

MINUTES of a meeting of the COALVILLE SPECIAL EXPENSES WORKING PARTY held in the Board Room, Council Offices, Coalville on TUESDAY, 8TH OCTOBER, 2013

Present: Councillor N Clarke (Chairman) (in the chair)

Councillors R Adams, J Geary, R Johnson, J Legrys, L Spence, M B Wyatt

Officers: Mr L Brewster, Mr G Lewis, Mr J Richardson and Mr P Simpson

#### **11. PRESENTATION FROM TIM SPORNE (JUBILEE ALLOTMENTS)**

Mr T Sporne updated Members on progress at the site.

He relayed that the allotment had been formally opened by both the District and County Chairmen in September and had been renamed Jubilee Allotments to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012.

It was stated that the three acre site had previously been used for cattle grazing and had therefore initially been very overgrown. However, a contractor had since been employed to work the land so it was fit for purpose. In addition, an access road had been installed and a former garage site had been converted for use as a car park.

Mr Sporne stressed that the allotment's ethos was to work hand in hand with nature. Consequently, it was confirmed that the site was taking an environmentally friendly approach in not allowing the use of any contaminants, as well as ensuring that all waste was composted onsite.

It was outlined that the site would be used as a facility for the community with the installation of a nature walk, sensory garden, orchard and disabled plots for the benefit of local schoolchildren and charities. Furthermore, it was intended to encourage the local community to purchase any surplus produce from the site.

Mr Sporne passed on the thanks of the whole society to North West Leicestershire District Council for their help, in particular Mr J Richardson, Head of Community Services and Mr C Robinson, Environmental Development Officer, for their enthusiasm, help and advice on the project.

Councillor L Spence congratulated the society on the impressive progress that had been made in a short space of time. He also relayed that, through his role as a governor of a local school, he had seen firsthand that children were already benefitting from the site.

Councillor J Geary thanked both Mr T Sporne and Councillor M B Wyatt for their work on the project and stated that the project would not have been such a success without both of their contributions.

#### **12. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors P Clayfield and D Everitt.

#### **13. 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 and Coalville Town FC, as a business owner in the Town Centre.

Chairman's initials

Councillors J Geary, R Johnson, J Legrys and L Spence 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 – 2013/14 Events Update due to his involvement with Hermitage FM.

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

#### **14. MINUTES**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2013.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

the minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2013 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

#### **15. CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE**

The Head of Community Services presented the report to Members.

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

Coalville Park Improvements

The project was virtually completed and would shortly be signed off, with any outstanding balance being assessed at the end of the financial year. The Green Gym was receiving positive feedback and being regularly used by the public. The digimatic floor signage had now been ordered and would be installed in mid-October.

Councillor J Legrys thanked officers for their work on the project and stated that residents have spoken positively to him about the improvements.

Owen Street Recreation Ground

The hot water system had now been upgraded through the replacement of a circulation pump and an increase of hot water storage capacity of 50%. The floodlights had now been assessed and recommendations from the contractor would be received imminently.

The Football Foundation had confirmed that the relocation of Coalville Town FC to Owen Street Recreation Ground would fit the criteria for a funding application to meet 50% of the costs. However, until they had seen the plans and considered the costs of the application, they would not commit as to whether or not the bid would be successful.

Property Services had presented draft plans and costings that were based on the initial designs presented by Coalville Town FC. However, these were significantly over budget. Consequently, new plans had been agreed with the club that omitted various aspects that were included in the original plans including a meeting room, a kitchen, a storage area and separate toilets.

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Property Services were now in the process of revising the costs based on the new proposals. If it was established that the new proposals could be met within budget, the plans would be sent to the Football Stadia Improvement Fund for comments and consideration and the formal application would be progressed.

An initial draft of the long-term license had been drafted by Legal Services. This would now be reviewed by Officers before returning to Legal Services to be completed. It would then be formally submitted to Coalville Town FC through the Owen Street Management Committee for approval.

Councillor J Geary suggested that the plans be put out to tender as this would likely reduce the costs of the project.

Councillor M B Wyatt enquired whether further funding could be available, for instance from the Big Society Grant Fund at Leicestershire County Council. The Head of Community Services indicated that this had been looked at but that the sums offered would not be significant.

#### Thringstone Miners Social Centre

The Thringstone Miners Social Centre Management Committee was currently liaising with Leicestershire County Council with regard to the footpath diversion and the movement of a street light in order to facilitate a grass training pitch.

#### Cropston Drive BMX Track and Wheeled Sports Facility

Proposals for the wheeled sports facility and BMX track were presented at the meeting and were approved by Members. Confirmed costs would now be obtained prior to local children being consulted on the plans.

#### Broom Leys Allotments

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

It was confirmed that the route for the mains water had been agreed with the Allotment Society and Severn Trent. The mains pipe laying had now been completed and it was anticipated that the mains water would be connected by the end of October.

Councillor M B Wyatt returned to the meeting.

#### Urban Forest Park

The new piece of play equipment had now been installed and had received positive feedback from the public. A contractor had visited the site and had made suggestions regarding improvements to the footway and drainage. In addition, an internal survey had been undertaken regarding current drainage with a view to making improvements. Proposals would now be developed to improve both areas and a scheme of works would be produced.

Councillor J Legrys enquired as to what drainage improvements were planned. The Head of Community Services confirmed that the works would concentrate on lessening surface water retention to aid dog walkers and runners.

RESOLVED THAT:

the progress on 2013/14 Capital Projects be noted.

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## 16. 2013/14 EVENTS UPDATE

The Cultural Services Team Manager presented the report to Members.

He provided Members with an update on each event.

### Coalville by the Sea Family Event

The event was extremely well supported by local families and lots of positive feedback had been received. The new venue at Needhams Walk worked well and provided a safe environment for children to play. Furthermore, the event attracted regional media attention and was also supported by Hermitage FM, the Marlene Reid Centre and Coalville Library.

Councillor M B Wyatt queried whether large housing developers had been approached to contribute funding to Coalville town events. The Head of Community Services stated that this had happened in the past and could be looked into further.

Councillor J Legrys pointed out that the Council had previously voted to move Section 106 money into infrastructure projects within the Coalville Urban Area. He instead favoured the Head of Regeneration and Planning Services asking for contributions outside of Section 106.

Councillor L Spence stated that he had previously spoken to a developer who had indicated that they were happy to provide more than the funds required under Section 106 if there was a business case that meant it would be of mutual benefit.

### Annual Food & Drink Promotions

Leicestershire Food Fortnight successfully took place between 21 September and 6 October. Various local businesses took part in the promotion including Hermitage FM Coffee Lounge, Rose Cup Tea Rooms, La Torre Italian Restaurant, Coalville Market Cafe and Sommerfields Butchers.

The Coalville Town Team were currently planning a new Coalville Food and Drink Festival on 23 November which would include food and drink stalls, arts and crafts, entertainment and an ice skating rink.

### Christmas in Coalville

The event in Coalville would take place on 30 November to coincide with a similar event in Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

The suggestion of the events sub-group to relocate the event to Memorial Square had not been supported by the emergency services due to both the high numbers of people expected and the associated risks that this would present. The event would therefore be held outside Coalville Market, as in 2012.

Councillor J Legrys stated that he was unhappy that Memorial Square would not be used as the venue. He indicated that he believed the location at Coalville Market makes the event more remote to the public.

The Cultural Services Team Manager stated that last year's event was the first at this location and that lessons had been learnt from that event that would be implemented this year.

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Councillor J Legrys stated that he favoured synergy between the Christmas event and the Food and Drink Festival the weekend before. The Head of Community Services stated that he would look into the logistics to determine whether this was feasible.

Councillor M B Wyatt agreed that the current location was in the wrong place. He also favoured moving the event back to Memorial Square, stating that the event was a great success the last time that it was held there.

The Head of Community Services stated that the Council does not have the resources to meet the demands of the emergency services in terms of road closures and traffic rerouting. On this basis, it had been decided not to relocate the event.

Councillor J Geary stated that he does not support switching the venue to Memorial Square on health and safety grounds. He stated that the crossroads at Memorial Square were the main access route into Coalville for the emergency services and that closing the road would pose serious problems for emergency response vehicles.

Councillor N Clarke stated that, whilst he favoured Memorial Square as a venue, it was clear that it was beyond the means of the Council to hold the event there currently.

#### Coalville Christmas Decorations

It was confirmed that there would be new lighting this year, as agreed at the meeting on 16 April 2013, including new festoon lighting outside the Council Offices and a small number of decorations for lamp columns around Belvoir Road.

#### RESOLVED THAT:

the progress on 2013/14 events be noted.

### **17. 2013/14 PERIOD 5 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 five and that this would allow a modest contribution to balances.

He went on to state that the General Fund budget proposals that were recently agreed by Cabinet included the reallocation of justified costs in the General Fund to the Coalville Special Expense Budget. Subsequently, he noted that several areas of expenditure that should instead be funded from the Coalville Special Expense Budget had already been identified.

Councillor M B Wyatt stated that he strongly disagreed with the proposal to charge the Coalville Special Expense Budget for the Remembrance Day Service given that it acted as a focal point for commemorations in the entire District. He stated that this was highlighted by the fact that the Chief Executive and Chairman of the District attended the Coalville event.

The Head of Community Services stated that the Coalville Special Expense Budget should fund the event as other parishes within the District host their own events which they fund themselves.

Councillor L Spence stated that he agreed with the position taken by Councillor M B Wyatt and that he disagreed with the proposal in the strongest possible terms. He noted that he appreciated that some burden would have to transfer to the Coalville Special

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Expense Budget given the current economic climate. However, he said that he was astonished that it was being proposed to transfer the funding of the Remembrance Day Service for the same reasoning given by Councillor M B Wyatt.

Councillor R Johnson stated that he thought the proposal was disgraceful and agreed that the cost of running the event should be taken from the General Fund.

Councillor J Geary stated that he was bitterly disappointed with the proposal. He noted that other parishes within the District held their own events, but stated that parishes were able to raise Council Tax precepts to help fund such events whereas the Coalville Special Expense area had to liaise with Cabinet in order to do so. He stated that he felt the maximum increase in Council Tax should be requested.

Councillor M B Wyatt countered that in his opinion Council Tax should not be raised.

Councillor L Spence also stated that, in his opinion, an increase in the precept for the Coalville Special Expense area should not be requested.

Members sought clarification as to how much the Council could increase Council Tax. The Senior Accountant confirmed that any raise is capped at 2% and that the District intended to implement a 1.5% raise in any case.

Councillor J Legrys suggested that the increase should be kept at 1.5% if the £3,500 cost of holding the Remembrance Day Service was returned to the General Fund.

The Head of Community Services indicated that savings could be achieved by reducing the amounts currently allocated to various areas, such as existing events, grants and the cost of open space management.

Councillor L Spence stated that, in his view, it was important to maintain open spaces, such as flowerbeds, as it provided both residents and visitors with a positive impression of the town. He stated that he believed this was more important than one-off events and that the Working Party should concentrate on making Coalville a place where people want to live all year round.

Councillor J Legrys concurred with the views put forward by Councillor L Spence. He stated that it was essential that the town was maintained all year round and that events such as Coalville Twenty14 could instead be run by volunteers.

Councillor M B Wyatt stated that the large events that were currently held were important to the community and suggested that these should be maintained, at the expense of the smaller events.

Councillor J Legrys proposed that the St George's Day Flags should be scrapped in forthcoming years, along with the annual Food and Drink Festival which he described as unnecessary. However, he noted that the Coalville by the Sea event had been well attended and appeared to be popular with the public and, as such, should be maintained.

Councillor L Spence countered that the St George's Day Flags, much like the maintaining of the flowerbeds, made the town seem pleasant and welcoming to the public and should therefore be maintained. He instead suggested that the budget for each event should be capped.

Councillor N Clarke suggested that, as a minimum, the Christmas and Picnic in the Park events should be maintained.

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Councillor J Legrys requested that the recharge for the work undertaken by Event Management officers should accurately reflect the time taken to complete the work. The Head of Community Services confirmed that this would be the case.

Councillor M B Wyatt suggested that the grants that were currently offered by the Working Party should be forsaken in favour of the larger events that were held.

Councillor L Spence disagreed with this viewpoint, stating that the grant fund should be maintained given the likelihood of the Grants Review Working Party being imminently disbanded.

The consensus of Members was to convene a meeting of the Events Task & Finish Group during the consultation period to consider the 2014/15 Events Programme and other budget changes in light of the proposed reallocation of funds from the General Fund to the Coalville Special Expense Budget.

It was moved by Councillor R Adams, seconded by Councillor M B Wyatt and

**RECOMMENDED THAT:**

the expenditure in respect of the Coalville Remembrance Day Service be referred to Cabinet to consider inclusion in the General Fund budget.

#### **18. WINTER GRIT BINS UPDATE**

The Head of Community Services updated Members on progress.

He confirmed that grit bins had been installed in every location that had been requested by the Working Party.

Councillor N Clarke enquired when further applications for grit bins could be made. The Head of Community Services confirmed that applications would reopen next Spring.

Councillor J Legrys encouraged Members to promote the County Council's Snow Warden Programme during the forthcoming winter.

**RESOLVED THAT:**

Members note the update.

#### **19. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Members noted the dates of the future meetings.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, 17 December 2013 at 6.30pm in the Board Room.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 7.54pm.

Councillor M B Wyatt left the meeting at 6.56pm and returned at 6.58pm.

Councillors J Geary and R Johnson left the meeting at 7.32pm.

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