

Minutes of a Meeting of the Okehampton Town Council Parks Committee
held on Monday 22 July 2013
in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Okehampton at 7.00 pm

Committee Members Present: Councillor Mrs C Marsh (Chair)
Councillor Dr M Ireland (Vice Chair)
Councillor P Vachon
Councillor M Davies (Town Mayor)
Councillor Mrs J Goffey (Chair, Property)
Councillor T Cummings (Vice Chair, Policy & Resources)

Other Members Present:

In Attendance: Mrs J Gillard (Deputising for Town Clerk)
Mr D Whitfield (Park Keeper)

115. **Apologies for Absence** - Apologies for absence were presented on behalf of Councillors D Weekes, A Leech and K Ball.
116. **Deferment of Business** (for comment by the public) - There were no members of the public present.
117. **Members' Questions** - Councillor Vachon advised there were a large number of cyclists using the paths in the park. The Chair agreed that although there were signs advising 'no cycling', these were small and not easily seen. The Chair suggested that all the signage within the park, together with the byelaws, needed reviewing and it was agreed that the Chair, Councillor Davies and Mr Whitfield progress with this. Item to be added to next agenda for review.

Written question from Councillor A Leech: 'I noticed today that a member of our Parks staff was maintaining the Gateway Garden. When did we agree that the Town Council would maintain this area or when did we sign a contract with Devon County Council agreeing that we would maintain the garden and, if we have, what payments do we receive for this service or is the member of staff doing it independently in his own time?'

The Chair read extracts from Parks Committee meetings of 29th March 2010, 1st June 2010, 20th August 2012 and 5th November 2012. It concluded that transfer of the land from Devon County Council to the Town Council was not possible and Devon County Council invited the Town Council to assume responsibility for ongoing maintenance of the area. Mr Whitfield advised minimal time was spent on this upkeep together with upkeep of the Waitrose bed. It was proposed by Councillor M Ireland and seconded by Councillor Mrs J Goffey that the arrangements for the Town Council maintaining these areas continue. All were in favour with one abstention.

118. **Minutes** - The minutes of the Parks Committee meeting held on 17 June 2013 were approved and signed by the Chair on the proposition of Councillor M Davies, seconded by Councillor P Vachon.

119. Matters Arising -

119.1 Clapps Wood - Councillor M Davies advised that final agreement was awaited from Devon and Cornwall Housing and, once received, the purchase would be completed.

119.2 OCRA Sports Pavilion Simmons Park - Councillor M Davies advised the transaction had been completed and a Solicitor's bill received for the work involved. Agreed to add payment of this bill to the next Policy and Resources agenda as an urgent item when available budget could be checked beforehand.

119.3 Park Bookings -

- (i) Daredevil Stunt Show - the Chair advised a representative from the company would arrange to visit the site with the Chair when they were next in the area.
- (ii) Exeter City Football Club - booking confirmed for Wednesday 7th - Friday 9th August, Wednesday 21st August, Monday 2nd September - Tuesday 3rd September and also Wednesday 30th October - Thursday 31st October.
- (iii) The Chair advised that there was no formal pricing structure in place for park bookings. It was agreed Bideford Town Council be approached as they are holding a Stunt Show shortly and also inquiries made of Tavistock Town Council re Meadowlands bookings. Agreed a bond was needed for all events where damage likely to occur. Carry forward to next agenda.
- (iv) Circus/Spring Fair - the Clerk advised that the Circus had not paid their invoice. Mr Whitfield advised a charge also needed to be levied for hire of a skip for the rubbish. Contact to be attempted to be made with Circus. Also agreed invoice to be issued to the Fair as this booking had also not been paid for.
- (v) Booking Request from Co-op Foodstore - Family Fun Day 1st September 2013, charity event. Agreed this booking be accepted with no charge, providing usual insurance cover was in place.
- (vi) Baobab Play - request booking August bank holiday 24th - 26th, not a charity event as they charge £5 entry. Agreed to investigate charges implemented elsewhere and add item to next Policy and Resources agenda for agreement of cost.

119.4 Notice Board - Councillor Mrs Goffey advised letters had been sent to various community organisations requesting their support, response awaited.

119.5 Red Telephone Box, North Street - Mr Whitfield advised that there are two possible locations in the park for the telephone box. He is investigating costs of sandblasting, repainting and moving costs and will report back to next meeting.

119.6 Sophia Simmons' Memorial - The Clerk advised no response yet from Exeter Diocese.

119.7 Jubilee Bridge - The Chair advised that repainting would be left until next year. Although funds were available in the budget for the work, permissions were needed from the Environment Agency to enter the river.

119.8 Mobile CCTV Cameras - Mr Whitfield advised he was continuing research on costings and hoped to have more information for the next meeting.

119.9 Access through Park during Spring/Autumn Fair - Councillor Mrs Marsh advised she had spoken to Alan King at Okehampton College, they are in principle happy to look for an alternative route through the College car park, however costs would be involved to make this change happen. Agreed consideration for this item needs to be included in the next year's budget setting.

119.10 Procedure for Booking Tennis and Putting - The Clerk and Chair have been in contact with OCRA and the Leisure Centre. Various issues have been flagged, signage, change to till set up, storage of equipment for the Ladies Putting, purchase of tennis equipment etc. Chair to discuss further with the Leisure Centre and item to be discussed again at next meeting.

120. Dog Fouling - Two complaints had been received since the last meeting. Agreed that the Relief Caretaker, in his volunteer role in collecting litter etc, be asked to address the areas concerned and letters of acknowledgement be sent to the electors complaining.

121. Other Park Issues -

- (i) Mr Whitfield advised that no lights were working from the top car park by the Jubilee Bridge to the football pitch and the light by The Nook gateway was also not working. It was resolved that Mike Harding be requested to investigate the issues, proposed by Councillor M Davies, seconded by Councillor Mrs J Goffey. The Chair also advised that the skate park light was not working and it was agreed that Mr Harding be asked to investigate this at the same time as looking at the park lights.
- (ii) The Clerk advised that a bench had been destroyed in the park by a car reversing into it. The event was reported to the police at the time and it was agreed that a claim should be made to the driver's insurers for replacement of the bench.
- (iii) Skate Park - the Chair advised that rails had been replaced around the piece of equipment where the rails had previously been taken off and the lack of rails highlighted in the risk assessment report. Skaters have suggested that the equipment is more dangerous with the rails in place, Chair agreed to investigate further and report back to next meeting before further action taken.

122. Members' Reports -

- (i) Parklands Leisure Centre Users' Group - no meeting.
- (ii) Okehampton Community Recreation Association - Councillor Mrs Marsh advised a successful Sports Week has recently been held and the pavilion is due to open on 1st September.
- (iii) North Dartmoor Search and Rescue Group - Councillor Vachon advised £10,000 had recently been received towards the building funds. The police are also adopting a SARCALL system linked to North Devon Search control which will enhance the speed of response to incidents.
- (iv) Tennis Court Management - Councillor Mrs Marsh advised the club are investigating the cost of resurfacing the courts.
- (v) Okehampton Community Archive - Councillor Vachon advised the damaged sign on West Bridge has now been replaced. Work ongoing on setting up a graveyard walk. A successful coffee morning held, a display to be held at Okehampton Show.

- (vi) Carnival Committee - Councillor Cummings reported several fundraising events held recently, children's entertainment on 12th and 19th October to be held in Fore Street and the programme for the event this year to be free, costs covered by sponsorship.
- (vii) Youth Issues/Room 13 - no report.
- (viii) Children's Centre - no report.

123. Miscellaneous Item - The Chair reported a successful QEII Playing Fields plaque unveiling event had been held in the park and Councillor M Davies thanked the Park Keeper on the appearance of the park as a whole.

124. Simmons Park Access by Lyndridge Care - The Clerk advised a request had been received from Lyndridge Care requesting they be given permission to drive their mini-bus with elderly residents into the park past Chalet Treloar to enable them to disembark at that point. The bus would not remain in the park, but would return to collect the passengers later on. After reference to Mr Whitfield, permission was given to enable them to do this. Councillors were in agreement with this decision.

Meeting closed 8.25 pm.

Councillor Mrs C Marsh
Chairman