

MINUTES of a meeting of the COALVILLE SPECIAL EXPENSES WORKING PARTY held in the Board Room, Council Offices, Coalville on TUESDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2015

Present: Councillor J Geary (Chairman)

Councillors R Adams, N Clarke, J Cotterill, D Everitt, J Legrys, P Purver, M Specht and M B Wyatt

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

10. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies received.

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor J Legrys declared a disclosable non pecuniary interest in Item 6 – 2015/16 Events Update due to his involvement with Hermitage FM.

Councillor M B Wyatt declared a disclosable non pecuniary interest in any reference to Coalville, as a business owner in the Town Centre.

Councillor J Geary declared a disclosable non pecuniary interest in Item 5 – Capital Projects Update as a regular supporter of Coalville Town FC.

12. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2015.

Councillor J Geary commented that a visit to Broom Leys Allotments had still not been arranged, despite the suggestion at the last meeting that an open day would be held in September.

Councillor M B Wyatt stated that the Chairman of the allotments had been ill and that, as such, an open day had not been held. He confirmed that a response to the written request for a site visit would be forthcoming shortly.

Councillor J Geary thanked Members for contributing to the sub groups that had been held since the last meeting. He referred to comments made at a recent Cabinet meeting where the number of sub groups that the Working Party had formed had been criticised. He countered that the sub groups were an effective way in which to conduct Working Party business.

Councillor M B Wyatt stated that he was not happy that a member of Cabinet had tried to tell the Working Party what to do.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

the minutes of the meeting held 9 July 2015 be approved.

Chairman's initials

13. CEMETERY CHARGES UPDATE

Councillor M Specht, as Chairman of the sub group, updated Members on the meeting that had been held. He stated that it had been confirmed that the cost of running each cemetery was divided by the number of properties in each precepting area and that, as Coalville had more properties, the cost per property was therefore less. He confirmed that the consensus of the meeting had been to maintain this as the way in which costs were calculated.

Councillor J Legrys stated that he agreed with this stance. He queried why this information had not been relayed back to the Parish Councils concerned. It was agreed that this should happen imminently.

14. 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

It was confirmed that work was continuing on the Peace Garden and that it was anticipated that the project would be finalised shortly before an official opening on 3 November to which Members of the Working Party would be invited.

Councillor M Specht suggested that Members that represented wards outside of the Coalville Special Expenses area also be invited to the official opening. The consensus of Members was to do this.

Councillors N Clarke and J Geary stated that they would not be able to attend the official opening.

Owen Street Recreation Ground

Electricity Upgrade

It was confirmed that a contractor had visited the site and presented costed proposals to update the floodlighting lux levels to satisfy the Football Association's ground grading requirements should the club be promoted to a higher level. It was stated that the current floodlighting would be sufficient should the club be promoted one division, but no further. As such, it was stated that it was anticipated that the work would not take place until it became necessary to do so.

Councillor P Purver asked how long the works would take to complete should they become necessary. It was stated that the first stage of work would improve the lux levels by installing new light bulbs and would therefore be relatively quick to complete.

Councillor M Specht stated that he was uncertain as to why differing lux levels were required depending on the level of football that was being played. It was explained by Councillor J Geary that, at a higher level of football, there was a greater media presence that required brighter lighting for their equipment. Additionally, the current lighting was now 19 years old and had already failed twice previously. Consequently, as the lighting needed to be replaced, it would be logical to upgrade it at the same time.

Changing Room Development

It was stated that the building works had commenced and that it was anticipated that works would be completed in April 2016. As part of the funding agreement, the District Council would act as the Clerk of Works for the project and would be responsible for monitoring the build.

Entrance Trees

It was confirmed that this piece of work had now been completed.

Thringstone Miners Social Centre

It was stated that potential sources of funding were still being identified and that the project had been split into three phases with the outstanding money funds being earmarked for the first stage.

It was confirmed that a public consultation had been conducted via the distribution of flyers to households in the local vicinity. Only one response had been received and it had objected to the proposal. Given the very limited response, the planning and footpath diversion applications had now been submitted.

Additionally, work was continuing in order to secure further funding for the second and third phases. It was possible that a funding application could be submitted to the BIFFA Main Grants Scheme which accepts application up to £50,000, although they also require a third party contribution of 10% of the cost.

Councillor M Specht asked for clarification as to what proportion of the allocated funds would be used for planning application fees. It was confirmed that these would cost in the region of £1,500 to £2,000.

Cropston Drive BMX Track and Wheeled Sports Facility

It was confirmed that further work was being undertaken on some elements of the design after the proposed gateway entrance was considered unfeasible. Final proposals and costs for these elements would be presented to the Working Party at its next meeting, with works anticipated to start during spring 2016.

Urban Forest Park

It was stated that work had now commenced on site with the installation of the boardwalk. However, despite the order for the footpath and drainage work being placed in early summer, the contractor had since cancelled an agreed start date in September. An alternative start date of 26 October had now been agreed.

Highway Verge Improvements

It was confirmed that all one off improvement works to the areas around Phoenix Green, Bardon Road and Ashby Road had now been completed. An application to the District Council's Environmental Improvement Grant had been submitted and, if successful, works will be undertaken to include the barking and mulching of flower beds that will suppress future weed growth.

The £4,000 that had been allocated for ad-hoc improvements had been spent on 10 additional cuts over the summer period to Phoenix Green, as well as the cutting back and

Chairman's initials

maintenance of all shrubs within that area. Additionally, winter prunes would take place prior to Christmas at Phoenix Green and along both Bardon Road and Ashby Road. These works had been arranged so as to complement the works conducted by the County Council.

Councillor P Purver stated that she had seen that other local authorities had planted wild flowers as a replacement to grass that required less maintenance. She enquired whether this would be something that the Working Party could look at doing.

The Head of Community Services confirmed that this would be feasible if desired by Members but that full costs and locations would need to be identified. The consensus of Members was for such research to be undertaken by Officers.

Councillor J Legrys thanked Officers for the work that had been undertaken at Phoenix Green. He stated that the area was looking far better than it did previously.

Councillor M Specht stated that, in his view, the only areas that needed to be cut were those where there were issues regarding highway safety. He stated that other areas should be left uncut to encourage wildlife.

Councillor M B Wyatt stated that he disagreed with Councillor M Specht's view. He stated that certain areas must be maintained irrespective of whether they impacted upon highway safety as otherwise the District would look untidy. He stated that even if more wildlife areas were identified, that these would still require maintenance and that there would therefore still be a cost involved.

Warden Presence

It was confirmed that a new parks warden had been appointed for 16 hours a week until October. The role predominantly covered the after school period from Monday to Friday and focused on the areas around the play areas at Cropston Drive, Staples Drive and Scotlands Recreation Ground. The position had been successful in that levels of litter were reduced and no anti-social behaviour issues had been reported.

Thringstone Bowls Club Toilet Block

It was confirmed that formal quotes for the project had been sourced and submitted to BIFFA as part of the funding application. A decision as to whether the bid had been successful was expected by mid November. If successful, building works would commence immediately with a view to having the toilet block operational by April 2016. The total costs of the work would be £25,422 of which 10% would be funded from the Special Expenses fund.

Councillor J Geary queried why the 10% funding was being provided by the Special Expenses fund and not the bowls club themselves. It was confirmed that the funding stipulated that the 10% must be provided by a third party and that the bowls club could not therefore contribute themselves.

Memorial Trees

It was confirmed that a request had been received from Members to consider planting trees in various locations in Coalville in run up to 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War in 2018. The project would be funded through a combination of the Special Expenses fund and external sources.

2016/2017 Proposed Capital Projects

The Head of Community Services outlined projects that had been proposed for the next financial year.

Melrose Road Green Gym (£15,000 cost)

A proposal had been put forward to install a green gym for older children and adults. It was anticipated that a budget of £15,000 would be sufficient to install five pieces of equipment.

Benches in Thringstone (costs to be confirmed)

A request had been received to install benches at various locations within Thringstone in order to assist residents that have difficulty in walking and to enable them to rest on the way to bus stops in the east of the village.

Scotlands Playing Field (costs to be confirmed)

It was stated that, subject to the transfer of the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) from Lillehammer Drive to Scotlands Playing Field being completed, Members may wish to consider funding the creation of a play hub within the vicinity.

Thringstone Miners Social Centre Training Pitch (£5,000 cost)

It was stated that the Special Expenses fund could cover the 10% of the costs that must be provided by a third party. This would then allow the trustees to submit a funding application for the outstanding amount.

The Head of Community Services stated that he had also received several supplementary proposals since the papers for the meeting had been circulated. He updated Members on each of these proposals.

Variable Message Signs

A proposal had been received to install signage to warn motorists of their speed. It was stated that such signage was no longer funded by the County Council and that the Working Party may wish to do so instead.

Phoenix Green

A proposal had been received to refresh the area. It was stated that this was currently the responsibility of the County Council but that the Working Party could look to take on the work instead.

Councillor M B Wyatt stated that, as a minimum, the County Council should be approached to contribute to such a project, before it was decided whether to proceed.

Signage for Places of Interest

A proposal had been received to install signage directing residents to places of interest within the Coalville area. It was suggested that some residents were still unaware of the location of some attractions and would benefit from some additional signage.

Mantle Lane Bridge

A proposal had been received to regenerate the area surrounding Mantle Lane Bridge. It was confirmed however that Network Rail maintained the bridge and that they had been uncooperative when approached previously.

Town Guide for Coalville

A proposal had been received to create a town guide for Coalville that would include details regarding attractions, projects and initiatives that would be of interest to local residents.

Flag Pole at the Council Offices

A proposal had been received to install a flag pole at the front of the Council Offices on London Road.

Councillor J Geary stated that he was loath to proceed with any of the projects until full costings were available for every proposal. He stated that once these were available the Working Party would be in a better position to analyse which projects should proceed.

The Head of Community Services stated that costings would be feasible for all of the projects that had been put forward, with the exception of Mantle Lane Bridge due to it being managed by Network Rail. Additionally, he added that the relocation of the MUGA to Scotlands Playing Field was outside of the council's control.

The consensus of Members was for Officers to develop full costings for all of the projects that had been suggested which could then be discussed by Members at the next meeting of the Working Party.

RESOLVED THAT:

the Working Party notes the progress update on 2015/16 capital projects.

15. 2015/16 EVENTS UPDATE

The Cultural Services Team Manager presented the report to Members.

He provided Members with an update on each event.

Christmas Lights Switch On Event

It was confirmed that the event would once again be combined with Town Team's Food and Drink Festival on 21 November. This year, the lights will be switched on by Sheena McHugh who was a semi-finalist on The Voice television show and who lives in Coalville. It was proposed that this year's free car parking on Saturdays would run for five consecutive Saturdays from 21 November.

Coalville Christmas Decorations

It was confirmed that a tender process had recently been completed and that the contract had been awarded to Field and Lawn who had provided the best overall value for money package.

Chairman's initials

At the sub group meeting held on 9 September, Members requested that a Christmas tree with lighting be installed in Memorial Square this year. The tree itself would cost £970 including installation, whilst the necessary lighting would cost £1,400. The tree would become an annual cost, however, the cost of the lighting would be one off and would then be incorporated into the new Field and Lawn contract.

It was confirmed that there was currently no budget set aside for such a project and that it would therefore be necessary to fund it from the reserves. Similarly, any costs arising due to damage to the tree and lights would also need to be funded in this way. Permission would also have to be sought from the County Council as the tree would be sited on their land.

Councillor M Specht stated that he would support funding a Christmas tree in Memorial Square this year, however, if it was vandalised, he would not be supporting such a move again in future years.

Councillor J Legrys suggested that there was CCTV in this area that may deter vandalism.

Councillor D Everitt stated that he believed that the Working Party should not allow the prospect of vandalism to prevent Members from approving the project. He stated the vast majority of the public were in favour of such a move.

Councillor N Clarke stated that Hermitage FM usually install a Christmas tree outside their building on Memorial Square. He suggested that the Council liaise with Hermitage FM to ensure the two trees complement each other.

Leicestershire Commemorates

It was stated that the Council had been approached by a national campaign that was promoting the idea of civic buildings being lit red for the duration of this year's Poppy Appeal between 21 October and 11 November. Consequently, it had been proposed that the Clock Tower in Memorial Square be lit red during this period. Members stated their agreement with this proposal.

RECOMMENDED THAT:

the Coalville Special Expenses Fund finance the installation of a Christmas tree in Memorial Square at a cost of £2,370.

16. PERIOD 5 ACTUALS AND FORECASTED OUTTURN

The Head of Community Services presented the report to Members.

It was stated that there was currently a forecasted over spend for the year of £4,877. However, such a position was not atypical at this point in the financial year and was predominantly explained by a decrease in burial income over the summer months.

It was confirmed that budgets for the 2016/17 financial year were currently being finalised and that progress would be reported at the next meeting of the Working Party.

RESOLVED THAT:

the Working Party notes the report.

Chairman's initials

17. COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Councillor J Geary, as Chairman of the Working Party, agreed to a request from Councillor M B Wyatt for an additional item to be discussed at the meeting regarding the public consultation that the combined fire authority was undertaking and specifically the changes that were being proposed for Coalville Fire Station.

Councillor M B Wyatt stated that the proposals looked to reduce the capacity of the fire service in Coalville. He queried the logic behind the proposals in that there was likely to be a large number of new dwellings built in the area and therefore a surge in the local population. As such, he stated that he believed such proposals were unfeasible. He stated that he felt that the Working Party should respond to the consultation collectively as they all represented wards that would be affected.

Councillor J Geary stated that the Labour group would be presenting a motion to the next full council regarding this issue that he hoped all Members would support.

It was asked whether the Working Party could respond to the consultation collectively. The Head of Community Services stated that he thought the Working Party's terms of reference only allowed them to consider financial and budgetary matters that were then referred to Cabinet. As such, he stated that he did not think that a collective response would be feasible. However, he stated that he would check this and report back to Members at a later date.

18. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Members noted the dates of the future meetings.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, 15 December 2015 at 6.30pm in the Board Room.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.00 pm

Chairman's signature