

REPORT ON A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD AT 7.00PM TUESDAY 5<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2013 IN THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS, THORNE.

Present: Cllr. R.S.Durant (Chair)

Cllrs. K. M. Abell, C. Blackham, J. Blackham, A. Brookes, G. Derx, S.J. Durant, A. Farrand, M. Houlbrook, A. Jones, R. Porter and R.J. Powell, K. Redmile and M. Williams.

2 Members of the public.

2406. APOLOGIES

None received.

2407. DECLARATIONS AND DISPENSATIONS

Cllr. A. Brookes declared an interest to the planning item 5.2 as a neighbour.

2408. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2013, pages 4072 – 4082. It was noted that the resolution for item 2397 should refer to Financial Regulations rather than Standing Orders.

RESOLVED: That subject to the amendment above, the minutes be signed.

2409. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

(i) 12/03037/FUL

Retention of change of use of land for siting of three relocatable classroom units (two at 9.0m x 7.8m and one at 9.65m x 9.09m) (being application under Regulation 3 Town and Country Planning (General) Regulations 1992) at West Road Primary School, West Road, Moorends for Doncaster MBC.

RESOLVED: No observations.

(ii) 13/00289/FUL

Erection of pitched roof double garage to rear of semi-detached dwelling following demolition of existing garage (attached to neighbour's garage) at Windyridge Cottage, Fieldside for Mr P. Walton.

RESOLVED: No observations.

2410. MATTERS RAISED BY THE PUBLIC

None.

2411. FINANCE

The Clerk reported on the financial position at the end of month 10, which included the revised budget together with an updated forecast which showed a reduction on the forecast from the previous month. It was anticipated that expenditure would more or less match the budget.

The Clerk reported that capital expenditure was in line with current approvals.

RESOLVED: That the report be accepted.

#### 2412. ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Consideration was given to the Accounts Payable to the end of Month 11 of the current financial year.

RESOLVED: That the accounts payable be authorised

Cllr. M. Williams requested that agenda item 10 be brought forward to this point. Councillors present were in agreement.

#### 2413. COUNCIL POLICY

It was reported that the rules relating to "vacation of office by failure to attend meetings" is set out in Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 which states:

"Subject to subsections (2) and (3) below, if a member of a local authority fails throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of his last attendance to attend any meeting of the authority, he shall, unless the failure was due to some reason approved by the authority before the expiry of that period, cease to be a member of the authority.

(2) Attendance as a member at a meeting of any committee or sub-committee of the authority, or at a meeting of any joint committee, joint board or other body by whom for the time being any of the functions of the authority are being discharged, or who were appointed to advise the authority on any matter relating to the discharge of their functions, and attendance as representative of the authority at a meeting of any body of persons, shall be deemed for the purposes of subsection (1) above to be attendance at a meeting of the authority.

(3) A member of any branch of Her Majesty's naval, military or air forces when employed during war or any emergency on any naval, military or air force service, and a person whose employment in the service of Her Majesty in connection with war or any emergency is such as, in the opinion of the Secretary of State, to entitle him to relief from disqualification on account of absence, shall not cease to be a member of a local authority by reason only of a failure to attend meetings of the local authority if the failure is due to that employment."

The Clerk reported that the Act gives no guidance as to the circumstances where there are reasons why a Council can or should approve non-attendance, so it is a discretionary issue for each Council. Potential examples could be ill health, employment, or a representative function where the absence is not likely to be long term.

The Clerk suggested that the Council could consider developing a policy in this matter which would clarify the position. He said that he had contacted the monitoring officer at Doncaster MBC to discuss the matter further and that their approach is to report each circumstance to Council, setting out reasons. The monitoring officer feels that it is difficult to set a firm policy in this matter as each case will have issues that should be considered on individual merit.

The Clerk advised that there is nothing preventing Councils from accepting apologies in advance, so in circumstances where a Councillor knows they were unable to attend meetings for some time for whatever reason this could be considered well before the end of a 6 month period.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted**

Cllrs. K. Redmile and M. Williams left the meeting at this point.

## 2414. YOUTH PROVISION

A number of local young people attended the Council meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2013 to raise issues about provision for young people in Thorne. The Clerk reported that:

Formal provision for young people is led by Doncaster Council Youth Service who provide activities at Youth Clubs. In Thorne there are currently 3 sessions per week (Monday 5:30-9:00; Thursday 7:00-9:00; Friday 6:30-9:00) held at Thorne Youth Club in Bridge Street/Stonegate. In Moorends there are 2 sessions per week held at the Youth Club in the Winning Post (Tuesday 7:00-9:30; Thursday 5:00-7:00). According to the Youth service this is the maximum that can be offered with the current staff capacity.

The service is currently under review. In the current financial climate this will not lead to an increase in provision, but at present there is no proposal to reduce it.

There are youth activities offered by a variety of voluntary sector groups, though these tend to be more focused such as the Sea Cadets or dance schools.

There have been some issues associated with both centres in recent times. The centre staff have assured him that any problems on the premises will be dealt with by the staff, including where necessary visiting young people at home and talking to their parents. Off-site issues are harder to deal with.

There is an opportunity for young people to raise issues through youth surgeries which are held regularly in Thorne and Moorends and Stainforth Wards. In addition there are 2 young people from the east area who are on the Doncaster Youth Council.

There were 2 specific issues raised by the young people relevant to Council facilities;

- a. Memorial Park Lighting – there was a suggestion that lighting in the Park should be improved so it could be used by young people in the winter. There is some existing lighting provided by the footpath lights, and the street lighting in the Park perimeter. Unfortunately, there have been recent examples of anti-social behaviour including the damage to the rose beds. In addition the park has housing close to its boundaries. I would therefore not recommend encouraging additional evening use of the Park by young people.
- b. Wyke Gate Park MUGA lighting – the MUGA at Wyke Gate Park is some distance from housing, and a recent survey carried out by DMBC has confirmed that residents are not opposed to evening use. The lighting was vandalised some time ago, and I am obtaining quotations for its repair.

Council was advised that football sessions for the youths had been arranged at the Trinity Academy, funded by the Mayor, with the first session due to be held on 6<sup>th</sup> March.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

## 2415. WALLED GARDEN

At the Council meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> September it was reported that DMBC had offered to fund improvements to the walled garden at the Memorial Park using S106 funds. It was agreed to establish a Working Group (including DMBC Ward Councillors) to take this forward.

There have been a number of meetings of the Working Group, including a site meeting, and the following has now been agreed:

- a. A scheme for the creation of a "Peace Garden" in the "Walled Garden". This would include a wall where commemorative plaques can be erected
- b. DMBC have advised that the S106 available is c £55K, though this may be increased subject to final costs.
- c. Any scheme should be easy to maintain

DMBC Landscape have been appointed as design consultants and have produced an initial design. This is a fairly simple scheme (to allow for easy maintenance) including ornamental trees, bulb planting and climbing plants on a trellis next to the rear fencing. It proposes the removal of the current planting boxes. It also includes 3 seats, and the use of the existing water pump as a feature. The path and access from the Park and the access from Ellison Street have been widened to improve access to the site, but the Park wall is substantially retained. The scheme has been costed at c£60K including fees.

There is currently a c 1.8 metre high brick wall which divides the walled garden from the rest of the Park. This was an original feature from Thorne Hall, and is considered by the conservation officer as a feature in the conservation area that is worthy of retention. The group have agreed that the site needs greater visibility from the rest of the Park both to encourage usage, and to discourage anti-social behaviour, and feel that this wall has to be partly removed as part of the scheme. To resolve this issue it is proposed to submit a planning application for modifications to the wall as a first step, to prevent possible abortive work on the rest of the scheme.

The Working group are also proposing other amendments to the draft scheme, principally the retention of all or some of the planting boxes. This would release funding for the works to the wall and for additional planting/seating. A further scheme including these amendments will be prepared providing the wall issue can be resolved.

The agent for Haworth Timber has confirmed that they remain interested in acquiring the site, but feel that the DV valuation is too high. They have not submitted a formal offer.

**RESOLVED:** That the Clerk submit an application on behalf of the Council for Planning consent for alterations to the Park wall.

#### 2416. MOORENDS WELFARE PITCHES

A plan was circulated which showed an area of land which had in the past been laid out as a rugby pitch. The Rugby Posts were removed about 2 years ago, though the post holes were not removed. Since that time it has not been formally laid out, though it has been used for informal recreation and for training purposes.

Recently Moorends Marauders erected a new set of Rugby posts on this site using the existing post holes. They have submitted a retrospective request for consent to erect these posts. Their intention is to use this for training and for matches when their main pitch is unplayable. They have also suggested that it can be used for football training.

The Clerk reported that he had inspected the posts are they are of solid construction and are not an obvious risk.

The Council have agreed that the Rugby Club are not charged for the use of the Welfare Ground facilities, pending the review of Sports Ground charges.

The Clerk reported that a separate approach had been made from Thorne United regarding this area of land. They have received a grant from the South Yorkshire Community Foundation to

expand their activities, in particular to establish ladies teams which currently do not exist in Thorne starting next season. They have asked whether this could be created into an additional pitch which is closer to the changing rooms.

Since the posts have been erected the Clerk reported that he'd had a further approach from Thorne United asking if this area could be used for both football and rugby.

The Clerk reported that there is some capacity on the existing pitches which could possibly meet Thorne United's needs.

#### Consideration

The Council is responsible for the overall management and health and safety of this site, so no substantial works should be carried out without the Council's consent.

This land has not been maintained or used as a pitch for around 2 years. Despite this it is in reasonable condition, and can be used as a pitch.

The Council have been encouraging the clubs to "self-help" though this needs to take place within a management framework.

The Moorends Welfare Steering Group has been established to discuss the development of the whole site. This future of this land has not been discussed at the meeting.

Notwithstanding the above it would seem churlish to require the removal of the posts this season as there is no other short-term requirement for this land. I would however recommend that the issue is considered by the Moorends Welfare Working Group as part of the longer term consideration of the site.

RESOLVED that:

1. Consent be granted for the erection of the Rugby posts for this season.
2. The Moorends Welfare Working Group consider the longer term future of the land
3. All clubs are reminded that they must receive consent from the Council prior to any substantial works being carried out.

#### 2417. TOILETS, THE GREEN

The Toilets at the Green in Thorne Town Centre are owned by Doncaster MBC, but have been maintained by the Town Council for some years. This was initially funded through Cllr Carol Williams allowance, but has been funded through precept since April 2011.

Doncaster MBC retains responsibility for maintenance of the building. This, however, is fairly basic. The toilets are in poor condition, though the building is basically sound. Despite the poor condition, and an element of misuse, the toilets are a well-used facility and their loss would be viewed negatively in the town.

Doncaster MBC has previously raised the issue of the Council taking responsibility for these toilets. This was discussed at Council on 11<sup>th</sup> September when the DMBC proposal involved offering a long lease, and carrying out some basic refurbishment. It was agreed at that meeting that the Council would consider taking over the toilets, but only on the basis of asset transfer, and a properly refurbished facility so that future maintenance costs would be reduced.

The Clerk reported that he had been approached again by DMBC regarding the toilets who are now proposing asset transfer, and a much higher level of refurbishment (to be carried out by DMBC prior to transfer). They have requested a response by 15<sup>th</sup> March to allow them to earmark the funding.

The proposed refurbishment includes the following:

- Repairs to flat roof
- Repairs to glass lights/windows
- Replace broken tiles
- Deep clean
- Electrical Works
- Ventilation
- Heating/frost protection
- Replace MCWS pipework and valves
- Fittings repair
- Automatic flush control
- Decoration

The Clerk reported that he'd had a site meeting with DMBC to allow him to better understand the full extent of the works. It had been estimated by an independent advisor that the cost of repairs would be in the region of £17,000 to £20,000, DMBC were offering £10,000 so this Council would have to find the difference.

RESOLVED: that the asset transfer of The Green toilets be approved subject to the following:

1. That a request be made for a small increase in the budget.
2. DMBC being responsible for their legal costs.
3. The refurbishment of the toilets is completed to the Council's satisfaction.

#### 2418. TREE SURVEY

A Tree Survey was undertaken in the Memorial Park and Cemetery in June 2012. These areas were prioritised as they were seen the areas of highest risk. Works recommended by the tree consultant have now been completed.

The Clerk reported that a Tree Survey had been undertaken on other sites in Council ownership. Fewer issues had been identified than there were in the Park and Cemetery. The main proposals are:

- a. Toll Bar – a programme of felling and replacement of the trees next to the football pitch
- b. Coulman Recreation – removal of a small number of trees. There are a number of larger poplars on this site which adjoin residential properties, and I have received some representations from residents regarding these trees. However no action is considered necessary by the tree consultant.
- c. The Delves – work to some trees near the entrance
- d. Wyke Gate park – no problems identified
- e. Bunting's Wood – mainly one tree identified as a problem
- f. Moorends Welfare Ground – some boundary trees need attention

g. Memorial Park – a small amount of additional work has been identified.

The recommended works primarily cover Health and Safety issues so must be seen as a priority. The Clerk said he would discuss this further with the Consultant, and obtain a budget cost. Following this he recommended obtaining quotations so that the works can be carried out as soon as possible and the costs can be met from within the Repairs and Maintenance budget for 2013-14.

RESOLVED: that quotations be sought for the tree works identified by the tree consultant, and the works be carried out.