

LEISURE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 16 November 1999 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Ms Flanagan (Chair); Councillors Aujla, Butler, Caborn, Darmody, Davis, Dove, Dray, Mrs Edwards, Gifford, Golby, Mrs Goode, Hammon, Mrs Hodgetts, Talbot.

(Councillor Mrs Compton (Chairman of the Council)).

(Councillor Gifford substituted for Councillor Copping).

(Councillor Golby substituted for Councillor Shilton).

(457) MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 1999, having been printed and circulated were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

PART I

(Matters not the subject of powers delegated to the Committee by the Council)

NIL

PART II

(Matters delegated to the Committee by the Council)

458. WILDLIFE MEADOW - NEWBOLD COMYN

The Head of Leisure and Amenities submitted a report outlining the scheme to create a wildlife meadow at Newbold Comyn and the fundraising efforts of residents in the Newbold Comyn area.

In November 1993 the Recreation and Amenities Committee had agreed the Leam Valley Local Nature Reserve proposals in conjunction with the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust. Part of the proposals had been for a wildflower meadow in the field which accommodated the model air-craft flyers.

Following the designation of the Nature Reserve the Newbold Comyn Residents' Association had raised a total of £642. Hilary Jordan of the Residents' Association attended the meeting and presented a cheque for £75, being the latest amount of money raised, to the Chair.

Members thanked Mrs Jordan for the work that she and her Association had done to raise money to further the aims of the Local Nature Reserve.

459. SKATEBOARDING MOTION

LEISURE COMMITTEE (Continued)

The Head of Leisure and Amenities submitted a written report on the following notice of motion from Councillor Kirton which had been referred to this Committee:-

"members may recall when original discussions on skateboarding took place, the view was expressed that if the four skateboard ramps were well used, consideration would be given to extending some of the smaller types to allow use by more youngsters. The ramp provided in Acre Close, Whitnash has, to the credit of both parents and children, been used responsibly and taken care of. The ramp, however, was one of the smallest in the district and was capable of extension at reasonable cost. It has benefited both the youngsters of Whitnash and the community and it would be a fitting reward to both parents and children of the town if it were extended. I would therefore propose that the Leisure Committee be asked to review the present scheme:-

- (1) Review existing provision and where successful consider extending the facility; and
- (2) Consider the rural areas for similar provision".

The Council had provided ramps at Castle Farm Kenilworth, Victoria Park Leamington, St Nicholas Park Warwick, and Acre Close Whitnash. The ramp at Victoria Park was 20ft wide as opposed to 16ft wide on the other sites.

All four sites had ramps of the same height and in other respects they were of the same specification. The Council did indicate that the possibility of extending them would be considered if they were successful.

The structures were wooden and had an expected life of only one or two more years. At that stage the Council would have to decide whether to replace the ramps and this was an issue that was currently being looked at by the Play Facilities Working Party. It was pointed out that whilst the initial outlay for the ramps was considered reasonable there had been large costs associated with maintaining them which had amounted to £10,811 since they had been installed. The cost of providing additional ramps would be £8,000 for wooden ones and £11,000 for steel ones. The cost of extending them from 16ft to 20ft would be £2,750 each.

RESOLVED that the question of extending the existing ramps and the possibility of providing additional ramps in the rural area be referred to the Play Facilities Working Party.

460. **REVENUE ESTIMATES 2000/2001**

The Committee considered a report from Leisure and Amenities and Finance on revised estimates for 1999/2000 and proposed estimates for 2000/2001. In September 1999 the Strategy Committee had formulated the Council's financial strategy for the year 2000/2001.

This had been prepared on the assumption that there would be a potential growth of £900,000 for that year. Final decisions on the use of the potential growth would be made by the Strategy Committee in February 2000.

The effects of applying the Financial Strategy to the services covered by this Committee had produced a target budget of £3,817,400. An analysis of the budget for each service was appended to the report and identified the main groups of expenditure and income.

The total net expenditure for 2000/2001 was £3,910,800 and exceeded the Committee's target budget by £93,400. This was because it had not been possible to realise fully the projected savings identified in year 3 (2000/2001) of the Leisure Service Plan. The question of Service Plan savings was dealt with in minute 461. The estimates for 2000/2001 did not reflect the effects of any capital financing charges that might be required to support the Capital Programme.

LEISURE COMMITTEE (Continued)

The Committee had considered its bids for additional resources through the Service Planning process at its last meeting. Since additional resources were only bids at this stage of the estimate process they were not included in the revenue estimate calculations for 2000/2001. The Head of Leisure and Amenities, in conjunction with the Commissioning Director, had reviewed the list of bids identified in the Service Plan which this Committee had recommended at its last meeting for submission to Strategy Committee and additional bids for grants to cultural and sporting organisations was dealt within minute 464. The bid for funding for playground equipment which had been referred back by Council was dealt with in minute 462.

Details of the revised estimates for 1999/2000 totalling £3,988,200, were submitted showing an increase of £225,200 compared with the original estimate. The main items responsible for the increase were identified in the report. Service Plan savings totalling £36,200 had not been realised and this matter was dealt with in minute 461.

RESOLVED that

- (1) revenue estimates for 2000/2001 amounting to £3,910,800 be approved and referred to the Strategy Committee; and
- (2) the revised estimates for 1999/2000 amounting to £3,988,200 be approved and referred to the Resources Sub-Committee.

461. SERVICE PLAN SAVINGS REVIEW - REVISED 1999-2000 AND ESTIMATED 2000-2001

A report from the Commissioning Director and Head of Leisure and Amenities was submitted updating members on the current position with regards to Service Plan savings.

In 1997 the three year savings options in the Service Plan for Leisure had been agreed totalling nearly £500,000 and in the first year (1998/99) the £225,000 planned savings were made. In the year 2 (1999/2000) difficulty was anticipated with targets due substantially to a loss of fees and charges income at the crematorium of £30,000 as a result of the opening of the Banbury crematorium giving a total projected savings shortfall of £36,200.

In year 3 (2000/2001) it was presently not able to meet targets by £93,400. Full details of the reasons for this shortfall were set out in the report.

RESOLVED that the spokespersons continue to investigate alternative options for savings so that the shortfalls of £36,200 for 1999/2000 and £93,400 for 2000/2001 can be met.

462. FUNDING FOR PLAY AREAS

A report from the Head of Leisure and Amenities was submitted on the decision by Council to refer back to this Committee the decision to bid for £80,000 for 2000/2001 to commence the work required to the Council's play areas.

RESOLVED that the bid in the Committee's Service Plan for funds for 2000/2001 towards the cost of bringing the play areas up to the new European guidelines be increased from £80,000 to £100,000.

LEISURE COMMITTEE (Continued)

463. FARMERS MARKET - REVIEW ACROSS DISTRICT

A report from the Commissioning Team was submitted on the impact of the trial of farmers markets across the district.

Three trial farmers markets had taken place in the district at Abbey End Kenilworth, Royal Pump Room Gardens Leamington Spa and Regent Street East Leamington Spa. The final market trial agreed by this Committee would take place in Warwick Market Place in December. The farmers market planned for Clemens Street had been moved to Royal Pump Rooms Gardens following an objection by the Police. A meeting had been held at which the police were present and it had now been agreed to a trial farmers market taking place in Clemens Street early in 2000.

Details of results of customer surveys conducted at each of the farmers markets were supplied to each member.

There was clear evidence that the markets were popular with the public and the majority of traders with more than enough support from the public for a weekly market within the district.

Details of the cost associated with organising the markets were set out in the report. These costs had been funded from the Town Centre Management budget.

It was now felt important to agree a programme of farmers markets within the district to guarantee these events taking place at the prime times available and at the best locations.

RESOLVED that

- (1) 12 Farmers Markets a year be organised at each of Abbey End Kenilworth and Warwick Market Place and in Leamington Spa;
- (2) a decision on the locations for the markets in Leamington be deferred until after the Clemens Street trial; and
- (3) a report be submitted to the Committee's next meeting with a detailed plan for the running of the markets including proposals for generating income.

464. CULTURAL AND SPORTS GRANTS

The Head of Leisure and Amenities submitted a report on the level of funds available for cultural and sports grants.

At its last meeting the Committee had asked for a report on the level of such funding because of the added costs to organisations through the level of fees for hiring the Pump Rooms and through increases in the rents charged by the Council for premises.

RESOLVED that bids for additional resources of £2000 for grants to cultural organisations and £2000 for grants for sporting organisations be added to the Committee's Service Plan for 2000/2001.

LEISURE COMMITTEE (Continued)

465. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2000/01

A report from the Head of Leisure and Amenities and the Commissioning Team was submitted on the Capital Programme for the year 2000/2001.

As part of the Financial Strategy for 2000/2001 the Strategy Committee had approved a maximum amount for the "core" Capital Programme of £750,000. The amount available in 2000/2001 for new schemes was £634,110 due to supplementary estimates which had been approved in the current year and continuing schemes from 1999/2000.

A draft Capital Programme for the Committee was submitted showing the proposed expenditure for 2000/2001, 2001/2002, and future years.

RESOLVED that the Capital Programme, as set out, be submitted to Strategy Committee for approval.

466. CAPITAL SCHEME 1999/2000 - CREMULATORS

A report from the Head of Leisure and Amenities was submitted on an urgent capital scheme for the replacement of the cremulators at Oakley Wood Crematorium.

In order to comply with health and safety legislation it was necessary to purchase a new design of cremulator and install an air vacuum cabinet overhead to reduce the dust levels in the area. Estimated costs would be £17,000.

RESOLVED that Resources Sub-Committee be asked to approve an amendment to this year's Capital Programme for £17,000 to enable the work to be tendered and completed in this financial year.

467. CULTURAL GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

(Councillor Hodgetts declared a non-pecuniary, substantial interest but did not leave the room as there was no discussion on this matter).

A report was submitted from Leisure and Amenities and Finance on applications for grant aid from the Leamington and District Branch of the Embroiderer's Guild, the Gap and Community Arts Workshop.

The report set out the policy adopted by the Committee for considering grant requests which was based on financial information on the organisation and how the services provided by the organisation fitted the Council's Art Strategy.

RESOLVED that the following grants be awarded:-

- (1) £250 to the Leamington and District Branch of the Embroiderer's Guild;
- (2) £750 to the Gap project; and

LEISURE COMMITTEE (Continued)

- (3) £650 to the Community Arts Workshop.

468. DEDICATION OF PARLIAMENT PIECE - KENILWORTH

A report from the Head of Leisure and Amenities was submitted on the proposed designation of the above land as a local nature reserve.

In January 1997 the Committee had considered an approach from the Open Space Society for the District Council to take over a parcel of land in Kenilworth known as Parliament Piece as public open space. The freehold of the property which consisted of 15 acres of park land, was vested in the Open Space Society and had been donated to them in 1986 together with an endowment fund of £5,000.

In May 1998 the Committee gave authority for the Council to enter into a 99 year lease with the Open Space Society for the land and that the management of the land should be in accordance with the wishes of the person who had originally donated the land to the Open Space Society.

A 99 year lease had been entered into between the Open Space Society and the Council in September 1999 and the sum of £5,000 had been paid to the District Council for future maintenance.

A detailed draft Management Plan for the land was circulated with the report. The Solicitors for the Open Space Society had confirmed that their clients were happy with the draft Management Plan. Full consultations had taken place with Kenilworth Town Council, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and Crackley Residents in drawing up the Management Plan.

RESOLVED that

- (1) Parliament Piece be declared a nature reserve under Sections 19 and 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and be incorporated into the schedule to the agreement dated 17 May 1994 made between the Council and Warwickshire Nature Conservation Trust Ltd governing the management by the Trust of local nature reserves within the administrative area of the Council; and
- (2) the draft Management Plan for Parliament Piece as submitted be approved.

469. LAND EXCHANGE - PRIORY PARK, WARWICK

(Councillor Davis declared a non-pecuniary, substantial interest in this matter and left the room while it was being discussed).

The Head of Leisure and Amenities submitted a report on a proposed exchange of land at Priory Park between the Warwickshire County Council and the District Council.

The County Council wished to extend and refurbish the Record Office in Priory Park. To do so they wished to gain ownership of land belonging to the District Council. The County Council were suggesting that it would exchange a larger area of land belonging to it which was enclosed on three sides by District Council park land. Details of the areas of land were set out in an appendix to the report. It was pointed out that planning

LEISURE COMMITTEE (Continued)

permission had not been obtained for the extension to the Warwick Record Office but the County Council had indicated that even if planning permission was not forthcoming it was still wished to proceed with the exchange.

The Officers felt that this would be an ideal exchange of land not only in terms of ease of maintenance but to create a more attractive feature as a transition from the built area around the Record Office into Priory Park itself.

RESOLVED that the proposed exchange of land with Warwickshire County Council as shown in the report be approved.

470. CAPE ROAD CAR PARK, WARWICK

(Councillor Ms Flanagan declared a non-pecuniary, substantial interest in this matter and left the room while it was being considered - Councillor Darmody took the Chair).

(Councillor Davis declared a non-pecuniary, substantial interest in this matter but under Section 12(a) of the National Code of Local Government Conduct gave himself dispensation to speak and vote on the matter).

A report from the Head of Leisure and Amenities was submitted on the car boot sales which were held at Cape Road, Warwick on Saturdays this summer. In March of this year the Committee had agreed that no action be taken under the powers arising from the Council's market charter to stop the car boot sales at Cape Road for 12 months subject to no commercial traders operating at the sales and the situation being reviewed at the end of this period.

A letter had now been received from the County Council stating that they were already receiving requests for bookings for each of the Saturdays from the second half of March until September 2000 and had asked that the Committee consider whether the sales could continue next year.

The Officers felt that the sales had operated very well during 1999 and there had been a determined effort by the County Council and the operators to ensure that there were no commercial sales from the venue. This fact had been verified by the Council's own Market Operator.

RESOLVED that no action be taken under the powers arising from the Council's market charter to stop car boot sales at Cape Road subject to no commercial traders operating at the sales.

471. WARWICK DISTRICT CELEBRATES 25 YEARS OF ITS EXISTENCE AND WELCOMES THE MILLENNIUM

A report from the Head of Leisure and Amenities was submitted setting out proposed activities planned for New Year's Eve 1999.

The Committee had agreed in January to have activities during the early evening of the 31 December to celebrate the Millennium. Meetings had taken place and others were planned with the Fire, Police and Ambulance services and representatives of the Council's Business Units to ensure that the celebrations proceeded without any trouble.

LEISURE COMMITTEE (Continued)

Because of the advice from the other agencies it had been decided to hold the events in the Pump Room Gardens with an aerial firework display which would be sited in the Jephson Gardens.

The afternoon's activities were intended to include a local group, The Royal Leamington Spa Military Band, Cubbington Silver Band, community singing, and at approximately 6pm the aerial firework display.

Supporting activities, including a number of fairground rides and a local performer, would be held throughout the afternoon. A leaflet giving all the final arrangements was circulated to Members at the meeting.

RESOLVED that the proposed activities on 31 December 1999 be noted.

472. CHRISTMAS CLOSURES - SPORTS FACILITIES

A report from the Head of Leisure and Amenities was submitted informing Members of some additional closures of St. Nicholas Park Leisure Centre and Castle Farm Recreation Centre that were being planned for the Christmas period.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the closure of St. Nicholas Park pool from 13 December to 24 December to allow the redecoration of the ceiling above the pool be approved;
- (2) the closure of St. Nicholas Park Pyramids from 13 December to 16 December, from 7.00 am to 5.00 pm, to allow redecoration and fitting of new carpets be approved; and
- (3) the closure of the Castle Farm Pyramids all day on 17, 21 and 22 December to allow redecoration and fitting of new carpets be approved.

(Although this item was not on the agenda the Chair agreed that it should be considered as a matter of urgency in view of the need to make a decision on the closure of the facilities before the next meeting of the Committee).

473. GENERAL REPORT

(A) GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

RESOLVED that the report from the Head of Leisure and Amenities on the current situation with respect to the Grounds Maintenance Contract and on the performance of Glendale Grounds Management be noted.

(B) PLAY FACILITIES WORKING PARTY UPDATE

RESOLVED that the report on the work to date of the Play Facilities Working Party be noted.

(C) ROYAL SPA CENTRE/LOADING BAY PLATFORM

RESOLVED that

LEISURE COMMITTEE (Continued)

- (1) the proposals set out in the report from the Head of Leisure and Amenities/Head of Property for the extension of the loading bay platform and the provision of safety rails be approved;
- (2) authority be granted for the seeking of tenders for these works and the Head of Leisure and Amenities be authorised to accept the most suitable tender received; and
- (3) authority be given to make application for planning permission for the works.

474. **PUBLIC AND PRESS**

RESOLVED that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item by reason of the likely disclosure of exempt information within paragraphs 7 and 9 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

475. **ADVERTISING WITHIN THE LEISURE CENTRE**

A report from Leisure and Amenities was submitted seeking Members' views on a proposal for generating income from advertising in the leisure centres.

As part of the Council's Financial Strategy it had been agreed that changes in service provisions should be identified, assuming that less resources would be available over the next three years. One option identified to assist in meeting the savings target was to generate new income through advertising in the leisure centres. It was proposed to generate £6,000 annually. Details were submitted of a deal negotiated with PR Publishing for advertising in the leisure centres.

RESOLVED that agreement be given for a one year trial contract with PR Publishing with the option to extend by two years, on the terms negotiated, subject to the officers negotiating an increase in the income to the Council.

(The meeting ended at 7.45 pm)

\MINS1\LEI16-11