

MINUTES of the MEETING of the RECREATION, LEISURE & AMENITIES COMMITTEE
held at THE COUNCIL OFFICES, THE GROVE, SWANSCOMBE on THURSDAY 21
MARCH 2024 at 7.00PM

PRESENT: Councillor Peter Harman – Chairman
Councillor Emma Ben Moussa – Vice – Chairman
Councillor Lorna Cross
Councillor Ann Duke
Councillor Peter Harris
Councillor Elizabeth Wickham

ALSO PRESENT: Graham Blew – Town Clerk
Martin Harding – Assistant Town Clerk/RFO
Dan Usher (Senior Groundsman/Gardener)

ABSENT: Councillor Dawn Johnston

468/23-24. ARRANGEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS REGARDING FILMING OR RECORDING THE MEETING.

The arrangements and constraints relating to the filming or recording of the meeting were explained.

469/23-24. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Lesley Howes due to other commitments.

RESOLVED:

That the reason for absence, for the above Town Councillor/s, be formally accepted and approved.

470/23-24. SUBSTITUTES.

There were none.

471/23-24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.

There were none.

As per Standing Order 34 c) the Chairman adjourned the meeting at this point to allow members of the public to address the meeting in relation to the business being transacted at the meeting.

472/23-24. ITEMS DEEMED URGENT BY THE CHAIRMAN / MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES AND THEIR POSITION ON THE AGENDA.

The Town Clerk informed members that the Junior Park Run had begun in the Heritage Park on 10 March 2024 and the organisers would be displaying a promotional banner on the metal fencing in front of The Swanscombe Centre for a period of 4 weeks and it would then, unless members had any objection, be re-located to the fencing at the front of the Heritage Park.

Members were informed that x1 of the x3 replacement trees recently planted at Manor Park had been snapped on 17 March 2024. This had been reported to the Police in the usual manner.

473/23-24. TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 JANUARY 2024.

Recommended: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 January 2024 were approved and signed as a true record.

474/23-24. SENIOR GROUNDSMAN /GARDENER'S REPORT.

Members were provided with a copy of the report which updated members on the work undertaken, by the Parks Department and the work planned which included:

Broomfield Park, Eagles Road, Heritage Park, Knockhall Park, Manor Park, Swanscombe Park, Saxon Court, Valley View, Equipment/ Staffing and Miscellaneous.

The Senior Groundsman/Gardener highlighted the issues that were being experienced by foxes damaging the bowls green and the resources this was taking up.

At this point the Chairman informed the Committee that the Senior Groundsman/Gardener had begun his employment with the Town Council on 22 March 1999 (25 years) and presented him with some tokens of appreciation in recognition of this.

Recommended: That the report be noted.

TOWN CLERK AND RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT.

475/23-24. TREE IN BROOMFIELD RECREATION GROUND (NEXT TO DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL HOUSING - O'DELL PLACE).

Members considered the item, placed on the agenda at the request of the Vice-Chairman.

Members were provided with the following:

- Request from Vice-Chairman
- Photographs taken on the day after high winds.
- Extract of the last tree survey
- Diagram showing location of the tree.
- Copy of the Town Councils Tree Management/Planting Policy

Members discussed the contents of the report and the Town Clerk informed members that the 5-year periodic tree survey was currently being undertaken. It was then proposed, duly seconded, and agreed:

Recommended: To take no action until the outcome of the 5-year Periodic Tree Survey was available.

476/23-24. PERIODIC TREE SURVEY.

Further to the 8 February 2024 full Council meeting (minute 411/23-24) members considered the level of risk of the areas included in the periodic tree survey undertaken by the Town Council (every 5 years).

Advice had been sought from a tree consultant as well as the Town Councils insurers and had been provided to members along with a list of the site locations.

Members were advised that x2 of the Parks Department staff had attended a Lantra Basic Tree Survey and Inspection course (this would also be arranged for the remaining Parks Department Staff)

<https://www.lantra.co.uk/about/about-lantra>

The financial implications of the current tree survey were advised to members, in that it incurred a cost of £3,200.00 to undertake the survey, and that any works highlighted would result in further expenditure.

After discussing the contents of the report it was proposed, duly seconded, and agreed:

Recommended: That the Town Council continues with a 5-year periodic tree survey of its sites.

477/23-24. NORTH WEST KENT CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU (NWK CAB) – VIDEO ADVICE KIOSKS

Further to minute 416/23-24 members were updated that contact had been made with the Operations Manager (NWK CAB) regarding the possibility/suitability of having a Video Kiosk operating from The Old Fire Station Community Café.

Members were informed that whilst the Video Kiosks are free (they had been funded by UK Power Networks), once the kiosk is deemed working well and demand is established NWK CAB would request a contribution, from the Town Council, towards the cost of providing the advisers (approximately £1000 for a year).

Recommended: That the CAB be advised that the Town Council would be happy to accommodate a Video Advice Kiosk but that the cost of providing the advisers should be covered by the grant given to the CAB by Dartford Borough Council.

478/23-24. INGRESS PARK COMMUNITY CENTRE – UPDATE.

Further to the update provided at the 17 January 2024 Recreation, Leisure and Amenities Committee meeting (minute 384/23-24), the Technical Director & Deputy Managing Director, Crest Nicholson Eastern had provided further information in an email dated 13 February 2024, which had been provided to members.

The Town Council had also received an email from him, dated 5 March 2024 indicating confirmation of the previously agreed commuted sum.

Recommended: That the update be noted.

There being no further business to transact the Meeting closed at 7.30 pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chairman)

DRAFT