

Runnymede Borough Council

ENGLEFIELD GREEN COMMITTEE

31 October 2017 at 7.30 pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors Miss M N Heath (Chairman), N H Prescott and Miss J K Sohi

Members of the Committee absent: Councillors N M King, M T Kusneraitis and P I Roberts
Residents' Representatives: Mr A Panter (Vice-Chairman) and Mr N Band

313 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20 June 2017 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

314 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors N M King, M T Kusneraitis and P I Roberts. Residents' Representatives: Mr A Panter (Vice-Chairman) and Mr N Band

315 MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF THE GREEN

The Committee was updated on management and maintenance issues relating to the Green and asked to consider future maintenance operations around the Green.

i) Works to the surface of the Green

At the November meeting last year the Committee approved certain maintenance operations being carried out on the Green which, it was hoped, would improve the condition of the grass. These included a trial of Vertidrainage, a process which punched small holes into the surface of the ground to improve drainage. Officers reported that the first Vertidrainage had been undertaken and it had gone very well. Officers recommended that Vertidrainage should be carried out again in 2018. The Committee agreed with this approach. Officers would provide the Committee with a further update in November 2018.

The second operation approved was to scarify the Green. This used a motorised rake to remove large amounts of dead grass and moss which built up over time. This would help to improve the surface drainage and thereby the general condition of the grass. The Green had been scarified once in April this year and a huge amount of material was removed, however, it needed to be repeated several times before any real impact would be seen. Officers were therefore recommending that this process be repeated in 2018 and 2019. The Committee agreed with this approach. Officers would provide the Committee with a further update in November 2018.

The issue of weeds growing in the grass sward across the Green had been raised again since it was discussed at the last meeting. Members were asked to again consider whether they wished the weeds to be treated with a suitable herbicide.

The Committee recalled that at their site visit in June they did not consider the weeds to be a particular problem. The Committee agreed that they did not consider it necessary for the weeds to be treated with herbicide at this time. Officers would however monitor and advise the Committee if they considered treatment was needed.

RESOLVED that –

- i) the surface of the Green be scarified again in 2018 and 2019;**
- ii) Vertidrainage be carried out again in 2018; and**
- iii) Officers to report back to the Committee the impact of the additional maintenance operations in November 2018; and**
- iv) Officers did not need to arrange for the Green to be treated with herbicides at this time**

ii) Traveller incursion

On Saturday 22 July a number of travellers moved their caravans and associated vehicles onto Englefield Green by bridging the ditch opposite the bus stop at St Jude's Road. On Monday 24 July Officers attended the site to discover that there were a number of distinct groups of travellers. A group which had previously occupied other open spaces in the Borough had been joined by four other groups. Because of the previous incursions the Council was already pursuing an injunction through the High Court which would prevent any further incursions on specific open spaces and car parks owned by the Council, including Englefield Green. The injunction was granted by the High Court on Thursday 27 July and the travellers started moving off. On Saturday 29 July the courts Process Server served a copy of the injunction on site and the last of the caravans left on 30 July.

The Committee was advised some damage to the grass had occurred. Officers had arranged for the areas to be seeded. There was also a broken locking pin on the security gate which had been replaced. Officers would ensure the barrier gate was as secure as possible. Members were, however, pleased to note that the injunction was now in place.

iii) Woodland Management Plan

At the meeting in June, Officers had described to Members the positive impact a Woodland Management Plan could have on improving the condition of the woodland over a period of time. It was agreed that prices for the initial ecological survey work, which would inform the Plan, be sought from Surrey Wildlife Trust (SWT) and reported to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman. This had been done in September.

The Committee was advised that the overall cost of the survey work would be £8,411, this included 12 visits to the site by various ecologists who would be looking for different flora and fauna within their specialism at appropriate times of the year. Additionally, the quote included ten days of desk work which was needed to compile all the survey data and write up the reports.

Officers considered this quotation offered value for money and recommended to Members that it be accepted and the surveys be commissioned from SWT to take place at appropriate times over the next twelve months or so.

Members were fully supportive on this approach and agreed no further comparative quotes were required. It was noted that the cost of the work would be spread over two year's budget.

RESOLVED that –

Officers procure ecological surveys of the woodland from the Surrey Wildlife Trust.

iv) Litter Pick on 4 March 2017

The Committee was advised for information and clarification that it had been drawn to the Council's attention that the litter pick on 4 March 2017, reported at the Englefield Green Committee on 14 February 2017, was organised by three local residents Pete Deane, Wendy Locker and Joan Cauldwell. It was not planned by the Englefield Green Residents Association (EGVRA), although funding was obtained for the after litter pick refreshments from EGVRA. It was an Englefield Green wide event and included student volunteers from RHUL.

316 EVENTS ON THE GREEN

i) Village Fair

The Englefield Green Village Residents Association held their annual Village Fair on the Green again in June. There was no damage to the Green and their ground deposit was refunded in July.

iii) Carters Steam Fair

Carters Steam Fair operated from the Green over the weekend of the 30 September and 1 October. There was some wet weather during their stay and some damage to the surface of the Green resulted. This impacted on the cricket outfield so Officers had been liaising with the Cricket Club and organising the necessary repairs which would be funded from Carters' ground deposit.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 7.45pm)