

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
Environment & Leisure Committee
17th September 2018 at 7.30pm

Present: Councillors: Mrs T McMahon Chairman
Mrs Y Farrell
C Slough
A Swain
Mrs S Thorne
K Wattingham (Substitute)
T Welch (Substitute)

Officers: Clare Evans Town Clerk
Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services

Also present: Councillors: J Carroll
Ms J Hillyard

Public: 4

Apologies: Councillors: Ms L Ellaway
D Dixon-Wilkinson
Officer: T Luff Head of Grounds Operations

9557 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Dixon-Wilkinson (Cllr Welch substituted), Cllr Ellaway (Cllr Wattingham substituted) and Tony Luff, Head of Grounds Operations.

9558 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

A concern was raised regarding the rubbish that had accumulated in the Brook, it was requested that consideration be given to clearing the rubbish while it was dry, before the weather turns.

The timescale of the planned improvement project of the Brook was requested, and it was suggested that the introduction of Junior River Wardens would help keep the river clear of debris and litter.

A response would be given in writing to this request.

A query was raised regarding pitch availability. Teams had been turned away due to lack of suitable pitches, and fixtures had to be changed to accommodate safety concerns regarding the junior team and their proximity to the adult game running at the same time.

Members were unaware that there was a shortfall of pitches based on the usage of last year and would be discussed further in agenda item 13.

9559 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr McMahon declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 5, Houghton Brook.

9560 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 16th July 2018.

Resolved: To confirm the Minutes of the meetings held on 16th July 2018 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

9561 HOUGHTON BROOK

Members received a report on proposals by the River Lea Catchment Partnership to improve Houghton Brook.

Ms Watts from Groundwork attended the meeting to speak on the proposals and invited questions from Members.

Ms Watts advised members that the project involved some low-key capital improvements. Proposals were to include the enhancement of the aesthetics of the Brook, some education work collaborating with local schools and a viewing area at the source (to the rear of the Village Green Pavilion).

Funding was being sought from the Water Environment Agency and potentially from the Art Council, and the River Lea Catchment Partnership were hopeful for match funding. Houghton Regis was the first area the River Lea Catchment Partnership had focussed on, additional projects were planned for areas further downstream.

Resolved:

- 1) To welcome the proposals put forward on behalf of the Luton Lea Catchment Partnership;**
- 2) To request that the Luton Lea Catchment Partnership undertake local consultation and community engagement activities;**
- 3) To request that the Luton Lea Catchment Partnership issue a press statement / package so that preliminary information on the project can begin to be shared.**

9562 BUDGET REVIEW

Members received the income and expenditure report for Environment & Leisure Committee to date.

Members were requested to note the following:

271-4017 – this expense has been miscoded and should be shown in 291-4017

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272 – this cost centre should show a transfer in from EMR 320 Churchyard wall

222-4015 – the expense shown includes for the repair of a gas main (£468). This specific item of expense should be coded to 222-4036

222-4036 - the expense shown includes for some works completed at Parkside pavilion (£191). This specific item of expense should be coded to 212-4036

Resolved: To note the report subject to the above amendments.

9563 VISION UPDATE

Members discussed installing smart meters and automatic lighting in the Village Green to improve energy efficiency.

Members were advised that further work was required on the Church Wall and this had gone out to tender. Members would be advised when further updates were available.

Resolved: To note the report.

9564 UPDATES

Members received updates on:

- Parkside Pavilion Upgrade
- S106 Variation
- Village Green Outside Gym & Family Games Area

Members were advised that a query had been raised on the planned spending of available s106 monies and they were advised that it would be used to widen development opportunities.

Resolved: To note the report.

9565 HHP PROJECT UPDATE

Members were advised that the new Community Gardener had started her employment at Houghton Hall Park, improvements in the Community Garden had already been noticed. Produce from the garden had been sold in the café.

Solar lighting had been installed in the visitors centre car park.

Concerns were raised regarding the number of parking spaces available to visitors at the Visitor Centre, however there were no options available for increasing the number of parking spaces on this site.

Events planned at Houghton Hall Park:

- Hullabaloo were holding an event in Houghton Hall Park
- Dog engagement day

Houghton Regis Town Council Grounds Team had completed weekly checks on the play and gym equipment. There had been three minor Health & Safety incidents over the summer.

9566 NEW AREA CEMETERY DESIGN

Members received a report detailing a revised design for the new area within the current cemetery. Members commented on the revised layout and found this design an improvement over the previous design.

Members were advised that costing would be done over a number of years, however the plans would need to be finalised before an accurate costing would be presented to members.

Members raised concerns that there was a lack of public awareness over the cessation of burials and ashes interments and that the new area would offer a range of entombment options. It was suggested that once that graphics are completed, the plans would be displayed publicly in the library, within council premises and at the cemetery.

- Resolved:**
- 1) **To approve the revised design subject to costs and phasing detail;**
 - 2) **To share the design within the community and invite feedback.**

9567 GROUND'S TEAM

Members were advised that a review of the structure of the grounds team had taken place. The review concluded that as the work of the team remained constant and was likely to continue to do so, it was therefore recommended that the team should continue to comprise of the Foreman plus 5 groundsmen and 1 junior groundsmen.

On the advice of human resources, the position would be advertised. As such this would take place as soon as possible. It was likely that there would be a gap between the current fixed term contract ending and the permanent position being filled, as such it was suggested that the fixed term contract be extended until 30th November 2018.

An amendment to recommendation 3 was proposed to read:

To authorise the extension of the current fixed term contract until 30th November 2018.

Proposed by Cllr Swain Seconded by Cllr Welch

Members for: 7 Members against: 0 Abstentions: 0

- Resolved:**
- 1) **To note the report;**
 - 2) **To authorise the position of groundsmen being advertised;**
 - 3) **To authorise the extension of the current fixed term contract until 30th November 2018.**

9568 ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Members received a report detailing the range and scope of an energy audit for consideration.

An amendment to the recommendation was proposed to read:

In accordance with Objective 5 of the Vision and specifically Outcome 5d to seek competitive quotes to undertake an energy audit on the council offices, the 5 council pavilions and the workshop and to report back on costs and sources of funding.

Proposed by: Cllr Swain Seconded by: Cllr Slough

Members for: 7 Members against: 0 Abstentions: 0

Accordingly, this became the substantive motion.

Members voted on the recommendation:

Proposed by: Cllr Swain Seconded by: Cllr Slough

Members for: 7 Members against: 0 Abstentions: 0

Resolved: In accordance with Objective 5 of the Vision and specifically Outcome 5d to seek competitive quotes to undertake an energy audit on the council offices, the 5 council pavilions and the workshop and to report back on costs and sources of funding.

9569 SPORTS FACILITIES

At the planning Committee meeting on 19th June it was requested that this committee consider whether the open space part of the Kingsland site could be returned to sports facilities. Members were advised that this land was not owned or managed by HRTC. It was the responsibility of CBC, as such HRTC could only make a representation to CBC, however members requested CBC were invited to attend a future meeting to present to councillors their leisure strategy.

This matter was raised at the Town Partnership meeting on 24th July. It was advised that as the site had not been used for sports provision for a number of years, the ground would need some reinstatement works beyond grass cutting to bring it back into sports use and would require ongoing maintenance. Members were advised that there were no changing or toilet facilities on this site, only within the leisure centre.

The football allocation process this year was believed to have supplied enough pitches for the demand expressed by local clubs. However, members were reminded that Houghton Athletic had made representations for the provision of an enhanced facility. Members were advised that there were not enough pitches for the demand for the coming season as mentioned by the member of public at the beginning of the meeting.

Members were reminded that there was s106 money available for football improvement within Houghton Regis.

An amendment to the recommendation was proposed to read:

To request a presentation to Houghton Regis Town Council on the Central Bedfordshire Council leisure strategy.

Proposed by: Cllr Welch Seconded by: Cllr Slough

Members for: 7 Members against: 0 Abstentions: 0

An additional recommendation was proposed to read:

Houghton Regis Town Council requested that Houghton Regis Town Council be allowed to assume the management of the pitches until such time as the land is required for other purposes at the Leisure Centre.

Proposed by: Cllr Welch Seconded by: Cllr Slough

Members for: 7 Members against: 0 Abstentions: 0

Accordingly, these became the substantive motions.

Proposed by: Cllr Welch Seconded by: Cllr Slough

Members for: 7 Members against: 0 Abstentions: 0

- Resolved:**
- 1) **To request a presentation to Houghton Regis Town Council on the Central Bedfordshire Council leisure strategy.**
 - 2) **Houghton Regis Town Council requested that Houghton Regis Town Council be allowed to assume the management of the pitches until such time as the land is required for other purposes at the Leisure Centre.**

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.11pm

Dated this day of 2018

Chairman