

MINUTES of a meeting of the COALVILLE SPECIAL EXPENSES WORKING PARTY held in the Board Room, Council Offices, Coalville on TUESDAY, 15 APRIL 2014

Present: Councillor N Clarke (Chairman)

Councillors R Adams, P Clayfield, J Geary, R Johnson, J Legrys, M Specht and M B Wyatt

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

27. UPDATE FROM GLYN RENNOCKS (COALVILLE TOWN FC)

Mr G Rennocks thanked the Working Party for having invited him to the meeting. He stated that the football club had a great working relationship with the District Council and expressed hope that this would continue in the future.

He relayed that the football club had been particularly successful on the pitch over the last few years and that, consequently, facilities off the pitch had fallen below their new league's standards. Mr Rennocks outlined that the club were in contention to be promoted again this season and stated that this would necessitate further improvements to the facilities, such as the installation of extra seating and turnstiles. It was stressed that if promotion was achieved then the improvements must be completed by the end of March 2015.

Mr Rennocks stated that the club were committed to Owen Street Recreation Ground and were close to signing a new 12 year lease. He went on to explain that the new lease will allow the club to apply for funding to improve facilities to the necessary league standards.

It was stated that the unfortunate demise of the cricket club had enabled the club's junior sides to relocate to Owen Street. As such, the facilities at the ground were now being used 7 days a week by the various sections of the club. It was stated that the existing changing rooms were unsuitable, particularly given the fact that the facilities were being used by the ladies and girls teams.

Mr Rennocks thanked the District Council for their contribution of £115,000 towards the changing room improvements. He stated that the budget for the project was currently expected to be £280,000, which comprised of the funding from the District Council and £25,000 from the football club itself. This funding would then be matched by the Football Stadia Improvement Fund in order to reach the necessary total. It was stressed that the plans had been specifically designed so that they could be developed further in the future if circumstances required it.

Councillor M B Wyatt expressed concerns regarding the funding of the project. He enquired how much was currently held in the club's tote and asked whether it was intended to utilise this money for the project. Mr Rennocks responded that the tote was run by the supporters club and not directly by the club itself. He stated that the fund currently totalled around £15,000 and that a proportion of the total would be put towards the improvements. Mr Rennocks also stated that he would contribute personally to the project if required.

Councillor J Geary enquired how many individuals regularly used the facilities. Mr Rennocks stated that the combined total of the senior team, junior teams and ladies team would be in excess of 150 regular playing users.

Chairman's initials

Councillor J Legrys complimented Mr Rennocks and the other directors of the club for all their work. He congratulated them on having improved the image of the town as a whole and stated that the club's success had been a great morale boost for the town.

Councillor M Specht asked if it was intended to put the contract for the work out to tender. Mr Rennocks responded that it would not be possible to get firm quotes for the work until the plans had been finalised.

Councillor N Clarke thanked Mr Rennocks for having provided the Working Party with an update. He stated that the Working Party wished the club all the best in the future, both on and off the pitch.

28. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor L Spence.

29. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor M B Wyatt declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Item 5 – 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 and R Johnson declared a disclosable non pecuniary interest in Item 5 – Capital Projects Update, as regular supporters of Coalville Town FC.

Councillor J Legrys also declared a disclosable non pecuniary interest in Item 6 – 2014/15 Events Update due to his involvement with Hermitage FM.

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

30. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2013.

Councillor J Legrys queried whether there had been any progress in regard to the artwork at Phoenix Green Bridge that he had raised at the previous meeting. The Cultural Services Team Manager confirmed discussions with Mantle Community Arts were ongoing and that opportunities for further funding were being investigated.

The Head of Community Services updated Members in respect of the Whitwick Pit Disaster Memorial. He stated that discussions would continue with the management company to ensure that the plaque was maintained.

RESOLVED THAT:

the minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2013 be approved.

31. 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

Chairman's initials

It was confirmed that all works had been completed. There was a remaining balance of £820 and consideration was being given to any additional equipment enhancements that could be made to the Park.

Councillor J Legrys stated that he felt there was insufficient play equipment aimed at very young children and suggested that the money be put towards rectifying this. The Leisure Services Team Manager stated that, given the small remaining balance, it would be unlikely that new equipment would be installed and the focus would instead be on enhancing what was already in place.

Owen Street Recreation Ground

The electricity upgrade works had been completed. Further works were being considered in order to upgrade the fittings on the floodlight columns and an initial quote had indicated a cost of £60,000. It was confirmed that clarification was being sought to see if the necessary lux improvements could be completed at a cheaper cost.

The proposed long term lease had been issued to the football club for their consideration. As a short term measure, a one year lease had been signed so that league requirements were satisfied for next season.

The new long term lease would allow the club to apply to the Football Stadia Improvement Fund for match funding for a new changing room pavilion. The club had developed an initial design that included an additional turnstile, external toilets, an external catering outlet and the flexibility to segregate home and away fans. The design had been shared with the Football Stadia Improvement Fund and amendments were currently being made following their advice.

It was reiterated that £115,000 had been committed to the project from the District Council and the additional amount required to reach 50% of the cost would be funded by the football club.

Councillor M B Wyatt raised concerns regarding the funding that was being provided by the District Council. He stated that steps should be taken to ensure that the contract goes to tender and stressed that if this was not the case that he would have grave concerns over providing the funding. The Head of Community Services stated that he was confident that the process would require a tender but stated that he would seek clarification in order to confirm this.

Thringstone Miners Social Centre

Provisional costs and plans had been obtained for the training pitch which had shown that an artificial surface would be cost prohibitive. It was confirmed that discussions with the County Council regarding the footpath extinguishment were ongoing and that a survey had been commissioned to assess whether it would be viable.

Cropston Drive BMX Track and Wheeled Sports Facility

It was confirmed that work on the BMX track had commenced and that it was anticipated that this element would be completed in May. Confirmed costs from the two contractors for the wheeled sports facility were expected imminently. These would then be evaluated for best value before the final proposals were discussed and consulted upon. It was anticipated that the works would commence in June.

Chairman's initials

Broomleys Allotments

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

The project had now been fully completed and the final balance was in the process of being calculated.

Councillor J Geary asked if it would be possible for members of the Working Party to visit the allotments in order to see the finalised project prior to the next meeting of the Working Party on 15 July 2014. The Head of Community Services stated that he would try to arrange such a visit.

Councillor M B Wyatt returned to the meeting.

Urban Forest Park

An independent assessor had been engaged to evaluate any implications with potential gas emissions that may be created through drainage and path works. Recommendations were that any contractors should be made aware of the membrane prior to commencing work and that it should be left in an undamaged state. Proposals would now be developed and approved by the assessor prior to Ward Members being consulted before the work commenced in early summer.

Councillor J Legrys stated that he still had concerns regarding gas emissions and warned that it was important to be extremely cautious with the membrane at the site. The Leisure Services Team Manager stated that emissions were tested twice a year, in line with the legal requirement, and that no problems had come to light as a result. He reassured Members that anything detrimental highlighted in the assessor's report regarding potential works would lead to a reevaluation of the project.

Melrose Road Play Area

The additional flooring had now been installed and, as such, the project had now been completed.

RESOLVED THAT:

the progress on Capital Projects be noted.

32. 2014/15 EVENTS UPDATE

The Cultural Services Team Manager presented the report to Members.

He provided Members with an update on each event.

St Georges Day Flags

The District Council would not be erecting the usual number of flags around Coalville this year. Most of the existing flags and poles and a number of wall brackets had needed to be replaced and there would be significant costs in doing this. It was confirmed that the annual £800 cost of erection and dismantling would be reallocated to support the existing Town Centre events programme. However, there would still be flags displayed on each side of the Clock Tower, at the market and at the Council Offices.

Chairman's initials

Councillor M B Wyatt sought clarification that the £800 saving would be redirected to the Christmas events. The Head of Community Services confirmed that this was already the case.

Picnic in the Park

It had been confirmed that the event would take place on 29 June and that it would revert to its original name so that it would be easily recognisable to local residents.

The annual Motorfest, organised by the Coalville Town Team, would take place the preceding day on 28 June and joint marketing opportunities had been investigated in order to promote an exciting weekend of events for local residents. It had been decided to market the two events as Coalville's Big Weekend.

Councillor M Specht stated that in previous years food stallholders had ran out of stock relatively early in the day. He enquired if there was anything that could be done to encourage stallholders to stock accordingly. The Head of Community Services confirmed that stallholders would be made aware of previous years' attendances. He also stated that a wider variety of stallholders would be encouraged to attend this year's event.

Coalville By The Sea

A similar event to last year had been organised for 8 August, which would include games, arts and crafts, puppet shows, music and sandpits. The event would be held on the open grassed area in Needhams Walk.

Christmas Events

It had been agreed by the Events Task and Finish Group and the Coalville Town Team representatives to combine the 2014 Christmas event with the Town Team's Food and Drink Festival. Consultation on the 2015 activities will be conducted at this year's event.

Councillor M B Wyatt asked whether consideration had been given to providing free car parking in the town over the weekend of the Food and Drink Festival. The Head of Community Services stated that traditionally free car parking had been provided over every weekend in December. Last year this had been extended to 5 weekends due to the way in which the dates fell i.e. 29 November for the switch on event. He explained that the decision over free car parking would be discussed with the Portfolio Holder for Community Services.

Councillor M B Wyatt stated that he favoured extending the free car parking to 6 weekends in order to provide free parking at the Food and Drink Festival. This could be at the expense of the final weekend in December, if 6 free weekends was deemed too many.

Councillor J Geary stated that he agreed with Councillor M B Wyatt. He suggested that it would be a nice gesture to the Coalville Town Team to offer free parking on the day of the Food and Drink Christmas Event.

Coalville Christmas Decorations

It was confirmed that no additional lighting equipment had been planned for 2014/15 and that, consequently, this year's budget would be £12,500 which included testing, minor repairs, energy consumption, storage and erection and dismantling of the decorations.

Chairman's initials

RECOMMENDED THAT:

- a) the offer of free car parking in Coalville Town Centre be extended to include the Food and Drink Festival on 22 November.
- b) the event in Coalville Park reverts to its original name of Picnic in the Park.

33. PERIOD 11 ACTUALS AND FORECASTED OUTTURN FIGURES

The Head Community Services presented the report to Members.

He confirmed that the accounts for the last financial year were currently being finalised. The indications were that there would be a significant contribution to balances, principally due to an increase in burial and monument income and a reduction in staffing costs at parks and recreation grounds.

The 2014/15 budget had been agreed at Cabinet on 25 February. He explained that as a consequence of the decision to continue to finance the Remembrance Day Service from the General Fund, there was now £2,000 available to be reallocated.

The consensus of Members was to place the surplus funds in a contingency fund to be added to the events budget if needed.

The Head of Community Services welcomed suggestions from Members with regard to projects that the current balances could be spent on.

Councillor J Geary stated that the funds should not be used for the sake of it and should therefore be kept until appropriate projects arose.

Councillor J Legrys stated that there were a number of schemes in the town that the money could be spent on, such as a community project to renovate the Mantle Lane Bridge. He stated that the area was a key approach into the town and suggested that renovation of the site would be beneficial to the town as a whole.

Councillor J Geary agreed that the Mantle Lane Bridge was currently an eyesore to the town. He stated that there was a particular issue with pigeon faeces at the site and suggested that the owners are engaged to see what could be done.

The Head of Community Services stated that the owners had installed wire spikes and meshed netting at the site to discourage pigeons from roosting beneath the bridge. He added that the owners had been approached to consider a community art project at the site but that there had been no response as yet.

RECOMMENDED THAT:

- a) the reallocated funds from the Remembrance Day Service be held in a contingency fund to be added to the events budget if needed.
- b) the current balances be held in reserve until appropriate projects arose.

34. REQUEST TO RENAME COALVILLE PARK

The Head of Community Services presented the report to Members.

Chairman's initials

A request had been received from a local resident that had asked for consideration to be given to renaming Coalville Park to commemorate the centenary of the First World War. It was explained that the Portfolio Holder for Community Services had requested that this matter be considered by the Working Party with a recommendation then being made to Cabinet.

Councillor R Adams explained that he opposed the park being renamed. He stated that he agreed that it was important that the anniversary was recognised but disagreed that this was the most appropriate way in which to do so.

Councillor M Specht suggested that Coalville Park had an area specifically designated for those that contributed to the war effort to be remembered in. However, he agreed that the cost of the park being renamed was unnecessary in the current austere times.

Councillor J Legrys stated that he had had several conversations with local residents and not one had been in favour of the park being renamed. However, he agreed that there was a need for the anniversary to be commemorated. He stated that the poplar trees alongside the Council Offices and in Coalville Park that were planted as a memorial to the war were not expected to survive much longer. As such, he suggested that it would be a nice gesture to allocate funding to replace these trees.

Councillor J Geary stated that he had given considerable thought to the proposal. He agreed that there was a need to recognise both those that died and contributed to the war. He proposed that a monument be placed outside Stenson House to commemorate the anniversary.

Councillor J Legrys agreed that a monument outside Stenson House would be appropriate as the area had been the civic centre of the town for many decades. He added that the site was ideal as it was located on the route that was used during the Remembrance Day Service.

Councillor R Adams suggested that a peace garden be created so that residents could have a space to reflect on the war and remember those who had contributed. The Head of Community Services stated that there was currently a sensory garden within Coalville Park that could be amended so as to incorporate a peace garden.

RECOMMENDED THAT:

- a) the request to rename Coalville Park be rejected.
- b) a list of prominent potential locations for a memorial in Coalville be created by officers.
- c) a commemorative peace garden be installed within Coalville Park.

35. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Members noted the dates of the future meetings.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, 15 July 2014, subject to confirmation at the upcoming Annual Council.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.57 pm

Chairman's initials