

**Minutes of a meeting of the Leisure & Cultural Committee
held virtually by Zoom
on Tuesday 01 December 2020, commencing at 7.00pm**

Members Present: Councillors R Ellison (Chairman), M Finch (Vice Chairman), L Davison, B Hilton, C Lester, C Richardson and A Sharpe.
In attendance: Helen Goodwin, Clerk to the Council.

The Clerk advised the meeting the meeting would be recorded and the recording will be kept until the minutes are approved at the next Leisure & Cultural committee meeting on 09 February, following which they will be destroyed.

7757 TO NOTE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr S Humphrey. Cllrs J Gripton, S Jones and S Verma were absent.

7758 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman asked to receive any Declarations of Interest in accordance with the adopted Code of Conduct. None were received.

7759 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 08 September, were approved as a correct record and signed as such.

7760 SITES & PROJECTS UPDATE

(i) The Clerk provided an update on the sites:

- Blythwood: The Clerk has attended the wooded area at Blythwood with consultant Peter Harding. The work previously advised has only been partially completed due to an issue with the felling licence but Mr Harding has now revised the work scope so that it falls within the licence. ANB Groundcare has been contacted to give a quote for the work.
- Cheapside: The tender invitation has been prepared and thanks were offered to Cllr M Finch for his hard work in preparing this. The committee agreed that this invitation should be sent out and that it should include a reference to some of the equipment being accessible for children with special needs.
- South Ascot: The damaged equipment in the play area has been removed this week and work has been carried out to repair the playground surface. Unfortunately there was some vandalism on Monday night which damaged the new surfacing but this has now been rectified and it is planned to open the playpark by the end of the week. The Clerk advised that she has been working on arranging some fairground rides to come to South Ascot for the weekend as compensation for the disruption, however it was proving difficult to arrange as access at the recreation ground was not suitable for the necessary vehicles to bring the equipment. 'Hyn's Green' had been suggested as an alternative site but the committee did not consider this an appropriate option so it was agreed not to go ahead with the rides at this stage. Cllr M Finch will attend the play area as Professor Bubbledore to entertain the children at the weekend.
- Tom Green's Field:
 - The Clerk attended with Peter Harding who is of the opinion that no further work is required to the trees at this stage. He suggested planting wild flowers, as had previously been planned, and will advise on the type of wild flowers appropriate. A suggestion was made to tie this in with the research conducted on our behalf by Imperial College which highlights that the parish green corridors are being visited in the winter time by species on the endangered list. It was agreed to investigate the possible provision of wildlife habitats such as bat boxes, bird boxes, hedgehog houses, etc, to encourage the species to come to Tom Green's Field.
 - The Clerk has asked ANB Groundcare to quote to replace the fence on the border with Coombe Grange.
 - A resident in Oriental Road is concerned about some trees bordering their property. The Clerk has established that the trees in question belong to Tom Green's Field, however the resident has put up a new fence which incorporates the trees into their garden. The Clerk will write to the resident advising that the fence will need to be moved. It was noted that these trees are inspected every three years to ensure they remain safe as residents of Oriental Road have previously been concerned about them.
- Victory Fields:

- The Clerk receives regular complaints from one of the residents about noise and antisocial behaviour. Large groups of young men and boys have been observed at the skate park playing loud music. The local Community Warden was contacted but he has now resigned and it is not clear whether he will be replaced. The police were informed of the problem and our security company, Premier, was asked to do extra patrols. The feedback we received from Premier was that they hadn't encountered any problems.
 - It was agreed that the planting of trees at the top of the slope should go ahead before the spring. A suggestion was made that, as no tree work is required at Tom Green's Field this season, we could use some of the budgeted money to pay for these trees.
 - A 1/3 portion of the hedge line that borders the Oriental Road footpath down to the A329 was trimmed back some time ago and new hedging planted to encourage a thicker hedge line. No further work has been carried out for a couple of years but, as there is extra budget available, it was agreed that work on the next 1/3 of the hedge line should be undertaken this season.
- (ii) Litter Picking: Litter picking around Sunninghill and South Ascot has been co-ordinated on a weekly basis by Cllrs L Davison, C Richardson and S Humphrey with volunteers from the community. To comply with Government Covid guidelines they have worked in groups of two and have not shared kits. They don't have any volunteers in North Ascot but it was felt there isn't a major problem of litter in that area. A piece about the initiative has been written for the January edition of the parish magazine and pictures will be put on the website; a press release will also be put out to local newspapers to advertise the initiative. A suggestion was made that next year a more co-ordinated approach be considered and also a preventative campaign with the aim of stopping the litter in the first place. More kit is required and a request has been made to RBWM for some of what is needed. Other equipment will be purchased by the parish council. The area alongside the railway has been identified as being a particular eyesore with litter; it is understood that Network Rail will clear this when they carry out trees works, but if this isn't done enquiries will be made as to whether a litter picking team may have access to clear the litter.
- (iii) Land off Coombe Lane: The wooded area off the top of Coombe Lane which, although privately owned, has been used by the public for many years, has now been sold to an offshore company who has put it on the market, apparently with a view to development. It was noted that the area is greenbelt and, additionally, today RBWM has placed TPO's on all the trees; this will make development difficult and expensive. The Finance & Personnel Committee discussed this when they met last week and suggested looking into the possibility of a Community Bid. This would need the support of the borough and the Clerk has attempted to contact Chris Joyce to discuss the idea. The committee agreed that our borough councillors should be asked to help gain the support of RBWM. A Community Bid would mean an expression of interest in the land and would give the Parish Council, with the help of the borough, six months to see if funds to purchase the land could be raised, either through our own efforts or with the help of contributions from the community. The Clerk was asked to secure the agreement of the parish council to the idea that the Community Bid should be taken forward and this would be done by email, due to time restrictions, as the land is due to be auctioned on 8th December. Cllr David Hilton will be asked to speak to Chris Joyce to try to secure the support of the borough regarding the Community Bid.

7761 SOUTH ASCOT PLAYPARK

Now that the playpark is about to re-open the committee agreed that posts to social media and the website should give information about why the park has been closed for so long; there has been a lot of frustration in the community and it was felt that the parish council needs to communicate what the issues have been and what the future plans are. It was noted that no response has still been received from the landlord regarding a new lease for South Ascot, despite the fact that the Clerk emailed them in October asking for a contract to be prepared. In addition no updates have been received on the borough's considerations regarding a possible SANG.

7762 2021/22 BUDGET

The Leisure & Cultural items on the 2021/22 budget were presented and agreed. In terms of the new signage and maps being planned, the suggestion was made that these should include walking distances between sites to encourage active travel and discourage driving between sites. It was agreed that, due to the Covid disruption this year, fees would remain the same and not be increased in 2021/22. The budgets for woodland management and biodiversity enhancement at both Tom Green's Field and Blythewood were discussed and it was agreed that the work at each of these sites should be allocated a reserve of £3,000 per site each year.

7763 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to be discussed.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8:27pm.