

ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE COMMITTEE

REPORT (Minutes) of the meeting of the Environment & Leisure Committee held at the Fleur de Lys Council Chambers, Market Square, Hailsham on Monday 7th June 2010 at 7.30 pm.

Prior to commencement of formal business, a period of not more than 15 minutes was assigned for the purpose of permitting members of the public to address the Committee or ask questions (on matters relevant to the responsibilities under direction of this committee) at the discretion of the presiding Chairman.

Mr B. Harris, Chairman of Hailsham Allotment Society, spoke in respect of some vandalism that had taken place over a recent Bank Holiday in which the shed owned by Hailsham Community College had been burnt down and the perimeter gate was damaged. He also reported that on 24 and 25 April some items had been stolen out of various allotment sheds. The damage had been reported to the Police. He requested that the perimeter gates are looked at by the Town Council.

Stuart Towner addressed the Committee to request permission for the Town Farm Residents Association to hold one or two boot fairs a month in the summer on Maurice Thornton Playing Field. He also requested permission to install a bench in memory of Tony Tack, in the children's play area at Maurice Thornton.

Mrs K. Howard expressed concern to the Committee in respect of the Battle Road Play Area safety gates, stating that young children can push the gate open adjacent the road site too easily, and asked for the gate, or the resistance to the gate, to be changed.

Councillor P. Holbrook asked the Committee if they still wished him to continue as Allotment Warden for the Battle Road Allotments and requested that the problem of vandalism at the allotments be discussed at the next meeting in September. It was agreed for Councillor Holbrook to continue as Allotment Warden.

Councillor N. Ellwood addressed the Committee regarding the Committee Clerk's report on the Youth Shelters. He claimed that the report was misleading, stating that it was resolved in 2002 to use the Council owned Battle Road site for a Skateboard Park, in which the Project Co-ordinator Andy Joyes was going to apply for funding for this site. He refuted the statement in the report that planning permission is unlikely to be granted for this site and stated that it is granted under permitted development.

NB - Kelvin Williams, The Head of Planning at Wealden District Council, advised the Committee Clerk prior to the report that a skateboard park with very low ramps or mud ramps may not require planning permission, however if the Council wish to install a traditional skateboard park, as planned, planning permission is required and unlikely to be granted in this area. At a meeting of the Youth Provision Forum on 11th May 2010, Louise Clark of Wealden District Council stated that it is unlikely the Town Council will obtain planning permission for a skateboard park on the Battle Road site as it is likely to attract too many objections.

Councillor Ellwood also spoke in respect of youth shelters, expressing concern that a shelter is being considered for Hailsham Country Park. He stated that the Country Park has a history of problems with congregating youths and reminded the Committee of the shelter which was vandalised at Maurice Thornton and had to be removed. He advised he has witnessed up to 50 youths congregating in the Country Park area at one time and considered that a shelter will increase the problem of vandalism in the Country Park.

Finally, Councillor Ellwood spoke regarding the dog bins in Hailsham and asked the Committee why the Cemetery Superintendent was not emptying the dog bins as proposed in October 2009? He requested to know what action the Town Council is taking to rectify this.

Mr J. Leach addressed the Committee regarding the agenda item on shelters, stating that he had lived in Holyhead close for 11 and a half years and had experienced a large amount of anti social behaviour in the area at this time, such as youths urinating in the area, bad language, litter dropping and youths playing football in the park late at night. He considered that installing a youth shelter in the Country Park would encourage the youths to congregate in this area.

The Committee Chairman and Councillor G. Rowe advised Councillor Ellwood that the matter of the dog bin emptying is due to be discussed at a meeting of the Town Council's Staff Sub Committee. Councillor Mrs J. Bentley issued a point of order at this time, stating that the matter could not be discussed any further as it is confidential business and no further discussion took place on this item.

E&L/10 /1/1 **Present:** Councillors: Mrs J. Bentley, B.F. Burchmore, Mrs SPM Cottingham, I. Haffenden, Mrs S. Henstock, Mrs B. Holbrook, J. Puttick (Chairman), G. Rowe (Vice Chairman) and Mrs M. Rowe

Officers in Attendance: Karen Moralee (Environment and Leisure Officer)

2 **Apologies for Absence:** None were received.

3 **Declarations of Interest**

None were received.

4 **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

RESOLVED to note that the report (minutes) of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee (reference: E&L/09/4/237-245) held on Monday 15th February 2010 was confirmed as a correct record, and adopted at the meeting of Hailsham Town Council on Monday 15th March 2010.

5 **Matters Arising**

None were received.

Officer's Update on the Environment and Leisure Committee's Achievements

6 A written report appended to these minutes as Appendix EL/10/1/6 was circulated with the agenda, outlining all the completed works and ongoing projects. Members noted and adopted the report.

Western Road Recreation Ground and Hailsham Country Park

7.1 **Multi Purpose Shelters**

A written report appended to these minutes as Appendix EL/10/1/7.1 was circulated with the agenda. An email from Helen Markwick of Wealden District Council and appended to these minutes as Appendix EL/10/1/7.1A was read out to members by the Committee Chairman. Much discussion ensued and members considered that they did not want to jeopardise the money set aside for a skateboard park to finance a youth shelter. There was also concern at placing a shelter at Hailsham Country Park, due to the problems of anti social behaviour that are already experienced there.

7.2 **RESOLVED** to recommend that the skateboard park funds are not diverted to finance a youth shelter at either Western Road or Hailsham Country Park.

Maurice Thornton Playing Field

8.1 Memorial Bench

A request had been received from the Town Farm Residents Association to place a memorial bench in the play area for Tony Tack, using some of the money available from the play area funding. Members were shown a picture of the type of bench intended to be purchased. The Committee Clerk advised that approximately £1,400 remains in the budget allocated for the Maurice Thornton Play Area. Members were not opposed to the installation of a bench but were against using the play area funds for this.

- 8.2 **RESOLVED** to recommend that a memorial bench for Tony Tack can be placed in the Maurice Thornton Play Area but the funding for the bench must be met by the Town Farm Residents Association.

Bike Stands

- 8.3 Mr S. Towner also asked whether bike stands could be placed outside the play area. Members were in favour of this request.

- 8.4 **RESOLVED** to recommend that bike stands be placed outside Maurice Thornton Play Area, with the funding for these items to be taken from the Maurice Thornton Play Area budget.

Playing Field - request to hold Boot Fairs

- 8.5 A written report appended to these minutes as Appendix EL/10/1/8.3 and also a letter from Hailsham United Football Club, as appended to these minutes as Appendix EL/10/1/8.3A were circulated with the agenda.

Members raised various concerns at the proposal of holding boot fairs, such as the level of traffic a boot fair could attract, whether the drainage of the ground could be affected by the vehicles and whether to charge a fee for the use of the ground. The Committee discussed insurance and Mr S. Towner confirmed that the Town Farm Residents Association is part of the Wealden Residents Action Group which covers their Association for 5 million public liability insurance. He advised he had spoken to Tina Pugh, of Hailsham East Community Centre, and she had confirmed that the public could use the Community Centre car park, which would ease the parking problems. Mr Towner also stated that marshals would be present at the event.

- 8.6 **RESOLVED** to recommend that one boot fair is held on the Maurice Thornton Playing Field, outside of the football season, as a trial run. Further consideration as to whether to permit the boot fairs will be given after the trial has taken place.

Battle Road Play Area

Gates

- 9.1 Members were advised that some concern had been raised by parents using the Battle Road Play area that the safety gate that opened outwards opened too easily and could be pushed open by a toddler, who could then escape onto the road. The Committee Chairman and Clerk advised they had visited the site to inspect the gates. The Committee Clerk reported she had contacted the manufacturers of the safety gates who had advised that the resistance of the gate could not be changed. The only solution would be to turn the gate around so it opens inwards. Members were advised that the play area and gates had been approved by the Council's insurers, Zurich Municipal, and that a barrier had been installed in front of the safety gate, to stop a child from running directly onto the road. Members were advised that the reason the gate opened outwards was to allow a child to escape easily in the event of

bullying or abuse. Councillor Rowe suggested placing a bench in an area adjacent the gate, to allow the parents to supervise their children in this area, to make it easier to watch over the child and prevent them leaving the play area if necessary. Members also agreed to place another barrier halfway across the exit, in between the safety gate and current barrier.

- 9.2 **RESOLVED** to recommend a bench is installed adjacent the outwards opening safety gate, with a barrier installed halfway across the exit, in between the safety gate and existing barrier.

Dog Bins

Mountain Ash Close

- 10.1 A request had been received to install a dog bin in an area of Council owned land at Mountain Ash Close, at a cost of £350. The Committee Clerk advised that the nearest dog bins to this area are placed by Grovelands School and the Country Park. Members were not in favour of installing a dog bin in this location and considered that there were sufficient dog bins in the area.
- 10.2 **RESOLVED** to recommend that the request to install a dog bin at Mountain Ash Close is refused.

Stroma Gardens

- 10.3 A request had been received to install a dog bin in an area of Council owned land by Stroma Gardens, at a cost of £350. This request had been made by a resident who had advised that the current bin at Stroma Gardens became full very quickly. Members were not in favour of installing a second bin but it was agreed to continue to monitor the current bin at Stroma Gardens.
- 10.4 **RESOLVED** to recommend that the request to install a second dog bin in Stroma Gardens is refused.

Committee Expenditure

- 11.1 **RESOLVED** to recommend to note and adopt the summary of the Committee Income and Expenditure for 1st April 2009 to 31st March 2010 as printed and circulated and appended hereto as Appendix EL/10/1/11.1
- 11.2 **RESOLVED** to recommend to note and adopt the summary of brought forward balances for submission to the Finance Policy and Resources Committee for adoption as printed and circulated and appended hereto as Appendix EL/10/1/11.2

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.20 pm.