

SPECIAL ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

27 February 2023 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Chace (Vice-Chair in the Chair), Bicknell, J. English (Substitute for Edwards), P. English, Goodheart, Madeley, Needs, Wallsgrove and Worne

Councillor Pendleton was also in attendance for all or part of the meeting.

705. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Edwards.

706. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor P. English declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item 8 as a Member of Felpham Parish Council and Chair of the Allotment and Open Spaces Committee.

Councillor J. English declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item 8 as a resident of Felpham.

Councillor Madeley declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item 8 as a Ward Councillor of Felpham West.

Councillor Needs declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item 9 as a Member of Bognor Regis Town Council.

707. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2023 were approved by the Committee. These would be signed at the end of the meeting.

708. ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA THAT THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MEETING IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The Chair confirmed that there were no urgent matters for this meeting.

709. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair confirmed that no questions had been submitted for this meeting.

Environment Committee - 27.02.23

With the approval of the Chair and the Committee, Councillor J. English read a statement from Felpham Parish Council regarding the Section 106 agreements for Blakes Mead in Felpham.

710. LAWN TENNIS ASSOCIATION FUNDED IMPROVEMENT PROJECT FOR ARUN'S TENNIS SITES

The Chair welcomed Matt Glazier, Parks Investment Delivery Partner for the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) and thanked him for coming to the meeting.

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Environmental Services & Strategy Manager introduced the report, which he saw as a great opportunity, and handed over to the LTA Parks Investment Delivery Partner.

The LTA Parks Investment Delivery Partner gave an overview of the work of the LTA. He explained that parks were important as more people played tennis in a park than a more traditional setting, as was somewhere most people felt more comfortable playing for the first time and therefore a gateway into the sport. They had been working closely with local authorities over the past 9 years, providing support in terms of technology and awareness, and improving the ability for people to get onto the sites and enjoy playing tennis. They had found not all parks tennis facilities were in good enough condition to promote, which had been a barrier. The LTA had been able to secure a significant investment from Central Government of around £22million to improve the quality of parks tennis facilities and provide gate access. This had been topped up by £8million from their charity and they had been proactively targeting local authorities with parks tennis facilities they wanted to improve. They had been working on the correct operational model for Arun, in conjunction with the Council and Tivoli, across 4 sites. They had assessed what support and funding would be required to allow Tivoli, in partnership with the Council, to manage the sites more efficiently, encouraging more people to use them and ensuring the sites were sustainable. They had earmarked in the region of £54,000 of investment across the 4 sites - Swansea Gardens, Blakes Road, Norfolk Leisure Gardens and Maltravers Leisure Gardens.

Members then took part in a question-and-answer session and the following points were made:

- The report was welcomed and the charges thought reasonable. There was concern the £49 per year season ticket was too cheap and would not help to recoup money. The LTA Parks Investment Delivery Partner explained the fee was based on benchmarking across the region and the aim was to soften the move from being able to use the sight for free to a paid model. This could be reviewed.

- There was further concern regarding the season ticket prices being too cheap, and that booking of these sessions may dominate use of the court. It was suggested this should be raised to £149 per year, or the usage reduced from 4 hours per week to 1 hour. The Environmental Services & Strategy Manager explained the prices were at the discretion of Tivoli, but that a further discussion could be had.
- One Member felt there should be a half hour option for juniors too, with a rate of £2 for half an hour, and £4 per hour, and the rate for adult bookings should be double this cost. The Environmental Services & Strategy Manager explained they could also talk to Tivoli about these suggestions.
- Had thought been given to making tennis more accessible for people in wheelchairs? The LTA Parks Investment Delivery Partner explained that as part of the improvement the gate access would be fully accessible. Training would also be provided to local coaches to ensure the correct equipment was available and the right level of coaching could be provided to all users.
- Would there be concessions for disabled users? The Environmental Services & Strategy Manager said this could be looked at with Tivoli.
- Support was expressed for Officers reviewing the pricing structure with Tivoli.
- Questions were asked around the booking processes, and answers provided.
- It was suggested that specialist wheelchairs with straps and anti-tip mechanisms be made available for wheelchair users.
- Would reviewed charges come back to the Committee for approval? The Environmental Services & Strategy Manager explained this was an operational matter that would not usually require Member approval. This was a commercial decision and at the discretion of Tivoli and a requirement to obtain Member approval would delay the project. He confirmed he would take all comments from Members on board when discussing the pricing structure with Tivoli.
- One Member asked that the landscaping and signage around the tennis courts be looked at.

Councillor Bicknell proposed an amendment to the Officer recommendation as follows (additions have been shown in **bold** and deletions in ~~striketrough~~):

That the Lawn Tennis Association grant funding for use as set out in this report ~~be approved~~ **with the price structure to be reviewed as laid out in the Committee meeting.**

The amendment was seconded by Councillor P. English, who had concerns over the unknown pricing structure.

Some Members had concerns about this amendment as it was felt it would be for Tivoli to set the fees.

Environment Committee - 27.02.23

The Director of Environment and Climate Change provided assurance that Officers would take the suggestions of Members on board regarding the pricing structure during conversations with Tivoli, and suggested authority be delegated to Officers for this, as this was an operational matter and not a matter for this Committee to decide.

The Chair adjourned the meeting for a short period.

Upon the meeting resuming, the amendment was withdrawn by Councillor Bicknell, with the agreement of the seconder, Councillor P. English. He felt reassured by Officers that they would go away and take on board the pricing structure discussed in the meeting. The seconder explained his understanding was that Officers would update the Chair and Vice-Chair, who would update the Committee. Any issues could be raised to the Chair and Vice Chair. This was confirmed to be correct by the Chair.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Worne and seconded by Councillor Bicknell.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the Lawn Tennis Association grant funding for use as set out in this report be approved

711. BEACH ACCESS FOR ALL, BOGNOR REGIS - BOGNOR REGIS BEACH ACCESS WORKING PARTY

[Councillor Needs declared a Personal Interest during discussion of this item as a Member of Bognor Regis Town Council]

The Chair welcomed Andrew Pearce, Engineering Team Service Manager from Coastal Partners and thanked him for coming to the meeting.

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Chair of the Bognor Regis Beach Access Working Party introduced the item and explained there had been some really positive meetings, she felt good progress had been made and there had been some positive cross-party work on this in the Working Party. She then handed over to the Group Head of Environment and Climate Change who presented the report. He explained the report summarised the Working Party activities. It presented recommendations from the Bognor Regis Beach Access Working Party and next steps for providing practical achievable steps in improving access for all to the beach. He handed over to Andrew Pearce, Engineering Team Service Manager from Coastal Partners, who gave an overview of Coastal Partners, and how they had assisted the Bognor Regis Beach Access Working Party with the recommendations and report.

The Group Head of Environment and Climate Change explained the recommendations and that the delivery of several of small actions would make it possible for more people to access the beach. It was envisaged the outcome of the work could be applied to improve access to all of Arun's beaches.

Members then took part in a question-and-answer session and the following points were made:

- Support was offered for the report by several Members, with one Member stating the Working Party and Officers involved should be commended for the report.
- One Member was very pleased that there was a way forward and pleased the report talked about making the beach accessible for all.
- How would wheelchair users be kept safe whilst using ramps being used for water sports? The Group Head of Environment and Climate Change explained there would be a survey carried out of all ramps to see which were more suitable, and it was likely conversations would be had with the users running the ramps for water sports, to see if any agreements could be made.
- How would it be decided which were appropriate locations for matting and decking? The Group Head of Environment and Climate Change explained that engagement would take place with stakeholder groups around the most appropriate locations.
- There was excitement for the clearing and checking of ramps.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Madeley and seconded by Councillor Wallsgrove.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the report to Committee and the Minutes of the Bognor Regis Beach Access Working Party 06 February 2023, had been received, and the course of action, as set out under Item 4.6 of this report, with the objective of improving access for all to the beach at Bognor Regis, had been noted.

Environment Committee - 27.02.23

712. OUTDOOR SPORTS PROVISION, FELPHAM

[During discussion of this item Councillor Madeley re-declared her interest as Felpham Ward Councillor]

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Group Head of Environment and Climate Change presented the report to Committee, which was regarding the provision of sports facilities in Felpham. The development at Blakes Mead in Felpham (formerly known as Site 6) had a Section 106 Agreement that was set to provide sports facilities on site. The policy for the provision of outdoor sports had been updated alongside other sporting bodies such as Sport England, to improve existing facilities and develop them as hubs to benefit the wider community. If agreed, the developer would instead provide an off-site sum for outdoor sports facilities in Felpham, and would transfer the site as landscaped public open space to the Council and provide a commuted sum for future maintenance. In addition, a sum would be provided for the project management of delivering those facilities. The report sought approval to accept the proposals.

Since the development had gained planning permission, the Council had developed guidance for sports provision through a playing pitch strategy to support the Local Plan, which was in line with sporting bodies' policies including that of Sport England. This review took into account the strategies which supported the Local Plan, including an audit of the existing facilities. The study found there was potential to improve the quality and capacity of nearby existing facilities. This aligned with the Playing Pitch Outdoor Sports Strategy Action Plan.

The Group Head of Environment and Climate Change drew Members' attention to the sums in 4.3 and indicative plan illustrating the proposal at Appendix 2. Concern had been raised regarding the previous planned location of a changing facility which could be subject to vandalism, being located away from the natural surveillance provided in residential areas. This proposal removed this risk. The proposal would enable additional tree planting, which would not be possible if there was a sports pitch at the location. The Arun Local Football Facilities Plan, developed with the Football Foundation, had recommended improvements of the facilities at King George V at Felpham, specifically improvement of the grass pitches to improve capacity and the provision of a new changing pavilion. The Group Head of Environment and Climate Change explained this was an opportunity to use the sum to improve sports facilities in Felpham, which were long overdue.

In the development of a project to use these Section 106 sums, the Council would carry out consultation with the public and stakeholders including Felpham Parish Council. King George V was an obvious starting point for this. This would then be brought back to Committee for update or approval.

Members then took part in a question-and-answer session and the following points were made:

- Felpham Parish Council felt let down on discussions prior to this report.
- The previous suggested location was at risk of vandalism.

- The Pavilion on King George V needed a massive update and the opportunity for a franchise to serve refreshments/meals.
- How could it be guaranteed that the field turned into open space would not be built on? The Group Head of Environment and Climate Change explained the land would be transferred to the District Council and maintained as public open space, which would be protected under the Local Plan.
- There were many trees on site that were dead. How would this be monitored and ensured they were replaced? The Group Head of Environment and Climate Change explained they were working with the developers to ensure these trees were replaced prior to the land being transferred to the Council.
- It was felt stakeholder consultation was important.
- One Member was unsure how they felt regarding this, as did not feel they had a good understanding of resident opinion regarding this issue.
- The parking at King George V was very bad and it was very important this was considered.
- Were there plans for a 3G pitch? The Group Head of Environment and Climate Change confirmed there was not.

A non-Committee Member given permission to speak said that the parking around King George V was a real problem, and it was hoped this would be taken account of during any renovations.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Goodheart and seconded by Councillor Chace.

The Committee

RESOLVED that

- 1) The provision of an off-site sum in lieu of provision of sports facilities on site at Blakes Mead, Felpham to support local outdoor sports facilities whilst retaining the site as public open space, which aligns with the Council's outdoor sports strategy, be approved
- 2) The drawdown of the off-site sum, the project management sum and Public Open Space commuted maintenance sum be approved. The off-site sum expenditure will follow further review of the local facilities for the development of the sports facilities projects in the Felpham area.

Environment Committee - 27.02.23

713. CHANGING PLACES TOILETS ALTERNATIVE VENUE

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Group Head of Technical Services presented the report to Committee. Following a decision to support the Changing Places Toilets Expression of Interest at the Environment and Neighbourhoods Committee meeting on 23 September 2021, authority was sought to reallocate the grant funding to an alternative venue. Owing to the rescheduling of refurbishment works to the Regis Centre, the Changing Places Toilet would be ineligible for the Changing Places Toilets grant funding. It was proposed that the grant funding should be reallocated to Arun Leisure Centre. Due to grant funding timescales this was the only venue option which would be able to secure the grant funding. Authority was sought to support the reallocation of grant funding from the Regis Centre to Arun Leisure Centre.

Members then took part in a question-and-answer session and the following points were made:

- Was there an opportunity to discuss other locations for the Changing Places Toilet? It was confirmed there was not.
- Was it guaranteed that the money would go towards a Changing Places Toilet at the Regis Centre? The Group Head of Technical Services explained the proposal maximised funding for Changing Places toilets in the District, and the intention was that this would be provided at the Regis Centre, however this would be subject to the funding body's approval.
- Was there a need for an additional Changing Places toilet on the beach? The Group Head of Technical Services explained there had been consultation undertaken in preparation for the Changing Places Toilets programme, and as there was some very expensive equipment installed as part of this, the best practice was for those to be located inside managed facilities.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Bicknell and seconded by Councillor Madeley.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the reallocation of £40,000 grant funding for a Changing Places Toilet from the Regis Centre, Bognor Regis to Arun Leisure Centre, Felpham, in order to secure the grant funding needed to enable Changing Places Toilets to be delivered at both locations, be agreed

714. OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no updates from Members regarding Outside Bodies.

715. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee noted the Work Programme.

(The meeting concluded at 7.43 pm)