

MINUTES of a meeting of the COALVILLE SPECIAL EXPENSES WORKING PARTY held in the Board Room, Council Offices, Coalville on TUESDAY, 17 DECEMBER 2013

Present: Councillor N Clarke (Chairman)

Councillors R Adams, D Everitt, J Geary, R Johnson, J Legrys, M Specht, L Spence and M B Wyatt

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

20. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor P Clayfield.

21. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor M B Wyatt declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Item 4 – Capital Projects Update, as a member of Broom Leys Allotment Society, and left the meeting for the consideration of that project. He also declared a disclosable non pecuniary interest in any reference to Coalville, as a business owner in the Town Centre.

Councillors J Geary, R Johnson and J Legrys declared a disclosable non pecuniary interest in Item 4 – Capital Projects Update, as regular supporters of Coalville Town FC and members of the Owen Street Recreation Ground Pavilion Management Committee.

Councillor L Spence also declared a disclosable non pecuniary interest in Item 4 – Capital Projects Update as a supporter of Coalville Town FC.

Councillor J Legrys also declared a disclosable non pecuniary interest in Item 5 – 2013/14 Events Update due to his involvement with Hermitage FM.

Except where stated otherwise, the above named Members remained in the meeting.

22. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2013.

Councillor M B Wyatt advised that he had no involvement with Coalville Town FC and asked that this be reflected in the Declaration of Interests.

RESOLVED THAT:

Subject to the above amendment, the minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2013 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

23. CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE

The Leisure Services Team Manager presented the report to Members.

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

Coalville Park Improvements

The 400m jogging circuit with 100m markings had now been installed. This included the current long and triple jump world records, which it was hoped would act as an inspiration to users.

Owen Street Recreation Ground

Electrical works had now been completed and attention had returned to the floodlights. The approached contractor had not been forthcoming in making recommendations for potential improvements. Consequently, an alternative contractor had now been engaged.

In terms of the changing room development, two plans had been developed by Property Services, an ideal and a scaled down solution, both of which significantly exceeded budget. Consequently, a contractor that had been recommended by the football club had begun work devising a scheme of works within budget.

It was confirmed that it was unlikely that the project would be supported by the Big Society Fund given that the development would only focus on one club and one sport. However, officers at the County Council had confirmed that they would be willing to discuss the project and its eligibility in more detail before the deadline for the next round of bids closed.

It had been recommended by the Council's Asset Management Group that a long-term lease be issued to the football club rather than a license. As such, approval would now be sought from the Council's Corporate Leadership Team before the proposed lease is sent to the club for consideration. It was stated that this option gave the club more autonomy to use the area as they saw fit. Similarly, this option allowed the club to access various funding sources that required a lease as a prerequisite for applying.

Councillor M B Wyatt stated that, in his opinion, it was important to ensure that the changing room contract is put out to tender and enquired whether it was intended to do so. The Leisure Services Team Manager responded that it was his understanding that a tender would be necessary but that indicative costs would be sought first of all.

Councillor M B Wyatt stated that he had been made aware that the club had a fund of around £30,000 available and enquired whether this would be utilised for the project. The Leisure Services Team Manager confirmed that he had been unaware of such a fund but that he would liaise with the Management Committee on the issue.

Councillor L Spence stressed that transparency was a key factor in any procurement project and agreed with Councillor M B Wyatt that the contract be put out to tender.

Councillor M B Wyatt asked whether clauses would be inserted into the contract stipulating that the land must be used for sporting purposes. The Leisure Services Team Manager confirmed that this would be the case.

Thringstone Miners Social Centre

It was confirmed that the Thringstone Miners Social Centre Management Committee had liaised with both the District and County Councils with regard to footpath diversions and the movement of a street light in order to facilitate a grass training pitch on the former Clover Place play area. Provisional costs were now being sought for the groundworks and various sources of funding were being looked at.

Councillor L Spence praised the plans for the area and suggested that they were a fantastic use of derelict land. However, he queried the long and costly process in arranging the extinguishment of the footpath and suggested that the club had insufficient resources for such a process. The Leisure Services Team Manager responded that there were outstanding funds available for the project and that the trustees were aware of this.

Cropston Drive BMX Track and Wheeled Sports Facility

It was confirmed that two bids had been received for the project and that these were currently being evaluated. Once this had taken place, the final proposals would be presented to consultees before work began on the project in the Spring.

Councillor M B Wyatt stated that he was aware of one particular stakeholder that had not yet been consulted on the plans, despite being one of those who initially instigated the project. The Leisure Services Team Manager apologised that this was the case and confirmed that this would be done.

Broom Leys Allotments

Having declared an interest in this item Councillor M B Wyatt left the meeting.

It was stated that the project was now virtually completed. The excavation works and main pipe laying for the water feed to the site had now been finished. Severn Trent Water had undertaken their inspection and the water supply had been connected. It was anticipated that the backfilling of the excavation would be completed shortly.

Councillor M B Wyatt returned to the meeting.

Urban Forest Park

It was confirmed that the new piece of play equipment had now been installed. In terms of the footway and drainage improvements, it was stated that schemes of work were currently being produced and that Ward Members would be consulted once these had been finalised.

Councillor J Legrys stated that he still had concerns that the work would lead to potential gas emissions. The Leisure Services Team Manager proposed that annual gas emission tests took place in order to allay any fears of emissions.

Councillor J Geary stated that he was surprised that the site was ever considered suitable for recreational use. He expressed concerns that the site could prove to be costly to maintain, particularly if annual gas emission tests were necessary. He suggested that any expenditure on the site be closely monitored and reiterated Councillor J Legrys' concerns regarding gas emissions. The Head of Community Services responded that the project was being funded by a Section 106 Agreement and that there were therefore stipulations that required the money to be spent in this location.

Councillor N Clarke asked Officers to confirm the specifications of the Section 106 Agreement. The Head of Community Services confirmed that he would do so and would report this back to Members.

Melrose Road Play Area

It was confirmed that the project had now been completed and that there was an outstanding balance of £1,988. It was proposed that this money be used to improve and upgrade the flooring under the original play equipment as it had deteriorated.

Councillor D Everitt remarked on the success of the project. He stated that he had recently visited the site himself and that he had been impressed with the number of families that were making use of the facility.

Councillor L Spence stated that the play hub had been beneficial to the local community and that the concept should be replicated elsewhere in the District in the future.

RESOLVED THAT:

the progress on 2013/14 Capital Projects be noted.

24. 2013/14 EVENTS UPDATE

The Cultural Services Team Manager presented the report to Members.

He provided Members with an update on each event.

Food and Drink Festival

The Coalville Town Team delivered their Food and Drink Festival on 23 November. It was reported that this year's event proved to be a popular event offering a wide variety of stalls, live music and entertainment.

Councillor M B Wyatt stated that he had received lots of positive feedback from residents regarding this event and suggested that the event should be continued next year.

Councillor J Legrys congratulated the Coalville Town Team for having organised such a superb event. He applauded the various individuals that had contributed their own money towards the event and stated that he was grateful that individual traders were willing to do this.

Christmas in Coalville

The event successfully took place outside Coalville Market on 30 November. It was stated that the area was more effectively programmed than in previous years and that it appeared that more people had attended. A short survey had been conducted on the day in which 84% of respondents had rated the event as either good or excellent. Feedback from local traders had also been complimentary, however, it had been noted that the location had pulled footfall away from the shopping precinct.

Councillor M B Wyatt stated that the Coalville Town Team should be encouraged to take responsibility for the event in future years. He added that this year's lights switch on had been disappointing and that residents had not been inspired by it. He felt that the Coalville Town Team had the expertise required to improve the event going forward.

Councillor J Legrys stated that he had seen various negative comments from the public on social media regarding the lights switch on. He stated that next year consideration should be given to combining the Food and Drink Festival and the Christmas in Coalville events.

Councillor M B Wyatt countered that local businesses preferred two separate events being held. He explained that holding two events benefitted local traders as it encouraged people to visit the town centre on both weekends.

Councillor J Geary stated that he felt there had been a noticeable improvement in the Christmas lights this year. He suggested that the lights in Coalville compared favourably to their equivalents in Ashby-de-la-Zouch and Swadlincote. He stated that thought should be given to holding two separate events over the same weekend next year and added that there were various permutations that could be considered.

Councillor L Spence stated that there was undoubtedly room for improvement in future years but that the Working Party should be proud that it had pushed forward with improvements to the Christmas lights. He suggested that it was highly likely that next year's event would be limited by the current financial constraints. He concluded that, consequently, a single event led by the Coalville Town Team ought to be considered next

year. As such, he proposed that the Working Party ought to liaise with the Coalville Town Team to establish whether they would favour such an approach.

The Head of Community Services suggested that the Coalville Town Team could be invited to the next meeting of the Events Task and Finish Group. He added that there was certainly potential for the two events to work well alongside each other given that the Christmas in Coalville event centred on the Market Hall, whilst the Food and Drink Festival was based at the shopping precinct. He noted that if the two events were merged that consideration would need to be given to the timing of the event to ensure that the Christmas lights were not switched on too early.

Councillor L Spence stated that the lights in Coalville were noticeably late in being turned on this year compared to other local towns. He felt that there would not be an issue in moving the lights switch on to coincide with the Food and Drink Festival if necessary.

Councillor J Legrys countered that the Working Party had previously decided not to switch the lights on this early due to residents' complaints that the Christmas period was too drawn out. He stated that local traders ought to be consulted and that no decision should be made until discussions had taken place with the Coalville Town Team.

Councillor R Johnson referred to the free car parking promotion that was currently taking place on Saturdays. He stated that he had seen users paying for tickets despite not having needed to and suggested that all meters should be covered to avoid confusion. The Head of Community Services confirmed that all meters had signs above them that explained the promotion and that additional signage had recently been installed to prevent any further confusion.

The consensus of Members was to invite representatives of the Coalville Town Team to the next meeting of the Events Task and Finish Group to discuss the 2014/15 Events Programme.

RESOLVED THAT:

the progress on 2013/14 Events and provisional plans for 2014/15 Coalville Events be noted.

25. 2013/14 PERIOD 7 FINANCE REPORT (REVENUE AND CAPITAL)

The Head of Community Services presented the report to Members.

He confirmed that outturn figures were projected to be underspent at the end of period seven and that this would allow a modest contribution to balances. He confirmed that the period eight figures were now available and that they showed that the projected underspend had increased to £7,300.

He went on to state that both the minutes of the last meeting and those of the Events Task and Finish Group, as well as Councillor M B Wyatt's suggestions had now been reported to Cabinet. Furthermore, Councillor N Clarke had attended the meeting and had made representations regarding the funding of Remembrance Day. It had been agreed that the Portfolio Holder for Community Services would attend a future meeting of the Events Task and Finish Group to discuss budget matters further.

Councillor J Geary queried the spending on Gracedieu Woods and asked how this money was spent. The Head of Community Services confirmed that the sum covered the cost of maintaining the area.

Councillor M B Wyatt referred to the 'Love Hinckley' campaign that was currently being

promoted in the town and stated that it had grasped residents' imaginations. He suggested that it might be worthwhile to develop a similar scheme in Coalville. It was agreed to discuss this with the Coalville Town Team in order to avoid any duplication.

Councillor J Legrys stated that the artwork on the Phoenix Green Bridge needed to be refreshed. He enquired as to how he could make a bid for funding such a project. The Cultural Service Team Manager agreed to investigate this further and report back at the next meeting.

Councillor N Clarke stated that the Whitwick Pit Disaster Memorial was in need of restoration and queried whether it was situated within the Working Party's area. The Head of Community Services agreed to establish who was responsible for the memorial and report back to Members.

RESOLVED THAT:

the Working Party notes the report.

26. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Members noted the dates of the future meetings.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, 15 April 2014 at 6.30pm in the Board Room.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.35 pm.

Councillor M B Wyatt left the meeting at 6.42pm and returned at 6.43pm.

Councillor J Legrys left the meeting at 7.30pm.