

REPORT ON A MEETING OF THE PLANNING AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE HELD AT 7.00PM ON TUESDAY 9TH APRIL 2013 IN THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS, THORNE.

Present: Cllr. S. Durant (Chair)

Cllrs. C.Blackham, R. Durant, L. G. Derx, A. Farrand, M.Houlbrook, A. Jones and R. Porter.

2419. APOLOGIES

The following apologies were declared:

Cllr. J. Blackham – DMBC Commitment

Cllr. R. Powell – Holiday

Cllr. R. Walker – Illness

There were two members of public present.

2420. DECLARATIONS AND DIPENSATIONS

Cllr. C. Blackham declared an interest in agenda item 5(i).

2421. AUTISM PLUS

Dave Shrel and Mark Donahue gave a presentation on the future plans for Thorne House on St. Nicholas Road, Thorne. Plans included the erection of 3 x single storey and two storey buildings and later improvements to the Main House, which hadn't been designed as a residential home. It was confirmed that the Main House is not a listed building. Council were informed that it was hoped that the planning application would be submitted this year.

Dave Shrel and Mark Donahue were thanked for their presentation.

2422. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Amenities Committee held on Tuesday 5th March 2013, pages 4083 – 4089.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be signed.

2423. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

i) 13/00355/FULM

Cllr. C. Blackham left the room for this application.

Erection of 152 dwellings on approx. 4.12 ha of land off Grange Road, Moorends for Gleeson Developments Ltd.

RESOLVED: That the Council object to this application on the grounds that it is against planning policy.

ii) 13/00491/FUL

Change of used from flat roofed barn to pitched roof detached dwelling following demolition of attached storage building at Nunmoor Farm, High Bridge Road, Thorne for Mr A. Temperton.

RESOLVED: No observations.

iii) 13/00438/EXT

Erection of place of worship (21.41m x 10.42m) with associated parking, landscaping and new boundary fencing (2.2m high) (being extension of time to planning application 10/00745/FUL, granted on 24/5/10) at The Grange, Grange Road, Moorends for Trustees of the Thorne Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses.

RESOLVED: No observations.

iv) 13/00400/ADV

Display of three flagpoles (8m high each) externally illuminated by four up lights at BMW Thorne, Paddock Lane, Thorne for BMW Group UK Ltd.

RESOLVED: No observations.

v) 13/00518/FUL

Erection of detached house on approx. 0.14ha of land, following demolition of pair of semi-detached dwellings at Dykes Marsh Farm, Farm Lane, Thorne for Mr Richard Hinchliffe.

RESOLVED: No observations.

vi) 13/00416/3FUL

Change of use of land to form extension to existing 'Gypsy and Traveller' site (twelve plots) including twelve amenity blocks (Being Application Under Regulation Town and Country Planning (General) Regulations 1992) on Land to rear of Caravan Site, Lands End Road, Thorne for DMBC.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk write to DMBC

vii) 13/00510/FUL

Erection of single storey pitched roof detached garage/garden store to rear of semi-detached dwelling at 5 West Street, Thorne for Mr M. Bailey.

RESOLVED: No observations.

viii) 12/02921/ADV

Display of 4 internally illuminated signs, 2 non-illuminated signs and internally illuminated ATM collar at Lloyds TSB Bank Plc., Silver Street, Thorne for Lloyds Banking Group.

RESOLVED: No observations.

2424. MATTERS RAISED BY THE PUBLIC

No matters were raised.

2425. ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Consideration was given to the Statement of Accounts Payable to 31st March 2013 were considered.

RESOLVED: That the Accounts Payable be approved.

2426. FINANCE

The Clerk reported on the Council's financial position at the end of month 11, which included the revised budget together with an updated forecast. The Clerk reported that overall the budget remained reasonably on target.

The Clerk reported that the yearend report would be presented to Council at the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

2427. SPORTS CHARGES

The Clerk said that when the charges for pitches were set for 2013-14 it was agreed that there would be a further review prior to the next football/ rugby season to ensure that there

were consistent arrangements for all users. The report considered current arrangements for the hiring of sports facilities. It considers potential changes including clear arrangements for any discounts. Standard charges are as follows: Football/Rugby/Cricket £31 per match including VAT for adult teams (£13 inc. VAT for junior teams). There is no current agreement for the Bowls Club.

The standard Council service is as follows:

- Provision of changing facilities (the demountable building at Toll Bar has no services)
- Grass cutting (this is provided by DMBC on the Miner's Welfare) – this is carried out approximately fortnightly
- Pitch maintenance (this is provided by DMBC on the Miner's Welfare)
- Goal posts and nets (the nets have to be erected by the clubs)
- Pitch marking

Exemptions/ Variations

The Council has currently agreed the following exemptions in return for some self-help:

- Bowls Club – no charge – the club maintain the greens, though the Council provides weed and feed/ fertiliser etc.
- Cricket Club – no charge – the club mark and maintain the square.
- Thorne Colliery FC – no charge – the club mark and maintain the pitch and stand
- Moorends Marauders RLFC – no charge – the club have provided their own posts and demountable buildings
- Canal Tavern – no charge - the club mark and maintain the pitch.
- Hornets and Stingers – pay an annual lease rather than for individual matches. This was reviewed in 2012-13, and is in line with Junior pitch hire charges.

Comparison Costs

1. The current charges are similar to the charges of nearby Town Councils:

Hatfield TC - £27 per match (no VAT as the Council is not registered) – clubs are responsible for line marking, though the Council provides the equipment

Goole TC - £30.90 per match inc VAT.

2. The charges are however cheaper than nearby Borough Councils, examples including:

Doncaster - £39 - £57 inc VAT

Rotherham - £37 - £48.50 + VAT

Sheffield - £32.50 - £59 inc VAT

3. In all the cases above the cheapest rates are for pitches without changing rooms.

4. In addition all the Borough Councils offer season long rates which do not state a number of matches. If these are block booked they become exempt from VAT.

The provision of sports grounds in Thorne and Moorends forms a significant cost to the precept payer. Costs cover the Council's in house staff, electricity & gas, water & drainage, repairs and maintenance, cleaning and grass cutting. The net cost represents about 15% of the precept. On the basis of matches played, the Council's subsidy is around £130 per match. The use of the precept to provide local sports facilities is a specific power for local Council. DMBC do not currently provide pitches in Thorne and Moorends.

Proposed Future Arrangements

The Clerk reported that Draft proposals based on the arrangements below had been circulated to current sports users and no comments had been received regarding the overall principles.

The Council will continue to provide local sports facilities in Thorne and Moorends on the following basis:

It will aim to retain

and enhance facilities, working closely with the users.

It will operate fair and consistent charges

It will seek the best deal for precept payers.

The Clerk reported that it is proposed that charges for football/ rugby and cricket are as follows:

Pitch Charges – these are increased to £35 including VAT

Season Charges – these are introduced for 2013-14 at a rate of 11 times the basic charge (inclusive of any discounts), for up to 14 games. These would be for single teams, non-transferable, booked and invoiced in advance, though payment can be in instalments. Date changes would be permitted.

Discounts – reductions would be made on the following basis:

- Changing room not required – 25%
- Marking own pitch – 15%
- Grass cutting/ pitch maintenance – 25%
- Building maintenance – 25%

It was noted that under these arrangements the “self-help” teams would receive a substantial reduction, but all users would have to pay something and it was proposed to introduce the changes from 1st July 2013.

The Clerk reported that the Bowls Club do not operate in the fashion of other activities, and would need to be subject of a separate agreement.

Resolved: That charges for the hire of Sports Pitches from 1st July 2013 be as follows:

Pitch Charges –£35 including VAT

Season Charges – these are at a rate of 11 times the basic charge (inclusive of any discounts), for up to 14 games. These would be for single teams, non-transferable, booked and invoiced in advance, though payment can be in instalments. Date changes would be permitted.

Discounts – reductions would be made on the following basis:

Changing room not required – 25%

Marking own pitch – 15%

Grass cutting/ pitch maintenance – 25%

Building maintenance – 25%

2428. MOORENDS DRAINAGE

The Clerk reported that there were drainage problems on the Moorends Welfare Recreation Ground which have been exacerbated by the amount of rainfall over the last year and has increased the times that pitches are unplayable. In addition there is a particular problem of ponding in the south west corner.

1. The Clerk reported that Sport England are currently offering grants to tackle issues of this nature and to assist with pitch improvements. Called "Protecting Playing Fields" it offers grants of between £10,000 and £50,000 to improve the condition of playing pitches. The next funding round opens on 10 June 2013 and closes on 05 August 2013.
2. To help understand the nature of the problem, and potential solutions a report has been commissioned from a specialist turf consultant. This concentrated on the pitches to the east of the site which consists of 2 adult pitches and a junior pitch.
3. The Clerk reported that following the preparation of the report that he'd held a discussion with the allotments association who have advised him that there is a culverted ditch which runs between the allotments and the Welfare Ground which has capacity to take additional surface water. The Allotments association would be happy for the Town Council to use this. The Clerk said that he'd advised the Consultant of this who now feels that a pump will probably not be required.
4. The Clerk said that he had also been advised by the Internal Drainage Board that they do not maintain the ditch which runs along the east of the site – this is the responsibility of the adjoining landowners. The culverted ditch referred to above makes no use of this ditch.
5. The Clerk said that consideration needed to be given to the following needs:
 - a. As well as the area initially investigated there are other parts of the site with drainage issues such as the Rugby Pitch. Budgetary constraints will however require prioritisation.
 - b. The maximum grant would allow pitch drainage on up to 3 pitches.
 - c. Some of the works recommended as "intensified management" may not be eligible for grant and was checking with DMBC whether some of these works can fall within their existing maintenance regime.
 - d. The application needs to be supported by a Playing Pitch Strategy or relevant Local Needs Assessment. I am checking with Doncaster MBC the current situation.
 - e. A decision will not be made until after August. Implementation would therefore be in Summer 2014. The consultant has advised that the pitches would then not be available for 2-3 months, which would overlap with the start of the 2014-15 season. A strategy for dealing with this will need to be considered by council before any scheme is implemented.

RESOLVED: That:

1. An application be prepared for a "Protecting Playing Fields" grant.
2. The application be focused on the 3 pitches on the south of the site
3. Details of the grant application be delegated to the Clerk in consultation with the Chair and vice Chair of Planning and Amenities Committee

2429. MOORENDS WELFARE PAVILION

The Clerk reported that there is an agreed Council objective to replace the Pavilion at Moorends. Realistically this will take some time. The Council has spent significant resources in 2012-13 on the welfare site with a focus on health and safety issues. The pavilion would benefit from further investment to improve the facilities the Council is able to offer prior to any replacement facility being provided.

It was reported that there is a grant available via Sport England called Inspired Facilities which is for capital improvements to existing Sports Facilities. Grants of between £20,000 to £50,000 are available to Town and Parish councils. A grant of this level would go a long way to bringing the building up to an acceptable standard. The next closing date for applications is 29th April 2013. The Clerk recommended developing and submitting an application by this date and once submitted a decision will take around 12 weeks.

1. The Clerk reported that a dilapidation survey has previously been carried out which provides a framework for the works required. The Councils Architect had been asked to build upon this and to develop estimates for works to the building that can be submitted as a grant application. The works are for capital improvements and cannot be used for maintenance work such as decoration.
2. Works identified include:
 - Retiling 2 shower rooms and installation of appropriate extractor fans. Replacement of ceilings.
 - Converting 1 disused shower room into a changing room. Creation of access into adjacent shower room.
 - Hacking off and replacing damaged plasterwork.
 - Replacement of sealed up doors with metal fire doors.
 - Exterior repointing.
 - Improvements to front terrace
3. In view of the time frame it is recommended that the final scheme for the grant application is developed by the Clerk in consultation with the Chair and vice Chair of the Planning and Amenities Committee, and is reported back to Council prior to a decision being received from Sport England.

RESOLVED: That

1. A grant is submitted to the Sport England "Inspired Facilities" grant for improvements to Moorends Pavilion, with the proposal finalised by the Clerk in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Planning and Amenities Committee.
2. The grant proposal is reported back to Council before a grant decision is received

RESOLVED: That the report be noted

2430. CANAL BRIDGE

It was reported that there have been regular problems with the canal footbridge over a number of years caused by problems with its operation leading to a number of problems:

- Regular call out of Town Council staff which leads to additional overtime costs. If there were 2 call outs per week this cost the Council c £1,000 per year.
- Periods of non-operation which creates inconvenience for pedestrians.
- Costs for engineers to investigate problems.

Boats have priority on the canal, so if the system became inoperable, the bridge would need to be left open.

The footbridge was installed in 2005. The bridge is designed to be operated by boaters when they wish to pass through. It uses hydraulic power, and relies on a computer programme to control operation. This computer system includes a number of safety elements which stops operation if it thinks there is a problem. The control panel is situated

on the south side of the canal, and the main mechanism on the north side. Communication is via a wireless link.

A number of adjustments have been made to the bridge mechanism and programming over the years to attempt to make it more reliable. These have not resulted in any lasting improvement.

To try to develop a longer lasting solution I have commissioned a firm of Engineering Consultants to investigate and prepare a report (attached). The main problem seems to be the wireless communication which causes the bridge to operate intermittently. These breaks in operation sometimes result in call outs when the boaters feel that the bridge has failed. The most reliable system would be wiring which could either use the road bridge, or be installed in the canal bed.

The report also proposes changes to some sensors and changes to the operator pedestal which causes some confusion, and has been damaged over the years.

I am awaiting budget costs for the recommended repairs from the consultants. The current budget for repairs is £2,000, some of which is needed for annual hydraulic inspections.

RESOLVED: That consideration is given to the Canal Bridge repairs

2431. MARKET TRAILER

The Clerk reported that the Market stalls were transported by trailer for the weekly Friday Market. This is a specially designed trailer due to the nature of the Market Stalls.

The trailer has recently been out of action due to wheel and axle problems. These are in the process of being repaired. However it is clear when inspecting the Trailer that it is at the end of its reasonable life, and it would be sensible to acquire a new one.

The Clerk reported that he had contacted a specialist trailer firm who has quoted £3,195 plus VAT for a custom built trailer with VOSA approval. Delivery time would be 4-6 weeks. It would be reasonable to assume at least a 10 year life for the trailer.

As a new purchase this would count as a capital spend, and can be met from within the current capital budget.

RESOLVED: That new Market Trailer be acquired for £3195 plus VAT, funded through the capital budget.

2432. FIREWORKS

The Clerk reported that he had received a request from the Council's Fireworks supplier for the Council to confirm the date for the fireworks display in 2013. There is a budget of £4,000 for the display, which would allow a similar one to last year.

In recent years displays have alternated between Moorends Welfare and Wyke Gate Park. On that basis the 2013 display would be at Wyke Gate Park. November 5th is a Tuesday. There is no reason why the display should not be held on that night.

RESOLVED: That the 2013 Firework display is held on Tuesday 5th November at 7:00pm at Wyke Gate Park.

2433. STANDING ORDER 58

Consideration was given to invoking Standing Order 58 in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted.

RESOLVED: That the implementation of Standing Order 58 be invoked to allow Councillors to consider confidential matters.

2434. COULMAN BUNGALOW

The Clerk reported that he had received a request from Autism Plus for the use of Coulman Bungalow for a respite centre. The request is based on an initial short term let with a view to it being purchased in the future. In previous meetings they have proposed a 2 year rent free period in lieu of them undertaking the improvement works on the building, following which they would wish to acquire.

The Clerk said that this issue was last considered at the Council meeting on 15th January 2013 when it was agreed to market the building. He said that since that meeting he has been asked by the Community Buildings sub-group to investigate its potential as a temporary base for the Council so I have not yet marketed it.

The Clerk said that the current situation is as follows:

- The building is currently been used as a mess room by the outdoor staff.
- The dilapidation survey identified repairs and maintenance costs of around £15K.
- The building and adjacent land has been valued at £130,000 freehold, or £7,000 pa rent.
- A sketch plan has been prepared which shows that the building could accommodate the existing Town council office, mess room and meeting room. This would require some physical alterations to meet DDA requirements and to create a counter. It has been estimated that these works would cost around £30K.
- There is interest in the building from both Autism Plus and Thornesians, though neither has formalised their interest.

The Clerk reported that it was considered that:

- The building would be ideal for council use, and there would be some savings from the closure of the Assembly Rooms. However it would be difficult to justify the investment for a short period.
- The Council had not yet received any formal proposal for the building despite informal expressions of interest.
- The Autism Plus proposal would be a good use of the building, but would not generate any income for the first 2 years.
- If disposal is pursued the site would need to be advertised.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk be authorised to put the market the Coulman Bungalow.

2435. REQUEST FROM COUNCILLOR

The Clerk reported that he had been contacted by Councillor Redmile who has requested that she is linked to any future meetings by Skype where she is unable to attend due to her on-going health issues. She has made this request so that she can keep in touch with Council business as she is keen to remain a councillor, despite these health issues.

Councillor Redmile has advised me that she has a medical condition that affects the immune system which flares up intermittently. In its worst state she is not able to attend meetings or drive. At other times it can leave her feeling very tired, which can make attendance at evening meetings a problem after she has been working. She has advised that she will attend meeting when she is well enough.

The Clerk reported that he had sought advice on this request from the Monitoring Officer and YLCA. The main piece of legislation that needed to be considered was the Equalities Act. Advice from YLCA was still awaited.

The Clerk reported that it seemed clear that the use of a Skype link would not count as meeting attendance under the terms of the Local Government Act 1972 and that the Council needed to consider the tests that are outlined in the DMBC guidance note i.e. whether this counts as a "reasonable adjustment" that allows the Councillor to continue to carry out their duties.

The Clerk said that from a practical perspective the following needed to be considered:

- Setting up a laptop with a Skype capability during Council meetings is fairly straightforward.
- As it would not be possible to control who is viewing the feed the system would need to be switched off during any confidential items.
- It would only be possible to give a partial view of proceedings, and using the system interactively could cause difficulties.
- The quality of service via Skype is variable.

Councillors considered this issue carefully and felt that individual's disabilities and capabilities should be considered on their individual merit. Also that Councillors were kept informed with Council business through the minutes which are distributed to all members.

RESOLVED: That report be noted and that it would not be feasible to use Skype as it does not count as attending the meeting. The Clerk would continue issuing minutes.

End of meeting.