

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

Present: Councillors R Adams, N Clarke, J Geary, R Johnson, J Legrys, M Specht and L Spence

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

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN FOR ENSUING YEAR

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

RESOLVED THAT:

Councillor R Johnson be elected Chairman of the Working Party for the ensuing municipal year.

Councillor R Johnson then took the chair.

2. APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN FOR ENSUING YEAR

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

RESOLVED THAT:

Councillor J Geary be elected Deputy Chairman of the Working Party for the ensuing municipal year.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors P Clayfield, D Everitt and M B Wyatt.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors J Geary, R Johnson, J Legrys and L Spence declared a disclosable non pecuniary interest in Item 6 – Capital Projects Update as regular supporters of Coalville Town FC.

Councillor J Legrys also declared a disclosable non pecuniary interest in Item 7 – 2014/15 Events Update due to his involvement with Hermitage FM.

5. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 15 April 2014.

The Leisure Services Team Manager confirmed that the Whitwick Pit Disaster Memorial had now been successfully restored.

Councillor J Legrys thanked officers for their work in ensuring that the memorial was restored. He commented that it was a shame that the memorial was being used as a smoking area by some in the community.

Councillor N Clarke enquired whether the brass plaque had been replaced. The Leisure Services Team Manager confirmed that it had not been replaced but had been polished and cleaned.

Chairman's initials

Councillor J Geary expressed his disappointment that a visit to Broomleys Allotments had not been arranged, as had been agreed at the last meeting. The Leisure Services Team Manager confirmed that contact had been made with Tim Sporne from the society and a visit would be arranged in due course.

The Leisure Services Team Manager confirmed that Cabinet had agreed to provide free car parking in Coalville Town Centre for five weekends between 22 November and 20 December.

It was moved by Councillor M Specht, seconded by Councillor J Legrys and

RESOLVED THAT:

the minutes of the meeting held on 15 April 2014 be approved.

6. 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

Minor improvements had been made to enhance the offer to toddlers through the addition of talking flowers that allow two-way communication. These had now been ordered and it was anticipated that delivery would be taken in mid-August and installation would follow in early September.

It was confirmed that Cabinet had agreed with the recommendation not to change the name of Coalville Park. However, it had been requested that the suggestion to install a peace garden in the park be considered further. The Leisure Services Team Manager confirmed that a potential site within the park had been identified and that plans would now be formulated once a budget for the project had been agreed.

Councillor J Legrys suggested that the Working Party visit the proposed site in order to confirm its suitability for the garden. The Leisure Services Team Manager confirmed that he would arrange such a visit.

Councillor J Legrys enquired whether the project would be completed in time for the annual Remembrance Day commemorations in November. The Leisure Services Team Manager confirmed that this would be the aim.

Owen Street Recreation Ground

It was stated that the electricity upgrade works had been completed. However, it had been ascertained that the £60,000 quote to upgrade the fittings on the floodlight columns would not increase the lux levels to the necessary standard. Consequently, another contractor had been approached with a view to developing proposals that will raise the lux levels to a standard that would be sufficient to cope with a further two promotions. It was anticipated that the new proposals, as well as their cost, would be finalised by the end of August.

The proposed long term lease had now been considered by the football club and had now been returned to Legal Services to finalise. It was stated that, as a short term measure, a one year lease had been agreed and signed in order to satisfy league requirements for the upcoming season.

Chairman's initials

Once the long term lease had been finalised, the club would be able to apply to the Football Stadia Improvement Fund (FSIF) for match funding for the new changing rooms. It was confirmed that the designs had already been approved by the FSIF, as well as by Building Control and the Asset Management Group at the District Council.

It was stated that the football club had commenced the procurement process for the pavilion and that specifications of work had been sent to three building contractors as had been requested by both the FSIF and the Working Party. Each contractor would quote against the existing planning drawings, including all materials and finishes. A JCT (Joint Contract Tribunal) Design and Build contract would then be issued to the successful bidder in order to ensure that the contractor completed the project within the cost they had quoted.

Councillor N Clarke placed on record his thanks to the Leisure Services Team Manager for having regularly updated members of the Working Party with progress on the project.

Councillor J Legrys enquired as to how the planning application for the project was advancing. The Leisure Services Team Manager responded that the application was currently following due process and that indications were that the application would be called in.

Thringstone Miners Social Centre

It was stated that provisional costs and plans had been obtained for the development of an enclosed grass training pitch. The County Council had advised that the proposed footpath extinguishment would not be viable and had instead suggested a footpath diversion. Consequently, costs were currently being sought for a new footpath that would run across the edge of the land that formerly housed Clover Place play area.

Councillor L Spence stated that he was concerned that the social centre appeared to have isolated themselves within the community. He stated that he had been informed by residents who neighbour the site that there had been little consultation on the project. He enquired whether the District Council could encourage the social centre to liaise more closely with the community. The Leisure Services Team Manager confirmed that he would provide feedback to the social centre accordingly.

Cropston Drive BMX Track and Wheeled Sports Facility

It was confirmed that the BMX track had now been completed. Designs and costs for the wheeled sports facility had been received from two contractors. Unfortunately, a third contractor had not responded. Further consultation had now been undertaken with Greenhill Youth Club and Greenhill Community Shop and the opinions of local children had also been sought. It was stated that a final decision on which design would be implemented would be taken once further stakeholders had responded to the consultation.

Councillor N Clarke suggested that a deadline on responses be set in order to prevent the project being delayed any further. The Leisure Services Team Manager confirmed that he would look into this further.

Broomleys Allotments

It was confirmed that the project had been completed and that feedback had continued to be extremely positive.

Chairman's initials

Councillor J Legrys enquired how many plots had been taken at the allotment. The Leisure Services Team Manager stated that he would look into this and report back accordingly.

Councillor R Johnson asked how many beehives had been installed at the site. The Leisure Services Team Manager stated that he would contact the society in order to establish the figure before informing Members.

Urban Forest Park

It was stated that it had been established that it would be possible to undertake surface water sampling at the site if desired. However, such an approach would only act as a broad screen looking for contaminants that are appropriate to a landfill site, and would not cover every eventuality. It was confirmed that the cost of undertaking such testing would be in excess of £1,000 and that the final cost would be dependent upon the number of samples required.

The Leisure Services Team Manager confirmed that no issues had arisen from the biannual gas monitoring that occurred at the site and stated that Members needed to decide whether further testing was desired.

Councillor J Geary stated the Council found itself in an awkward position in that the possibility of water contamination had now been established. As such, he argued that the Council had a duty of care to test further in order to prevent any liability in the future. He stated that he favoured spending the £1,000 on further testing on this basis.

Councillor J Legrys thanked officers for having taken their concerns seriously. He agreed that the Council needed to take further action. He suggested that the Council's Health and Safety Officer undertake a proper risk assessment on the footpath and drainage proposals. He stated that he agreed with the idea of testing the surface water and indicated that he thought that this was the minimum that should be done.

Melrose Road Play Area

It was confirmed that the additional safety surfacing had now been fully installed and, as such, the project had now been completed.

Scotlands Changing Pavilion

The £10,000 that had been earmarked for maintenance work on the roof and boilers had now been spent and the work had been completed accordingly. All of the boilers had now been replaced and the roof had been fully refurbished. It was confirmed that, consequently, all balances had now been spent.

Councillor J Legrys proposed that the item remain on the agenda at future meetings of the Working Party due to the possibility of the play equipment at Lillehammer Drive being relocated to the site.

RECOMMENDED THAT:

- a) surface water testing be conducted at the Urban Forest Park.
- b) internal resources be utilised in order to conduct a risk assessment on the footpath and drainage proposals at the Urban Forest Park.

Chairman's initials

7. 2014/15 EVENTS UPDATE

The Cultural Services Team Manager presented the report to Members.

He provided Members with an update on each event.

St George's Day Flags

It was confirmed that the usual number of St George's Day flags were not erected this year. However, flags were displayed at each side of the Clock Tower, at Market Hall and at the Council Offices.

Picnic in the Park

It was estimated that more than 5,000 people attended this year's event. The event enjoyed an exciting mix of live music, family activities, fairground rides, street entertainers and stalls. The event saw an appearance from European BMX champion Keelan Phillips, as part of the County Council's Big Bike Ride scheme.

The event had received very positive feedback from various stakeholders including the Rotary Club of Coalville, the Friends of Thringstone and the Sir John Moore Foundation. The main theme of the feedback was community engagement and having fun.

The Cultural Services Team Manager paid tribute to the hard work of both Angela Bexton and Julia Harley in ensuring that the event was organised successfully.

Councillor L Spence thanked the Cultural Services Team for their hard work in organising the event. He stated that he feared the event would become undeliverable if its budget was cut any further in future years. He stressed that this year's budget should be seen as the minimum going forward.

Councillor J Legrys echoed the comments regarding the hard work of officers in arranging the event. He stated that it was important to explore external sponsorship opportunities for next year's event as this would ensure that the baseline budget was maintained in the future. He stressed that it was important to ensure that the event moves forward next year and does not become stale. He stated that he was unsure whether it would be wise to schedule the event on the same weekend as the Motorfest next year. He cited the fact that Hermitage FM had been involved in both events and had struggled with the logistics of doing so.

Councillor N Clarke agreed that the event had been a success. He stated that officers had been visible at the event and that he thought this would help with the Council's perception in the community.

Councillor R Johnson stated that the amount of litter at the event had dropped significantly from last year. He went on to say that it was good to see the public being more responsible in this respect.

Coalville by the Sea

Following its success last year, a similar event would be organised for families this year. The event would include games, arts and crafts, puppet shows, music and sandpits and would take place on 8 August in Needhams Walk.

Chairman's initials

Christmas Events

It had been agreed to combine the Council's Christmas event with the Coalville Town Team's Food and Drink Festival. Both events would be held on 22 November. It was reiterated that Cabinet had agreed that free car parking would be available on each Saturday between 22 November and 20 December.

RESOLVED THAT:

the progress on 2014/15 events be noted.

8. FINAL OUTTURN FIGURES 13/14 AND 14/15 FINANCE UPDATE

The Leisure Services Team Manager presented the report to Members.

It was stated that the outturn figures showed an underspend with a contribution to balances of around £29,000. This was predominantly due to an increase in burial and monument income, a reduction in staffing costs at parks and recreation grounds and reduced service recharges.

It was explained that there was a balance of £81,000 and that it was prudent to retain 5-10% of balances as a reserve. Consequently, it was confirmed that there was around £40,000 to allocate to projects if Members desired.

It was stated that Cabinet had put forward two proposals at its meeting on 24 June. It had been suggested that an allocation of approximately £10,000 be taken from balances to continue with Coalville's Christmas lights improvement programme. Specifically, the money would fund an exterior Christmas lighting scheme which would become a key part of the annual lights switch on event at the Market Hall. Around £1,000 of the money would also be used to repair and refurbish existing lighting where needed.

Similarly, Cabinet had agreed with the proposal to construct a peace garden, in conjunction with Armed Forces Veterans, within Coalville Park. A potential location had been identified and a budget of between £5,000 and £10,000 had been suggested.

Councillor J Geary asked what the maintenance costs for the peace garden would be. The Leisure Services Team Manager stated that this would be dependent on the plans.

Councillor J Legrys stated that he had serious doubts regarding the proposal to spend the reserves on Christmas lighting. He stated that he would prefer the money to be allocated to projects that would be used throughout the year. He suggested that investing in modern signage for the Market Hall would be more beneficial to the Town Centre.

Councillor J Geary stated that the emphasis over the last few years had been on cuts. Consequently, the £10,000 would be better spent on increasing footfall in the town throughout the year. He argued that the current signage did not give a good impression and suggested that modern, neon style signage should be installed. He stated this would be a far more prudent investment and would provide best value for money in tough fiscal times.

Councillor L Spence stated that the Working Party had invested in Christmas lighting in previous years. He stated that he was strongly of the opinion that reserves should be spent on improving footfall within the Town Centre. He stated that the Working Party should be doing all it can to drive economic regeneration throughout the year.

Chairman's initials

The Leisure Services Team Manager stated that approximately £1,000 of the money had been earmarked to refurbish existing lighting. The consensus of Members was to agree to fund this aspect of the programme.

The Leisure Services Team Manager explained that Parish Councils were being approached to see if they would favour taking over some of the grounds maintenance functions from the County Council. As such, the District Council had been approached regarding the unparished area covered by the Working Party. He stated that the priority areas currently identified as requiring attention were the area around the Phoenix Green Footbridge, as well as the approaches to the town on Bardon Road and Ashby Road.

Councillor J Geary stated that the County Council were taking this approach solely so that they could save money. He argued that the County Council had not fulfilled their duties in this respect and stated that the lack of upkeep on the Ashby Road corridor was a disgrace.

Councillor L Spence stated that the County Council would only fund the basic costs of doing the work. He stated that he believed the Working Party would have to supplement the funding for the work in order to complete it to a good standard.

Councillor N Clarke reminded Members of the Community Right to Bid. He enquired whether it would be possible for the Working Party to bid to take over the grass cutting function from the County Council.

Councillor M Specht stated that a meeting of Parish Councils had been arranged for 6 August to discuss this issue. He suggested that it should be ascertained whether Members of the Working Party could attend this meeting.

The consensus of Members was to attend the meeting on 6 August before discussing whether taking over grounds maintenance functions would be favoured.

It was moved by Councillor J Geary, seconded by Councillor J Legrys and

RECOMMENDED THAT:

- a) new neon style signage for the Market Hall be funded from the reserves.
- b) laser style lighting be hired as a one-off for the Christmas switch on event.
- c) officers work on further proposals that would drive footfall through the market.

9. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Members noted the dates of the future meetings.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, 14 October 2014 6.30pm in the Board Room.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.44 pm

Chairman's initials