumping ground, which had been expensive to clear (*OS/5027 October 2008 refers*).

Members agreed that the Regulations for the allotments should be reviewed to encourage improved conditions. The Town Clerk suggested that capital costs for rodent control be met by the Town Council. If ongoing control costs were funded by increases in rent, this would encourage allotment holders to take measures to reduce the rodent problem, in the interests of keeping their own costs down. Members agreed that this proposal seemed fair.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That a further report be brought to the Committee on updating the Council's allotment Regulations having regard to the Regulations in place at other authorities;
- 2) That as a general principle the cost of implementing rodent control measures at all of the Council's allotment sites should be on the basis of the Town Council supplying and fixing bait boxes on concrete slabs and that the annual revenue costs thereafter relating to the visits by Pest Control Officers and removal of dead rats be recharged at full cost amongst all allotment holders; and
- 3) That arrangements be made for a meeting with allotment holders to explain the proposed action and that the Contractor appointed to undertake Pest Control be requested to attend that meeting.

<b>ACTION Terry Simpson / Christine Smith</b>
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*Cllr Wiseman returned to the Meeting.*

**OS/5177**  
**ALLOTMENTS AT HIGHTOWN ROAD**

When the works at the Cemetery in Hightown Road have been completed, an area of land will again be available for temporary allotments (these would be available for around 10 years after which it was likely the land would be required for cemetery use). Previous allotment holders (all of whom were allocated plots elsewhere) have been given first option to return to holding a plot at Hightown Road. However, given that there were over 60 residents on the waiting list, it was proposed that a new plot size be created of approximately 21 x 6 metres. These would be slightly larger than the single plots at Upper Kingston. This

was a very good size, noting that the purpose of allotments was for personal and not commercial use. This would create 18 new allotment plots. One of the original Hightown Road allotment holders was unhappy with the reduced size, and wished to retain their alternative plot at Southampton Road in addition. However, given the size of the waiting list, it was not felt appropriate that one person should receive special treatment and be allowed to hold two new plots.

The Town Clerk also believed that a number of residents found the existing plots too large to manage, or for their needs, and the Council should allocate part of the land for a new size of 'mini-allotment'. This would be suitable for those who only required a small plot, perhaps for summer salad vegetables. The mini-allotments would be approximately 6 x 4 metres and 8 would be available.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That 18 new temporary plots of approximate size of 21 x 6 metres be created at Hightown Road at a current rental cost of £21 per annum;
- 2) That those allotment holders who originally held a plot at Hightown Road be given the option of a new plot at approximate size of 21 x 6 metres;
- 3) That no allotment holder be entitled to hold more than one allotment plot; and
- 4) That 8 new 'mini-allotments' be created at approximate size of 6 x 4 metres at a rental cost of £10 per annum.

<b>ACTION</b> Christine Smith
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**OS/5178**

**EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC & 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 (*Confidential Annex 'B' and 'C' attached*).

<b>ACTION</b> Claire Perrens
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**OS/5179**

**PEST CONTROL AT ALLOTMENTS**

*OS/5179 – Pest Control At Allotments. Cllr Wiseman declared a personal and prejudicial interest in OS/5179 as her daughter is an allotment holder. Cllr Wiseman left the room, taking no part in the debate or decision made.*

Members considered quotations received for control of rats at Long Lane Allotments.

**RESOLVED:** That, having reviewed the three quotations, the contract be awarded as agreed (see *Confidential Annex 'B' and 'C'*).

<b>ACTION</b> Terry Simpson
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*Cllr Wiseman returned to the Meeting.  
The Office Manager left the Meeting at 7.30pm.*

**OS/5180**

**FEES AND CHARGES**

Members reviewed Fees and Charges for 'Parking on The Bickerley' by fairs and circuses (*Minutes OS/5155 and OS/5156 02.12.09 refer*). As requested by Members, the Office Manager had conducted research into the fees charged by other local councils for overnight parking on recreation areas. The average charge was around £120 per night. It was therefore felt appropriate to increase the fees for Parking on The Bickerley.

**RESOLVED:** That Fees and Charges for 'Parking on The Bickerley' be increased to £105 for 2010/2011

**ACTION Martin Townsend**

**OS/5181**

**DANNY CRACKNELL POCKET PARK (DCPP)**

*OS/5181 Danny Cracknell Pocket Park Cllr O'Reilly declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item as she lives close by. Cllr O'Reilly made a statement and left the room, taking no part in the debate or decision made.*

The Town Clerk thanked the Landscape Architect, Alice Harwood, for attending the Meeting in order to answer any questions about this project. There would be three separate contracts: initially the ground would be cleared and prepared and this would include coppicing of trees. Once the contract was awarded it was expected that this would be completed by the end of March 2010. The second phase would involve works to the riverbank, which would be under the control of a specialist riverbank engineer, to create safe access. Thirdly, a contract would be offered for creation of the boardwalk, footpath and planting. The completion date was expected to be summer 2010.

Cllr Chard asked if there would be annual inspection of the riverbank. The Landscape Architect confirmed that this would be part of the ongoing maintenance programme. Cllr Cole commented that residents were worried about the idea of bat boxes, and the Landscape Architect confirmed that there would be bird boxes, but not bat boxes.

Members noted that Cllr Rippon-Swaine had agreed to fund the costs of materials to enable the May Bridge to be improved. The improvement works would be carried out by the County Council Rights of Way staff and the Town Council's grounds staff. This would achieve a significant saving against the original estimates.

Natural England's initial designs for the interpretation boards were circulated. The Town Clerk felt that these did not currently provide enough detailed educational information about birds, insects, animals, flora and fauna. Any suggestions from Members on content would be welcomed by the Landscape Architect. Cllr Cole offered to supply a walnut tree and information about birds in the area.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the progress report on Danny Cracknell Pocket Park project be noted and the proposals for the implementation of the scheme be approved;
- 2) That suggestions for text for the interpretation boards be forwarded to the Town Clerk and Landscape Architect as soon as possible; and
- 3) That the expected completion date of summer 2010 be noted

**ACTION All Members, Cllr Cole, Terry Simpson, Alice Harwood**

*The Landscape Architect left the Meeting at 7.45pm  
Cllr O'Reilly returned to the Meeting.*

**OS/5182**

**DROP IN CENTRE**

Members considered proposals for the use of approved budget for enhancement of facilities at the Drop In Centre by refurbishment of the kitchen. This would include separate hand washing and dishwashing facilities, and separation of the kitchen from the general area. Members were invited to make comments, prior to the Policy & Finance Meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> February, when the detailed costs would be approved. Maisie Jenkinson, Student Advisor, knew young people who used the Drop In Centre and welcomed the proposals. The Town Clerk commented on the success of the Centre.

**RESOLVED:** That proposals for refurbishment of the kitchen at the Drop In Centre be noted

**ACTION Terry Simpson**

**OS/5183  
SKATE PARK**

Members considered proposals for the replacement of the grind rail at the Skate Park, at Carvers Recreation Ground and provision of new equipment, following consultation with users of the Skate Park. This would be funded from existing budget provision.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the purchase of a replacement grind rail be approved; and
- 2) That the Town Clerk be authorised, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of this Committee to liaise with Skate Park users to select and purchase new equipment

<b>ACTION Terry Simpson / Jo Stannard</b>
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**OS/5184  
SLIDE AT CARVERS**

Members considered the replacement of the mound slide at Carvers Recreation Ground and the need to re-grade the mound (*Annex 'D' attached*). The Town Clerk suggested the possible reinstatement of the original play tunnel underneath the mound if it is feasible. Some Members were concerned about the safety of the tunnel, which was originally closed due to misuse. However, due to stricter health and safety regulations, Carvers Recreation Ground was frequently inspected and two grounds staff were based there.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the proposed way forward, as outlined in paragraphs 4 and 5 of *Annex 'D' attached*, to re-grade the mound and replace the slide in the playground at Carvers Recreation Ground, be agreed;
- 2) That consultation with parents and children using the slide at Carvers Recreation Ground be carried out;
- 3) That contractors be asked to provide proposals and indicative prices;
- 4) That the re-opening of the original play tunnel be approved subject to satisfactory assurances being obtained as to its safe condition and arrangements being implemented to deter its misuse; and
- 5) That the Town Clerk be authorised, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of this Committee, to negotiate with the selected contractor

**RECOMMENDED TO POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

That a variation be authorised to the arrangements for obtaining tenders and the selection of contractors for the provision of a new slide.

<b>ACTION Terry Simpson / Jo Stannard / Claire Perrens</b>
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**OS/5185  
BOWLS CLUB**

*OS/5185 Bowls Club* The Chairman, Cllr B Terry, declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item as a member of the Bowls Club. He made a statement and left the room, taking no part in the debate or decision made.

The Vice-Chairman, Cllr Chard, took the Chair for this item. Members viewed projected photographs showing the damaged tarmac on the paths around the bowling green. Prior to leaving the Meeting, Cllr Terry had stated that the Bowls Club did not have the resources to replace the tarmac, due to declining membership. The Town Clerk informed Members that a small budget of £250 was available, but the lowest quotation for the works needed was £750.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That, subject to the Policy & Finance Committee approving the Recommendation below, the quotation of £750 be accepted and £250 from available budget be approved towards resurfacing the path at the Bowls Club; and
- 2) That the Bowls Club be encouraged to seek further revenue from increasing fees and public usage and involving Ringwood School in the use of the facility by students

**RECOMMENDED TO POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

That a virement of £500 be requested for the resurfacing of the path at the Bowls Club

**ACTION Terry Simpson / Claire Perrens**

*Cllr Terry returned to the Meeting.*

**OS/5186**

**CEMETERY ENTRANCE**

The Town Clerk reported that the tarmac at the main entrance to the Cemetery required resurfacing. This was probably due partly to unauthorised use for parking by parents of children at the Junior School and because of the icy weather in recent years. It was noted that the tarmac would need completely replacing at a cost of £600. It would be necessary to keep the gates closed for around two months after the work was completed to protect the new tarmac.

**RESOLVED:** That the tarmac at the Cemetery Entrance be replaced at a cost of £600 from the maintenance budget

**ACTION Terry Simpson**

**OS/5187**

**LAND BETWEEN CASTLEMAN TRAIL AND THE MILLSTREAM**

The Town Clerk reported on the excellent Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> January regarding access to land between Castleman Trail and the Millstream. The Raymond Brown Company were preparing detailed plans which would then need to be approved by Natural England. It was proposed to create interpretation boards. The Chairman commented that, combined with the Danny Cracknell Pocket Park project, this would provide a very welcome improvement to the riverside facilities for the Town. It was hoped that the access works would be completed before the end of March, when the area would need to be restricted to protect nesting birds.

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Clerk be authorised to take necessary actions to progress this project

**ACTION Terry Simpson**

**OS/5188**

**TOWN PLANTERS & TUBS**

Members considered summer planting proposals from Pam's Plants for the Town's planters and tubs. The quotation of £1,725 included all summer planting for the Town. Plants had been chosen that required minimum watering. The quotation was slightly higher than the previous year, but still represented good value from a local supplier.

**RESOLVED:** That the planting proposals from Pam's Plants for the Town be approved at a cost of £1,725 from the approved budget.

**ACTION Terry Simpson**

**OS/5189**

**NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY (NFNPA)**

The Town Clerk reported on the draft Recreation Management Strategy for NFNPA. He felt that this new consultation paper was more strategic, without the specific detailed proposals in the last publication. He considered that the intention was still to restrict tourism and he remained concerned that the intention was to reduce caravan sites and car parking thereby being detrimental to the economic vitality of the area. Although care was needed in environmentally sensitive areas, the NFNPA needed to find a balance to avoid being too restrictive. The Chairman had also reviewed the paper and agreed with the Town Clerk's assessment. It was noted that local councils had not been included in the official list of organisations to be consulted.

**RESOLVED:** That a response be made to the NFNPA that the Recreation Management Strategy should not be implemented in a manner that would detrimentally affect the economic vitality of the New Forest area

**ACTION Terry Simpson**

**OS/5190  
EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC & 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 'B' and 'E' attached*).

**ACTION Claire Perrens**

**OS/5191  
BOWLS CLUB RENT REVIEW**

*OS/5191 Bowls Club* The Chairman, Cllr B Terry, declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item as a member of the Bowls Club. He left the room, taking no part in the debate or decision made.

Vice-Chairman Cllr Chard took the Chair for this item. Members reviewed the rent paid by Ringwood Bowls Club (*CONFIDENTIAL Annex 'E' attached*)

**RESOLVED:** That the rent for the Ringwood Bowls Club for the five years commencing November 2009 be as shown in *CONFIDENTIAL Annex 'B' attached*.

**ACTION Martin Townsend**

*Cllr Terry returned to the Meeting.*

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.45pm.

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

RECEIVED & ADOPTED  
24<sup>th</sup> February 2010

TOWN MAYOR

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN