

REPORT ON A MEETING OF THE POLICY, DEVELOPMENT, FINANCE AND STAFFING COMMITTEE HELD AT 7.00PM ON TUESDAY 6TH MARCH 2012 IN THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS, THORNE.

Present: Cllr. J.Blackham (Chair)

Cllrs. K Abell, G Derx, R S Durant, S J Durant, A Farrand and R.Walker.

There were two members of the public present.

1940. APOLOGIES

Apologies were declared as follows:

Cllr. A. Brookes - Personal

Cllr. B M Chowings – Personal

Cllr. M. Houlbrook – Course

1941. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr. R.Walker declared a personal interest in agenda item 14 relating to Thorne Cemetery.

RESOLVED: That the declaration be accepted.

1942. MINUTES

Consideration was given to signing the minutes of the Policy, Development, Finance and Staffing Committee meeting held on Tuesday 10th January 2012.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be signed.

1943. MATTERS RAISED BY THE PUBLIC

There were no matters raised.

1944. COUNCIL VACANCY

The Clerk reported that a vacancy had arisen for a Town Councillor for the Moorends Ward. He reported that the cut off date for applications was Friday 9th March 2012 and at the present time that no representation had been made to date. He said he would keep the Councillors informed of any further developments.

1945. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

i) 12/00262/WCC

Erection of 60 bed nursing home, 18 no. dwellings and car parking facilities (without compliance with condition 20 of planning application 10/01526/FULM granted on

7/9/10 – The development hereby permitted must be carried out and completed entirely in accordance with the terms of this permission and the details shown on the approved plans and specifications) Amendments to Plots H5 – H16 at former Northfield First and Middle School Site, North Eastern Road, Thorne for Mr L. Dudgeon.

RESOLVED: No observations.

ii) 12/00275/DEM

Demolition of two workshop buildings at former Thorne Colliery, Grange Road, Moorends for Harworth Estates.

RESOLVED: No objections.

iii) 12/00306/FUL

Removal of front conservatory and side bow window and replace with bay window at Dairy Farm, Eglins Road, Thorne for H. Burtwistle & Son.

RESOLVED: No objections.

iv) 12/00394/FUL

Erection of 2 storey pitched roof extension to rear of mid-terraced house at 109 Marshland Road, Moorends for Mrs C. Lyne.

RESOLVED: No objections.

v) 12/00387/FUL

Erection of single storey pitched roof extension to rear of detached bungalow at 137 Grampian Way, Thorne for Mr D. Armstrong.

RESOLVED: No objections.

vi) 12/00504/OUT

Outline application for erection of 5 dwellings on approximately 0.19ha of land (approval being sought for access & layout) on Land at Moorends British Legion & Comrades Club, 160 Marshland Road Moorends

RESOLVED: No objections.

Vii) 12/00490/FUL

Erection of pitched roof single storey extension to rear including replacement of flat roof with pitched tiled roof to rear of semi-detached dwelling at 6 Inglenook Drive Thorne for Mr M Gilson.

RESOLVED: No objections.

viii) 12/00517/OUT

Outline application for erection of detached house & garage on approximately 0.03ha of land (approval sought for scale) at 54 Haig Road Moorends for Mrs Margaret Williams.

RESOLVED: No objections.

ix) 12/00481/COU

Change of use of store and workshop (Class B2) to performing arts studio (Class D2)
Rear of 46 - 46A King Street, Thorne for Mr N Craven.

RESOLVED: No objections.

1946. ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Consideration was given to the Accounts Payable to 31st March 2012, Vouchers 303 to 330.

RESOLVED: That the accounts payable be approved.

1947. FINANCIAL REPORT

Consideration was given to the financial report deferred from the meeting held on Tuesday 7th February 2012. The Clerk reported that he had updated table to take account of income and expenditure to the end of month 9 which shows a reduction in the outturn forecast which was due largely to 2 main factors:

- a. Additional expenditure on the Winning Post for the Fire Alarm and Boiler that was not included in the last figures.
- b. Additional expenditure at Moorends Welfare Ground agreed at the December meeting.

The Clerk reported that in order to assist year end budget management he proposed that the forecast expenditure outturn is adopted as a revised budget, and that he be given delegated authority to vire up to 10% between Budget Heads.

RESOLVED: That the financial report be accepted and that the Clerk be given delegated authority to vire up to 10% between Budget Heads.

1948. CHANGES TO STANDARDS

The Clerk reported that the Localism Act 2011 will formally abolish the current system for the regulation of standards of conduct for Councillors on 1st July 2012, with more discretion given to Local Councils. He reported that this had a number of implication for the Council and included:

Code of Conduct

There will be a duty for Councils to adopt a Code of Conduct for Members. This is likely to be similar to the current Code. The National Association of Local Councils and Local Government association are producing a template Code which it would be sensible to adopt (amended as necessary) once completed.

The Act requires Code to deal with "Disclosable Pecuniary Interests", and how to register and declare other pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests. These will be defined further through regulations that are still to be produced.

Standards Committee

There will be no requirement to have a Statutory Standards Committee. However Doncaster MBC is considering retaining a voluntary Standards Committee along the lines of the existing. The Council can consider whether it wishes to utilise this once more details are available.

Dealing with Complaints

The Act requires the principal authority to set up a process for dealing with complaints. This will include the appointment of one or more "Independent Person(s)" who will assist with investigations. This role must be publicly advertised.

Sanctions

The voluntary Standards Committee and Independent Person will have an advisory role. Any sanctions would need to be agreed by the Town Council.

Register of Members Interests

The Act abolishes personal; and prejudicial interests, and replaces them with "Disclosable Pecuniary Interests", which must also include members of the family. Failure to disclose these interests will be a criminal offence.

The Code of Conduct will cover other pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests.

Future Action

These issues will need further consideration by the Council as more details and regulations become available.

The Clerk reported that Doncaster MBC have advised that they will be offering training for Councillors prior to the changes taking place.

RESOLVED: That this report be noted

1949. LAND OWNERSHIP

The Clerk reported he had been reviewing the property which is the responsibility of the Town Council and had distributed a schedule of these a map of which was on display at the meeting.

The Clerk reported that on the whole property fell within 3 categories:

- a. Land claimed by the Council due to historic use (e.g. Market Place, The Green, The Landings)
- b. Sites acquired by the Council (e.g. Winning Post, Toll Bar Ground, Buntings Wood).
- c. Sites leased by the Council (Moorends Welfare and Wyke Gate Recreation Ground).

A number of sites or parts of sites are looked after by other organisations under a variety of agreements.

The Clerk reported that he had identified some issues regarding the property that needs addressing:

Land Registration

A substantial store of historic records is retained on the properties. However, a significant number of the sites are not included on the Land Registry. Whilst this is not always essential it does limit the potential for future disputes, and is therefore good practice. Voluntary registration is relatively straightforward and can be achieved at modest cost (c £100-£200 per property). Two sites had been identified which have been registered in error to Doncaster MBC and are being corrected.

Leases

The schedule below identifies sites where there are leases or agreements with other organisations. Whilst some of these are formal leases (e.g. Winning Post and Coulman Recreation) there are others of a more informal nature. It would benefit both the Council and its users to formalise these to ensure that responsibilities are clear. The nature of these agreements will need to be considered on a site by site basis.

RESOLVED that:

1. All Land in Town Council ownership be voluntarily registered where this is possible.
2. Formal arrangements for leases/ agreements be drawn up for all relevant sites where these are not in place

1950. ASBESTOS SURVEY

The Clerk reported that the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006 requires property owners to take reasonable steps to find out if there are materials containing asbestos in non-domestic premises and if so, its amount, where it is and what condition it is in. This can be achieved by carrying out asbestos management surveys on relevant properties.

The Clerk said that it is likely that all the Town Council buildings will contain some asbestos, with the exception of the Coulman Pavilion as this was constructed after regulations were introduced regarding the use of asbestos and said that the presence of asbestos in a building isn't necessarily a problem providing that appropriate working practices are used when works that are carried out disturbs it.

The Clerk said that it is possible that the management surveys will identify problems that will need tackling immediately and that it was proposed that surveys be carried out on the following buildings:

Winning Post, Marshland Road, Moorends, Doncaster DN8 4TB
 Assembly Rooms, Fieldside Thorne, Doncaster DN8 5AF
 Moorends Community Centre, Garden Road, Moorends, Doncaster DN8 4LR
 Moorends Pavilion, Grange Road, Moorends, Doncaster
 Wike Gate Park, Wike Gate Road, Moorends, Doncaster
 Delves Café, Fieldside, Thorne, Doncaster
 Park Café, South Parade, Thorne, Doncaster DN8 5DZ
 Cemetery Chapel, Southfield Road, Thorne, Doncaster DN8 5DP.

Quotations had been obtained from 3 firms, whose methodology is similar and was based on industry standards, with the result as follows:

Cordtape	£2,725 +VAT
Merryhill	£5,275 +VAT
Clearwater	£3,100 + VAT

RESOLVED: That Cordtape be appointed to carry out the surveys at a cost of £2,725 plus VAT.

1951. TOWN CENTRE TOILETS

The Clerk reported that he had been informally approached by Doncaster MBC asking whether the Town Council would be interested in taking ownership of the public toilets in The Green, Thorne.

These are the only public toilets still open in Thorne and Moorends. Doncaster MBC proposed their closure in 2007, but the Town Council agreed to take over the cleaning, opening and closing with financial support through Cllr C Williams delegated budget. This support ceased at the end of the last financial year, though the Town Council has continued to clean the toilets.

Whilst Doncaster MBC remain responsible for structural repairs, the current cost of the cleaning, opening and closing service is around £3,500 per year which is included in the current budget.

The Clerk reported that he had carried out a superficial inspection of the building with an architect. The building appears structurally sound, with no evidence of water ingress. There are some issues with mould due to poor ventilation. However the main issue is that the interior needs substantial refurbishment to bring the facility up to a modern standard. Whilst this has not been looked at in detail, a budget of £20,000 would be realistic.

The Clerk added that the toilets appear to be a well-used facility, despite their poor internal condition and an element of misuse. Their loss in the Town Centre would be viewed negatively as further evidence of Town Centre decline. The costs of maintaining the facility is however significant and in his opinion it would be unwise to take over the toilets without allowing for their refurbishment and said he would suggest the following:

- a. Further discussions take place with Doncaster MBC regarding the terms of any transfer, particularly regarding a contribution to refurbishment
- b. A scheme be prepared to refurbish the toilets to provide more accurate costs.
- c. The Town Council continue to open and clean the toilets whilst their future is considered.

RESOLVED that:

1. Further discussions take place with Doncaster MBC regarding the terms of any transfer, particularly regarding a contribution to refurbishment

2. A scheme be prepared to refurbish the toilets to provide more accurate costs.
3. The Town Council continue to open and clean the toilets whilst their future is considered.

1952. WALLED GARDEN

The Clerk reported that an approach had been made by the Howarth Timber, owners of land adjacent to the Walled Garden in Thorne, with a view to acquiring the site so that they can expand their operation in Thorne. The Clerk reported that a similar request had been received in 2011 when the Council resolved that 'the application be rejected for the following reasons: 1) The Walled Garden provided a buffer between the existing builders yard and the park proper; 2) it could be used for future leisure developments in connection with the park.'

Howarth Timber has asked if the decision not to sell this site can be reconsidered as it would allow them to improve their operations in Thorne. Their intention would be to use the site for the storage of large building materials. To minimise impact on the remainder of the Park they have indicated that they would retain and maintain the existing boundary wall and carry out some new planting.

The Clerk reported that a site valuation had been obtained from the District Valuer at £116,500, based on residential use. Howarth Timber had been advised of this price who had indicated that they wish to pursue their interest in the site, subject to planning and a final agreement on valuation.

The Clerk reported that there are a number of issues that need to be considered with regard to this request:

- a. With investment this site could become a community asset. This would require capital and revenue funding.
- b. There is an opportunity to attract a significant capital receipt which could be invested in other Town Council activity.
- c. Disposal would assist a local business.

Cllr. R.Walker said that he was against the sale of this piece of land and was concerned about the problems caused by lorries delivering to Howarth Timber and said that he thought that they should be encouraged to locate to an industrial area.

RESOLVED: That further negotiations take place with Howarth Timber regarding the disposal of the Walled Garden site.

1953. CEMETERY

Following the decision made in December to close the vehicle gates to the Cemetery other than for official purposes it was also agreed that schemes would be developed to

improve pedestrian access (particularly for the disabled), and access to the Chapel, to be reported back to a future meeting.

The current pedestrian access has been reviewed and is as follows:

- a. Main entrance – this consists of a double gate and a pedestrian gate. The area between the highway and these gates is uneven, and presents a trip hazard. The opening of the gate has also created a ridge in the pathway. In addition the path and land to the north of the pedestrian gate slopes away, and would be hazardous to less able users.
- b. North entrance - there are a set of double gates, and a pedestrian gate. The double gates are unusable as there is a drop behind them, so are permanently locked. A ramp has been constructed behind the pedestrian gate. However this is unsuitable for disabled use due to its gradient and lack of landings.
- c. South entrance – a pedestrian gate with steps. As there is currently no handrail next to the steps this is kept locked.

The following improvements have been considered:

Main Entrance – to meet Building Regulations Access requirements for new developments slopes should be no steeper than 1:21, so a scheme has been designed on this basis. However due to existing levels this would be a substantial scheme costing in excess of £25,000, which would have an impact on grave sites. A more modest scheme with a maximum gradient of 1:17 has therefore been developed which involves relaying the surfacing near the entrance, and erecting a small retaining wall and handrail to the north of the entrance. It is possible to include both these options in a tender for further consideration.

- a. North Entrance – a number of options for providing a proper disabled access at this point have been looked at. However none are practical due to the location of trees and graves in this area. Some minor repairs are needed to the ramp if it to be continued to be used by pedestrians. In this case there should be signage advising that it is not suited for wheelchair use.
- b. South Entrance – the construction of a handrail would allow this to be used by pedestrians, but would give no benefit to disabled users.

Improvements to create a level access to the chapel are simpler, requiring the removal and relaying of a small area of tarmac.

A number of paving slabs along footpaths within the Cemetery also require relaying as they form a trip hazard.

In my view the most appropriate package of measures would be as follows:

- a. Relay the tarmac near the main entrance to remove the uneven surface and provide a gradient of no more than 1:17. Construct a retaining wall and fence to the north of the site.
- b. Replace the tarmac to provide a level access to the Chapel.
- c. Undertake minor repairs to the ramp.
- d. Undertake repairs to the paving slabs.

The Clerk reported that he had obtained an initial budget estimate for these works at £15,000 and that there is no budget currently available to carry out these works. However, as a capital scheme it could be funded through the c£70,000 unallocated capital budget available to the Council.

RESOLVED that:

1. A package of access improvements to the Cemetery at a cost of £15,000 be approved in principle, and tenders sought once funding is available, including the full Building Regulations compliant option.
2. A request for use of capital funding for this purpose be considered at the next Council meeting.

1954. NEIGHBOURHOOD MATCHED FUND

The Clerk reported that Cabinet Office has allocated £30 million nationally over 4 years for community projects in deprived areas. The fund is being managed by the Community Development Foundation

The funding will be accessed through Panels which are formed through online registration. The exact arrangement for confirming panels is not yet finalised.

The role of the panel includes consultation and development, so will be a significant commitment and some secretarial and technical support from existing organisations may be required.

The fund is Ward based so does not match the Town Council area.

There is no obvious Ward based panel in either Thorne or Stainforth and Moorends that could take on this role, so it seems likely that new panels will be required. It would seem sensible for the Town and Parish Council's to assist this process to ensure a representative and supported panel.

Cllr. Walker asked if Thorne Regeneration Partnership were involved and was advised by Cllr. Blackham that they weren't.

RESOLVED: That a panel be formed and that the Clerk be authorised to act on this liaising with Cllr. S. Durant and the adjoining relevant Parishes.

1955. TOLL BAR SERVICES

The Clerk reported that the two demountable building provided by the Council on the Toll Bar Ground were not connected to services, and therefore their usefulness was limited. He saw the provision of electricity, gas and water as being relatively straightforward. However the provision of foul drainage was more difficult due to the levels between the site and the sewer in Hatfield Road and it was felt that it would be cheaper to deal with this on site, though there would be a recurrent revenue cost to empty then tank.

The Clerk reported that he had obtained initial indicative costs as follows:

Gas	£8,000
Electricity	£3,000

Water	£6,000
Foul	£4,000

He felt that as the buildings would only have intermittent use it would seem sensible to use electricity for heating and hot water, which would reduce the cost. This would still leave a cost of c £13,000.

The Clerk reported that discussions had been held with Doncaster MBC regarding these costs, and Cllr. R.Hodson has advised that £3,000 can be made available through her Councillors allowance providing it is committed in this financial year. This would leave the Council with a balance of c £10,000.

The Clerk reported that there is no identified budget for these works. Consideration of use of capital could be considered at the Council meeting on 3rd April. However to meet the deadline indicated above there would need to be consideration of use of revenue funds from other budgets.

The Clerk suggested that there were 3 broad options to consider:

- a. Not proceed with the scheme and decline the DMBC offer
- b. Commit to the scheme and fund through revenue virement, accepting the DMBC contribution
- c. Agree to the scheme in principal and explore funding next year through capital and/ or grant funding, and decline the DMBC offer.

RESOLVED: That the scheme be agreed to in principal and that other funding opportunities be investigated.

End of meeting