

REPORT ON A MEETING OF THE PLANNING, ENVIRONMENTAL, AMENITIES & LEISURE COMMITTEE HELD AT 6:00PM ON TUESDAY 12th JUNE 2012 IN THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS, THORNE.

Present: Cllr. S.Durant (Chair)

Cllrs. K. Abell, C. Blackham, J. Blackham, B.M. Chowings, L.G. Derx, R Durant, A. Farrand, M. Houlbrook, M. Williams and A. Wilson.

1998. APOLOGIES

The following apologies were declared:

Cllr. A. Brookes – illness

Cllr. K. Redmile – illness

Cllr. R. Walker - holiday

1999. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

2000. PRESENTATION – FORMER THORNE COLLIERY SITE

A presentation on proposals for the former Thorne Colliery sites was given by Stuart Ashton, Planning and Development Manager for Howarth Estates and Steve Gamble, Land and Planning Director for Gleason Homes

Councillors were advised that Gleason Homes were looking at 9¹/₂ acres of a Brownfield site which would provide enough space to build 150 low cost homes. Steve Gamble explained that their aim was to encourage home ownership and he hoped that 90% of local people would be able to afford one of their homes.

It was hoped that during the build 1 – 2 apprentices could be taken on and that local people would be offered employment.

RESOLVED: That Stuart Ashton and Steve Gamble be thanked for their presentation.

2001. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

i) 12/00895/COU

Change of use of children's nursery to house at 28 King Edward Road, Thorne for S. A. Fadra.

RESOLVED: No observations.

ii) 12/01180/FUL

Erection of single storey pitched roof extension to rear of semi-detached house at 67 Kirton Lane, Thorne for Mr I. Dowding.

RESOLVED: No observations.

iii) 12/01189/FUL

Installation of top fixed spiked barrier to parapet of existing single storey rear extension at HSBC, 5 Market Place, Thorne.

RESOLVED: No observations.

iv) 12/01377/FUL

Conversion of existing residential building into 4 residential units, plus erection of a new residential unit at rear on footprint of previous outbuildings. Demolition of shopfront (as previously agreed), and provision of parking for 5 cars on land at 40 – 44 King Street, Thorne for Mr A. Witham (SYBPT).

RESOLVED: No observations.

v) 12/01459/FUL

Erection of 3 terraced pitched roof houses on approx 0.04ha of land at 6 Canalside West Street, Thorne for Mr Lee Todd.

RESOLVED: No observations.

vi) 12/0148/OUT

Outline application for the erection of a residential development on approx. 0.26ha of land currently used as a coal yard (all matters reserved) at 98 North Eastern Road, Thorne for Mr J. Lee.

RESOLVED: No observations.

2002. MATTERS RAISED BY THE PUBLIC

Mr Armitage from the Thorne Allotments thanked the Council for its assistance in cleaning up the allotments by providing rubbish skips but said that there were still a few issues which needed to be rectified including grass cutting, fencing and the allocation of vacant allotments. The Town Clerk reported that these matters would be carried out and that letters were going out to allotment holders not maintaining their plot.

Thorne Needs You thanked the Council for their help and making them feel welcome at meetings.

2003. CODE OF CONDUCT

The Clerk said that he had previously reported that the Localism Act is resulting in changes to the Standards regime and that there is a requirement to adopt a new Code of Conduct by 1st July 2012.

He reported that he had received a letter from Doncaster MBC suggesting that Town and Parish Councils adopt their existing Codes of Conduct as an interim measure, with a revised version being circulated once the regulations on interests etc are issued. Doncaster MBC also intends to retain the Standards Committee which the Council can voluntarily utilise.

The National Association of Local Councils has produced a template for a new Code of Conduct which has been specifically prepared to meet the new legislation.

The Clerk recommended that the best course of action would be to agree to adopt the NALC Code of Conduct as this ensures that the Council meets current legal requirements, but that once the Doncaster MBC template is prepared the Council could then consider adopting this.

It was further recommended that the Council agrees to utilise the Standards Committee as this provides a route for independent review should any issues arise.

RESOLVED: That:

1. The Council adopts the Code of Conduct template produced by NALC.
2. The Code of Conduct be reviewed once a local proposal is produced by Doncaster MBC.
3. The Council utilise the Standards Committee set up by Doncaster MBC, as appropriate.

2004. FINANCIAL MATTERS

2004.1 Accounts Payable

Consideration was given to the Statement of Accounts Payable to 31st May 2012.

Regarding voucher

A question was raised by Cllr. Williams regarding voucher 59 – the cutting down and chipping of Lime trees on Moorends Welfare Ground. Cllr. Williams asked why it was necessary for the trees to be removed and was advised that it was for safety reasons, also that replacement planting has been planned.

RESOLVED: That the accounts payable be authorised for payment.

2004.2 Financial Report

The Clerk reported that it is too early in the financial year to consider a revised budget but that a number of figures that could be highlighted:

- Administration – the expenditure figure includes £38,311 for insurance. This is £7,689 less than the budgeted figure, and in fact lower than last year and was partly due to an asset review undertaken last year.
- Park – the income for the Park includes an annual fee for grazing rights at East Ings as there is no other budget head for this, together with some back rent for the café which it had previously been agreed could be paid back over time.
- Moorends Welfare – the income includes the contribution from the Rugby Club towards the fencing.

Local Council Tax Support Scheme

A paper prepared by SLCC outlining the implications to changes being introduced by government to Council Tax benefits. The responsibility is being transferred from central to local government with a 10% budget cut.

The Clerk explained that the implication for the Town Council will be its impact on the precept. Currently payment is based on the number of Council tax payers whether this is paid by the individual or the government. In future Doncaster MBC will receive a block grant, which they will choose how it will be utilised within a regulatory framework. Future precept calculations could be based on a lower tax payer base (for example excluding those receiving relief), resulting in a higher precept increase just to stand still. The government appears keen to avoid this, and is encouraging local areas to develop arrangements that prevent this type of issue.

This is an issue that will affect all Town and Parish Council's. It is some months before the precept will need to be submitted, but it is important to keep this under review.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

2005. MOORENDS LIBRARY

Diane Whiting from Doncaster MBC attended the meeting and provided an update on the situation regarding Moorends Library.

It was reported that Moorends Library, based in the Hedgerow Centre is currently operating on a 3 half days per week basis with support from the Children's Centre. It is operating on a self-service basis. A library staff member currently visits one day a week to monitor activity, but this is due to be withdrawn. Doncaster Council has been seeking volunteers to provide supervision in the future. There is the opinion that, without this support, the Library will close.

There has been some publicity and meetings regarding volunteering, though response has been limited. Councillors suggest that Doncaster MBC contact Trinity Academy to enquire as to whether students may be able to help as part of a Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. Ms. Whiting thanked Councillors for their assistance.

2006. MOORENDS WELFARE GROUND

It was reported that the Moorends Welfare Working Group had continued to meet on a regular basis to deal with short term issues on the site, and to consider longer term options. The Council has previously agreed increases to the Repairs and Maintenance budget to assist this process. Issues that have been addressed, or are in the process of being addressed include:

- Pavilion – a new kitchen is currently being installed as a community contribution by Henry Boot. Improved ventilation has been installed into the building, and it will be steam cleaned. One of the football clubs has offered to buy paint, and a day is being arranged for members of the working group and other volunteers to paint the interior of the building.
- Moles – following trapping the problem has considerably reduced.
- Rugby pitch fencing – has been completed
- Removal of trees – a number of oversized poplars has been removed. These were becoming dangerous, and were shedding limbs. The removal was largely undertaken by the Rugby Club, though the Council arranged for the brush wood to be shredded.
- Bowls Club – the roof has been replaced and a sink installed in the storage building. A wooden shelter has been provided next to one of the greens.
- Spectator fencing for the Rugby Pitch and no1 pitch – this is ordered and will replace the existing concrete/ steel fencing which is unsafe.
- New Goals – these have been acquired for the 2 pitches at the south end of the site to replace the existing goals which were unsafe. They will be installed at the end of the close season.

A further issue raised has been the lack of water pressure to the pavilion showers. This has been considered by a number of specialist firms as there is a design input needed to solve the problem. The Clerk reported that the first quotation received was for £10,792.84 plus VAT and seemed an excessive cost to incur whilst the long-term future of the pavilion was under consideration. The Clerk reported that he had asked it to be reviewed by a specialist technical advisor who provided a design and a suggested budget estimate of £20,000 plus VAT. In the light of this the Clerk reported that he had approached a plumber who has been recently carrying out works on a number of buildings to consider how the issue can be tackled. He has proposed fitting 3 shower pumps (one for each set of showers) at a cost of £2,700. He has discussed this with specialist suppliers and considers that, whilst not as effective as the proposals above, it would improve the situation, and be satisfactory whilst the longer term future of the building is considered. It was therefore recommended that these works proceed – the cost of which can be met from within the Repairs and Maintenance allocation for Moorends Welfare.

It was reported that the Working Group have had a number of discussions about longer term improvements to the site, and have agreed that there is a need to carry out local consultation to allow consideration of priorities. This will be undertaken through existing local events, and meetings held in Moorends. Once this is completed a master plan for the site will be prepared, which will include identifying potential sources of external funding.

RESOLVED: That the quotation of £2,700 for the installation of the shower pumps be approved, and that the scheme proceeds.

Cllr. Chowings left the meeting at this point.

2007. THORNE TOWN CENTRE MAP

The Clerk reported that he had been approached by the Thorne Needs You Group with regard to the production of a map to promote the Town Centre.

The style of map proposed is produced by a firm called Cityscape maps. They produce maps both for signs and in paper form. The maps are of an attractive 3D design which allows for the identification of key buildings and some retailers.

He reported that he had met with Cityscape maps to discuss this further who had suggested signboards and printed maps, with a recommended budget of £10,000.

The following observations were considered:

- i) There will be other providers of similar services which should be considered prior to proceeding.
- ii) The maps are attractive and good quality, and would be a useful promotional tool for the town centre.
- iii) Any map will need to be intermittently updated to take account of changes in the town.

- iv) There is no budget allocation on the scale suggested, and grant aid would seem unlikely.
- v) Tackling some of the key issues in the town centre (derelict buildings, toilets, market etc) would seem to be a higher short term priority.
- vi) It was felt that whilst there would be benefits in producing a map of this nature it would currently be difficult to justify the expense. It was therefore proposed that it is not pursued at this point, but that it be reconsidered in the future when improvements take place in the centre.

RESOLVED: That the production of a Town Centre map is not pursued at this time, but would be reconsidered at a future date.

2008. TOLL BAR SERVICES

The Clerk reported that at the Policy, Development, Finance and Staffing Committee it was agreed that a scheme to provide services to the demountable buildings at the Toll Bar Ground be developed further, with funding to be sought once detailed costings had been identified.

1. To obtain these costings it has been necessary to provide the utility companies with specifications of requirements. This has produced the following results:

Water	Supply to gate by Yorkshire Water	£2,680+VAT
	Connection to new supply	£2,000+VAT
Electricity	Connection	£34,000+VAT
Gas	Supply and gas meter enclosure	£9,638+VAT
Drainage	Cess pool or similar	£6,000+VAT

2. Gas would not seem to be essential, and the quotations for water and drainage are close to the original estimates. However the quotation for electricity provided by Northern Powergrid seems hugely excessive, and gives no justification for this figure. This is being questioned and any further information will be reported at the meeting.
3. A more realistic cost would have been a reasonable candidate for grant aid. However, it would be virtually impossible to justify the current electricity connection cost quotation as value for money.
4. The Clerk reported that he'd had discussions with the regular users of the pitch who have suggested that a generator could be used if it is not possible to obtain a more sensible cost. The Clerk said that he would explore this further, and report back to Council.

RESOLVED: That this report be noted

2009. THORNE CEMETERY

Access Improvements: It was reported that the scheme approved at Council on 8th May 2012 started on site on 14th May 2012. It was expected that the bulk of the

works will be completed by 13th June, although there has been a delay in fabricating the handrail, so this will not be installed until July.

The site meeting (including nominated Councillors) to consider the other pathways in the Cemetery was held on 16th May. It had been agreed to utilise the balance of capital funds to deal with other hazards. The following was agreed:

- a. The balance of funding could tackle repairs to the majority of the paths where trip hazards are identified, together with the damaged roadway round the chapel. It was agreed that these could proceed.
- b. There is a specific problem with the paths in the north west corner of the site as these are being lifted by tree roots. Repairs to these areas would require lifting the path levels, which would be expensive, and could be damaged fairly quickly through further tree growth. Alternatives such as bark, chippings, or grass would be a cheaper more flexible solution, but would be less satisfactory for wheelchairs and less mobile users. The trees are in any case oversized and in need of attention, so it was agreed to defer action in this area until advice has been received from the tree expert.
- c. There is a need to construct a new path in the north east corner of the site to service a new part of the Cemetery. There have however only been a limited number of burials in this area to date, and it was agreed that the construction of this path was not an immediate priority.

5. The total anticipated costs are now as follows:

Contract sum	£16,427
Pathway repairs	£7,110
Fees	£2,600

TOTAL	£26,137

6. This exceeds the initial capital allocation by £1,137. This can be met through the repairs and maintenance budget for the Cemetery, or through an increased. I would recommend the latter, though this would need to be considered by the Policy Committee on 12th July. In the meanwhile the repairs and maintenance budget is adequate for the works to proceed.

Trees

7. As well as problems with trees lifting paths, there have been recent issues with trees shedding limbs. One that was in particularly poor condition has recently been removed. The Council receives complaints about leaves and bird droppings on graves that have overhanging trees. The trees on the north western corner are particularly large, and overhang the highway.
8. There needs to be a balance between tackling these problems, and maintaining the amenity of the Cemetery.

9. To assist with further consideration of this issue I have commissioned a tree surveyor to inspect the trees and draw up recommendations and alternatives for the Council to consider. I will report back to Council once this is completed.

Grass Cutting

10. There have been a number of problems recently with the grass cutting at the Cemetery which has led to some complaints (grass lengthy, cut grass on graves). This was partly caused by the weather conditions as the wet weather in April resulted in a backlog, which was followed by rapid growth.
11. Currently the maintenance is the responsibility of the Cemetery Supervisor supported by prisoners. They are assisted at times by other Council staff, depending on availability and other pressures. They are aware of the situation, and are working hard to catch up.
12. For a significant part of the cemetery it is only possible to cut the grass with strimmers due to the arrangement of the graves. Grass blowers are used to clear the grass, which is then collected, though this is not fully effective when the grass is wet.
13. In discussion with staff I have identified part of the Cemetery which could be maintained using a small mower. This would increase the efficiency of the team. This will need to be acquired through the repairs and maintenance budget.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the additional works to the pathways at the Cemetery be approved.

2010. ALLOTMENTS

Glebe Road

It was reported that a number of allotment holders on the Glebe Road allotments had organised themselves into an Allotments Association and meetings have been held attended by a number of Councillors to help them to improve the site and that a number of issues had been discussed including:

- Occupancy – occupancy levels are high, but a small number of plots are poorly maintained. Letters had been sent out, and a small number will be evicted if no action is taken.
- Allotment hut – there is a hut near the entrance used for the storage of materials which is in very poor condition. The replacement of this building by a demountable structure for use by the allotment holders would be a good candidate for grant aid, and the Clerk reported that he will work with the group to assist them.
- Materials on site – there are a number of mounds of material on the site which result from clearances of plots in the past. Arrangements had been made to remove this surplus material.

- Fencing – there are some problems with the fencing particularly at the rear of the site which will be addressed. The Association recognise that the site will never be fully secure.

Discussions had been constructive, and it was hoped that they would result in a positive future working relationship.

Moorends

The Council have previously agreed to ask Doncaster MBC to transfer the ownership of the Moorends allotments to the Town Council.

The Clerk reported that Doncaster MBC have been progressing this in a positive fashion, but he had been advised that the site was originally acquired through the Housing Revenue Account which creates complications as disposal for other uses requires the consent of the Secretary of State. The Clerk said that he will report on the progress of this issue once further information had been received.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

2011. JUBILEE PARTY IN THE PARK

It was reported that the "Party in the Park" in Thorne Memorial Park on Bank Holiday Monday had proved a huge success. The Park was busy from start to finish as local residents flocked to see the variety of family attractions including all day entertainment, traditional games, pony rides, bouncy castle and face painting.

The Party was opened by the Jubilee Queen, Molly Turner, her Consort Jacob Corbett and her princesses Seanna Corbett and Talia Clark, supported by the Town Mayor, Cllr Rachel Durant and Deputy Mayor Cllr George Derx who were paraded into the Park by the Thorne Air Cadets. The entertainment included cheerleaders and street dance from Green Top School, performances by local dance schools, Jayne McDonald and Cheryl Jones, and a variety of singers covering Country, Swing, Rock, as well as the National Anthem. The event was closed with the lighting of a Jubilee Beacon.

It was reported that the Children's games which included the egg and spoon and sack race had proved to be popular with medals being awarded for first and second place.

Chair of the organising Committee Cllr Susan Durant said "It was great seeing people come out in such huge numbers. We aimed at a family audience, and it was really pleasing to see so many families attend, who all seemed to have a great time. We tried to step back in time a bit with the children's games, and it is clear that even in this digital age these remain popular.

Huge thanks were given to all the volunteers who gave up their time to make this such a great event, Cllr. Durant said that she would like to highlight the contribution of Thorne Needs You, the Sea and Air Cadets, Thorne Lions, and the Summer Festival Committee. The volunteers were all fantastic and we really do appreciate their hard work and effort. Local businesses were also thanked for their contributions.

Also invaluable was the support of the Town Councillors Joe Blackham, Mark Houlbrook, George Derx, Annie Farrand, Carol Blackham and Rachel Durant, as well as the Town Council staff including Dean, Steve and Jeremy.

End of meeting.