

Runnymede Borough Council

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

14 March 2019 at 7.30 pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors Miss M N Heath (Chairman), N M King (Vice-Chairman) M D Cressey, S L Dennett, Ms F Dent, T J F E Gracey, Mrs M T Harnden, S A Lewis, A P Tollett and Mrs G Warner.

Members of the Committee absent: None.

529. FIRE PRECAUTIONS

The Chairman read out the Fire Precautions.

530. PRESENTATION – BRIGHT LIGHTS JUNIOR YOUTH CLUB

The Committee received an informative presentation by Bright Lights Junior Youth Club, for children aged 5 – 13 years with special needs, based in Egham, but catering for families in Runnymede, Spelthorne or the surrounding North West Surrey areas. Both the presenters had been personally involved with the club for a number of years and their first hand experience assisted the Committee to appreciate the challenges they faced personally and financially. The Club met on a weekly basis using facilities provided by The Orbit Sports Centre and also organised trips for the children and their families which were much appreciated. Parents were asked to contribute £10 per month and the club was actively engaged in fund raising.

Members were very impressed with the club and what they had achieved. The Chairman was keen to discuss funding options with them and the Vice-Chairman would speak to them about Duke Of Edinburgh award opportunities. Other Members pledged their practical support and sought ways to publicise the club's activities and raise their profile, perhaps through the Business Enterprise Forum and as a way of attracting funding.

Officers were asked to consider options for promoting Bright Lights and other local charities on the Council's website and other appropriate channels; for example the 'Runnymede Talks' newsletter.

531. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 15 January 2019 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

532. RUNNYMEDE PLEASURE GROUNDS – IMPROVEMENTS – PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee was given some detailed illustrations of the most recent ideas for improvements at Runnymede Pleasure Grounds and were asked to approve tabled proposals for the final layout and position of the key elements within the design. Officers took Members through a series of drawings and pictures of suggested materials and finishes for the main elements of the project; these being the Café and multi-use room, the lodges, the play and water play areas.

Officers invited Councillors to attend the public display of the plans at the United Church of Egham on Saturday 16 March between 10:00 and 13:00, after which feedback would inform final design options.

Members were content with the revised designs which in effect brought the project back to something which retained the open aspect of the pleasure grounds without too much intrusion by way of paths, hard and soft landscaping and buildings. The Committee was assured though that the materials being used for surfaces etc. were both durable and accessible whilst retaining a natural look and feel. This was welcomed.

The plans had been rigorously examined by Planning and the Environment Agency and several site surveys had been undertaken. Officers were confident that all requirements had or would be met. It was noted that advice given by the statutory bodies was legally binding and that planning permission would not be secured without compliance with their recommendations. Officers also confirmed that the reduced number of lodges from 4 to 2 and conversion of the old Park Keeper's cottage to holiday accommodation had not met with objections by the Runnymede Hotel who would be making some site visits in the near future.

Members were furnished with the latest timeline projections and details of the proposed procurement route by an open bidding process which they approved.

The absolute need to generate income was noted and Officers agreed to provide the Committee with a note detailing financial options and implications with regard to cash flow, timing of the elements of the project and phasing, as opposed to waiting for all elements to be ready for one grand opening. Members discussed this with specific regard to the lodges, bookings for which they considered might be less appealing if the other elements were not ready. Officers were asked to consider the optimum orientation of the lodges and also confirm that they would be 'dog friendly'. It was noted however that marketing of the lodges would be within the purview of the hotel but that thought had been given to taking bookings throughout the year with mixed business and leisure use.

Officers were asked to consider security, CCTV and deterrents to dogs accessing the play areas, the latter being noted as contrary to the existing by-laws.

Officers agreed to keep the Committee updated on budgetary matters, particularly bringing the cost to within budget without detriment to the play areas and appraise Members of any other developments, such as the outcome of the funding application to the London Marathon Trust.

RESOLVED that -

- i) progress with the project be noted;**
- ii) the procurement of the main construction contract using the methodology set out in the report, be approved;**
- iii) proceed to RIBA Stage 3 on the basis that costs must be reduced from the current estimate of £4.89m to £4.8m (the original budget) through value engineering; and**
- iv) the revised plans (as tabled at the meeting) be approved**

533. GOGMORE FARM PARK PAVILION

The Committee was asked to consider leasing of the empty Gogmore Farm Park Pavilion in Chertsey, to a new Community Group, for a range of community uses, primarily youth related activities.

The initiative was led by the Mayor, Councillor Dolsie Clarke, and supported by the Surrey Youth Clubs Association who had helped the new Management Committee produce a Constitution and a detailed business plan which was appended to the report.

Members welcomed the proposal, recognising the amount of work undertaken over the last six months especially by a number of people, committed to its success. In kind support and donations had been received from the River Bourne Health Club, offering use of a room and discounted swimming facilities and furniture for the pavilion had also been obtained at no cost from a local charity. The Management Committee had longer term plans for sustainability, including opening up a servery for snacks and drinks to park users.

In terms of the lease, Commercial Services had valued the current rental value of the pavilion at £5,000, noting that Councillor Mark Nuti had already pledged £1,000 towards the rent from his County Councillor allocation. The Committee was pleased to support the Group's request for an initial five year lease and considered that a rolling break clause after two years was sensible. It was also agreed that rent grant aid of 50% was appropriate.

RESOLVED that –

- i) The Gogmore Farm Park Pavilion is leased to the new community group for a five year period, with a rolling break clause that can be invoked after two years of the lease, with six months' notice by either party; and**
- ii) Grant aid support is provided at 50% of the rental cost**

534. RENT GRANT AID POLICY

The Committee's approval was sought for a new Rent Grant Aid Policy to be applied to all existing and new grant aid provided to local community groups who leased or paid rent on Council properties or land.

The Committee reviewed the current policy and conditions for receiving rent grant aid and agreed that a more rigorous regime was necessary to ensure that only those community organisations that fully merited grant aid should receive it in the future. The new policy was appended to the agenda. The aim was to encourage self-sufficiency and accountability and support only those groups whose functions aligned with the Council's Corporate Plan objectives, did not compete directly with Council services and who worked collaboratively with the Council. Generic lease terms and charges were also included which could be adapted.

Members considered the assessment criteria and scoring matrix to be fair and approved the weighting to be applied, each on a case by case basis, to be fully reviewed every three years or earlier if a group's circumstances changed. The option to remove grant aid altogether was agreed.

In terms of Equalities, it was noted that a full impact assessment was not required.

The norm would be for a group to receive, after assessment, up to a maximum of 50% time limited grant aid and that existing recipients would be no worse off than they were currently. The financial implications of this were noted, the current rent grant aid budget being £67,000 per annum which was likely to increase in subsequent years.

The Committee was keen to exercise more control over which groups were supported, although there was some concern that valuation at a full market rate might adversely impact some groups and in turn affect the rent received by the Council, if groups were in effect, priced out of the property. Conversely other Members were aware that some organisations currently in receipt of rent grant aid probably did not warrant the level of support they received so a review was long overdue. An example was cited of an adult sports club using income raised by its juniors to fund its activities instead of ploughing back income into the youth wing of the club.

In order to gain an insight into how grant aid was currently allocated, Officers were asked to submit a list to the Committee of rent grant aided organisations, the amount they receive and what it is proposed they receive, following their rent review and prior to leases being renewed, to also include long lease arrangements.

RESOLVED that –

- i) the new rent grant aid policy be adopted; and**
- ii) the financial implications of the new policy be noted**

535. HALL HIRE REVIEW – FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee was asked to approve a series of recommendations for a 12 month pilot, following the outcome of a review of the Council's two community halls.

Members were advised that the review of the halls had focussed on identifying improvements to their operation and usage in order to increase income and reduce costs by simplifying the 'offer' including the charging structure and packages available. Officers had mapped the current processes, benchmarked against other venues and produced recommendations, all of which the Committee approved.

The hall fees and charges would, for a 12 month period, be varied to create 4 packages (business, community, children's parties and functions). There would be options within the package depending on the facilities required. It was agreed that removing the mandatory security requirement for bookings with the exception of 18th and 21st birthday parties should encourage bookings and that including public liability insurance in the price for one off bookings would also assist.

With regard to Licensing issues, it was agreed that exercising greater control over the sale and supply of alcohol was important. Therefore, the Council would undertake a procurement exercise to test the local market for a concessionary contract to supply and run the community halls bars rather than remove the alcohol element of the premises licence. It was noted that as the Premises Licence Holder, the Council retained responsibility should there be any problems associated with the sale or supply of alcohol.

Officers in Community Development were asked to consider how to survey potential bookers on the alcohol provisions in the hall hire offer and build a picture of the client base and usage.

The review also sought to streamline the booking process with regard to payments, cancellation and deposits, to safeguard against potential lost income and standardise the booking procedure.

The Committee agreed that more marketing of the halls was needed in order to reach the ambitious income generation target of £25,000 per annum and Officers agreed to confirm the total hall hire income for 2017/18 [a note was circulated after the meeting].

Although the supplementary estimate of £6,000 was relatively modest, Officers were asked to produce a monitoring report of supplementary revenue estimates against the agreed budget for 2019/20 similar to that reported to Corporate Management Committee.

The Committee approved the recommendations and looked forward to an update in due course.

RESOLVED that –

- i) the community halls fees and charges be amended to reflect package prices for:**
 - **Business Packages**
 - **Community Packages**
 - **Children’s Party Packages**
 - **Function Packages**
- ii) public liability insurance be included in the price for all one off bookings at halls;**
- iii) a procurement exercise be undertaken to test the local market for a concessionary contract to supply and run the community halls bars;**
- iv) the current booking policy be amended to remove the mandatory security requirement for bookings, with the exception of 18th and 21st birthday party bookings;**
- v) the payment, cancellation and deposit terms be amended as detailed in section 2 of the report; and**
- vi) a supplementary revenue estimate in the sum of £6,000 in 2019/20 be approved, on an invest to income generate basis, to generate £25,000 a year, cumulative for the next 4 years**

536. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – QUARTER 3 - 2018/19

The Committee noted the results of the key performance indicators for Quarter 3, 2018/19 of the services being monitored in Community Development and Community Services.

Members noted that all parts of the services were either on target or in the case of the Community Transport service and the percentage of Careline calls answered within 60 seconds, exceeding their target.

Officers advised that following the division of Community Development and Community Services there would be separate KPI reports from June 2019.

537. HANDYPERSON SERVICE UPDATE AND PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE WORKING

The Committee noted a report regarding the Council’s Handyperson service which had been approved the previous evening at the Housing Committee. In future, reports of this nature would be submitted to the Community Services Committee when the Council’s revised Constitution was updated to reflect the new structure and budgetary reporting lines.

Members learned that since the Council had been working with Woking Borough Council, as part of a North West Surrey cluster including Spelthorne Borough Council (and subject to approval, Surrey Heath as well), the Handy person service had increased its client base, accessing a wide range of practical support for people aged 60 and over, vulnerable adults, disabled households and by statutory referral, children at risk of harm.

Officers had explored ways to generate additional income, extend the service into the wider health and social care arena and possibly include a trading element. All options had been approved by the Housing Committee and Members agreed that improving a valued and trustworthy service was the preferred route. Members also sought additional marketing to promote the service, which Officers confirmed was in hand.

An update on the service would be submitted to the Committee in March 2020.

538. CABRERA TRUST MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – MINUTES – 10 JANUARY 2019

The Minutes of the Management Committee, held on 10 January 2019, as attached at Appendix 'A' were received and noted.

539. FUTURE PROVISION OF ADDLESTONE CONNECT AND LONGCROSS LINK TRANSPORT SERVICES

By resolution of the Committee, the press and public were excluded from the meeting during the consideration of this matter under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the discussion would be likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

The Committee's approval was sought to delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chairman to finalise terms for a proposed agreement with Surrey County Council for the continued provision under contract of two existing transport services in Longcross Garden Village and the Strawberry Fields service in Rowtown.

Officers outlined how the separate services currently operated in terms of Licensing, fares, numbers of passengers and the amount of income generated. It was agreed that both arrangements were a valued addition to the Community Transport service which needed a firmer footing for long term sustainability and as a basis for development in the future.

The County Council's specification for a new service, initially for an 18 month period with the option to extend for a further 12 months, using Section 106 monies was supported by the Committee. The approach taken so far was also endorsed, in securing the new contract through a local authority agreement with a view to providing a range of travel solutions to residents in which Officers were involved in the design and delivery to create efficiency savings.

The Committee asked to be informed of service developments by email/reports as appropriate and that the future arrangements be brought back to the Committee for review.

RESOLVED that –

authority be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman of the Community Services Committee, for all decisions relating to the proposed agreement with Surrey County Council and mobilisation of any future contract in relation to the Longcross Garden Village and Strawberry Fields services

Chairman

(The meeting finished at 9.40pm)

Runnymede Borough CouncilCABRERA TRUST MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE10 January 2019 at 2.30pm

Members of the
Committee present: Councillor P S Sohi, Councillor N Wase-Rogers, Mr C Hunt
(Honorary Secretary), Mr P McKenzie (Honorary Treasurer)

The following attended in an advisory capacity;

Honorary Wardens: Mr T Ashby, Mr K Barkham,
Mr J Midwinter and Mr A Saunders

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 19 July 2018 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor C S S Manduca and Mrs H Lane

3. ACTIONS TAKEN SINCE LAST MEETING

The Committee was updated on various actions taken since the last meeting.

Outstanding repairs

The Committee was advised that sections of the Riverside Walk which had remained muddy following the boardwalk replacement had been firmed up with crushed stone. A site inspection in mid-December revealed the paths to be mostly firm, despite recent rain, with just one or two muddy areas which were easily passable.

An outstanding repair to a hole in the timber at the edge of the upstream bridge had been completed.

Waste and litter

Officers reported that some remnants of the old boardwalks left on site by contractors had now been removed and disposed of.

There had been a discussion at the last AGM around a lack of litter bins on the Trust land and it was agreed that a bin should be placed at each end of the Riverside Walk. The Committee was advised that Officers not present at the AGM had recently discussed the introduction of more litter bins who were unconvinced of the benefit of the proposal for the following reasons;

- Litter was not a major issue on the Trust land
- The bins would be remote and therefore emptying of the bins could be problematic
- The likelihood of birds and squirrels getting into the bins and removing then dropping the litter in the vicinity of the bin was high.

ACTION

Officers had passed on concerns about the amount of litter on Network Rail land behind the chain link fence adjacent to the station path. Officers would monitor progress later in the year.

Peter Winfield

RESOLVED that –

No further bins should be placed on the Trust land at this time.

Carnival Capers contribution

In July Officers and Members of the Committee received the welcome news that the Carnival Capers Committee had agreed to make a £375 contribution to the Trust's funds in appreciation of being able to use the Cabrera Avenue Playing Field for the event. A letter of thanks was sent in reply by the Treasurer. The Committee expressed thanks to Mr K Barkham for approaching the Carnival Capers Committee regarding a contribution.

Mission Statement

Following discussions at last year's AGM around work that volunteers should be permitted to carry out at the Riverside Walk, Officers were asked to consider a 'mission statement' for the Trust which would encapsulate both the original objectives of the Trust and the more recent aspirations of the Committee and could be used as a guide for any site work volunteers undertook on the site.

Members received detailed information on the terms of the trust in relation to both the Riverside Walk and Cabrera Avenue. Members recalled that the Riverside Walk Advisory Committee was amalgamated with the Cabrera Trust Management Committee in 2010.

The Riverside Walk Management Plan, adopted by the RWAC (Riverside Walk Advisory Committee) in 2001, also supported the ethos of nature conservation and had broad aims to 'widen the bio-diversity of the native flora and fauna at the Walk and provide safe public access to designated areas of the site'. It set out the Management Objectives for the Riverside Walk which were stated as:

1. To encourage and widen the bio-diversity of the native flora and fauna of the Riverside Walk.
2. To maintain the current woodland canopy and encourage its regeneration along with associated low-level plants and the soil on which they depend.
3. To open up glades to increase the variety of woodland edge plants, as well as other areas alongside the riverbank to encourage species of aquatic life. These areas to be kept clear for sequential coppicing.
4. To control the spread of *Rhododendron ponticum*.
5. To maintain the present water table, and where appropriate, to raise it in order to help conserve aquatic and marshland species.
6. To promote the safe public use of part of the Riverside Walk, by encouraging the public to follow the marked paths.
7. To discourage public use of the undisturbed parts of the Riverside Walk.
8. To encourage the use of the Riverside Walk for educational purposes by schools and other interested groups.

9. To interpret the Riverside Walk by means of information boards and leaflets.

The woodland that included the Riverside Walk had also more recently been designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) and a Local Nature Reserve, both of which recognised its importance for wildlife locally.

Therefore whilst the original terms of the Trust included the option of providing facilities for recreation within parts of the Riverside Walk, the RWAC and the CTC had always managed the site with an emphasis on encouraging and widening the bio-diversity of the native flora and fauna whilst providing safe public access to designated areas of the site.

Members reviewed the draft mission statement and fully supported the approach of continuing to manage the Riverside Walk for nature conservation. Members were pleased to note that the mission statement summarised the need 'To protect and enhance nature conservation interests at the Riverside Walk while promoting safe public access to parts of the site and to provide a well maintained public recreation ground at Cabrera Avenue'

RESOLVED that –

The draft mission statement proposed by Officers be adopted

Volunteers

The formation of a volunteer group to support the work of the Trust was discussed at the AGM in July. The Committee supported this in principle and members of the public present were content to facilitate it. By October, 20 residents had put their names forward.

In November, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman met with Officers and Mrs Lane to consider the matter further and concluded that for a volunteer group to be sustainable in the longer term there would need to be a small number of volunteer leaders who could liaise with the Trust via Council Officers to agree what work should be undertaken and to organise future working parties. To this end, the Honorary Wardens were asked if they would be willing to be lead volunteers and the resident who had compiled the list of new volunteers was asked whether anyone on the list was prepared to lead. 5 volunteer leaders had come forward. Officers suggested that a meeting be set up with the lead volunteers, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee and Officers within the next month or so to discuss the mission statement and ethos. In the short term (probably for the first year) Green Space Officers would be available to arrange and oversee the volunteers work but due to resource limitations this would not be able to continue long term. Officers advised the Committee that volunteers would be covered by the Council's insurance arrangements.

Peter Winfield

Peter Winfield

Additionally, at the AGM it was agreed that a guided walk for volunteers in the Spring of 2019 might be a good way to introduce them to the site and the Trust's aspirations for it. This could then possibly be followed by a bat walk in the Summer. The first work party could be Himalayan Balsam bashing, also in the Summer of 2019. It was noted that the optimum time for this to be undertaken was late June/early July.

Peter Winfield

Peter Winfield

Members were advised that it was likely that the Egham and Staines Conservation Volunteers might be available to help with some work parties in the future, however, they did get very booked up and they did charge a small fee per volunteer and this would need to be borne in mind.

2019 was the 'Year of Green Action' this was a government led initiative where people were being encouraged to engage with local green spaces by volunteering, so Officers would explore whether local youth groups or schools could also be involved.

RESOLVED that –

**The proposed volunteer activities for 2019
be approved.**

4. MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

The Committee was advised that following the installation of barriers to prevent horses accessing the Riverside Walk via the Cabrera Avenue entrance, Officers had now asked contractors to widen this entrance slightly so that wheelchairs and pushchairs could pass through whilst still preventing access by horse riders.

5. DRAFT ANNUAL ESTIMATES FOR 2019/20

The Committee was asked to consider the probable budget for 2018/19 and the draft estimates for 2019/20.

Members discussed the expenditure and in particular the central costs. Officers advised Members that recharge costs had to be incurred when Council Officers undertook work for other organisations. In some cases (Borough Parks Management) the costs had reduced and all other costs had been frozen. Members of the Committee asked the Honorary Treasurer if the accountancy work could be undertaken by a volunteer, if one could be found, to reduce costs. The Honorary Treasurer would need to discuss this with the Council's Corporate Head of Law and Governance.

Peter McKenzie

The Honorary Treasurer advised the Committee due to investment rates flat lining the Trusts investments had reduced in recent years. Whilst no further major works were proposed at present should the need arise the Trust would need to consider applying for grant funding. However, grant funding opportunities had greatly reduced in recent years. It was hoped that once a team of volunteers was established that they would be willing to do some fund- raising for the Trust at local events such as Carnival Capers. The Honorary Secretary advised the Committee that Officers from the Community Development team could provide assistance with leaflet design for fundraising activities.

Peter
McKenzie/Mario
Leo

It was noted that the volunteer group may save some money but specialist works such as tree work would be ongoing.

Members of the Committee expressed concerns on what approach would be taken by Runnymede Borough Council should the funds completely diminish. The Honorary Treasurer advised the Committee that the Trust would need to approach Runnymede for funding. However, the legal responsibility on Runnymede to provide funding would need to be established.

Peter
McKenzie/Mario
Leo

6. DATES FOR MEETINGS IN 2019/20

The next meeting of the Cabrera Trust Management Committee would be the July meeting and AGM which was scheduled to be held in the Committee Room at the Civic Centre on **Thursday 18 July 2019 at 2.30pm.**

However, following discussions at last year's AGM the Committee was asked

to consider whether they would like to change the time of the AGM and if they wished to consider holding the AGM at Christ Church in Virginia Water.

It was noted that since the daytime AGM had been held at the Civic Centre the number of the public in attendance had not decreased when compared to the attendance numbers at the previous evening AGM meetings held in Virginia Water. Given the financial position of the Trust the Committee was unconvinced that to move the meeting to the evening was beneficial due to both additional Officer time and travel costs incurred.

Additionally, it was noted that Officers would be in contact with the volunteer group on a regular basis.

The January meeting of the Cabrera Trust Management Committee would be held on **Thursday 9th January 2020 at 2.30pm**

(The meeting ended at 3.32 pm)

Chairman