

MINUTES of the MEETING of the RECREATION, LEISURE & AMENITIES COMMITTEE held at THE COUNCIL OFFICES, THE GROVE, SWANSCOMBE on THURSDAY 19 SEPTEMBER 2019 at 7.00PM

**PRESENT:** Councillor Sue Butterfill - Chairman  
Councillor Peter Harman - Vice Chairman  
Councillor Anita Barham  
Councillor Emma Ben-Moussa  
Councillor Linda Hall  
Councillor John Hayes

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

**ABSENT:** There were none

**202/19-20. ARRANGEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS REGARDING FILMING OR RECORDING THE MEETING.**

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

**203/19-20. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors' Lorna Cross and Lesley Howes.

Apologies for lateness were submitted by Councillors' Linda Hall and John Hayes.

**204/19-20. SUBSTITUTES.**

There were none.

**205/19-20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.**

There were none.

***The Chairman gave the opportunity for the meeting to be adjourned at this point to accept questions from the public.***

**206/19-20. ITEMS DEEMED URGENT BY THE CHAIRMAN / MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES AND THEIR POSITION ON THE AGENDA.**

The Town Clerk informed members that a further meeting with the Allotment Association and Dartford Borough Council had taken place on 11 September 2019 to clarify the access arrangements for the Keary Road and New Burial Ground sites should the DBC housing development proposals go ahead.

The Chairman advised the committee that she and the Town Mayor had met with Gravesham Community Leisure Limited (GCLL) earlier in the day for an informal

discussion and update on operation of The Swanscombe Leisure Centre. Members were informed that a celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the centre would be taking place on 29 November 2019.

**207/19-20. TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 JUNE 2019.**

**Recommended:** That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 June 2019 were approved and signed as a true record.

**208/19-20. SENIOR GROUNDSMAN /GARDENER'S REPORT.**

The Senior Groundsman/Gardener went through the report which updated members on the work undertaken, by the Parks Department and also the work planned for the future which included:

Swanscombe Park, Manor Park, Broomfield Park, Knockhall Park, Heritage Park, Eagles Road Play Area, Valley View, Vans/Equipment and Staff.

The Chairman informed the committee that the Edible Ebbsfleet Network had encountered similar issues to the council regarding the pond lining in the Heritage Park being vandalised and that, with the assistance of the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation, they had resolved this by lining their pond with a special clay. They had some of the clay left over and had indicated that they may be able to line the pond in the Heritage Park if the small shortfall of the amount of clay required could be obtained. The RFO would work with them to investigate this.

**Recommended:** That the report be noted.

**TOWN CLERK AND RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT.**

**209/19-20. TREE SURVEY (p).**

Further to minute 107/19-20, and the previous survey being undertaken in 2015. Members had been provided with the completed tree survey and the breakdown of the costs provided for the works highlighted in the survey.

Although the priorities of the works contained in the survey differed members were asked to consider having all the works undertaken for practicality and best value i.e.

- It would ensure that all the Councils trees were at the same standard of safety and maintenance;
- The finances required were contained within the FRA. The 3 and 6 month priority works were covered within the specific Area Assessed within the FRA i.e. earmarked for the Tree Survey. The remaining works would be undertaken utilising funds held in contingency for other long term requirements;
- The costs could change/increase for any works not undertaken at this time;

- It would be more manageable to have the work undertaken at the same time.

Members discussed the survey and, for the reasons contained within the report, it was agreed to have all the works highlighted undertaken at the same time.

Members paid particular attention to Tree 6 in Swanscombe Park and whilst not wanting to see the removal of healthy trees it was agreed that, due to the damage being caused by the growth of the tree, that this tree should be felled. To mitigate this loss it was also agreed that x2 new trees should be planted in Swanscombe Park and that the Senior Groundsman/Gardener, in consultation with the tree consultant, should look into this and report back to the Committee.

Members' also discussed Tree 49 in Swanscombe Park and it was agreed that no action be taken at this time but that the tree should be monitored.

**Recommended:**

1. To note the contents of the survey and to agree to have the works contained in the survey undertaken as detailed above.
2. That the Senior Groundsman/Gardener, in consultation with the tree consultant, investigate the purchase and planting of x2 new trees within Swanscombe Park and report this back to the committee.

**210/19-20. ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLAN.**

The Chairman had asked members to consider the best way for the Council to review that its facilities were both used and operated environmentally friendly.

The Chairman advised that she had placed this item on the agenda to stimulate debate on the environment and after discussion it was agreed to form a working group to consider strategies and actions that could be implemented / taken.

It was agreed the Environmental Action Plan Working Group be made up of the following:

Councillor Anita Barham  
Councillor Emma Ben Moussa  
Councillor Sue Butterfill  
Councillor Linda Hall  
Councillor Peter Harman

**Recommended:**

That the Environmental Action Plan Working Group be formed as above to consider improvements to the Town Councils open spaces and facilities.

211/19-20. **POLICY FOR USE OF TOWN COUNCIL PARKS / OPEN SPACES.**

The Terms of References for the Recreation, Leisure & Amenities Committee includes “*To exercise the functions of the Council in controlling the operation and provision of facilities in relation to recreation grounds, parks open spaces...*”

Members were asked to recommend adopting the draft Policy for Use of Town Council Parks / Open Spaces.

Members agreed the following amendments to the wording of the policy:-

Page 1 - POLICY FOR USE OF TOWN COUNCIL PARKS / OPEN SPACES BY  
*EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS.*

Page 2 – EVENTS WHICH WILL NOT *NORMALLY* BE GRANTED PERMISSION.

Page 2 – Anybody wishing to stage an event in a Park / Open Space must complete an Event Notification Form to be submitted to the Town Council at least 14 weeks prior to the event *except for minor events which require at least 4 weeks.*

Page 4 – Small Events – Number permitted in financial year – *At the Town Councils discretion.*

Page 4 – Minor events – Number permitted in financial year – *At the Town Clerks discretion.*

**Recommended:** That the policy, including the amendments detailed above, be finalised and adopted.

212/19-20. **EVENT NOTIFICATION FORM.**

Further to minute 154/19-20 the Recreation, Leisure & Amenities Committee were asked to formalise a finalised document for endorsement by the Town Council.

Members agreed the following amendments to the wording of the form:-

Page 1 – Time Limits – Any notification form would be required to be received a minimum of 14 weeks prior to any event taking place, *except for minor events when the required notice period will be a minimum of 4 weeks.*

Page 3 – Removal of “*Foreshore/berthing*” from section 7.

**Recommended:** That the event form be finalised, to include the amendments detailed, and submitted for endorsement by the Town Council.



213/19-20. **COMMUNITY EVENT.**

At the previous full Council, 11 July 2019 (minute 155/19-20), it had been agreed that the Recreation, Leisure & Amenities Committee be asked to consider forming a Working Group to organise and undertake a Community Event in Broomfield Park next year (2020).

Nb. Working Groups.

- Number of members to be between 3 or 5;
- Quorum for a Working Group to meet is 3 members;
- The RLA need to agree the Terms of Reference for the Working Group.

Members were informed that the Youth Community Engagement Officer, Sarah Rawlings, had advised that she would like to collaborate with the Town Council on this and had asked if she could be invited to be part of the Working Group.

After discussion it was agreed that the Working Group membership be made up of the following:

1. Councillor Anita Barham
2. Councillor Emma Ben Moussa
3. Councillor Lorna Cross (subject to her agreement)
4. Councillor Lesley Howes (subject to her agreement)
5. Councillor Peter Harman

**Recommended:** That the membership of a Community Event Working Group be agreed as above.

214/19-20. **LEISURE CENTRE OPENING HOURS.**

Condition 8.1.2 of the Management Agreement requires Gravesham Community Leisure Limited (GCLL) to.... *“Not to open the Leisure Centre outside of the opening hours without the Town Councils consent which may be refused”*.

During the recess period the Managing Director, GCLL submitted a request to amend the opening hours, this was put to the Chairman who had agreed to the request.

**Recommended:** To endorse the actions taken in agreeing to the request to amend the opening hours.

**215/19-20. COUNCIL OFFICE AND CAFÉ CHRISTMAS OPENING ARRANGEMENTS.**

Members had been issued with a calendar for the Council Offices and Café over the Christmas and New Year and were asked to consider when they wished the office and café to be closed over the festive period. Officers had been consulted and had no objection to using annual leave entitlement to cover any periods of closure.

**Recommended:** That the Council Offices and Café be closed on 24, 27, 30 and 31 December 2019 with a notice being displayed, in advance, advising Members of the Public of the closures. As per previous years a relevant message would also be recorded for the Council Office answer machine for this period.

**216/19-20. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC.**

MOVED BY Councillor Peter Harman and seconded by Councillor John Hayes;

**RESOLVED:**

That, pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, that because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press leave the meeting during consideration of the following item(s).

No members of the press or public were present during discussion of the following items of business.

**217/19-20. INGRESS PARK COMMUNITY CENTRE UPDATE.**

Members received a confidential update.

**Recommended:** That the item be noted.

**218/19-20. FURTHER REQUEST FROM WALK TALL.**

Members received a confidential update.

**Recommended:** That the item be noted.

There being no further business to transact the Meeting closed at 8.30 pm.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairman)