

MINUTES of a meeting of the COALVILLE SPECIAL EXPENSES WORKING PARTY held in the Remote meeting using Microsoft Teams on TUESDAY, 30 JUNE 2020

Present: Councillor

Councillors E G C Allman, A S Black, A J Bridgen, D Everitt, M French, J Geary, J Legrys, J Windram and M B Wyatt

In Attendance: Councillors

Officers: Mr J Knight, Mrs W May, Mr P Sanders, Mr T Delaney and Mrs M Long

**1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN FOR ENSUING YEAR**

Melanie Long, Democratic Services Team Manager opened this first meeting of the civic year by inviting nominations for the appointment of Chairman for the ensuing year.

Nominations were moved and seconded in respect of Councillor M Wyatt and Councillor E Allman and, upon voting on each nomination, it was subsequently

RESOLVED THAT:

Councillor M Wyatt be appointed Chairman of the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party for the 20/21 civic year.

**2. APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN FOR ENSUING YEAR**

A nomination was moved and seconded in respect of Councillor A Bridgen and, there being no other nominations, it was

RESOLVED THAT:

Councillor A Bridgen be appointed Deputy Chairman of the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party for the 20/21 civic year.

**3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received.

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors Legrys declared a non pecuniary interest in any items relating to the Town Centre given his role as a volunteer at Hermitage FM; and Councillor Geary declared a non pecuniary interest in any item which referred to the Springboard Centre given his role as a director there and also to any reference to Mantle Arts and Coalville Football Club given his role as a Council representative on these bodies. They both remained for the entirety of the meeting.

**5. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2019

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**RESOLVED THAT:**

By affirmation of the meeting, the minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2019 be approved as a correct record subject to a minor amendment to show that Councillor Geary moved the minutes of the previous meeting.

**6. EVENTS UPDATE**

Wendy May, Cultural Services Team Manager provided an update on the 2020/21 events and projects funded within the Coalville Special Expenses Area, the details of which were set out in the report. This included the impact on these events as a consequence of COVID-19. She advised Members that, since writing the report, there had been some early discussions with fairground operators given the recent relaxation of the lockdown rules, which may enable a funfair to be held later in the year, though it was too early to confirm that at this stage. She also reassured Members of the ongoing discussions surrounding Remembrance 2020 adding that a county-wide meeting was scheduled at the end of July.

The Cultural Services Team Manager took Members through the report and invited comments thereon.

The Chairman referred to the report on the Artwork at Needhams Walk stating that it was a very comprehensive report and that he agreed with the suggested recommendations. He stated that he was eager to see how the work on the Christmas lights could be progressed to enable a more robust contract to alleviate some of the issues of the past, adding that he believed there would be more funding coming forward from developers in the future. The Chairman urged Members to ask any future developers coming forward with applications in and around the town, if they would like to contribute to the Christmas lights in the future.

The Chairman invited comments from the floor.

Councillor Legrys asked whether, in light of the recent planning application from the precinct owner, discussions regarding Needhams Walk would be progressed or put on hold until the planning application had been determined.

The Cultural Services Team Manager advised that she had not had sight of the full details of the planning application but she considered that the artwork in this area to be 'the icing on the cake' and did not consider discussions at this very early stage to be a primary matter for the developer. Timely conversations would be had once she was in a position to better understand the anticipated timescales of the proposals of the planning application. The Chairman added that he had spoken with the precinct owners and he had mooted the idea of artwork at Needhams Walk and they were very favourable of the initiative and would very much like to support such a project. He agreed with the Cultural Services Team Manager that conversations on how this would be progressed would need to be had in a timely manner.

Councillor Geary fully supported this view and asked that conversations not be held with the developer until their intentions for the site were fully understood. With reference to Remembrance 2020, he asked for clarification on the references in the report to plans A, B and C. The Cultural Services Team Manager advised that Plan A – life is normal and the delivery of the event would be as previously, Plan B – dependant on guidance on the lockdown position and any restrictions on mass gatherings, restrictions on numbers may need to be applied and Plan C – should a full lockdown be imposed, there would be no external interaction and a completely virtual scenario may have to be enacted. She reiterated that, at this stage she did want to try and second guess where we will be in 4

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months' time but wanted to reassure Members that plans were in place to cover for all eventualities.

By affirmation of the meeting it

RESOLVED THAT:

- (1) The progress update on the 2020/21 events programme be noted.
- (2) The progress update on the artwork options for Needhams Walk be noted.
- (3) Further development of options two and three for the Artwork at Needhams Walk be supported, subject to the outcomes of the planning application.

## **7. CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE**

Jason Knight, Leisure Services Team Manager provided an update on the 2020/21 capital projects, the details of which were set out in the report.

Upon the request of the Chairman, the Leisure Services Team Manager took Members through each item in turn and invited questions thereon.

Turning to the first item, Thringstone Miners Social Centre Training Pitch, Councillor Everitt advised that the issues surrounding the Club had been rumbling on for quite a while but he was hopeful that a solution would be found and that works could progress.

Councillor Geary added that Thringstone once had a prime football club within Leicestershire which had rapidly declined and he had been following the circumstances around this very closely over the past few years and he urged caution on the provision of funding until they could prove beyond all reasonable doubt that they were capable of running a stable organisation. The Leisure Services Team Manager assured Members that the Club had now left the site and had no involvement whatsoever, so any funding would go to the Trustees and any resident clubs who would oversee any projects.

On the issue of the Melrose Road Play Hub, Councillor Everitt asked whether stonemasons, who cut granite as a matter of course, had been contacted to do the work. The Leisure Services Team Manager advised that he could not confirm this but he would find out and report back outside the meeting. That said, he was confident that the contractors would be able to do this work and will be in a position to commence in the next two weeks.

In relation to Coalville Park, the Chairman expressed his concern regarding the capacity of the park in retaining the ability to hold future events adding that it would be a huge shame to lose this space. Therefore he encouraged any planting to be around the perimeter of the site and not in the centre which would render it incapable of being used to host large events.

Councillor Black and Councillor Allman echoed these concerns, acknowledging that enhancing green open spaces was vitally important but that this should not be at the expense of the ability to use those spaces.

Councillor Legrys asked that his thanks and appreciation be passed on to the Parks Team for their efforts in keeping Coalville Park maintained throughout the difficult past few weeks. He asked whether local residents and volunteers could be consulted on the design element of the planting scheme before a final decision was made. The Chairman gave his

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assurance that no scheme would be progressed if it did not meet with approval from local residents.

Councillor Everitt stated that the problem over lack of green spaces was not limited to Coalville as this was replicated throughout the district with even the smallest pieces of land being built on. He endorsed the comments already made.

Councillor Allman made reference to a protection order for Ashby Baths Grounds and asked whether something similar was or could be applied to Coalville Pak. The Leisure Services Team Manager advised that protection was in place for the Park itself but not the field at the rear as this wasn't classed as part of the Park. If it were, then the Order might be able to be extended to cover it. In terms of consultation, he added that this was possible but regard needed to be had to the very strict timescales which needed to be met in order to access the funding so any consultation would need to be swift. It was agreed that he would look at some wording which could be put on the website seeking views from local residents.

Councillor Geary asked whether consultation on the skate park graffiti project could be deferred until Picnic in the Park next year to ensure that an opportunity to consult with young people was not missed. It was therefore agreed that this would be postponed until next year.

Turning to the issue of Lillehammer Drive, Councillor Legrys asked if there was any indication from Barratts as to when they were going to clear the site. The Leisure Services Team Manager advised that Barratts no longer have any responsibility for that site as it has been transferred to the District Council, and due to COVID-19 it was not possible to maintain it, but now that grass cutting had been resumed, this should now have been done.

On discussing Coalville in Bloom 2020, Councillor Geary asked whether the surplus could be spent on infrastructure for next year and would be ringfenced. It was confirmed that because the money was external funding specifically for this project then it had to be ringfenced to this project and would roll over to the next financial year with no impact on the precept.

Councillor Allman urged caution in extending the scheme into Ashby Road given that for much of next year it is likely to resemble a building site. The Chairman agreed that this would be taken into consideration.

In relation to Scotlands Bowls Pavilion, the Chairman asked whether the building was structurally sound and likely to still be a viable option to be taken on even if left empty for a while. He was advised that the biggest risk was damage caused through anti-social behaviour and additional fencing had been erected in an attempt to deter this. Councillor Geary sought clarification on the bowling green and how this was being maintained. He was advised that the grass was being cut but it was not being maintained as a bowling green as this would incur additional costs but he was assured that to return it to its former glory would not be too excessive and would only take a few weeks.

Turning to the issue of Asset Management, Councillor Allman expressed concern over the amounts being charged to the local authority by structural surveyors. He asked that we check to make sure we were using the right people as the figures appeared excessive given his knowledge in this field. The Leisure Services Team Manager advised that he would check with Property Services who are responsible for the procurement of the structural surveyors. Councillor Everitt echoed these concerns given his experience in the telecoms industry where over charging local authorities was said to be rife.

In relation to Scotlands Recreation Ground, Councillor Legrys asked if the football club would be inclined to want to fence it off to prevent dog fouling and he was advised that it would have to be retained as a public open space and could not be fenced off without Council approval and it would also be built into the lease that the Council could use the land for events should it wish to do so. Councillor Wyatt sought confirmation as to how much a lease for the football club would save Coalville Special Expenses. The Leisure Services Manager said that any income received above the annual fee paid by the club would effect a saving and that the club would also have to take on the liability and costs incurred through maintenance issues arising with either the grass pitch or the changing pavilion.

A lengthy debate was had on tree planting and the desire to protect trees from vandalism, ongoing maintenance, and the concerns expressed by local residents who would support tree planting to act as an intrusion barrier. Support was given to the possibility of planting more mature trees to help alleviate some of the issues raised and it was agreed to seek advice from the National Forest.

By affirmation of the meeting it was

**RECOMMENDED TO CABINET THAT:**

- (1) Approval be given to the allocation of £5,000 from S106 funding for the planting of trees and shrubs in the rear field at Coaville Park.
- (2) Approval be given to allocation of a maximum of £5,000 from balances for the planting of trees, shrubs and plants at Scotlands Recreation Ground.
- (3) Authority be delegated to the Chairman and Deputy Chairman in consultation with the Ward Member to progress the above initiatives and agree design works.

## **8. COALVILLE SPECIAL EXPENSES FINANCE UPDATE**

Paul Sanders, Head of Community Services presented the report.

The Working Party was advised that, at the time of writing the report, the revenue outturn and asset protection fund for 2019/20 was still being finalised. The provisional outturn will be reported to Cabinet on 23 July 2020 and an update will be provided at the next meeting of the Working Party in October.

It was noted that the 2019/20 outturn had not yet been finalised and therefore the opening balance of the reserve was likely to change.

Members were advised that, due to the pandemic, there would be a reduction in planned expenditure of £81k due to the suspension of the grounds maintenance services received (£52k) and the cancellation of a number of events (£28k). As the special expenses account is ring-fenced, the reduction in planned expenditure will be transferred into reserves. This has meant that that there will now be a contribution to reserves of £66k, compared to a budgeted deficit of £15k that was to be funded through reserves.

There is a planned maintenance programme in place for 2020/21. The approved budget is £46k, of which £24k is funded through the asset protection fund, £12k from reserves and £10k from external contributions. There has been no planned maintenance undertaken during the year yet and therefore nil expenditure.

By affirmation of the meeting it was

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RESOLVED THAT:

The 2020/21 Period 1 actuals and forecast outturn for the year, be noted.

Before the close of the meeting, Councillor Geary reported that during the lockdown period, the Owen Street Pavilion had been refurbished from top to bottom at the Football Club's expense which was welcome news. He also asked whether there would be any further meetings of the Events Sub Group before the end of the year. It was acknowledged that a date had been agreed for a meeting on 16 September at 5pm. The membership of this had been agreed at an earlier meeting. Councillor Geary asked if he could attend and was advised he would be welcome.

**POST MEETING NOTE - As the above date now clashes with a changed time to a meeting of the Local Plan Committee, the Events Sub Group will be held on Tuesday 15 September at 5pm.**

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.55 pm

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