

MINUTES of a meeting of the COALVILLE SPECIAL EXPENSES WORKING PARTY held in the Remote meeting using Microsoft Teams on TUESDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2020

Present: Councillor M B Wyatt (Chairman)

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

In Attendance: Councillor A C Woodman (Observer)

Officers: Mr P Sanders, Mr J Knight, Mrs W May, C Colvin, Mr T Delaney and Mrs C Hammond

9. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor J Geary declared non-pecuniary interests as a director of the Springboard Centre, Founder of Mantle Community Arts and supporter of Coalville Town Football Club should any matters relating to them arise at the meeting.

Councillor J Legrys declared non-pecuniary interests in relation to his voluntary activities at Hermitage FM and observing role with the local group Friends of Coalville Park.

Councillor M Wyatt declared non-pecuniary interests in all items as an owner of two businesses in Coalville Town Centre; and in Item 5 – Capital Projects Update, as a member of the Broom Leys Allotment Society and the Bardon Liaison Committee, both of which were involved in several of the schemes mentioned in the report.

They remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion on all matters.

11. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was moved by Councillor J Geary, seconded by Councillor A Bridgen and by affirmation of the meeting

RESOLVED THAT

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 June 2020 be confirmed as an accurate record.

12. EVENTS UPDATE

Wendy May, Cultural Services Team Manager presented the report.

The Cultural Services Team Manager highlighted several of the key themes of the report, including the impact of COVID-19 leading to a number of events being cancelled or scaled back. The report also went through areas of concern in preparation for Christmas in Coalville such as difficulties in signing traders and the uncertainty caused by the potential for local restrictions being imposed due to COVID-19. It was observed that nationally many similar Christmas events had already been cancelled.

It was also recommended that the Working Party consider utilising the underspend from the 2020/21 Events budget by asking Cabinet to allocate £30,000 from Coalville Special Expenses funding to make a significant and timely investment in the Christmas Lights for 2021.

Chairman's initials

Attention was also drawn to the Coalville Special Expenses Community Grant which was anticipated to be re-instated by the end of October. Members were encouraged to promote the availability of the scheme and the wider programme of grants within their wards.

The Chairman thanked the Cultural Services Team Manager for her report and opened up the discussion to Members.

Members were supportive of the recommendation to seek funding of £30,000 from Cabinet for the purposes of investing in new stock for Coalville Christmas Lights.

Several Members raised concerns with the proposal including the importance of securing good value for money through a competitive process, the costs of storing and maintaining the stock, ensuring lights would not quickly become old or out of date, and whether these issues could be resolved by hiring Christmas lights rather than buying them outright.

The Cultural Services Team Manager assured Members that their concerns would be taken into account and that through a competitive process with several firms applying, it was hoped several different options would be available, which would help address these concerns.

In response to several questions from Members, the Cultural Services Team Manager explained that work to install the lights for Christmas in Coalville 2020 had already begun which would alleviate the risk of COVID-19 leading to work being left incomplete. A decision would also be imminent on which events would take place or be scaled back if required due to further COVID-19 restrictions.

A discussion was also held regarding the placement of a Christmas Tree at Marlborough Square due to issues that had taken place last year as a result of vandalism. Despite aesthetic concerns, Members broadly spoke in support of maintaining a tree at that location, having considered factors such as the availability of other locations, costs and the reliability of the supplier in previous years.

It was moved by Councillor A Black, seconded by Councillor M French and by affirmation of the meeting

RESOLVED THAT

The Working Party:

- 1) Notes the Progress Update on 2020/21 Events
- 2) Supports the proposed Event Programme for 2021/22 (Subject to Budget Approvals in February 2021)
- 3) Confirms membership of the Events Sub Group for 2021 as Councillors E Allman, A Black, D Everitt, M French, J Geary and M Wyatt

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET THAT

- 4) Approval be given for the allocation of a maximum of £30,000 from balances for investment in Coalville Christmas Lights

13. CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE

Jason Knight, Leisure Services Team Manager presented the report which updated Members with regards to Capital Projects within the Coalville Special Expense Area.

Chairman's initials

Additionally, reference was made to a proposal to allocate £500 to match funding by the Princes Trust which would support a local community project to install a mosaic at a derelict site at Cropston Drive, photos of which had been circulated in the Additional Papers.

The Chairman thanked the Leisure Services Team Manager for his report and opened the discussion to Members.

Members spoke in support of the work being undertaken on many of the projects referenced in the report, and wished to thank officers for their continuing work despite the many complications caused by COVID-19. Members were also pleased to see those projects that were being funded partially or entirely through external funding rather than the taxpayer.

Members spoke in support of the work being undertaken at Coalville Park including that by Friends of Coalville Park in surveying local residents. They also felt that it was important that the capacity of the park and its ability to host large events was not reduced in any way and that any proposals would not be overambitious, leading to higher maintenance costs for the Coalville Special Expenses budget in the long term.

Concerns were also raised with regard to littering issues at the Lillehammer Drive site, the length of time the project has and was anticipated to take and the cost of tree removals at London Road Cemetery.

On these issues, the Leisure Services Team Manager gave assurances they would be looked into and actioned where it was within the scope of officers.

Going forward, it was requested that Members be updated at the next meeting on London Road Cemetery being brought back into use for the interment of ashes, as it had previously been raised at a meeting of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee.

Furthermore, officers were encouraged to work with colleagues at Leicestershire County Council in order for Bardon Road to be included as one of the sites for tree planting referenced in the report.

Several Members also supported work undertaken so far at Scotland Bowls Pavilion. It was requested that officers be asked to look into the feasibility of installing solar panels and a wind turbine at the site in order for the building to be self-sufficient and carbon neutral. This would be funded from the Council's Climate Change Reserve and match-funded by the Bardon Aggregates Community Fund.

Over the course of the meeting, Members also spoke in support of the proposal to allocate funding of £500 to Cropston Drive to match the funding already put forward by the Princes Trust. In particular, Members were pleased that this was a locally driven project and were grateful to recent support that residents had received from Housing officers.

By affirmation of the meeting it was

RESOLVED THAT

- 1) The Working Party note the progress update on the 2020/21 Capital Projects and

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET THAT

- 2) £500 be allocated to improvements at Cropston Drive to match the funding put forward by the Princes Trust.

Chairman's initials

- 3) Officers be asked to investigate the feasibility of installing solar panels and a wind turbine at Scotland Bowls Pavilion, funded by the Council's Climate Change Reserve and match-funded by the Bardon Aggregates Community Fund.

14. FINANCE UPDATE

Paul Sanders, Head of Community Services presented the report, setting out the latest financial figures for the Coalville Special Expenses Area.

As there was now an overall reduction in expenditure of £76,000, mainly due to grounds maintenance work and several events not being carried out, there would now be a contribution to reserves of £61,000 instead of the planned £15,000 overspend.

Therefore, as this would take reserves to a total of £142,000 at year-end there was a unique opportunity to consider using this money for investments such as those on Coalville Christmas Lights agreed earlier in the meeting. The Head of Community Services concluded by outlining several different options for the use of this money which Members could consider going forward.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Community Services for his report and opened up the discussion to Members.

It was observed that although the amount of extra spending available going forward might seem high, it was important that any extra spending be decided prudently.

Improvements and repairs to play equipment in Coalville were identified as a possible area to commit to extra spending going forward.

It was moved by Councillor J Geary, seconded by Councillor J Legrys and by affirmation of the meeting

RESOLVED THAT

The Working Party notes the 2019/20 Final Outturn figures and the 2020/21 Period 3 Actuals and the forecast for the year.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.41 pm

Chairman's initials