

## **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 14<sup>th</sup> February 2011 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 S. Towner, the Chairman of the Town Farm Residents Association, spoke in favour of the request for a youth shelter on Maurice Thornton Playing Field. He advised that this is planned to be part of the skateboard park, and that the skateboard project is moving along well. He also addressed the Committee regarding the request to hold a fete on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2011 at Maurice Thornton Playing Field and advised that this is a national event, a "huge picnic" and part of "The Big Lunch" with the Eden Project and National Lottery. He stated that this was a project for the whole of Hailsham and he would like to invite other members of associations in Hailsham. Active Play and a bouncy castle would be booked if permission was given for the event.

D. Hubbard addressed the Committee regarding his written request for the sailing of extra model boats on a number of dates, at the Common Pond.

R. Piggott spoke to the Committee regarding her written request to hold the Bonfire Societies bonfire and fireworks display on either Western Road or Maurice Thornton playing field. She stated that they would turf or re-seed the area if necessary.

Councillor P. Holbrook stated that the proposed youth shelter would need planning permission from Wealden District Council and that the Town Farm Residents Association would need a licence for any alcohol consumed on the day of the fete. The Committee Clerk advised she was aware that planning permission was required and members were informed a survey was currently being carried out involving the local youth, to ascertain what type of shelter they would like and where they would like it placed. Once this has been decided the Committee Clerk would be able to contact Wealden District Council, who require an exact location before they can decide on planning permission.

Councillor Holbrook also spoke regarding the plan showing the proposed allotment site by Redrow Homes, in Battle Road. He asked why the plots had not been measured in rods. The Committee Clerk advised that a three rod plot was approximately 75m<sup>2</sup>; therefore the majority of the plots on the plan which were shown as being 75m<sup>2</sup> were in fact a three rod size.

P. Hobden, the Common Pond Warden, addressed the Committee regarding the two islands on the pond. He stated that one of the islands had been partially protected from erosion, with the other island requiring further work. He also stated that the Maryann Alcove was in need of some repair work.

Mr Hobden advised that there had been a problem with horse riding at the Common Pond and that when the Committee Clerk checked the bylaws she had discovered that horse riding was not actually prohibited. He asked whether it would be possible to have the bylaws changed to include this.

Finally, he spoke regarding his request to remove the lifebuoys at the Common Pond. He stated that the lifebuoys had been stuck on the ice for the majority of December and some of January as he was unable to reach them. He advised that once he had retrieved them, they were thrown back within the space of hours. He also recollected some incidents where the ropes attached to the lifebuoys had been used as a tool to try and trip people up in the dark.

He added that the ropes attached to the lifebuoys are often cut and the lifebuoys are used to retrieve footballs from the water. Mr Hobden stated that they are used as toys and considered that they have become more of a danger than a use.

Councillor G. Rowe asked the Pond Warden how many people had fallen into the pond, in the last twenty years, since Mr Hobden had been the Pond Warden and was told that there were no incidences of a member of the public falling into the Pond.

E&L/10 /4/197 **Present:** Councillors: Mrs J. Bentley, Mrs SPM Cottingham, I. Haffenden, Mrs S. Henstock, Mrs B. Holbrook, J. Puttick (Chairman), G. Rowe (Vice Chairman)

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

198 **Apologies for Absence:** Councillors B.F. Burchmore and Mrs M. Rowe

199 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Mrs J. Bentley declared a personal interest in agenda item "Tennis Club" as she is the President of the Tennis Club. Councillors Mrs S. Henstock, G. Rowe and Mrs S. Cottingham declared a personal interest in agenda item "Bonfire Society" as they are members of the Bonfire Society.

200 **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED** to note that the report (minutes) of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee (reference: E&L/10/3/143 – E&L/10/3/154) held on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2010 was confirmed as a correct record, and adopted at the meeting of Hailsham Town Council on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2010.

201 **Matters Arising**

Members were advised that a meeting was due to be held on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> February between the Football Club and Town Farm Residents Association to discuss the proposal for a new clubhouse at Maurice Thornton Playing Field (minute ref: E&L/10/03/151)

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

A written report appended to these minutes as Appendix EL/10/ 4/202 was circulated with the agenda, outlining all the completed works. Members noted and adopted the report.

### **Common Pond**

#### **Model Boats**

203.1 A letter had been received from The Eastbourne Model Power Boat Club requesting permission to sail an increased number of model boats on the Common Pond on a variety of Sundays in 2011. The letter stated that the Club share Princes Park Lake in Eastbourne with The Eastbourne Model Yacht Club, as well as using the Common Pond. On a number of Sundays this year they are unable to use Princes Park Lake as it is being used all day by The Model Yacht Club.

203.2 **RESOLVED** to recommend that the Model Boat Club's request to sail an increased number of model boats at the Common Pond on the specified dates listed in their letter, is granted.

#### **Lifebuoys**

204.1 A report attached to these minutes as Appendix EL/10/4/204 was circulated with the agenda.

The Pond Warden had reported that there was a continuing problem where the lifebuoys were being thrown into the Pond, and requested that the lifebuoys be permanently removed because of this. Much discussion ensued and although members sympathised with the problems being encountered by the Pond Warden, some members expressed concern at the request. It was agreed that anyone caught throwing the lifebuoys into the Pond should be prosecuted. Members decided to try and solve the vandalism problem and considered that a police camera set up in this area may assist. Councillor J. Bentley advised that she sat on the Joint Action Group Committee and would liaise with the Police to request a striker camera is installed in the Common Pond area.

An original resolution of the Council in June 2008 to permanently remove lifebuoys and stations once a lifebuoy goes missing was not relevant in the current situation at the Common Pond as the lifebuoys were being thrown into the Pond, rather than being stolen.

- 204.2 **RESOLVED** to recommend that a request is made to the Police to install a striker camera in the Common Pond area and have a trial period of 6 months of monitoring the lifebuoys before a decision is made regarding the Pond Wardens request.

**Clerks note: At a meeting of the Finance, Policy and Resources Committee, on 23rd June 2008 (minute ref: FPR/08/1/71) it had been resolved to recommend the removal of all lifebuoys and lifebuoy stations, as there had been a spate of thefts of lifebuoys and the Council was not able to comply with the legal requirement of providing lifebuoys in the stations. This item was covered in the local press shortly after the meeting and a number of lifebuoys were returned by members of the public who had found them thrown into their garden or hedges but had not got around to returning these to the Council. The returned lifebuoys were then placed back in their stations and there was then no need to remove these stations. However, the original resolution still stands and when a lifebuoy is permanently lost because it has been stolen, the station will be removed.**

#### **Western Road Recreation Ground**

- 205.1 **Tennis Club**

A letter had been received from the Tennis Club requesting a grant of £5,000 towards work required to the surface of courts 3 and 4. The letter stated that the Club had recently had a visit from an LTA court advisor who confirmed that the courts are in urgent need of resurfacing. The Club expressed a preference for an astroturf type surface to cover the existing macadam and had been advised by the LTA that such a surface would need to be laid at the latest by the end of summer 2011 as after this time the surface would deteriorate too badly for the existing macadam to be covered. Failure to replace the surface this year would then mean that the courts would have to be resurfaced in macadam, which after the extra cost of transporting the materials onto the court, is a much more expensive option than astroturf.

Members asked whether the public use the courts and Mr H. Marks confirmed that they do.

The Committee Clerk advised that there was no funding set aside for this work but there was some money available in the Common Pond budget which could be used. After much discussion the Committee agreed they could not fund the entire £5,000 but could offer £3,000 towards the work.

- 205.2 **RESOLVED** to recommend that a sum of £3,000 is taken from the Common Pond path budget and donated to the Tennis Club to help fund the re-surfacing work required on courts 3 and 4

206.1 **Memorial Bench**

A request had been made by Mr L. Lovelady to place a memorial bench on Western Road Recreation Ground, with the exact location on the Recreation Ground to be decided by the Town Council. The Committee were advised that the Town Council would order the bench and then invoice Mr Lovelady. Members gave approval to Mr Lovelady's request.

206.2 **RESOLVED** to recommend that the request to place a memorial bench at the Western Road Recreation Ground is permitted.

**Maurice Thornton Playing Field**

**Youth Shelter**

207.1 A request had been made from the Town Farm Residents Association to place a youth shelter within the vicinity of the proposed skateboard park, on the playing field. Members expressed some concern at the levels of vandalism that had occurred in the area in the past, however they were informed that the Residents Association would be requesting the use of the current CCTV placed at the Community Centre to also monitor the skatepark area, to attempt to deter vandalism. Mr S. Towner confirmed that the building of the youth shelter would be tied in with the building of the skateboard park and that funding for the shelter would come from the grant money raised for the skateboard park.

Members were reminded that permission for a youth shelter is still required from Wealden District Council.

207.2 **RESOLVED** to recommend that the Town Council agree in principle to the installation of a youth shelter, subject to:

- i) the Town Council's agreement of the style, size and location of the shelter
- ii) the building of the youth shelter being tied in to the construction of the skateboard park

**Fete**

208.1 The Town Farm Residents Association had requested to hold a fete on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2011 on Maurice Thornton Playing Field, as part of the Eden Project and National lottery "Big Lunch". Members were in favour of this request, subject to the condition that vehicles are not allowed on the football pitches.

208.2 **RESOLVED** to recommend that permission is given to the Town Farm Resident's Association to hold a fete on Maurice Thornton Playing Field on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2011

**Maurice Thornton Playing Field / Western Road Recreation Ground**

209.1 **Bonfire Society**

The Committee were advised that due to the forthcoming Hillreed Development behind the Wealden District Council car park, the Bonfire Society were eventually going to lose their site for their bonfire celebrations. A request had been made by the Bonfire Society to hold their bonfire and fireworks display at either Maurice Thornton Playing Field or Western Road Recreation Ground, when they could no longer use the area behind the Wealden Council Car Park.

The Committee agreed that it was not possible to hold the display at Maurice Thornton as the pitches need to be kept clear and with the building of the proposed skateboard park there would not be a great deal of room available. Members agreed that Western Road Recreation Ground would be a better option, although it was agreed that the cricket pitch must be

cordoned off. The Committee were not in favour of a bonfire on the ground, but proposed a beacon is used instead.

The Committee Clerk was asked to liaise with Hillreed Homes to find out whether the development in this area will commence this year and also to investigate the possible use of a triangle of land owned by Wealden District Council, which could be used as an alternative site for the bonfire display. It was agreed that this area would be suitable as it is near to the Bonfire Societies current location.

209.2 **RESOLVED** to recommend that the Town Council in principle support the use of Western Road Recreation Ground for the bonfire celebrations, subject to:

- i) health and safety conditions
- ii) the use of a beacon rather than a bonfire
- iii) only if the current location or area of land owned by Wealden Council is not available.

210.1 **Diplocks Estate Play Area**

A report attached to these minutes as Appendix EL/10/4/210 was circulated with the agenda.

Much discussion ensued and the Committee agreed that no sufficient funds were available to replace the play equipment; therefore it was decided to hand back responsibility of the play area to Home Group, the Estate Managers of Diplocks Estate. The Committee Chairman requested that the remaining equipment in the play area is removed and that Home Group is given the required 3 months notice advising that the Town Council are handing back responsibility of this area to them.

210.2 **RESOLVED** to recommend that the play equipment is removed from the Diplocks Play Area and responsibility of the Play Area is handed back to Home Group

211 **Hailsham Country Park**

Management Plan

A list to these minutes as Appendix EL/10/4/211 was circulated with the agenda. Members noted the list of the wild flowers.

**Fishing**

212 A list of the current and proposed fishing rules to these minutes as Appendix EL/10/4/212 was circulated with the agenda

The Committee Clerk advised that some changes and updates to the current rules on the Town Council's fishing permits had been suggested by a member of staff who is a fisherman. Members noted and agreed the changes to the rules.

**Common Pond Allotments**

213.1 **Bees**

A report attached to these minutes as Appendix EL/10/4/213 was circulated with the agenda

Councillor G. Rowe reported that he had spoken to a local beekeeper for advice on this matter. He expressed concern at the request, stating that the allotment location was too small, other allotment holders would have to be consulted and may not all be agreeable, and how situations such as swarming would be managed. Members agreed that it was a very good idea considering that bees are in decline; however they agreed that bee hives were not

suitable to be placed on the Town Council's allotment sites as the area of land was not large enough.

Councillor Mrs J. Bentley advised that there is a "bee hotel" placed at the Country Park and Councillor G. Rowe stated that he would pass the bee keeper's contact details to the Committee Clerk to pass on to the allotment holder, as he may be able to provide her with an area for her bee hive.

- 213.2 **RESOLVED** to recommend that bee hives are not permitted on the Town Council's allotment sites.

#### **Urban Grass Contract**

- 214 Members noted that the urban grass contract had been awarded to Barcombe Landscapes for £15,300

#### **Redrow Homes Development at Battle Road**

- 215 A design of the allotments and attached to these minutes as Appendix EL/10/4/215 was circulated with the agenda.

Members noted and agreed the proposed layout and size of the allotments.

#### **Committee Expenditure**

- 216 **RESOLVED** to recommend to note and adopt the summary of the Committee Income and Expenditure for 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010 and circulated and appended hereto as Appendix EL/10/4/216

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.45 pm.