

GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Meeting of the General Services Committee held at 6.30pm on Tuesday, 8 June 2021 in the Town Hall, Banbury.

Present: Councillor Colegrave (Chairman)
Councillors: Bunce, Cherry, Dalton, Donaldson, Kilsby, Mears, Phillips, Powell and Richards.

Also in attendance: Councillor Andrew Beere, for Minute GS.8/21.

Officers: Mark Recchia (Town Clerk)
Mark Hassall (Deputy Town Clerk & RFO)
Paul Almond (Operations Manager)

GS.4/21 Apologies for Absence
None.

GS.5/21 Declarations of Interest
Councillor Phillips declared a personal interest, as Chairman of Banbury Cricket Club, in respect of discussions on cricket provision at Horton View Sports Ground under Minute GS.8/21, and remained in the meeting during the discussion and voting thereon.

GS.6/21 Minutes of the Last Meeting

IT WAS RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 March and 18 May 2021 be approved as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

GS.7/21 Income & Expenditure Report

The Committee considered a report prepared by the Deputy Town Clerk/RFO comparing year-to-date income and expenditure with the projected annual budget for the financial year.

Officers responded to a range of questions from Members relating to various budget codes and financial procedures. Members' attention was drawn to the fact that overall the Committee's expenditure was within forecast.

Variances were principally:

- ◆ Timing of invoicing for grounds maintenance works impacted equally by seasonality and awaiting May invoicing, across Parks, Football pitches and Horton View.
- ◆ Timing of capital expenditure on MUGA refurbishment, Stanbridge (completed) and Hillview, which should be completed shortly. Retention funds were being held to clear snagging issues to enable Peoples Park toilets to be opened for use
- ◆ Increased advertising on Bus Shelters is being funded by a grant received from the Controlling Outbreak Management Fund (COMF).

IT WAS RESOLVED to receive and note the Income and Expenditure report.

GS.8/21 Parks and Open Spaces Monitoring Report

The Committee considered a report on the condition of the parks, recreation grounds and open spaces in Banbury. The report covered the following areas:

- Parks and Cemeteries Service Overview
- People's Park – Community Building, Public Toilets and Walled Garden.
- St Mary's Churchyard – Landscape Refurbishment Scheme.
- Hardwick Hill Cemetery - Extension.
- Timms Road – Play Area Refurbishment
- Banbury Borough Bowls Club - Lease Renewal
- Horton View – Football
- Land Adoptions - Hanwell View MUGA and associated Public Open Space, Longford Park Sports Pitch, Pavilion and associated Public Open Space.

Parks and Cemeteries Service Overview

Given that there were a number of new Members joining the Committee, the Operations Manager gave an overview of the services covered by the Committee.

Peoples Park Projects

The new community building and toilet block was now complete and ready for opening to the public, following rectification of snagging issues. Landscape planting around the building was now also complete, this was undertaken by the in-house green team. Work now needed to commence on the design and refurbishment of the walled garden. There was a capital budget agreed for this work to be undertaken in the current financial year.

St Mary's Closed Churchyard Landscape Refurbishment Scheme

Work had started on the designs for the refurbishment of St Mary's Closed Churchyard. There was a capital budget agreed for this work to be undertaken this financial year.

Hardwick Hill Cemetery Extension

The Planning Application to Cherwell DC had been granted subject to a number of conditions being met. Although the initial archaeological trench works were completed, there could be further works required. The only other outstanding item was to submit layout and landscape designs. In the meantime, a grazing licence had been renewed with a local farmer to graze the land until the winter, on the understanding that it did not interfere with the site development.

Timms Road Play Area Refurbishment

Following the tendering exercise and consultation the successful tenderer had been on site for a number of weeks now installing the new equipment. The completion of the new play area was due to be in good time for the School Summer Holidays.

Banbury Borough Bowls Lease Renewal

A new combined lease for the clubhouse and patio had been drafted by Brethertons and the Club Trustees had now agreed to the terms of this combined lease. This would run for 20 years from 1 January 2018. An inflationary increase had been applied to the original rents and the Club was happy with this.

The Bowls Club had recently requested permission to install a new disabled ramp to the entrance of the clubhouse and extend the enclosed patio area. These works had now been completed and formed part of the new lease arrangements.

Horton View Recreation Ground

Last year the Council was approached by Activate Learning in conjunction with Banbury United to run a football training course at Chandos Close Recreation Ground twice a week during the season. This was accepted but did cause concerns about overplaying the pitches and the effect on the condition of the pitches was raised by the league teams who played there at weekends.

Sports Pitch Provision at Horton View was currently one Senior Football Pitch and a Cricket Square. Unfortunately, there had been no demand for Cricket at this site, either by a resident team or casual hire. The Council was maintaining the Square at considerable costs and not receiving any income for cricket. Provision for Cricket was well provided for at the facilities in Bodicote, less than half mile up the road.

The Operations Manager explained that the proposal would be for an intermediate football pitch to be marked out in preference to maintaining a Cricket Square at Horton View and that this would be offered as an alternative venue to Banbury College. If requests for casual cricket were received these could be accommodated at the artificial wicket at Hanwell Fields, which was still available.

Prior to opening this matter up for debate the Chairman advised Members that Councillor Andrew Beere was in attendance and had asked to address the Committee. However, as this matter did not directly and specifically affect his ward, the Committee was asked to suspend Standing Order 19 to facilitate this. It was then **RESOLVED** that Standing Order 19 be suspended for the duration of this debate.

Following a lengthy debate, it was felt that any decision to withdraw cricket provision at Horton View should be deferred to the next meeting to enable further research to be undertaken into maintenance costs, potential demand and the terms of the Head Lease for the site.

Land Adoptions

- Hanwell View MUGA and associated Public Open Space

This site had now been laid out and was ready for adoption. The MUGA was an excellent facility situated in its own public open space behind the school site in the heart of the development. The site was being offered with appropriate commuted sum to cover future maintenance.

- Longford Park Sports Pitches, Pavilion and associated Public Open Space
- The sports pitches had been laid out now for two years, the pavilion had been completed a similar amount of time, however, the remedial works on the Public Open Space had not been signed off by Cherwell District Council and remained the reason why this facility had not yet been offered to the Town Council for Adoption.

In response to a member's question the Operations Manager confirmed that public open space on the development had been closed to the public by the house-building consortium pending practical completion being granted by the Planning Authority. The area had only been opened up as a temporary measure during lockdown and was not yet ready for public use.

It was then **FURTHER RESOLVED** to:

- (1) note the Parks and Cemetery Service Overview.
- (2) authorise the Town Clerk to develop plans, tender and complete the refurbishment of the Walled Garden at People's Park, within agreed budgets.
- (3) authorise the Town Clerk to develop plans, tender and complete the Landscape refurbishment of St Marys Churchyard, within agreed budgets.
- (4) note the update on the Hardwick Hill Cemetery extension and to authorise the Town Clerk to develop layout plans and complete the landscape designs, to secure full planning consent.
- (5) note the progress on the Timms Road Play Area refurbishment.
- (6) authorise the Town Clerk to complete the Lease with the Banbury Borough Bowls Club, on the terms agreed.
- (7) defer the layout change from Cricket to Football at Horton View Recreation Ground pending a further report to the next meeting; and
- (8) authorise the Town Clerk on behalf of the Town Council to accept the transfer of the MUGA and associated Public Open Space at Hanwell View and the Sports Pitches, Pavilion and associated Public Open Space at Longford Park (when this reaches an adoptable standard), with the appropriate Commuted Sums.

The meeting ended at 7.30pm