

Runnymede Borough Council

ENGLEFIELD GREEN COMMITTEE

30 October 2018 at 7.30 pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors M T Kusneraitis, N H Prescott, Miss J K Sohi and P J Taylor

Residents' Representatives: Mr A Panter (Vice-Chairman in the Chair), Mr N Bromilow

Members of the Committee absent: Councillors Miss M N Heath (Chairman) and N M King

317 MINUTES

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

318 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Miss M N Heath and N M King

319 MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF THE GREEN

The Committee was updated on management and maintenance issues relating to the Green and asked to consider additional security measures that might be appropriate for the Green.

i) Replacement benches

At the last meeting of this Committee Members had been informed of funding which had been made available by the developer Danehurst to replace some benches on the Green. The developer had now confirmed that there were sufficient funds to purchase two new benches. Officers advised the Committee that the new benches had been ordered and when delivered would be used to replace the two log seats on the Green which needed replacing.

ii) Maintenance of the grass surface

As agreed at the last meeting, the whole green (excluding the Cricket Square) had been treated with a selective herbicide in late September which was taking effect. The vertidrainage, a process which punched holes into the surface to aid drainage, had been postponed due to the ground being too hard. This would be done as soon as ground conditions were suitable. Scarifying, the mechanical removal of moss and dead grass would be carried out as soon as the conditions were suitable.

iii) Woodland Management Plan

The Committee was advised that the ecological surveys of the woodland, which would inform the new woodland plan had now been completed by Surrey Wildlife

Trust. Moderate bat activity and a potential roost were noted, which would need to be considered if any tree thinning took place. 14 species of ancient woodland vegetation had also been identified. Officers would incorporate the findings into the new woodland plan and liaise with the Crown Estate's Forestry Manager regarding recommendations. Officers would then bring a report thereon to the next meeting of the Committee in February.

iv) Unauthorised Encampments

Officers reported that Runnymede had seen an unprecedented number of unauthorised encampments on its parks and open spaces, including Englefield Green, this year and this had been replicated across the County with many other Boroughs experiencing the same issue. Whilst the Boroughs and Districts considered the longer term measures to address the problem, the Green Space team was looking at more immediate measures that could be implemented to enhance the security of Runnymede's parks and open spaces. Officers recommended to the Committee that a more secure vehicle barrier could be considered to deter future unauthorised encampments. Members were keen to support this approach to ensure the Green was protected and asked Officers to purchase a more substantial gate along with wooden poles to install close to the the bridge opposite the bus shelter to prevent vehicle access onto the Green.

It was noted that the unauthorised encampments had caused disturbance to the Cricket Club. It was therefore suggested that Officers should liaise with the Cricket Club to discuss any support the Committee could offer. Officers would arrange to meet with the Cricket Club and report back to the next meeting on the discussions.

RESOLVED that –

- i) Officers be authorised to purchase replacement substantial gate and in addition wooden poles to be installed close to the bridge opposite the bus shelter; and**
- ii) Officers to meet with the Cricket Club to discuss support the Committee could offer the Club following disturbances caused by the unauthorised encampments and bring a report back to the next meeting in February**

320 EVENTS ON THE GREEN

i) Village Fair

The Village Fair took place on 23 June and EGVRA reported another successful fair. The fair was opened by the Mayor. The weather was fine, but not too hot, and visitor numbers were good. Arena events included birds of prey and dog displays, and local groups singing, dancing and displaying football skills.

ii) Carters Steam Fair

Carters had operated on the Green over the weekend of 29 and 30 September. Both Council Officers and the Cricket Club were satisfied that no damage that would not recover of its own accord was caused by the presence of the fair. Therefore, the ground deposit had been refunded in full. The Committee noted that Carters Steam Fair always left the Green in good condition and the area was left tidy. The Steam Fair was very much enjoyed by the village residents.

iii) Yoga Classes

At the last meeting the Committee had approved an application for yoga classes to be held on the Green during the summer months. Due to a combination of circumstances unfortunately these did not take place. The applicant was therefore seeking permission to re-schedule the trial period to Spring or early Summer next year, depending on the weather. The Committee was supportive of deferring the 3 month trial period with the previously agreed conditions.

RESOLVED that –

The re-scheduling of the 3 month trial period for Yoga classes be authorised with previously agreed conditions.

iv) Parking on the Green

Officers advised the Committee that Officer time had been diverted to other tasks during the Summer, predominately dealing with the immediate implications of the unauthorised encampments. Officers had therefore been unable to action the points relating to parking on the green from the previous meeting. It was reported that vehicles being parked for a long period of time, often of which were commercial vehicles, exacerbated the parking problems around the Green. Dangerous parking practices also continued which could lead to emergency vehicles being unable to obtain access to some properties around the Green. The Committee was keen to introduce some sanctions and asked Officers to liaise with the Council's Parking Manager to request that parking enforcement Officers visited the Green on a regular basis. The current 'No Parking' signs were inefficient and more prominent 'No Parking' signs together with their location needed to be explored. As reported at the last meeting Surrey County Council were undertaking a wider Controlled Parking Zone and Officers were asked to liaise with Surrey County Council on what is being considered. Additionally, Councillor Prescott would discuss the parking issues around the Green at the Runnymede Joint Committee. Thanks were passed to the wardens who addressed the parking issues when possible which Members appreciated was often an arduous task.

RESOLVED that –

- i) Officers to liaise with the Council's Parking Manager to arrange for parking enforcement Officers to visit the Green on a regular basis; and**
- ii) Councillor Prescott to discuss parking issues around the Green at the Runnymede Joint Committee; and**
- iii) Officers to liaise with Surrey County Council on wider Controlled Parking Zone currently being considered; and**
- iv) More prominent 'No Parking' signs together with their location be explored**

321 OPTIONS TO REGULARISE THE VARIOUS ACTIVITIES AND STRUCTURES ON THE GREEN

By resolution of the Committee, the press and public were excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following matter under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the matter in question would be likely to involve disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in paragraph 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

The Committee gave further considerations to the options to regularise the various activities and structures on the Green taking into account further information and advice from Counsel.

The Committee stressed their commitment to conserving the Green. Members main objective was to formalise and regulate what was already in situ.

Members made various suggestions on the document drafted by Counsel. Officers would raise these with Counsel and provide Members with further advice and information prior to the next meeting and bring a report thereon to the next meeting in February.

RESOLVED that –

- i) Officers to further instruct Counsel and forward further advice and information to Members prior to the next meeting; and**
- ii) A report incorporating Counsel's advice and further information be brought back to the next meeting in February**

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 9.26pm)