

Minutes of a Meeting of Leisure & Cultural Committee
Held in the King Edward VII Meeting Room, Ascot Racecourse, SL5 7JX
On Tuesday 24 September 2024 commencing at 7.00pm

Members present: Councillors C Richardson (Chairman), L Davison-West (Vice-Chairman), J Gripton, B Hilton, C Revilla and A Sharpe.

In attendance: Mrs Helen Goodwin, Clerk; Miss Jayne Strand, Assistant Clerk to the Parish Council.

8868 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs C Morrison and R Tavoletti and were accepted by the committee. Cllr J Gillborn was absent.

8869 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

8870 MINUTES

The minutes of the Leisure & Cultural Committee Meeting held on 23 July were approved as a correct record and signed as such.

8871 SITE UPDATE

The Clerk presented a site update which is attached hereto as Appendix 1.

Councillors reported as follows:

- Cemetery – Cllr A Sharpe – nothing new to report.
- South Ascot – Cllr L Davison-West – nothing new to report.
- Cheapside – Cllr J Gillborn – no report received.
- Allotments – Cllr B Hilton – no update.
- Blythewood – Cllr C Revilla – the new swing is proving popular.
- Victory Field – Cllr R Tavoletti – no report received.

Footpaths: No issues were reported. Councillors will send in their reports to the Projects Administrator.

8872 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

The tenders for the grounds maintenance contract were put before council along with a summary of the fees each contractor was proposing for the different aspects of the work. They were discussed in great detail and it was proposed that the list of tasks be split so as not to rely too heavily on one contractor.

The committee agreed by show of hands, by a majority vote of 4 to 2, to split the contract as follows:

- Garden Designs to be contracted to take on the items considered 'Weekly/Regular' tasks;
- Ascot Garden Services to be contracted to take on the annual and ad-hoc tasks and also the hanging baskets and planters;
- The cleaning of the pavilion and changing room to be separated out and a cleaner sought by the office.

This decision to be recommended to full council for ratification.

8873 2025/26 BUDGET

- Fees: The current fees were discussed and agreed as follows:
 - Cemetery fees to remain at the current rate with the exception of the 'Interment for child' which should be increased to £1.
 - Allotment fees to be increased as follows:
 - Full plot – new fee £55
 - Half plot – new fee £33
 - Small plot – new fee £22
 - Leisure Facility hire fees to remain at current rate except for:
 - Victory Field pavilion hire – increase to £20ph (resident) and £30ph (non-resident & business)
 - Football Pitch Hire Fees:
 - Ad hoc pitch hire – increase to £50
 - Adult team season hire – increase to £700
 - Youth/child team season hire – increase to £600

All agreed unanimously by show of hands.

- The list of 2024/25 capital projects was presented with suggestions for how costs may be saved or carried forward to 2025/26, and agreed as follows:
 - Footpaths (capital spend) – to budget £5,000 for 2025/26
 - Blythewood Management Programme – to budget £2,000 for 2025/26
 - TGF Biodiversity Enhancements – to budget £3,000 for 2025/26
 - Other Projects – to budget £2,000 for 2025/26
 - Parish noticeboard – to carry forward to 2025/26 at a budgeted cost of £2,000
 - Parish maps & signs – to split over two years, reducing the budget to £10,000 for 2024/25 and deferring £10,000 to 2025/26
 - Redeployable CCTV – so split over two years, reducing the budget to £1,000 for 2024/25 and deferring £1,000 to 2025/26
 - Christmas lights - £9,000 (of £11,000 budgeted) expected to be spent on infrastructure repairs and light hire in 2024/25; purchase of new lights to be a new project for 2025/26.

All agreed unanimously by show of hands.

- The list of new proposed projects for 2025/26 was presented and agreed as follows:
 - Purchase and installation of two dog waste bins on New Mile Road - £350 agreed but RBWM to be approached re (i) the feasibility of the parish council installing bins on RBWM land and (ii) RBWM taking responsibility for the emptying of the bins;
 - The parish council undertaking maintenance of some RBWM PROWs – as no cost has been assigned to this and there is concern over the implications of the parish council carrying out work on land which it doesn't own, it was agreed that more details need to be obtained before agreement;
 - Christmas lights purchase – agreed at £10,000;
 - Cow Pond – agreed at £8,500 for the construction and £3,000 for legal fees re the boundary dispute;
 - Parish Plan – publication costs agreed for budget at £1,500;
 - Street Fayre – a budget for expenses was agreed for £10,000;
 - 'Belsen' Plaque – to install the plaque (previously purchased) and host a reception – budget at £3,000;
 - Neighbourhood Plan – updating costs and publicity – budget £2,000;
 - Grants contingency – to set aside a contingency sum for community assets similar to previous requests such as the ANPR cameras, defibrillators, etc – budget £5,000;
 - To create a wildlife pond on allotment 1Ai which is currently unusable – budget £5,000;
 - Blythewood boundary – to take legal advice re the disputed boundary along Blackmore Stream, to write to residents and the Land Registry – budget £3,000;
 - To host a children's event such as the puppet theatre – budget £5,000.

All agreed unanimously by show of hands. In addition it was suggested 'John the fairground man' be invited to bring rides to Victory Field one day in the summer holidays. This would not incur a cost to the parish council.

8874 PARISH PLAN

Cllr J Gripton presented his thoughts on the future direction that should be taken with the Parish Plan and this was discussed by the committee.

The research carried out by Locality has now been completed and the clerk's office is ready to begin writing the plan, with input from councillors. It is intended to present the first draft of the Parish Plan to full council in January 2025.

The resolution that a working party should be formed, with all councillors invited to join, was agreed by show of hands, with a majority of five votes to one.

8875 SUNNINGHILL STREET FAYRE

The list of proposed sponsorship packages and advertising prices was presented to the committee. The following prices were agreed:

- Headline sponsor: £2,500
- Main sponsor: £1,000
- Tier 3 sponsor: £300 (this to include a small logo on banners)
- Full page advert £250
- Half page advert £150
- Quarter page advert £80.

Agreed were agreed unanimously by show of hands.

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

Cllr C Richardson, Chairman

Appendix 1

Leisure & Cultural Meeting 24 September 2024 Clerk's Site Update

South Ascot

- The latest extension to the lease runs to 28 October. Given the fact that there have now been eight extensions to the lease, each of which have incurred solicitor fees for the parish council, the Finance & Personnel committee wish to consider applying to the courts to resolve the issue, rather than going for another extension. The clerk is currently liaising with our solicitors regarding the best way forward.
- There was a spate of antisocial behaviour at South Ascot at the end of August, involving several incidents of broken glass and one of people entering the changing room and taking out and releasing the fire extinguisher. The clerk has been in touch with the police about this. There have also been some complaints about the state of the playground, including from MP Jack Rankin.
- The tender for the playground work is on Contracts Finder, as agreed by L&C in May (minute 8779). The deadline for receipt of tenders is 01 November, for consideration at L&C on 12 November.

Victory Field

- The refurbishment of the disabled toilet is finished and it is now open to the public during daylight hours.
- The height gate has been damaged and is currently unusable. We have engaged a fencing company which will be carrying out the necessary repairs this week. In the meantime we are keeping the main gate locked for security.

Cheapside

- There have been issues with graffiti which took a lot of work to remove.
- On more than one occasion the chainlink fence has been damaged – it appears that a hole has been deliberately cut in it. We have had it repaired, along with the wooden fence which was also damaged.

Cemetery

- A recent inspection has shown that there is widespread breaking of the rules for what is allowed to be placed on and around graves, with incidents of plastic flowers, open bottles and cans, and fairy lights. Arrangements will be made to tidy up the area and dispose of unsuitable items; a notice will go up ahead of time to inform users of this and give them time to remove any items of sentimental value.

Jones Corner

- The RBWM contractor has, again, damaged the fence bordering Jones Corner and the Blythewood nature reserve. We are in the process of arranging for the RBWM contractor to meet the repair costs.

Blythewood

- The swing seat is still damaged – HAGS have agreed to replace the seat but haven't done so yet – we are chasing.