

MINUTES of the MEETING of the RECREATION, LEISURE & AMENITIES COMMITTEE held at THE COUNCIL OFFICES, THE GROVE, SWANSCOMBE on THURSDAY 21 NOVEMBER 2019 at 7.00PM

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

**ALSO PRESENT:** x22 Members of the public  
Graham Blew - Town Clerk  
Martin Harding – Assistant Town Clerk/RFO  
Dan Usher – Senior Groundsman / Gardener

**ABSENT:** There were none

**325/19-20. 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.

The Chairman welcomed the members of the public to the meeting and clarified that, in accordance with Standing Order 34 c) at the point in the meeting for public speaking this would be limited to three minutes per person/organisation.

**326/19-20. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

There were none.

**327/19-20. SUBSTITUTES.**

There were none.

**328/19-20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.**

Councillor Linda Hall declared a personal interest in agenda item 7.2 Dartford Borough Council (DBC) Proposed Housing Developments, as she is the Chairman of the Allotment Association and an allotment plot holder.

Councillor John Hayes declared a personal interest in agenda item 7.2 Dartford Borough Council (DBC) Proposed Housing Developments as he is the partner of the Chairman of the Allotment Association.

Councillor Lesley Howes declared a personal interest in agenda item 7.2 Dartford Borough Council (DBC) Proposed Housing developments as she is an allotment plot holder.

Councillor Sue Butterfill declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 7.5 Gravesham Community Leisure Limited (GCLL) Draft Proposal Scale of Charges 2020 for The Swanscombe Centre, as she is a full member of the centre.

Councillor Linda Hall declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 7.5 Gravesham Community Leisure Limited (GCLL) Draft Proposal Scale of Charges 2020 for The Swanscombe Centre, as she is a full member of the centre.

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In response to a member's enquiry it was confirmed that the current temporary promotional memberships were not an interest that required declaration due to the nature of their limited duration.

**329/19-20. CHANGE IN AGENDA ORDER.**

The Chairman advised that the order of the agenda would be amended to enable the Senior Groundsman/Gardeners report to be taken next.

**330/19-20. 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, Heritage Park, Knockhall Park, Saxon Court, Valley View, Eagles Road Play Area and Equipment.

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

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

Questions and comments were raised from the public regarding the Grove Car Park Management Scheme and these included the following subjects:

Failure of the Working Group regarding timescales;  
Charging structure causing displacement of vehicles onto residential roads;  
Under use of the car park at present;  
Original consultation ignored;  
Maintenance costs not being covered by income;  
Permits for Council staff;  
Health and Safety concerns for the car park at weekends;  
Question on viability of the finances;  
Ineffective enforcement, consideration of use of ANPR;  
Loss of revenue for not charging at weekends;  
Lack of disabled bays on Swanscombe High Street;  
CCTV on the Swanscombe High Street to protect pedestrians and enforce parking;  
Permits schemes for residents who are struggling to park;  
Local workers being forced to park on neighbouring streets.

Responses from members included:

A summary of the results from the 2016 survey

Confirmation that this was a car park for the whole town.

An explanation was given of the history regarding the car park and the process that had gone into formalising the original decision.

Confirmation that the dispensation granted to the two officers was due to them being required to use their cars for work purposes.

Clarification that permits were not deemed viable for the car park.

That following deliberations the two options the Working Group had put forward were felt to be the available options.

The issues around parking on the High Street and surrounding roads was acknowledged and was something the Town Council had been taking seriously and work was ongoing with partner organisations to investigate this.

It was confirmed that use of ANPR cameras for enforcement of the car park was not an available option.

In summing up the Chairman added that the issue of parking was a national issue along with the volume of cars on the road. It was hoped that the push for a greener environment would help to reduce this and improve the use of public transport.

**331/19-20. ITEMS DEEMED URGENT BY THE CHAIRMAN / MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES AND THEIR POSITION ON THE AGENDA.**

There were none.

**332/19-20. TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 SEPTEMBER 2019.**

**Recommended:** That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 September 2019 were approved and signed as a true record.

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

**333/19-20. GROVE CAR PARK – REVIEW OF MANAGEMENT SCHEME.**

The Grove Car Park Working Group had held discussions and formulated 2 choices for consideration by the Committee, with regards to possible options on how the car park could facilitate a greater opportunity of parking for the local community and users of the local facilities.

Whilst the final decision would lie with the full council, as the originator of the Working Group the Recreation, Leisure & Amenities Committee was asked to propose a recommendation for full Councils consideration.

- A. That the car park remains enforceable with the period of free parking extended to 4 hours and then 2 hours chargeable at £2.00.
- B. That the car park has the enforcement and charging structure removed.

It was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed that both options, as detailed, be put to full Council for consideration.

**Recommended:** That both options, as detailed, be put to full Council for consideration.

**334/19-20. DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL (DBC) PROPOSED HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS.**

Each of the 3 proposed development sites within the Town are adjacent to land the Town Council owns/manages. As previously reported under minutes 108/19-20 and 206/19-20 meetings had been held between DBC, the Allotment Association and the Town Council to discuss the possible mitigating measures to be put in place for accessibility.

It was clarified to members that the proposed pathway through Broomfield Park would be subject to agreement from Fields in Trust (FiT).

The Chairman reminded members that this item was to consider accessibility measures and not the proposed developments themselves. Members discussed the benefits to the allotment sites and recreation ground users and agreed to the proposed works along with route option 1 for the pathway through Broomfield Park.

**Recommended:**

1. That the works proposed by DBC at Keary Road and the New Burial Ground allotment sites be agreed.
2. That the new kissing gates and route option 1 pathway through Broomfield Park be agreed, subject to FiT approval.

**335/19-20. APPLICATION TO USE THE HERITAGE PARK FOR JUNIOR PARK RUNS.**

Further to minute 434/18-19 a request has been submitted regarding the use of the Heritage Park for junior park runs.

Members stressed the importance of promoting the event as local and that parking would be limited.

**Recommended:**

That the request to use the Heritage Park for a Junior Park Run be agreed.

**336/19-20. REQUEST TO USE BROOMFIELD PARK FOR FUN DAY ON 24 MAY 2020.**

A request had been received for members' consideration. Members discussed and confirmed that further detail was required, especially regarding access and on-site parking.

Members agreed to the proposal subject to the Town Clerk confirming, and agreeing to, the finalised information required from the applicant.

**Recommended:**

That the request to use the Broomfield Park for a Fun Day be agreed subject to the Town Clerk confirming, and agreeing to, the finalised information required from the applicant.

*Having already declared prejudicial interests Councillors' Sue Butterfill, Linda Hall and John Hayes left the chamber and took no part in the discussion or decision of the following item.*

**VICE-CHAIRMAN, COUNCILLOR PETER HARMAN, IN THE CHAIR.**

**337/19-20. GRAVESHAM COMMUNITY LEISURE LIMITED (GCLL) DRAFT PROPOSAL SCALE OF CHARGES 2020 FOR THE SWANSCOMBE CENTRE.**

In accordance with the Management Agreement (Section 27.2.2), the Managing Director, GCLL, had advised of the proposed Scale of Charges for 2020 and had included the current charges for information.

Members discussed the comparison information with other sites and felt a more local comparison, specifically Fairfield Leisure Centre, Dartford, would be more appropriate. Members also felt that a comparison on any information available on local schemes that GCLL offer at their other sites would be beneficial.

**Recommended:** That the proposed scale of charges for 2020, submitted by GCLL, for The Swanscombe Centre be deferred subject to comparison information being supplied for Fairfield Leisure Centre and any information available on local schemes that GCLL offer at their other sites.

**338/19-20. ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLAN WORKING GROUP.**

The Working Group met on 15 October 2019 and had submitted options for the Recreation, Leisure & Amenities Committees consideration.

Members felt that tree and bush planting, along with water conservation, should be included.

**Recommended:** That the options submitted by the Working Group be agreed and to include tree and bush planting and water conservation.

**339/19-20. COMMUNITY EVENT WORKING GROUP.**

Further to the formation of the Working Group (minute 213/19-20) a vacancy had arisen and members were asked to fill this position. The current membership is:

- A. Councillor Emma Ben Moussa
- B. Councillor Lorna Cross
- C. Councillor Lesley Howes
- D. Councillor Peter Harman
- E. **Vacancy**

Members agreed to defer this item to full Council to consider the vacancy.

**Recommended:** That the item be deferred to full Council to consider the vacancy.

340/19-20. **GANG MOWING.**

Further to minutes 177/18-19 and 307/18-19, and in accordance with Financial Regulation 11.1 (iv) (and in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee), a continuation of the contract for gang mowing in 2020 had been signed.

**Recommended:** That, in accordance with Financial Regulation 11.1 (iv), the contract for gang mowing of the Town Councils areas for 2020 be approved.

341/19-20 **ESTIMATES FOR 2020 – 2021.**

Officers had begun work on the Annual Estimates for 2020 – 2021 earlier in the year and members were first asked for any suggestions in July (minute 151/19-20), with an agreed deadline of 31 August 2019. The Town Council meeting on 11 December 2019 would need to make a decision on the suggestions for estimates (minute 269/19-20) and the continuation of current ongoing projects, these will be detailed within the draft Annual Estimates 2020 – 2021.

The draft Annual Estimates 2020 – 2021 would need to be approved and endorsed by the full Council in January 2020 before setting the Council Tax Base for the 2020 – 2021 financial year.

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

There being no further business to transact the Meeting closed at 8.20 pm.

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