

Ringwood Town Council

Ringwood Gateway, The Furlong, Ringwood, Hampshire BH24 1AT

Tel: 01425 473883

www.ringwood.gov.uk

SUMMONS

Dear Member

20th February 2020

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Town Council at the Forest Suite, Ringwood Gateway on 26th February 2020 at 7.00pm.

Mr C Wilkins
Town Clerk

AGENDA

1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There will be an opportunity for public participation for a period of up to 15 minutes at the start of the meeting

2. To receive Apologies for Absence

3. To receive Declarations of Interest

4. To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting held on 29th January 2020

5. To receive Minutes of Committees and approve recommendations contained therein:

Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces

DATE :- 5th February 2020

Planning, Town & Environment

DATE:- 7th February 2020

Policy & Finance

DATE:- 19th February 2020

F/5772 Annual Financial Risk Assessment - see separate agenda item

6. ANNUAL FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT

To consider a recommendation from Policy and Finance Committee (*F/5772 refers*)

7. LONG LANE SPORTS GROUND IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

To receive a presentation from AFC Bournemouth Community Sports Trust and consider the Town Clerk's report (*Report A*)

8. To receive such communications as the Town Mayor may desire to lay before the Council (Councillors are reminded that no decision taking may take place as a result of this item)

9. To Receive Reports from Ringwood Town Councillors and Student Advisors (Councillors are reminded that no decision taking may take place as a result of this item)

10. To receive Reports from County and District Councillors (Councillors are reminded that no decision taking may take place as a result of this item)

11. Forthcoming Meetings – to note the following dates:

Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces	7.00pm	Wednesday 4 th March 2020
Planning, Town & Environment	10.00am	Friday 6 th March 2020
Policy & Finance	7.00pm	Wednesday 18 th March 2020
Full Council	7.00pm	Wednesday 25 th March 2020

12. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

To consider exclusion of the press and public from the meeting, in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, section 1(2), to transact business for which publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of its confidential nature.

13. COMMUNITY AWARDS

To consider the Town Clerk's report on nominations for community awards
(*Confidential Report B*)

If you would like further information on any of the agenda items, please contact Mr Chris Wilkins, Town Clerk, on 01425 484720 or chris.wilkins@ringwood.gov.uk

Council Members:

Chairman: Cllr Tony Ring, Town Mayor
Vice-Chairman: Cllr Philip Day, Deputy Mayor
Cllr Andy Briers
Cllr Gareth Deboos
Cllr Hilary Edge
Cllr Rae Frederick
Cllr John Haywood
Cllr Jeremy Heron
Cllr Peter Kelleher
Cllr Darren Loose
Cllr Gloria O'Reilly
Cllr Steve Rippon-Swaine
Cllr Glenys Turner

Student Advisors:

TOWN COUNCIL**26th February 2020****Report on Long Lane sports ground improvement project****1. Introduction and reason why decision required**

- 1.1 The Long Lane Sports Development and Football Club Working Party met on 6th February to consider a report on the improvement project and a presentation from AFC Bournemouth Community Sports Trust. The draft notes of that meeting are attached (Annex A).
- 1.2 The Working Party members considered that the proposal made by the Trust and supported by Ringwood Town Football Club (RTFC) was of such importance and the need to arrive at a decision in principle whether or not to support it so pressing that it should be brought before the full Council at the earliest opportunity.

2. Background information, options, impact assessment and risks

- 2.1 Steve Cuss and Andrew Battison of AFC Bournemouth Community Sports Trust intend to attend the meeting, make a presentation and answer questions. Phil King and Chris Till of RTFC will also attend and be available to answer questions.

3. Issues for decision and any recommendations**Whether the Council should:**

- 3.1 Declare its support in principle for the football facilities at its Long Lane Sports Ground to be shared by RTFC and AFC Bournemouth Community Sports Trust;**
- 3.2 Declare its willingness in principle to replace the current lease in favour of RTFC with a new lease granted to AFC Bournemouth Community Sports Trust for a term of at least 25 years;**
- 3.3 Declare its willingness to include in such replacement lease all the land included in the current lease and at least that portion of Bernie Guy's field that is currently used for football; and**
- 3.4 Agree that the rent charged under the new lease will be broadly similar to that currently charged to RTFC.**

For further information, contact:

Christopher Wilkins, Town Clerk
Direct Dial: 01425 484720
Email: chris.wilkins@ringwood.gov.uk

Long Lane Sports Development and Football Club Working Party

Notes of meeting held on Thursday 6th February 2020 at 7:00pm in the First Floor Meeting Room, Ringwood Gateway, The Furlong, Ringwood. BH24 1AT

Present: Cllr Andy Briers
Cllr. John Haywood
Cllr Darren Loose
Cllr Tony Ring

In attendance: Chris Wilkins, Town Clerk
Jamie Burton, NFDC
Steve Cuss, AFC Bournemouth Community Sports Trust
Phil King, RTFC
Chris Till, RTFC

1. Election of chairman

Cllr. Briers was proposed by Cllr Ring and seconded by Cllr Haywood. There were no other nominations.

Cllr. Briers was duly elected chairman of the Working Party until the first meeting after the next annual meeting of the Council.

2. Apologies for absence

There were none.

3. Declarations of interest

It was noted that Cllr Briers is an allotment holder at Long Lane and Cllr Loose is involved with the football club, therefore, each has a non-pecuniary interest in the matters to be discussed.

4. To agree notes of last meeting held on 10th September 2018

The notes were agreed as a true record.

4. Sports facilities improvements (inc. 3G AGP) project

Members considered the report from the Town Clerk on development of the project since the last meeting (Annex A).

Jamie Burton reported that similar projects have been completed successfully elsewhere in the district but would require the preparation of a Funding Plan, a Usage Plan and a Development Strategy together demonstrating financial and managerial sustainability.

The general conclusion was that the Town Council and Ringwood Town Football Club are unlikely to be able to develop a viable project within the foreseeable future without outside assistance.

5. Proposal from AFC Bournemouth Community Sports Trust

Steve Cuss explained the role of his Trust as the charitable community sports arm of AFC Bournemouth. It is closely associated with the premier league club but is legally separate

from it and has no direct involvement with the club's professional teams. He outlined their existing activities and facilities, including the work they already do in Ringwood and the links they have with Ringwood schools and RTFC.

He explained that the Trust is hampered somewhat by their lack of a permanent base and has been talking to RTFC about the possibility of sharing their space at Long Lane. Early discussions have been positive; it appearing that their needs and the needs of RTFC would complement rather than compete with one another. The Trust is used to developing and managing precisely the kinds of new facilities that are needed at Long Lane and has access to sources (and levels) of funding not available to RTFC and/or the Council.

The Town Clerk reported that he had been consulted about these discussions and had arranged this meeting so that members could assess the idea before matters develop further. Steve Cuss explained that further development of a "ground-sharing" partnership arrangement would require a significant investment of resources by the Trust on which they cannot prudently embark without a commitment from the Council as the owner of the site. Specifically, it would be a condition of securing the funding required that the Council grant the Trust (not RTFC) a lease of the site for at least 25 years. The Council would therefore need to commit to that in principle before the project could proceed further.

It was acknowledged that the interests of RTFC and the Rifle Club would need to be protected and the project would have to demonstrate wider public benefits in order to justify the commitment of the public resources involved. The project would also have to take account of factors like the uncertain tenure and future of the "Ten-Acre Field", access to the site, likely future housing development in the town and many other issues of detail. However, members present agreed that there is sufficient merit in the proposal for it to receive further consideration and that in view of its importance and urgency it should be considered as soon as practicable by the full Town Council rather than just the Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces Committee.

RECOMMENDED:

That the commitment sought by the Trust from the Council be formulated more precisely and brought for consideration to the meeting of the full Town Council scheduled for 26th February.

ACTION C Wilkins

6. Date of next meeting

To be arranged following the Council decision on 26th February and subsequent developments.

Sports Facilities Improvements (inc. 3G AGP) Project

1. Introduction and reason for report

- 1.1 It has been a considerable time since members last received an update on this important project and it is timely that members receive an explanation of the reasons for the delay now that a critical turning point has been reached.

2. Background information and update

- 2.1 A feasibility study was completed in 2018. This Working Party accepted that it provided a basis for further discussion between Council officers and representatives of Ringwood Town Football Club (RTFC). Those discussions have continued since with the aim of working up a more detailed proposal for consideration by both organisations.
- 2.2 A project which this Council could approve would need to meet many criteria. Two of these need particular mention:
- 2.2.1 Since the capital costs of the improvements would have to be met in part by means of a grant from Football Foundation (FF), the conditions attached to such a grant must be understood and capable of being complied with; and
- 2.2.2 The stable and robust financial viability of RTFC (as an essential party to long-term land tenure and facility management arrangements) would need to have been demonstrated.
- 2.3 In the course of discussions with FF, it emerged that it requires grant applicants to show how the renewal of the facilities will be funded when they wear out. Specifically in this case, they would require RTFC to transfer £25,000 into a sinking fund every year for ten years to meet this requirement as a condition of receiving the grant needed.
- 2.4 RTFC committee members have carefully and thoroughly researched how the new facilities (especially the 3G AGP) could be used to maximize use and revenue and the effect this would have on its finances. Even taking a reasonably optimistic view of future finances, they can see no possible way of funding so large an annual transfer to a sinking fund for as long as FF would require. Accordingly, they have been forced to conclude that the project as presently conceived is not viable and have advised the Town Clerk accordingly.
- 2.5 Every effort has been made to try to salvage the project. Different combinations of new facilities have been considered, numerous third parties have been approached and consulted, alternative sources of finance have been considered and football clubs elsewhere have been asked how they were able to complete similar projects. All to no avail. The picture that has emerged is that grant-funded improvement schemes of the kind considered so far only now work for clubs significantly larger than RTFC or if, in addition to the football club, there is another major partner (such as a university, college, large school or large sports club) involved who will share use of the facilities in a way that complements rather than conflicts with the football club use and will contribute to the funding requirements. (In our case, Ringwood School considered the site too remote from the school to enable them to use it during the day. The Rugby Club were interested but this would have required use of a different type of "carpet" which would have prejudiced FF funding and RTFC use.)

A

Annex A

- 2.6 The Clerk has since also received indications from Football Association sources that 3G AGP facilities tend to require regular use by about 40 teams to be financially sustainable. This bears out the calculations made by RTFC, which currently runs a little under 30 teams and is, therefore, under the “critical mass” required to go it alone.
- 2.7 However, the need for the new facilities remains as great as ever. RTFC’s clubhouse has major dilapidations and the changing facilities for teams and match officials are inadequate. The lack of a full-sized, all-weather playing surface is preventing RTFC from expanding its youth teams and offering more opportunities for girl’s and women’s football, walking football and so on, as it otherwise could and would like to do. Apart from the Rifle Club, there remains no provision on the site for any sport other than football.
- 2.8 Improving the facilities is essential to the Council’s current strategic plan for the site and to the appropriate use of developer contributions collected by NFDC and provisionally allocated to this site. Accordingly, the Council may have little choice but to review and revise its strategy for the site (which could have implications for the allocation of the developer contributions) unless some means can be found of increasing predicted usage of the new facilities.
- 2.9 With this predicament in mind, RTFC has been discussing with a local Community Trust whether their respective needs are compatible and could be met by proceeding with some form of facility-sharing arrangement. The Town Clerk was recently made party to these discussions and desires members to have an opportunity to hear what is being discussed and say if it is worth pursuing further. All parties are keen to work towards clarifying any “red lines” that any such arrangement could not cross if it is to receive the necessary Council support.

For further information, contact:

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