

MINUTES of a meeting of the COALVILLE SPECIAL EXPENSES WORKING PARTY held in the Board Room, Council Offices, Coalville on TUESDAY, 16 DECEMBER 2014

Present: Councillor R Johnson (Chairman)

Councillors J Geary, R Adams, N Clarke and J Legrys

Officers: Mr L Brewster, Mr G Lewis and Mr J Richardson

17. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor L Spence and Councillor M B Wyatt.

18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor J Legrys declared a disclosable non pecuniary interest in Item 5 – Events Update due to his involvement with Hermitage FM.

Councillors J Geary and R Johnson declared a disclosable non pecuniary interest in Item 4 – Capital Projects Update, as regular supporters of Coalville Town FC.

19. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2014.

Councillor R Johnson stated that he had voiced his approval of Councillor M B Wyatt's proposal to hold a Proms in the Park event and asked that the minutes be amended to reflect this.

Councillor J Geary queried whether the long term lease between the Council and Coalville Town FC had now been finalised. The Head of Community Services confirmed that the lease had been agreed but had not been signed off yet as the club had indicated that they intended to set up as a Company Limited by Shares. Consequently, officers were awaiting confirmation from the Football Stadia Improvement Fund (FSIF) and the Football Association (FA) that this governance structure would be suitable for the club and would not impact on their ability to source funding for the changing room project.

Councillor J Geary enquired whether long distance runner and local resident Gemma Steel had been approached to switch on the Christmas Lights as he had requested. The Cultural Services Team Manager stated that she had not been approached as Kieran and Sarah from Britain's Got Talent had already been engaged.

The Head of Community Services restated that he would be looking further at Councillor M B Wyatt's suggestion at the last meeting to raise funds for the shrubbery works through advertising. Furthermore, he confirmed that larger litter bins had now been installed on Long Lane following the relocation of the Subway store from the Town Centre.

Councillor N Clarke asked whether the vandal resistant litter bins at Cropston Drive had been installed yet. The Head of Community Services confirmed that they had been.

RESOLVED THAT:

Subject to the above amendment, the minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2014 be approved.

Chairman's initials

20. CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE

The Head of Community Services presented the report to Members.

He provided the Working Party with an update on each of the ongoing projects.

Coalville Park Improvements

It was stated that Members of the Working Party had conducted a site visit to Coalville Park to view the proposed site of the Peace Garden. The area was confirmed as being suitable and further suggestions had been made regarding its design. Officers would now liaise with other key stakeholders, such as the Royal British Legion, before the designs and costings are finalised. Further consultation will then take place with Members before work commenced in the spring.

Owen Street Recreation Ground

It was confirmed that, despite having visited the site in August, Edmondsons Electrical had still not provided proposals and costs for the electricity upgrade. Consequently, a further company, Durasport, had been engaged to supply proposals and quotes. It was also confirmed that there was currently no allocated resource to undertake the works at present.

The football club had commenced the procurement process for the new pavilion. In line with the requirements of the FSIF and as requested by the Working Party, specifications of work had been sent to three contractors. Consequently, a preferred contractor had now been identified.

It was stated that £115,000 had been committed to the project by the Council, with the remaining amount to be funded by the football club itself. A financial agreement was being developed by Legal Services that would clearly set out the Council's expectations and requirement to the football club. This would also financially protect the Council so far as is reasonably practicable.

Once signed, the long term lease would mean that the Management Committee for the pavilion would be disbanded, due to the fact that the football club would take full responsibility for the asset. The club would then be able to implement any governance structure that it felt was appropriate. However, the club had advised that they would like to continue to have Member representation as part of their new structure. As such, officers had requested that the football club put this in writing so that Members could be appropriately allocated to this body on an annual basis.

Thringstone Miners Social Centre

A meeting of the trustees of the social centre had taken place on 4 December where the application process to obtain approval for both a footpath diversion and a planning application for the conversion to a training pitch of the former play area at Clover Place had been commenced. As previously agreed by the Working Party, the costs of these applications would be funded by the outstanding £4,913 allocated to the project. The total cost of the project would be in the region of £45,000 to £50,000. It was hoped that external funding would be found for the project, however, it was thought unlikely that this would be made available without the relevant planning permissions being in place.

Cropston Drive BMX Track and Wheeled Sports Facility

Chairman's initials

Following the completion of the BMX track, the area had been tidied and more regular patrols were being undertaken by the Parks Warden team to ensure that standards are maintained. A fire retardant bin had been installed and grass seeding of bare areas would be undertaken in the spring.

It was confirmed that approval had been given to undertake work to the hedge line and that officers were now formulating designs to further improve the area. This would include improved fencing at the entrance and by the football pitches, shrub removal, hedge height reduction, additional tree planting, resurfacing of the hard standing area and removal of part of the hedge line. It was stated that costings for this work would be finalised in the New Year and that a site visit for Ward Members would be arranged in due course.

Urban Forest Park

Footpath and drainage improvement proposals had been designed and were approved by Members at the last meeting of the Working Party. Furthermore, the gas monitoring contractors had confirmed that the nature and type of work would not have any detrimental impact on gas emissions at the site. Water sampling had been undertaken and, following recommendations from the contractor, an additional sample of water and soil had been taken for further analysis. The results of these samples were expected to be received imminently and Members would be advised of any issues and measures required to mitigate against them prior to any work commencing.

Scotland Playing Fields

A potential location had been identified for the relocation of the Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) at Lillehammer Drive which local residents had been consulted on. Planning consent had been given for the change in use to the area where the MUGA was presently situated and Legal Services were liaising with Barratt Homes to agree a variation to the Section 106 agreement. Further consultation with local residents will take place in due course and any feedback received as a result would be relayed to Members.

Councillor J Legrys asked whether planning permission would be required in order to install the MUGA at the new site at Scotlands Playing Fields. The Head of Community Services stated that he did not think that this would be required as the area was already designated as recreational ground.

Draft 2015/2016 Capital/Revenue Projects

Shrubbery Works

A funding application had been submitted to the Council's Environmental Improvement Grant scheme to undertake one-off works in order to improve the shrubbery at Phoenix Green, Bardon Road and Ashby Road. The total cost of the works would be £2,114, of which half would be funded if the bid is successful. The County Council, who currently carry out the ongoing maintenance, had confirmed that they had no objections to the work being undertaken.

It was confirmed that it may be possible for the District Council, with the agreement of the County Council, to take over responsibility for the ongoing maintenance of these areas and that doing so would cost approximately £13,500 per annum. Alternatively, it was suggested that the District Council could undertake works in addition to those conducted by the County Council. It was stated that the cost of two additional visits per annum by the District Council would be £4,000.

Chairman's initials

Councillor J Legrys asked whether the District Council conducting extra visits would lead to the County Council visiting more infrequently or not at all. The Head of Community Services stated that such work was a statutory obligation of the County Council.

Councillor N Clarke asked how the shared approach would be coordinated between the two councils. The Head of Community Services responded that contact had already been established with the County Council on this issue and would continue both face to face and via email.

Urban Grass Cutting

It was confirmed that the County Council had now withdrawn its offer for the District Council to undertake the mowing of grass verges on its behalf.

Councillor R Johnson enquired why the offer had been withdrawn. The Head of Community Services explained that not all District Councils in Leicestershire had taken up the offer and that, as such, there would be residual costs to the County Council which would mean that the desired savings could not be realised.

Councillor N Clarke asked whether there was any means of pursuing this further. The Head of Community Services confirmed that this would not be possible as grass cutting was the County Council's statutory function so could not be challenged.

Warden Presence

It was anticipated that usage levels at both Cropston Drive and Scotlands Playing Fields would continue to increase as the planned improvements to both areas were made. In order to address the associated issues of litter, security and potential anti-social behaviour, officers were developing proposals to increase warden hours in the areas affected.

RESOLVED THAT:

the Working Party notes the report.

21. EVENTS UPDATE

The Cultural Services Team Manager presented the report to Members.

He provided Members with an update on each event.

Coalville Food and Drink Festival and Christmas Lights Switch-On

The Council's Christmas event took place on 22 November and was combined with the Town Team's Food and Drink Festival for the first time. Highlights of the event included a world record attempt, a Santa's Grotto with real life reindeer and a performance from Britain's Got Talent stars Kieran and Sarah. It was estimated that around 3,000 people had attended the switch-on and firework finale. It was stated that feedback from social media on the event had been positive and that the Town Team had felt that both events complimented each other perfectly.

Councillor N Clarke thanked officers for having organised a fantastic event. He stated that the Christmas lights in Coalville were as good as anywhere in Leicestershire.

Chairman's initials

Councillor J Legrys also thanked the Cultural Services Team for their hard work. However, he stated that he had spoken to traders on the High Street who had suggested that they had seen no increase in footfall on the day. As such, he suggested that, next year, activities should take place to encourage activity specifically in that area.

Councillor J Geary agreed that it had been a great event and stated that the fireworks had been particularly impressive. He stated that his only concern was that fireworks were around half an hour late in being set off and that, consequently, a fair number of people had left to go home. He stated that he had also spoken to traders in the town centre who had reported that the Christmas event and the free parking had failed to increase footfall.

Councillor J Legrys stated that he had been approached by individuals who had not realised that there was free parking and had put money in the parking meters. The Head of Community Services stated that all parking meters had had the coin slots covered each Saturday morning during the period of free parking.

Councillor R Adams enquired whether there had been any complaints regarding the fireworks this year. The Cultural Services Team Manager stated that there had been a couple of complaints regarding the noise. It was also noted that residents in the locality of Coalville Park were informed of the fireworks display by letter.

Councillor J Geary commented that the removal of the 20 pence tariff at car parks had deterred many individuals from visiting the town centre, particularly if they only required one or two items.

The Head of Community Services relayed to the Working Party an email that he had received from Councillor M B Wyatt regarding the Christmas event. He stated that Councillor M B Wyatt had received feedback from traders saying that the lights switch-on and the food and drink festival should revert to being held separately.

It was stated that Councillor M B Wyatt had asked residents, via social media, what their views were regarding the location of the event and that the vast majority who had responded to him were in favour of the event being held at the Clock Tower with the High Street closed for stalls.

Councillor J Legrys stated that the cost of closing the High Street and Memorial Square area would be extremely prohibitive. He stated that the costs involved would make such an approach unviable unless either local traders were willing to cover the cost or the Council Tax precept was raised.

Councillor N Clarke stated that the debate regarding the location of the Christmas event took place every year. He stated that the suggestion that the event be held at Memorial Square appeared to be logistically unfeasible and that the public should be made aware of the prohibitive costs.

Coalville Christmas Decorations

The annual Christmas lights contract for 2014/2015 was £12,500 which included testing, minor repairs, energy consumption, storage and the erection and removals of the lights. An additional £2,500 is required from balances in 2014/2015 in order to remove the festoon lighting from the trees in the High Street as they had been in situ for a number of years.

It was confirmed that the current contract ends in March 2015 and that the Council would be undertaking a procurement process for the work going forward. A budget of £15,500

Chairman's initials

had been included to reflect any potential increased costs that resulted from the procurement process.

RESOLVED THAT:

the Working Party notes the report.

22. PERIOD 7 ACTUAL AND 2014/15 FORECAST OUT TURN

The Head of Community Services presented the report to Members.

It was stated that the period seven position projected an under spending, with a contribution to balances of approximately £6,560 leading to an end of year projection of balances of £87,632.

It was confirmed that the 2015/2016 revenue budgets were being drafted and that several items were being considered and costed for potential inclusion. These included either ongoing or adhoc maintenance of County Council verges, shrubs and bushes, as well as an increased warden presence for Lillehammer Drive play area, Scotlands Recreation Ground and Cropston Drive Play Area. It was further stated that there was likely to be scope for further projects where desired.

Councillor J Legrys stated that money should be allocated from the balances to fund the top up maintenance work to the shrubbery on Phoenix Green, Bardon Road and Ashby Road.

It was confirmed that, following the last meeting of the Working Party, Cabinet had agreed to several commitments from balances, including the Peace Garden in Coalville Park, laser lights for the Christmas lights switch-on, neon signage for Coalville Market and a Proms in the Park event.

It was proposed by Councillor J Legrys, seconded by Councillor R Adams and

RECOMMENDED THAT:

the one-off works to shrubbery on Phoenix Green, Bardon Road and Ashby Road be funded from balances.

23. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Members noted the dates of the future meetings.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, 21 April 2015 at 6.30pm in the Board Room.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.28 pm

Chairman's initials