

PETERSFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Grounds Committee held at the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Petersfield, on Thursday 17th February 2011 at 6.30 p.m.

PRESENT: Cllr C Shore (Chairman), Cllr P Aiston, Cllr Mrs H Ayer, Cllr R Ayer, Cllr W Organ and Cllr Ms M Vincent

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Mr N Hitch (Town Clerk) Mrs S McMorran (Deputy Town Clerk), Mr P Jones (Maintenance Contracts Officer), Cllr V Clarke, Petersfield Post, Petersfield Herald and 10 members of the public.

G 0558 CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

The Chairman had visited Love Lane skatepark that afternoon and was pleased to see how well used the facility was. He commented that re-instatement work still needed to be carried out and observed the amount of litter that was being left around the park and within the football ground itself. The Town Clerk advised members that final invoices for the skatepark still had to be paid because of the outstanding work and this was being managed by the Maintenance Contracts Officer. Also, he advised members that our litter operative visited the skatepark daily to remove litter from the site and entered the football ground to remove items that had been thrown over the boundary fence.

G 0559 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were submitted..

G 0560 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was observed that the Chairman for the meeting had not been identified within the minutes of the last meeting.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Grounds Committee held on 13th January 2011 be approved once the Chairman had been identified within the list of attending councillors.

G 0561 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Shore declared a personal and prejudicial interest as he was a plot holder at Sheet Allotments, minute number G 0566 refers.

G 0562 PUBLIC REPRESENTATION

Mr Nigel Wells addressed the committee with regard to the skatepark and the proposed skatejam. He outlined the proposed activities at the skatejam and emphasised that it was intended to make it a community occasion and that other youth organisations had been approached to assist in running it. Funding had been applied for via a Sustainability Grant of up to £3,500 from Community Spaces, who had contributed money to the construction of the skatepark. He also indicated that a second skatejam event may be held in August.

Mr Alan Hall from South Downs Ballooning addressed members concerning the agenda item requesting permission to undertake balloon launches from Penns Field. He emphasised that his venture is a recent 'start-up' and could not afford the annual commercial payment for balloon launches and requested that an individual launch rate be approved for commercial balloon launches.

G 0563

PRESENTATION ON A PROPOSED PROJECT FOR QUEENS DIAMOND JUBILEE

Mr David Jeffrey addressed members on the proposal to erect a bandstand on Petersfield Heath to commemorate the Queens Diamond Jubilee between the Pond and the entrance at the junction of Heath Road and Heath Road West. The idea of the bandstand was that it would be a permanent, lasting and attractive memorial that would be used by present and future music groups in the town, extend the historic interest in music in the town and be of low cost to maintain. The proposed site for the bandstand would be close to the current 'developed section' of the Heath. Members discussed the merits of the idea with opinion being divided on whether a bandstand was an appropriate memorial in the 21st century. It was commented by several members that the Council had a policy on Petersfield Heath to prevent the urbanisation of the Heath and it was considered that the construction of a bandstand would constitute 'urbanisation'.

- RECOMMENDED: that**
1. A bandstand is not appropriate on Petersfield Heath
 2. The Diamond Jubilee Working party reconsider different ways of celebrating the event and providing a lasting memorial which could include the construction of a bandstand on an alternative site in Petersfield.

G 0564

MAINTENANCE CONTRACT OFFICER'S (MCO) REPORT

Members received the MCO's report which, following questions, was noted, copy attached to these minutes at Appendix A for information.

G 0565

LOVE LANE SKATE PARK

a. Festival for Young People

i) Revised date for Skatejam

Members were requested to approve moving the skatejam from the originally proposed date of 16th April 2011 to 29th May 2011 to avoid clashing with Petersfield Town Football Club's events

RESOLVED: that the date for the skatejam be moved to 29th May 2011 provided that the Maintenance Contracts Officer approves arrangements for the event and public liability insurance is in place.

ii) **Consider issue of toilet facilities in Phase 2 of skatepark construction**

Members received correspondence from the Festival for Young People suggesting that a urinal be constructed within phase 2 of the skatepark construction project against a wall of the Love Lane Pavilion. Members considered it would be more appropriate for proper toilet facilities to be available.

RESOLVED: that toilet facilities be included within the funding requirements for phase 2 of the skatepark construction project with external access to the Love Lane Pavilion toilets being explored for this purpose and if this should prove impractical an external toilet block be constructed on the Pavilion.

b. **Insurance**

Members received the Town Clerk's report on insurance of the new skatepark facility. The merits of the various quotations were considered as well as the option of 'self-insuring' the facility. Following debate, it was:

RECOMMENDED: that the skatepark be insured with Aviva at a cost of £540 including Insurance Premium Tax for a year with the option of self-insuring being reviewed as part of the budget process in the autumn.

Cllr Shore left the meeting prior to the discussion regarding allotments and Cllr Ayer took the Chair.

G 0566

ALLOTMENTS

a. **New Allotment Tenancy Agreement and Policies**

Members were presented with the proposed new Allotment Tenancy Agreement, a document seeking to explain some of the terms and conditions, proposed new letters to send to ploholders whose plots were not being adequately maintained plus policies on the use of greenhouses, sheds, bonfires and the keeping of bees and chickens. The Town Clerk advised members that all documentation had been drawn up in consultation with the Allotments Association who were fully supportive of the proposals. Members discussed the documentation and were generally content with it. It was suggested that the date & issue of the document be included on each page and a further review of the documents be undertaken to remove any lingering inconsistencies in the wording.

RESOLVED: that the new Allotment Tenancy Agreement and policies on the use of greenhouses, sheds, bonfires and the keeping of bees and chickens be approved subject to a further review of the documentation to remove any inconsistencies in the wording.

b. Waiting List management

Members were asked whether they were in agreement that applicants for allotments be placed on both waiting lists if the applicant wished. It was confirmed that the numbers of people on both waiting lists could be easily and quickly identified.

RESOLVED that allotment applicants may be placed on the waiting list for both Tilmore and Sheet allotments sites if the applicants wish.

Cllr Shore re-joined the meeting

G 0567 THE HEATH

a. Burnett Funfares

Members received correspondence from Burnett Funfares requesting a reduction in the daily operating rental costs for the Easter and Spring Bank Holiday Fares. The Town Clerk advised that last year the Easter Fare was charged £337 per operating day and a special concession was granted by members on a 'one-off basis' for a reduction to £225 for the Spring Bank Holiday Fare. Members debated the merits of the request, noting that the current charge is for the area of land and is the same regardless of the size of the fare. It was then:

RESOLVED: to suspend standing orders to allow Mr Burnett to speak.

Mr Burnett spoke of the difficulties they have running a small family funfare especially with the current high cost of diesel.

Committee then went back into session.

Following further consideration, it was:

RECOMMENDED: that the daily operating cost for the Easter and Spring Bank Holiday fares be reduced to £250 plus VAT with future years increases being in line with RPI.

b. Annual Petersfield Fairy Festival

A request was received to hold the Annual Fairy Festival on the Heath on Saturday 30th April and Sunday 1st May 2011. It was noted that this was the third year that the event has been held. Concern was once again expressed about the need for strict Child Protection Guidelines. Following discussion, it was:

RECOMMENDED: that approval for the Annual Fairy Festival on Petersfield Heath be approved subject to the same terms and conditions as last year with a charge of £250.

c. Petersfield Cricket Club

Members received and noted a report from Petersfield Cricket Club on the maintenance of the cricket ground and the use of the funding provided by the Town Council this year. It was also noted that funding for the maintenance is in the budget for the coming financial year but it cannot be assumed that this will always be the case. The quality of the report was also noted and appreciated.

RESOLVED: that the report be received and noted. The Town Clerk is also to remind the cricket club that they cannot assume the funding for the maintenance of the cricket square is a permanent arrangement.

G 0568 **PETERSFIELD UPS AND DOWNS CHARITY BIKE RIDE**

Members received and considered a request from the ride organisers to use land at Penns Farm playing fields and Love Lane recreation ground within the route for this years charity ride on Sunday 10th July 2011.

RESOLVED: that permission be granted for the use of Penns Farm playing fields and Love Lane recreation ground for the route of the 5 mile Ups and Downs Charity Bike Ride on 10th July 2011.

G 0569 **AVENUE PAVILION TENNIS COURTS**

A proposal had been received for 2 of the tennis courts to be used on Saturdays between 9.30 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. by Don Perrin Tennis Team from March onwards, term time only. Members were reminded that playball use one and sometimes two courts on a Saturday between 9 - 11.00 a.m. which would mean that for 1.5 hours on a Saturday morning there may be no free for use courts for the public. Members commented on their desire to see increased use of the courts and also wanted to know whether the coaches would be charging their 'students'. The proposal included a note that coaching events could be held during school holidays in the future.

RESOLVED that Don Perrin Tennis use 2 of the Avenue Tennis courts for coaching sessions on a Saturday between 9.30 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. from March during term time at a cost of £2.50 per court per hour for this season.

G 0570 **BALLOONING AT PENNS FARM PLAYING FIELDS**

The Town Clerk advised members that there is currently a price set for commercial balloon launches for the season and a price for one-off launches for private individuals, but not an individual launch price for commercial launches. The potential for disturbance to local residents was considered and the need for launches to be done from the rugby pitches emphasised.

RESOLVED: that permission be granted to South Downs Ballooning to launch from Penns Farm playing fields at a cost of £31.36 plus VAT per launch with the situation being reviewed in 1 year. Standard documentation, including public liability insurance, risk assessments, method statements and pilots licence to be provided before launches are commenced.

In view of the confidential nature of the business about to be discussed it was

RESOLVED that the public and press leave the meeting.

G 0571 **ST. PETER'S CHURCHYARD**

The Town Clerk advised members that a request had been received to dig a trench within the churchyard alongside their wall to see if this eased the damp problem. A reply had been sent giving permission with various conditions through our solicitors. It was also noted by members that The Market Inn was now for sale.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.27 pm

Maintenance & Contracts Officer's Report
to PTC Grounds Committee.
February 2011

APPENDIX A.

Members are reminded that the items within this report are provided for information only and are not available for debate. If it is considered that an item listed within the report should be debated fully by members, then it will be placed on the next appropriate Committee or Council agenda. Any member wanting clarification or further information on any aspect of items within the report, please contact me outside of the meeting.

Sheet Recreation Ground:

- Banner Homes are constructing the "Rotherfield Place" development adjacent to the recreation ground with access off the A272 London Road. The developer or their contractor has removed a large section of hedge on the southern boundary along the pathway leading to the scout hut and have erected a timber fence. The owner of "The Half Moon" public house has also erected a fence along the western boundary, this fence effectively closes the unofficial "entrance of desire" to the recreation ground from the pub car park which previously existed and a new gravelled access has been created further along adjacent to the pub's garden. While it is possible that, in both these cases, the fences may not be within our boundary, I am very concerned that Petersfield Town Council do not appear to have been officially informed and notified about any of these operations nor have we been given the opportunity to ascertain whether our permission should have been sought. Clearly the removal of the hedge, which I believe may have been ours, and the unofficial creation of a new entrance needs further investigation. To this end, I am in discussion with both the developer, Banner Homes, and the owners of the Half Moon PH.

There has so far been two complaints from local residents relating to the fence and the removal of the hedge.

Sheet Allotments:

- High centre ruts in the access tracks which previously caught the underside of vehicles have been scraped off and flatted but the ground remains soft particularly where earth has been moved in wet conditions – the situation should improve as the ground becomes consolidated and weather becomes dryer. If soft areas and potholes persist then we may be able to introduce some scalplings though there are difficulties with delivery at this site.
- Following discussions with EHDC I am pleased to say that they have finally agreed to treat the dumped derelict trailer as an abandoned vehicle and will now dispose of it for us.

Love Lane Skate Park:

- Agreement has been reached with Wheelscape Ltd to use one of our own local contractors to complete the landscaping surrounding the concrete skate park. The ground is to be graded and turfed with local turf. Work is to commence as soon as conditions permit but certainly within the next 7 to 14 days. Temporary fencing will be erected to protect the new turf until it becomes established, estimated to be 3 to 4 weeks. During this time access to the concrete bowl, street course and walkway will be maintained so that people may still use the skate park. The aim is to have the fences removed and the new turf settled, serviceable and able to be walked on before the end of March.

One remaining bin and bench seat is to be installed at the high point near the end of the walkway overlooking the bowl. This will be installed once the turf is established.

All "snag list" items to the actual skatepark and fence should be completed by Wheelscape within the next 10 days.

Love Lane Pavilion:

- The Pavilion roof has been vandalised and all the lead stolen! We have implemented temporary work to make the building weatherproof. A quotation for permanent repair has been received and is the subject of an insurance claim.

Penns Farm & Love Lane Playing Fields:

- Petersfield Town Juniors Football Club have agreed to cover the cost of repair resulting from damage which was caused by herbicide in the line marking paint. The work, which needs to start as soon as possible, will cause some temporary disruption of use of the pitches. A program schedule for the work is being agreed with the Football Club.

Rotherlands Nature Reserve:

- I have received a request from Southern Water and the Environment Agency seeking our approval to allow them to carry out certain works along Tilmore Brook, much of which is within the Conservation Area. Acting on advice from several agencies, they say that this work is essential to improve the flow rate in the brook and will of great benefit to aquatic life and the general ecology of the area. The Rotherlands Conservation Group have been consulted and are generally in favour of this work being carried out. I have arranged a meeting with the relevant parties in order that the proposed work can be properly discussed and effectively planned.

The Heath:

- British Gas contractors have been using the small Heath Road car park next to Little School. This has been a major cause for concern; the car park has at times resembled a builders yard and has attracted fly-tippers. Heavy vehicles have rutted the soft ground and there has been some minor damage to the dead-hedge which was constructed by the Friends of Petersfield Heath.

I have been in contact with British Gas and their contractor the Newpoint Group and they have promised me that the current road works will be completed within the next seven days, whereupon I have their assurance that all plant, materials and debris will be completely removed along with any rubbish left by others. Any ground or boundary damage will be repaired by them and the whole site will be left clean and tidy.

As a separate issue, a large Road Sweeper vehicle has been parking in this car park at various times, mostly evenings and weekends. This has caused problems for other users of the car park, has also caused some damage to the soft ground as well as being visually unappealing. I have written to the owner of the vehicle asking them to remove the vehicle and to desist from parking it on Town Council land in the future.

- Some minor work has been carried out to remove a dangerous tree and reduce growth on pond bank adjacent swims 17, 18, 20, 22 & 23 this work is within budget.
- Tree and sapling growth along the boardwalk has been reduced to improve the access, view and appearance.
- Vandals on motorbikes gained access to the cricket square and caused damage to the turf. Fortunately, on this occasion, the damage was not too extensive and the Cricket Club believe that the ground can be repaired with minimum cost.



GROUNDS COMMITTEE

Love Lane Skatepark Insurance

Members will recall my report last month on the proposed insurance of the newly constructed skatepark.

Our insurers, Zurich Municipal quoted insurance for the skatepark, including the sleepers and fence at a cost of £3,200 per annum plus Insurance Premium Tax (6% from 1st January 2011).

The Town Council continues to be tied-in with its current insurer until 31st March 2012 under the five year agreement entered into in 2007.

Four options were presented to Committee in my report, namely:

- 1 Insure the new skatepark with Zurich Municipal for the sum of £160,000 at a cost of £3,200 plus Insurance Premium Tax per annum;
- 2 Seek alternative quotes for insuring the facility;
- 3 Insure what is more likely to be damaged (the fence and sleepers) for the sum of, say £20,000 that would probably cost in the region of £350 per annum;
- 4 Decide that the risk of damage is not worth insuring and, in effect, self-insure the Skatepark.

Following discussion, the Committee resolved that:

- quotations be sought to insure the fence (value set at £10K) with excess in the sum of £250, £1K and £5K
- quotations be sought to insure the skate bowl (including the sleeper path) with the excess in the sum of £20K
- quotations be sought to insure the skate bowl for the value of a re-build with the excess set at £250

Quotations Obtained

Insurance companies have been approached to quote for cover as outlined in the above resolution however, most companies indicated that the differing excess levels made little difference to the overall cost. A summary of the quotations received is as follows:

1 Zurich Municipal

It should be remembered that the original quote of £3,200 came from Zurich Municipal

Wooden Fence only insured for £10,000

- Excess £100 - £200 + IPT
- Excess £250 - £180 + IPT
- Excess £1,000 - £160 + IPT
- Excess £5,000 - £120 + IPT

Skatepark Bowl and Sleepers insured for £150,000

- Excess 20,000 - £750 + IPT

2 Aviva

Entire skatepark and fence insured for £160,000 with £250 excess

- Minimum Premium £540 including IPT
- Doesn't include subsidence or heave

3 Allianz

Entire skatepark and fence insured for £160,000 with £2,500 excess

- Premium £2,926.66 including IPT
- Excludes graffiti damage and the clearing of graffiti

4 Ecclesiastical

Entire skatepark and fence insured for £160,000 with £250 excess

- Premium £1,415.09 plus IPT
- Cover on fences excludes storm and flood cover
- Excess £250 on all perils except the fence (£500) and for subsidence, landslip and heave (£1,000)

Option 1 remains unattractive on the grounds of cost. It must be accepted though that they are the only insurer that has quoted for all the various facets resolved at the last Grounds Committee meeting.

Option 2 is definitely the most attractive of all those provided yet the cost remains significant.

Option 3 since submitting their quote to Sutton Winson have confirmed they will match the premium offered by Ecclesiastical but the excesses will remain as per the original quote..

Option 4 is also a high cost option.

The option to self-insure remains open to the Council and is one that a number of the insurers indicated was probably the best option available to us. It seems that there is little appetite to insure this facility and those offering a quote have questioned why the Council would want to insure a facility of this nature.

Recommendation

If the Council wishes to insure the new skatepark, the quotation offered by Aviva is the recommended one to be accepted. If the Council considers that self-insurance is appropriate, a suitable figure needs to be agreed that is budgeted for each year to cover potential damage and repairs.

Neil Hitch
Town Clerk
10th February 2011