

CENTRAL SWINDON NORTH PARISH COUNCIL

LEISURE & AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 5th February 2020 at 32 The Circle

Present Cllr M Lucas (Chair)
Cllr J Yeowell (Vice-chair)
Cllr J Ballman
Cllr R Ballman
Cllr D Patey
Cllr J Rodrigues
Cllr S Thompson

Officers H Morgan (Deputy Clerk)
A Briggs (Estates Manager)
A Webb (Youth Worker)
H Armagan (Allotments Officer)
M Johnston (Community Centre Manager)
A Cripps (Libraries Manager)

Public Eight members of the public were present.

Public Session One member of the public, William Reynolds (WR), spoke about a large number of needles that had been collected from in and around the Hreod Burna Urban Forest (HBUF). WR advised the Committee that more needles had appeared in the area and it was asked if the Parish Council had any plans or processes in place to prevent or alleviate the problem. Cllr R Ballman commented that the collection of needles was the responsibility of Swindon Borough Council (SBC) and any needles found needed to be reported to SBC. The Parish Clerk added that there is a civic responsibility to report needles and the presence of needles shouldn't suggest an area isn't being managed properly.

Cllr S Thompson mentioned someone camping with the HBUF area.

408 **Apologies**
None received.

409 **Declarations of Interest & Applications for Dispensation**
Cllrs J Ballman & S Thompson declared a non-pecuniary and non-prejudice interest in HBUF activities as trustees.

410 **Tree Planting**
Cllr M Lucas read out a statement regarding trees planted.
The statement was displayed by the Parish Clerk and a copy can be found as Annex A in the Minute Book.
Cllr M Lucas added that Cllr S Thompson had been advised to construct a pathway within the trees with a clear line of sight from Mays Close to the river.

Cllr S Thompson asked about planting at the Southbrook Recreation Ground, to the North of the football pitches. Cllr M Lucas confirmed this planting could go ahead.

Cllr J Rodrigues referred to recommendation a) of the report and asked about the results of the consultation. The Parish Clerk confirmed that 93% of the responses supported tree planting.

Cllr D Patey proposed that recommendation a) of the statement be approved, seconded by Cllr J Yeowell.

Cllrs J Ballman & S Thompson abstained from the vote. All agreed.

RESOLVED that the Clerk be instructed to do further works to establish a full ecology report on the area.

Cllr R Ballman proposed that recommendation b) of the statement be approved, seconded by Cllr J Yeowell.

Cllrs J Ballman & S Thompson abstained from the vote. All agreed.

RESOLVED all trees currently planted on the Cricklade Road field within 10 metres of the gas main are re-sited immediately. Any trees remaining after the Gas Line removal will be permitted to stay.

The Parish Clerk confirmed that recommendation a) was not specific to tree planting. He added that the surplus trees were unlikely to survive until after a survey could be completed.

Cllr R Ballman commented that the Parish Council would be able to find other areas to plant trees.

Cllr J Rodrigues proposed that recommendation c) of the statement be approved, seconded by Cllr J Yeowell.

Cllrs J Ballman & S Thompson abstained from the vote. All agreed.

RESOLVED a) that no further tree planting is conducted within the Hreod Burna Urban Forest leased area until a full independent ecology survey is completed and debated by the Leisure & Amenities Committee.

b) Any surplus trees should be planted elsewhere in consultation with the Parish Clerk or deferred to the next planting season as planted elsewhere within Parish managed land.

Cllr D Patey proposed that recommendation d) of the statement be approved, seconded by Cllr J Rodrigues.

Cllrs J Ballman & S Thompson abstained from the vote. All agreed.

RESOLVED that, save for recommendation b, the trees planted on the Cricklade Field in December remain in place.

2 members of the public left at the end of this item.

411 Update from Youth Worker

A written report was circulated, a copy of which can be found as Annex B in the Minute Book.

Cllr J Yeowell queried whether a visit to Leicester had taken place. The Youth Worker confirmed that this was still to be arranged.

The Youth Worker informed the Committee that the Breakfast Club, Youth Club and outreach work were all continuing.

Cllr R Ballman queried how many attended the Breakfast Club. The Youth Worker responded that on average approx. 10 young people attended but the numbers varied.

Cllr M Lucas, on behalf of the Committee, thank the Youth Worker for his update and work completed.

Cllr J Rodrigues suggested the work of the Youth Worker be advertised on the Parish Council Noticeboards.

The Parish Clerk informed the Committee that he had met with Stratton Parish Council to talk

about the work completed by the Youth Worker.

4 members of the public left the meeting during this item.

3 representatives from the football leagues arrived during this item.

The Estates Manager asked if agenda item 8 could be presented ahead of items 5-7 for the benefit of the representatives in attendance. All agreed.

412 Update from Estates Manager

The Estates Manager provided a written update, a copy of which can be found as Annex C in the Minute Book.

Southbrook Security Lighting

It was confirmed that the lights to be installed would not be infrared

Cllr S Thompson spoke of a Badger Sett in the area and suggested an ecology report be completed which would cover the effect of lights on Setts.

The Estates Manager confirmed that the selected electrician had advised that the lights wouldn't distract nearby houses.

It was agreed that lights be installed subject to the results of an ecology report and conversations to be had with badger experts.

RESOLVED that lights be installed at the Southbrook Depot subject to the results of an ecology report and conversations to be had with badger experts.

The Estates Manager commented that there was a problem with vehicles returning to the car park and that the lights would help deter any anti-social behaviour.

Composting Toilets

Cllr J Ballman commented that any toilets to be installed would need to be DDA compliant and he explained an issue experienced when installing a toilet at Pickards Field Leisure Garden site.

Cllr J Yeowell asked about access to sites and commented that thought would need to be given as to where the toilets would be located on site.

The Estates Manager commented that the project was in its infancy and site representatives and users would need to be consulted and the ongoing maintenance of the toilets would need to be discussed.

Cllr R Ballman commented that the Pickards Field Leisure Garden site was an ideal location and a group of users willing to look after the facilities existed. The Estates Manager added that it was likely that there would be users willing to maintain a composting toilet and 2-3 of the Leisure Garden sites.

The Estates Manager confirmed that a need for toilets at some of the sites was raised by allotment tenants at a recent Allotments Working Group meeting. He commented on the increase in female and children attending and using the Leisure Garden sites.

Football Foundation Bid

The Estates Manager confirmed that Swindon Borough Council (SBC) had been chased up for the required leases on 31st January 2020 and the delay in receiving the leases was raised with the Chief Executive of SBC.

The Estates Manager confirmed that the Parish Council would have 6 months to draw down

the granted funds.

Even Swindon Community Centre

The Parish Clerk gave further details re: the issues and difficulties experienced, and reasons given for these. He confirmed that this would be presented as an item at the Full Council meeting to be held in February.

413 Update from Allotments Officer

The Estates Manager gave apologies for the Allotments Officers absence.

The Estates Manager explained that the Allotments Officer had been laying membrane at the Churchward Avenue Leisure Garden site to curtail the growth of horsetail which would hopefully mean that infected plots could be brought back in to use.

The Allotments Officer had made to repairs to water tanks and replaced locks at the Redcliffe Street Leisure Garden site. Subsequently locks at all Leisure Garden sites had been checked.

A bench had been constructed at Moredon & Rodbourne Cheney Library and the Allotments Officer had been assisting with the transport for the Dementia Café in addition to carrying out his usual tasks including monthly allotment check.

Cllr J Yeowell gave thanks for the work carried out by the Allotments Officer.

414 Update from Libraries Manager

The Libraries Manager was welcomed to the meeting.

The Libraries Manager introduced himself and explained that his first couple of weeks in the office had been spent fact finding.

The Libraries Manager informed that Committee that he had visited all libraries, met staff and had formed an initial opinion on the current status. He added that he felt that was lots of room for improvement.

The Libraries Manager explained that it was clear that most users of the Parish Libraries were parents, children and older people and that there was a big gap of ten users and other age groups.

The Libraries Manager confirmed that the Parish Council would take on the library service from Swindon Borough Council (SBC) from 1st April 2020.

The recruitment process for Library Assistants had been started and the vacancies had been published on the Parish Councils webpage, Facebook page and via CILIP, the UKs library and information association. Interviews for the posts were to be held 26th & 27th February 2020.

The Libraries Manager explained that he had been focusing on producing procedures and policies and a longer term vision for the Parish Libraries. He had been contacting various groups and organisations that the Parish Council could work with and gain support from.

The Libraries Manager spoke of the existing library staff and how some were not happy and felt unsupported.

It was said that work had to be done to promote reading and use of the libraries as community spaces.

The Libraries Manager commented on the higher usage of libraries which opened later and suggested the opening hours the libraries could be extended.

Cllr S Thompson suggested engagement with young people could take place via the Youth Worker. The Libraries Manager agreed and explained that he had spoken with the Youth Club Leader and was hoping to speak with many others who work with youths and young people locally. He added that there were conversations to be had with schools.

The Parish Clerk displayed the high level Mission Statement for the Parish Libraries. He went on to comment on the decrease of book loans and agreed that the spaces available needed to be better utilised.

Cllr R Ballman commented on the ability to download books and said that a user friendly service needed to be created. The Libraries Manager agreed and added that users had to be taught and enabled to borrow books how they wanted to.

Cllr J Ballman commented on the difficulty experienced downloading books from the SBC website and asked if there were any easier and friendlier services the Parish Council could utilise. The Libraries Manager responded that there were few companies who provided library access online and there were restrictions on accessing such services as a public library.

The Libraries Manager informed the Committee that he had been updating and improving the Parish Libraries website.

Cllr J Rodrigues commented on the exposure of the Libraries and how this needed to be enhanced by the Parish Council within the communities.

The Parish Clerk commented that SBC would no longer be providing DVDs through the libraries and that there were still some issues to resolve around the sharing of data. It was added that the SBC Soprano system was being turned into a different system which officers would be trained on.

The Libraries Manager went on to speak about the transfer of facilities at St Marks Recreation Ground to the Parish Council. He explained that conversations were taking place with the existing staff at St Marks.

The Committee were informed that issues with leaves on the courts had been resolved by the Allotments Officer and that problems with parking were to be worked on.

The Parish Clerk explained the arrangement made regarding the transfer of reserves held by the Community Trust which were winding down.

It was confirmed that the asset would be moved over the Parish Council and then transferred to the Libraries & Leisure Trust.

Cllr J Yeowell asked about the management of the existing website. The Parish Clerk responded that that the domain would be moved across to the Parish Council and managed by the Libraries & Leisure Trust and existing staff.

The Parish Clerk spoke of changes which are to be made to the existing access to the courts.

The Parish Clerk confirmed that Community Tennis had originally approached the Parish Council who approached the Libraries & Leisure Trust and all parties had agreed with the plan to transfer the asset.

Cllr J Rodrigues asked about the running and management of the café and shop. The Parish Clerk confirmed that these would not be managed by the Libraries & Leisure Trust but would be served under a Service Level Agreement between Community Tennis and the Libraries & Leisure Trust based on profit sharing.

Cllrs J Rodrigues and S Thompson left the meeting at 9.01pm.

415 Football Foundation & FA Pitch Improvement Grant

The Estates Manager ran through a written report circulated, a copy of which can be found as Annex D in the Minute Book.

Cllr J Ballman queried the cost to the Parish Council. This was confirmed by the Estates Manager who stated that the income budgeted for 2020/21 was approx. £15,000.

It was confirmed that the Parish Council had not committed to reinvest all income received from the hire of pitches.

The figures presented were explained and confirmed.

Cllr D Patey commented on the proposed commitment to spend more money than the pitches were expected to make. The Estates Manager explained that the Parish Council were responsible for the maintenance of the football pitches and associated costs.

Cllr J Rodrigues queried the income expected from football pitches. It was confirmed that the amounts being discussed related to the football seasons, not 52 weeks of the year.

A representative of the football leagues spoke of the benefits of the improvement being reported on and how the costs would decline at the quality of the pitches improved. The Parish Clerk added that the income would improve.

A representative stated that the leagues were making a commitment to the Parish Council to obtain funding on their behalf as they didn't have the money available themselves to commit to enable them to apply for the available funding.

Cllr J Rodrigues commented that the Parish Council needed to be wary of ringfencing and reinvesting funds. Cllr D Patey agreed with the comments made.

Cllr J Ballman confirmed that the deadline for the application for funding to be submitted was the 28th February and there was enough time available to finalise the application should the recommendation of the report be approved by the Committee and Full Council.

Cllr J Ballman proposed that the recommendation of the report be approved, seconded by Cllr J Yeowell. All agreed.

RECOMMENDATION to allow the Estates Manager to work with and assist both the Saturday & Sunday League secretaries in supporting the FA & Football Foundation funding application for Grass Pitch Improvements.

The league representatives in attendance left the meeting at the end of this item.

416 Play Areas – Repairs & Upgrades

Cllr M Lucas informed the Committee that there was £35,000 available in the 2020/21 budget for improvement of play areas.

Play area inspections had been completed and the reports received were to be reviewed to identify items to be replaced or repaired and relevant costings were to be obtained.

The Estates Manager confirmed that there were no high risk items in the report and only a few medium. He added that there were 15 areas to manage; some of which are ok and some that needed work.

417 **32 The Circle – the next phase**

The Estates Manager ran through a written report that had been circulated, a copy of which can be found as Annex E in the Minute Book.

Cllr J Yeowell queried the timescales and restricted access to the toilets.

Cllr R Ballman commented that a consultation would be needed regarding installing a disabled parking place opposite the building and it would most likely be unsuccessful.

Cllr R Ballman asked about the space available to set up an office for staff. The Parish Clerk confirmed that not all staff would be based within a new office and it was likely only senior offices would be based at the new office.

It was confirmed that, if hired out, it was planned that the meeting room would be accessed through the office although rear access could be made available.

Comments were made about making the existing corridor an office for the Parish Clerk and the existing kitchen area towards the back of the building becomes an office for Parish Officers so that front access could remain, and the meeting room could remain a hireable space.

Cllr D Patey proposed that Recommendation 1 of the report be approved, seconded by Cllr J Yeowell. All agreed.

RESOLVED that the Estates Manager be given approval to submit a request to SBC for a dropped kerb at a cost of £210.00.

All agreed with recommendations 5 and 6 of the report.

RESOLVED that the Estates Manager presents reports on creating a Parish Office space at 32 The Circle and the costs and options for DDA access at 32 The Circle.

418 **32 The Circle – fencing repairs**

The Estates Manager ran through a written report, a copy of which can be found as Annex F in the Minute Book.

Cllr J Ballman proposed that the recommendation to contract Kudos Fencing to complete the required fencing works be approved. All agreed.

RESOLVED that the Estates Manager be allowed to proceed with the quotation provided by Kudos Fencing for the supply and installation of 7m's of 1.8m High Close Board Wooden Fencing at 32 The Circle.

419 **Storage Containers at Southbrook Recreation Ground**

The Estates Manager referred to an email circulated regarding an amendment to be made to the planning application submitted for placing storage containers at the Southbrook Recreation Ground to increase the number of storage containers to be placed on site.

The Estates Manager confirmed that he was asked for permission to proceed with the amended planning application. It was added that Cllr J Ballmans Ward Development Allowance would be used for the purchase of any additional containers needed in future, pending the approval of the Finance & Staffing Committee.

Cllr J Ballman informed the Committee that the brick building at Southbrook Recreation Ground needed to be emptied to make space for the tractor to be purchased and that there were items that needed to be stored elsewhere and no space currently to store them.

The positioning of the proposed containers on the map included in the report were confirmed and it was added that one container wouldn't be put in place until a future date due to status of the land.

Cllr J Ballman proposed that the amendment to the planning application be approved, seconded by James Yeowell. All agreed.

RESOLVED that the amendment to the planning application to place storage containers at Southbrook Recreation Ground, to increase the number of containers, be approved.

420 **Clive Parade – Planters Maintenance**

The Deputy Clerk read out a section of an email received from Swindon Borough Council (SBC) regarding the future maintenance of the planters at Clive Parade.

Cllr R Ballman commented that it would be good to see the planters extended further along the pathway at Clive Parade. She added that there would not be much maintenance involved and the Allotments Officer could be asked to water the planters.

It was confirmed that SBC were being asked to accept responsibility for the planters.

Cllr R Ballman reiterated that she would not want to see the planters removed.

All agreed with the consensus that the Parish Council would want to keep the planters and would be happy to maintain them and that this response should be sent to SBC in reply to the email received by the Deputy Clerk.

421 **Disposal of Assets**

The Parish Clerk asked the Committee to approve the disposal of 2 large printers currently being stored in the staff room at Penhill Library, John Moulton Hall.

It was confirmed that the printers held little to no value.

All agreed.

RESOLVED that the printers stored in the staff room at Penhill Library be removed and disposed of as appropriate.

Cllr M Lucas mentioned it had been suggested that Tiverton Field become a wildflower meadow. It was said that this item would be discussed at the Committee meeting to be held in March 2020.

The meeting closed at 9.39pm

Signed.....

Date.....

Chair of the Leisure & Amenities Committee