

AT A MEETING OF THE DIRECT RESPONSIBILITIES & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE OF BRACKLEY TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN THE UPPER HALL, TOWN HALL, BRACKLEY ON MONDAY 26TH APRIL 2010 at 7 pm

Present: The Worshipful the Town Mayor (Councillor Caryl S Billingham)
Councillors C J Blunden, K D Bonner-Dunham,
P Joyce (Chairman) L D Ross, W B Stimpson and P M Titchener

Apologies: Councillors P J Broomfield, K Dixon, G Rhys and D Shaw

In attendance: Councillors C O Cartmell, D Dunham and T D Hayward

575. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

576. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr Denis Ryce, Swift Way, again reiterated the concerns of the residents about possible new play equipment at the Swift Way site. It was felt that the area already had sufficient equipment and it would be better to provide further facilities in another area of the town. He also asked that, when the final decision was made, this be recommended to full Council so that the residents would have a chance to speak.

Mr Andrew Rushton, Humphries Drive, reminded the working party that as the summer months and lighter nights were on the way, this would increase the volume of users of the equipment which would mean a bigger burden for the Police. He said there was 'no overwhelming mandate from people who would benefit from the re-development of the site, indeed there was overwhelming opposition'.

Mrs Kate Croot, Humphries Drive, agreed with Mr Ryce and Mr Rushton and said she was totally against the re-development of the Swift Way play area. She said her children had been unable to use the previous equipment because of damage and disruptions by other users.

Mrs Louise Lloyd, Humphries Drive, said she had 'lived through hell' when the previous equipment had been there. She said the level of noise had been unacceptable, there had been large amounts of smashed bottles and the graffiti had been disgusting.

577. PLAY SPACE WORKING PARTY

Notes from the last Play Space working party had been circulated to Members with the agenda.

Councillor Blunden said he was in favour of play spaces but he could not see why they all had to have play equipment on them. He said there was a huge site with equipment at the bottom of Humphries Drive and also the Park and he suggested that other areas could be left as open space for kicking a ball around on. He also suggested that before any decision was made about new equipment, the areas should be left for the summer to assess the level of anti-social behaviour. Councillor Stimpson totally agreed with the comments and felt the areas should be left clear, although he did like the idea of the log as suggested by the working party.

577. PLAY SPACE WORKING PARTY Cont'd.....

Councillor Joyce said one of the suggestions of the working party had been for just one piece of equipment in a number of areas and spending to be minimal. Councillor Bonner-Dunham said that the recent consultation had been successful and the reference to 'the majority of people being against new equipment' was incorrect. She said there had been positive feedback, the youth in the town had been asking for the more simple items of equipment which had been on display and every comment would be taken into consideration. Councillor Titchener also favoured open spaces where children could use their imagination. He also commented that during daytime hours there appeared to be no problem but later in the evening a lot of youngsters created mayhem. He said that parents should be responsible for keeping their children under control and the Council were not able to do anything about this problem.

The Town Mayor commented on the ongoing management of the equipment and associated costs. She felt that any decision on new equipment should be considered very carefully and if the idea was not to refurbish at the moment, perhaps the combination of Swift Way and Chaffinch way could be considered later.

Councillor Dunham commented that vandalism and broken glass was not restricted to play areas but was all around the town. Councillor Ross advised there had been an increase in alcohol consumption in the St James Lake area. Councillor Cartmell said that he could understand the concerns of the residents at the bottom of Humphries Drive because when they bought their houses the land had been an open space. However, the Swift Way play area had always had equipment on and residents were aware of this when they purchased their houses. Now the equipment had been taken away, the residents were suggesting that any new equipment should be put somewhere else.

After much discussion it was

RESOLVED:

That the report from the Play Space working party be accepted in its entirety.

That investigations be made into how much the equipment suggested by the working party would cost for Oak Road, Egerton House, Valley Rise and Roman Way and endorse the decision of the working party not to re-equip the Swift Way play area at the present time.

The Town Mayor then explained to the public present that a working party had no authority to make decisions and that everything had to come back to a committee and if necessary to a full Council meeting.

578. ST JAMES LAKE WORKING PARTY

Councillor Ross advised that there was nothing to report at the moment but a meeting was due to be held later this week.

579. LAND REGISTRATION

Reference Minute 470/10, title NN204717, contact has been made with Countryside Properties about the two small pieces of land at Halse Road to the front of Thomas Crewe Close. The last contact was in 2001 when the commuted sum for adoption of land was based on a formula set out in 1994. Because of the adoption delay Members were asked to approve an increased fee. After discussion it was

RESOLVED:

That the sum to be requested from the developers be £2,000 plus legal expenses.

580. GIANT HOGWEED

The Town Clerk updated Members with the progress to eradicate giant hogweed on Town Council land and a letter had been received from the Environment Agency. The Town Council had been asked to sign a statement of intent to show its commitment to the eradication of this plant. The Environment Agency is trying to contact other landowners, who are also being asked to sign the statement of intent. Several Members felt that the statement was very vacuous and Councillor Bonner-Dunham wished it recorded that she did not want the Town Council to sign this statement. After much discussion it was

RESOLVED:

That the Town Council does not sign the statement of intent drawn up by the Environment Agency.

That Councillors Dunham and Ross put together a paper for the Environment Agency giving factual details on how the Town Council is treating the giant hogweed and inform them that the programme will be continued.

581. CANDLEFORD COURT

A letter from Miss Walsom of Candleford Court regarding problems with skateboards was attached to the Agenda for the information of Members. The Police had asked the Town Council if a sign could be erected in the area as they said they could not stop youths skateboarding without a sign to this effect. Councillor Ross commented that it was another example of the Police not doing their job and he felt they should have powers under ASBOs to deal with this problem. A request for assistance has been made to County Council and South Northamptonshire Council but as yet no replies had been received. The Town Mayor said she had suggested to Mrs Walsom

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581. CANDLEFORD COURT Cont'd.....

that the housing association might be the right agency to contact regarding a sign. Councillor Cartmell said that the housing association had had a sign up for some time but the problem was in front of the bungalow on an adopted road and therefore they would not put a sign on the highway It was also suggested that the Police be

asked to monitor the area on a more frequent basis and perhaps environmental health would be able to help from a noise point of view.

Councillor Dunham commented that he had observed groups of youths in the area around 12.30 am and also around the Leisure Centre car park. The disappearance of the barrier was also a concern.

After much discussion it was

RESOLVED:

That a letter be sent to Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association advising that the Town Council had had correspondence from one of its residents and suggesting that they contact the Police and County Council.

That contact be made with the management of the Leisure Centre regarding the re-instatement of the barrier.

582. NATIONAL TRUST – BRACKLEY PARK

Reference Minute 177/09 contact has been made by the National Trust advising that there had been changes to its management and to request a meeting with some members of the Town Council to discuss the future use of the former Fire Station. A meeting had been arranged between the Town Mayor Elect (Councillor Blunden), Councillor Hayward and the Town Clerk for 12th May 2010. Councillor Bonner-Dunham felt that this meeting should be delayed until the Master Plan was live but this was not supported by other Members. It was therefore

RESOLVED:

That the meeting with the National Trust take place and that any ideas for the future of the Fire Station be passed to the office.

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583. HALSE MEADOW BALANCING POND

Members were updated with the situation regarding Anglian Water wanting to discharge into the balancing pond at Swift Way. Members approval was sought to try and gain agreement for the responsibility of the pond to revert back to Anglian Water. It was

RESOLVED:

That this be approved.

584. TUDOR WAY OPEN SPACE

Members were advised that Field in Trust do not wish to take up the right to purchase a small parcel of land within the Tudor Way open space and it is hoped that the area will be transferred to South Northamptonshire Council and the Town Council within the next couple of months. South Northamptonshire Council will be paying the fees for the transfer. Members noted.

585. WAR MEMORIAL

Further to Minute 530/10, it is hoped that the coping stones will be in placed on the War Memorial next week. The unveiling of the plaque for Corporal N Webster-Smith is to take place on 6th May at 12 noon. Members noted.

586. INFORMATION REPORT

- a) Brackley & District Angling Club
- b) The Pocketeer

587. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was

RESOLVED:

That the press and public excluded from this Meeting during the discussion on matters relating to the pocket park and tenders as publicity would be prejudicial to the public by nature of the business to be transacted.

588. POCKET PARK

Members views were sought on the course of action to be taken regarding a problem which had occurred in the pocket park, details of which had been circulated in a confidential report. After discussion it was

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588. POCKET PARK Cont'd...

RESOLVED:

That the person responsible for the dumping of soil be advised that this must be removed within 8 weeks at his expense and that if this is not done, the Council will take steps to have the soil removed and invoice him for the work.

589. TENDERS FOR FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS

Members were advised that three companies had been invited to tender for a new fire alarm system for the Town Hall. The tenders had been opened by the Chairman and Town Clerk prior to the Meeting and the quotation figures were given to Members at the Meeting. Comment was made that it should be confirmed that all the companies were quoting in line with the specification and it was therefore

RESOLVED:

That Mr Leather be asked to look at the tenders to check that all were quoting in line with the specification and that the information be brought to the next meeting.

Meeting closed at 8.29 pm

Chairman