

MINUTES of a meeting of the COALVILLE SPECIAL EXPENSES WORKING PARTY held in the Board Room, Council Offices, Coalville on THURSDAY, 11 JANUARY 2018

Present: Councillor J Geary (Chairman)

Councillors R Adams, N Clarke, J Cotterill, D Everitt, J Legrys, P Purver and M B Wyatt

Officers: Mr J Knight, Mrs W May, Mrs M Meredith and Mr P Sanders

17. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M Specht.

18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor M B Wyatt declared a non-pecuniary interest in any reference to Coalville Town Centre as a business owner.

Councillor J Geary declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 5 – Capital Projects Update as a regular supporter of Coalville Town Football Club and a founder member of Mantle Lane Arts.

Councillor J Legrys declared a non-pecuniary interest in reference to Hermitage FM due to his voluntary involvement with the organisation.

19. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2017.

The Chairman reported that a letter had been sent to Leicestershire County Council on 1 November regarding the state of road signage around the district. The outcome was that he and the Leisure Services Team Manager had been invited meet with officers to identify genuine areas of concern.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2018 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

20. 2017/18 EVENTS UPDATE

The Cultural Services Team Manager presented the report to members, highlighting that all events for 2017 had been delivered within or under budget, and the income received for the two key events of Picnic in the Park and Christmas in Coalville had ensured that those events had been delivered well within budget.

Christmas in Coalville

The Cultural Services Team Manager reported that the Christmas in Coalville event on 2 December had been well attended and partnership working had been positive. Following the comments made at the previous meeting, the entertainment had been increased to a wider area of the town to include Memorial Square. She advised that officers had engaged with 134 town centre businesses on the Friday following the event, and 89% of businesses had reported a positive or neutral impact during the event, and although 51% of businesses would prefer the event to be held in December, 72% said they would prefer to avoid a clash with the event in Ashby if possible. She added that the Ashby event was

highly likely to be held on 1 December on 2018 which would cause a clash. She asked members to consider whether they wished to bring the event forward to 24 November. She reported that there had been good social media activity during the event and a high number of impressions around Twitter, which was double the average number of tweets clicked on, liked or replied to. She thanked the Communications Team for their support with this. She added that comments and suggestions made on social media following the event were also being considered and were generally positive.

Councillor M B Wyatt stated that having spoken to local traders, they felt it was the worst ever event from a business perspective. High Street in particular was deserted and local shops reported less footfall and a reduction in takings. He added that Belvoir Road was equally badly affected and Memorial Square was under-utilised. He commented that people had said that if they had to choose between attending the Coalville event or the Ashby event, they would choose Ashby as it was a better event, and this was not due to the dates clashing. He reported that some of the businesses on High Street had not been contacted at all. He referred to comments made by an officer about the lack of a Town Council in Coalville. He stated that he felt there was no co-operation between the businesses and the council, and he had lost all heart in trying to put a positive spin on the event. He said that the feedback from residents was that the council was failing.

Councillor D Everitt stated that he was inclined to agree with some of those comments, and added that the music event did not seem to have the same appeal as the previous year. He commented that the weather on the day was also very cold.

The Cultural Services Team Manager explained that attendance had increased from the previous year, and for the event this year the stage had been positioned in a different orientation to allow a bigger viewing area which reduced the feeling of overcrowding.

Councillor J Legrys felt that the clash of dates with the Ashby event needed to be discussed. He added that he would be interested to know the difference in budget between the events in Ashby and Coalville. He made reference to the number of volunteers involved in organising the event, and the entertainment at Memorial Square was undertaken solely by volunteers. He commented on the coldness of the weather. He was pleased to see the entertainment in the precinct. He added that there was always room for improvement however this would be limited by the financial situation and the availability of volunteers.

In response to a question from Councillor P Purver, the Cultural Services Team Manager advised that the Ashby and Coalville events had clashed for the last 5 or 6 years.

Councillor J Cotterill referred to the fact that 72% of traders wanted to avoid the same date as the Ashby event and felt that the date had to be changed. He expressed agreement with all the comments made by Councillor M B Wyatt.

Councillor N Clarke commented on the lights and felt they were an improvement from last year.

Councillor R Adams expressed concern regarding the clash of dates with the Ashby event and suggested that the dates could be rotated.

Councillor J Geary stated that he would prefer the event to be held closer to Christmas. He commented that his first impression was that the input from local businesses on the main streets was poor, as only a limited number had trees on the shop fronts and not all were lit. He added that there was a lack of co-operation from the precinct owners. He felt that the event on the car park was well organised and well run, and the fireworks were good. He was pleased to see more of the shops in the precinct had remained open as well as some of the market stalls. He felt there was room for improvement, and he would be interested to see how much was spent on the Ashby event.

Councillor M B Wyatt felt that the light switch on was becoming an evening event. He added that if the event was to take place for a full day it should be earmarked correctly with a focus on helping businesses, generating footfall and getting value for money. He stated that the town lost money and an opportunity to showcase what was on offer. He felt the event had failed to put the town on the map.

The Chairman sought members' views on following the example of many market towns and holding the switch on event on a Friday evening to prevent a clash with the Ashby event.

Councillor M B Wyatt commented that this year's event had basically been an evening event with a little entertainment during the day. He stated that this was not working and did not help local businesses in any way.

A discussion followed around the options for future events, including reducing the offer to an evening event, allocating funding from reserves and establishing a working group to consider a way forward. It was agreed that this matter be discussed further at the Events Sub Group on 24 January to enable planning for the 2018 event to progress at the earliest opportunity. Progress on all event planning would be reported to the next meeting of the Working Party on 24 April.

Picnic in the Park 2018

The Cultural Services Team Manager advised that Coalville Miners Gala committee had requested to be involved in this event again and a meeting with the committee would be taking place to progress this. She reassured members that the event would be marketed and branded as Picnic in the Park and would provide a platform for the Miners Gala to showcase and celebrate the district's heritage.

Coalville Commemorates

The Cultural Services Team Manager reported that the cost of a gunmetal cross suggested at the last meeting was significant, and as such, less expensive alternatives were being investigated, including the feasibility of a stone based sculpture which would complement the existing artwork. She reported that since the last meeting, she had approached the local quarry who were very positive about providing the materials and transportation. A local artist based in Coleorton had also been approached who worked with granite to seek an indication of the costs of the project which would be in the region of £10,000 - £15,000, which was still in excess of the £2,000 currently allocated to the project.

Councillor J Geary referred to the site meeting where it had been established that members wished to install a monument that would be low maintenance, at a low risk of vandalism and would stand for 100 years as the memorial itself had. He added that granite or stone had been suggested at that time with thoughts that this would be donated by the local quarry. It had also been suggested at the meeting that it was appropriate not only to commemorate the men who went to war but also the families, communities and women who played an important role in contributing to the war effort.

A discussion followed on the options to progress the project. The Cultural Services Team Manager emphasised the limited timescale and requested a clear decision from the Working Party on whether to progress with a stone based sculpture and the budget.

Councillor J Legrys stated that he was keen to have the memorial installed. He was aware that the cost of gunmetal was too prohibitive and supported the stone based sculpture option. He suggested that decisions on progressing the project be delegated to the Chairman to enable delivery within the timescales.

Councillor D Everitt suggested that a sandblasting technique would be more cost effective than carving.

Members discussed the options in terms of the cost of the project and the budget to be allocated. It was suggested that other sources of funding could be explored.

In response to a question from Councillor M B Wyatt, it was clarified that the memorial would be a commemoration for the whole district, not just the Coalville area. Councillor M B Wyatt therefore suggested that a contribution towards the project be sought from Cabinet. He added that additional funding could also be sought from the Bardon Community Fund as this project met the criteria.

The Leisure Services Team Manager advised members that they could request through the minutes that Cabinet consider allocating a sum towards the project and members would need to consider how much funding they wished to request.

A discussion followed on the amount of funding to be allocated to the project overall and the amount to be requested from Cabinet.

It was moved by Councillor J Legrys, seconded by Councillor N Clarke and

RESOLVED THAT:

- a) The progress update on 2017/18 events be noted
- b) The Events Sub Group give further consideration to the Christmas in Coalville event and a progress report be brought to the next meeting of the Working Party
- c) The progress of the plan to commemorate the centenary of the end of WW1 be noted and the option of a stone based sculpture be supported
- d) Additional funding of £5,000 be sought from Cabinet towards the Coalville Commemorates project
- e) Future decisions on the Coalville Commemorates project be delegated to the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Working Party in order to progress the project within the timescales
- f) Initial proposals for 2018/19 events be noted.

21. CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE

The Leisure Services Team Manager presented the report to members and provided an update on ongoing projects.

Owen Street Recreation Ground

The Leisure Services Team Manager reported that if the lights were upgraded, they would require an upgrade to 180 lux as opposed to the current 120 lux, which meant that it wouldn't be possible to upgrade them utilising the current lamps as the existing columns and masts would be unable to support the lamps and the electricity supply would be insufficient. He outlined the current health and safety issues with the floodlights as the glass was falling out and replacement covers were not available. He highlighted the differing opinions from the contractors as to whether all the columns needed to be replaced or just the base columns, which would have an impact upon the cost of the replacement. It was anticipated that the cost of refurbishment would be £35,000 - £45,000. He highlighted the opportunity to replace the existing 6 columns with 4 columns, which would cost an additional £7,000. He explained that £50,000 was allocated towards this project in the Capital Programme and the football club was prepared to raise funding of £5,000 towards the project. He reminded members that ultimately the floodlights were the council's asset and responsibility, and as they were posing a health and safety risk he felt the council was obligated to replace them.

Councillor M B Wyatt expressed concerns regarding the level of expenditure and added that not everyone in Coalville was a football fan.

The Leisure Services Team Manager emphasised that this issue was more about health and safety and if someone was injured, the cost to the council would be significantly in excess of the cost of replacement.

In response to questions from Councillor P Purver, the Leisure Services Team Manager advised that the earliest date the football club could apply for funding from the Football Stadia Improvement Fund was 2020 and an upgrade to 180 lux would be sufficient to cover a further two promotions.

In response to a question from Councillor D Everitt, the Leisure Services Team Manager explained that the increased cost of upgrading to 4 columns rather than 6 was due to the re-siting of the columns and rerouting of cabling.

Councillor J Legrys stated that he was conscious of the health and safety risks however members did not yet have all the facts and consequently were unable to make a recommendation. He felt that this needed to be considered as a matter of urgency.

The Leisure Services Team Manager suggested that members may wish to consider delegating the decision as waiting until the next meeting of the Working Party may prejudice the completion of the works out of season.

In response to a question from Councillor N Clarke, the Leisure Services Team Manager advised that to upgrade with four columns rather than six would cost an additional £7,000. Clarification was being sought following the differing views of the contractors and he suggested that if only the base columns needed replacing, upgrading with four columns should not be considered.

It was agreed that authority be delegated to the Chairman and Deputy Chairman to make a final decision on the works to be undertaken.

The Leisure Services Team Manager advised that as the funding was allocated in the Capital Programme, approval from Cabinet would not be required unless the expenditure exceeded £50,000.

Radio Transmitter

The Leisure Services Team Manager reported that the planning application had been approved.

Thringstone Miners Social Centre Training Pitch

The Leisure Services Team Manager advised that the next meeting of the trustees had now been arranged, and it was hoped that the ongoing issues with the football club would be resolved at that meeting.

Coalville Forest Adventure Park

The Leisure Services Team Manager reported that the funding application had been successful. He thanked Councillor M B Wyatt for his help and support with this.

Mobile Vehicle Activated Signage

The Leisure Services Team Manager reported that the units were in situ and currently being used.

Melrose Road Recreation Ground

The Leisure Services Team Manager reported that the new seating had been installed and the shrubbery would be planted in February.

Melrose Road Play Hub

The Leisure Services Team Manager reported that approval had been given by the landowner and Legal Services were drawing up an agreement.

Coalville Park

The Leisure Services Team Manager explained that quarterly actions had been included in the Council Delivery Plan to work towards achieving Green Flag accreditation. He sought approval from members that the park be put in trust.

Councillor J Legrys expressed support for the project and requested as Ward Member he be briefed on the process.

It was agreed that officers proceed with the process of putting the park in trust.

The Leisure Services Team Manager advised that the cost of the associated work was being collated and would be brought to a future meeting. He added that there may be additional cost implications if improvements were required to the toilets and play area.

Lillehammer Drive

The Leisure Services Team Manager reported that a response from Barratts had not been forthcoming and discussions had taken place with the Legal Services Team regarding the next steps and he outlined the options to resolve this issue.

Councillor J Legrys thanked officers for their persistence with this issue. He stated that he had come to the conclusion that perhaps planning permission should be issued. He expressed his disgust with Barratts as the site was becoming more and more derelict. He was concerned that another summer holiday would pass without any action and he would like to see swift action being taken.

The Chairman endorsed the comments made by Councillor J Legrys.

London Road Cemetery

The Leisure Services Team Manager outlined the works being undertaken and commented that it had been apparent that the area had been neglected. He felt the proposed works would make a significant improvement to the area however there were other options members may wish to consider to further improve the area. He added that at the last meeting the possibility of putting the area into trust was raised however as it was a closed church yard the cemetery did not qualify.

Councillor M B Wyatt stated that this project certainly met the criteria for the Bardon Community Fund due to the environmental improvements and provision of access to the facilities for local people. He welcomed the proposal and urged officers to apply for funding.

In response to a question from Councillor P Purver, the Leisure Services Team Manager clarified that Green Flag accreditation could only be sought for parks and did not apply to cemetery improvements.

The Chairman commented that this was an opportunity not to be missed.

It was agreed that members meet at the cemetery at 5.15pm before the next meeting of the Working Party on 24 April and that the local resident who had expressed an interest in the improvements to the cemetery be invited to attend.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

- a) The progress update on 2017/18 Capital Projects be noted.
- b) Agreement be given in principle to complete the necessary works to Owen Street floodlights, with authority delegated to the Chairman and Deputy Chairman to make a final decision on the works to be undertaken
- c) Officers investigate further the process of placing Coalville Park in trust as a Centenary Field

22. COALVILLE SPECIAL EXPENSES 2017/18 P8 POSITION/FORECAST OUTTURN AND DRAFT 2018/19 BUDGET

The Leisure Services Team Manager presented the report to members, highlighting the current forecast underspent which represented a contribution to balances of just under £13,000. He explained this was mainly due to an increase in burial income of £7,000. He reminded members that it was prudent to retain 10% level of reserves and highlighted the slight increase in reserves forecast which could be allocated to a project.

Councillor M B Wyatt stated that he had spoken with a few local businesses and residents who had expressed support for the ideas of ringfencing additional funding for events. He suggested that members may wish to consider increasing the precept and asked how much income an increase of 0.5% would generate.

The Chairman referred to the Cabinet report on the improvements for Marlborough Square which suggested that a minimum of 4 events would be taking place next year. He expressed interest in the funding arrangements for these events.

Following a discussion on the possibility of increasing the precept, it was agreed that the Leisure Services Team Manager would investigate this further and provide information to members.

Councillor M B Wyatt explained that he had asked the Monitoring Officer to look into whether the meetings of the Working Party could be open to the public. The Chairman stated that he had no problem with opening meetings to the public. Councillor D Everitt commented that this would be in line with parish councils.

RESOLVED THAT:

- a) The 2017/18 P8 position and forecast outturn be noted.
- b) The draft budget for 2018/19 be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.03 pm