

Runnymede Borough Council

ENGLEFIELD GREEN COMMITTEE

29 October 2019 at 7.30 pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors N King (Chairman) M Kusneraitis (Vice-Chairman)
M Heath, N Prescott and J Sohi

Residents' Representatives: Mr N Bromilow

Members of the Committee absent: Mr A Panter (Residents Representative)

291. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 26 June 2019 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

292. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received Mr A Panter

293. MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF THE GREEN

The Committee was updated on management and maintenance of the Green.

Maintenance of the grass surface

At the last meeting it was agreed that Officers would meet with Committee members on the Green with a view to drawing up a grass maintenance plan. This meeting took place on 2 August where it was agreed that:

Weeds

1. Officers would arrange for a specialist contractor to cost up spot treating the individual weeds (and groups of weeds) across the main green with a suitable selective herbicide.
2. The same contractor would be asked to price up to apply a similar herbicide to all the outlying areas – grass triangles at Middle Hill, Northcroft Road, around the club house, ditches etc.
3. When the prices were available Officers would share them with the Committee before proceeding with the treatments.

Grass Quality

4. In the late summer/early autumn a lime based product would be applied across the main green, to address the pH imbalance, and a further fertiliser treatment would follow.
5. The whole green would then be seeded using a contravator (or similar) which planted the seed into the soil.

Ongoing maintenance

6. Officers would investigate having an individual dedicated Officer who would visit the Green on a regular, but infrequent basis, to repair damaged areas (burnt areas etc.), remove weeds and fill holes etc.

Officers provided the Committee with detailed costings for the proposed works to improve the quality of the Green. Officers had been advised that spot treating weeds was both labour intensive and expensive. Therefore it was proposed that the whole green was sprayed with a suitable weed killer. Members were supportive of this approach but stressed any weed killer must be as eco-friendly as possible. Additionally, it was proposed that a lime based product would be applied across the main green, to address the pH imbalance, and a fertiliser treatment would follow. The whole green would then be scarified and seeded, using a contravator (or similar), which planted the seed into the soil. In order to minimise the overall costs, there would be no vertidrainage this year. Members were fully supportive of this approach and were happy to support the proposed works.

RESOLVED that –

The total cost of £8,598.50 be approved to improve the condition of the Green

Site Security

Officers advised the Committee that as agreed at the last meeting two additional posts had been installed adjacent to the wooden bridge by the layby behind the Green to make vehicle access to this location more difficult.

There had been two further traveller encampments on the Green since the last meeting, one in August and one in September. Members of the Committee and Officers had been investigating how the security of the Green might further be enhanced and bollards had been looked at as a possible option.

Members viewed samples of composite. Composite bollards would be rot resistant, were available in brown and would blend into the area. Additionally a steel pole went through the centre of the bollards for added security. There were various options available in terms of type, dimensions, and currently installation costs were unknown. The Committee considered the installation of composite posts as a good alternative to the existing wooden posts and asked Officers to put together a plan for the proposed dimensions of the posts, costings and circulate to all Members.

RESOLVED that –

Officers to make a proposal further to options considered which would then be distributed to all Members of the Committee with delegated authority being given Officers in consultation with the Chairman

Cricket Club Improvements

Mr A Greig from the Englefield Green Cricket Club presented to the Committee the proposals for works that the club wished to undertake and which the Committee may wish to support.

The Cricket pavilion was in need of both essential repairs and further potential improvements. In order to obtain grants towards potential improvements it was acknowledged that the current lease expiring in 2024 would need to be extended.

The Committee was happy to support the club by giving a sum of £2,440 from Section 106 monies to cover the essential repairs needed at this time. Furthermore, they furnished Mr Grieg with possible funding avenues for the potential improvements when extension of the lease had taken place.

RESOLVED that –

The sum of £2,440 from Section 106 monies be given to the Englefield Green Cricket Club to enable essential repairs to the Cricket Pavilion to be carried out

Parking

The Committee was advised that in July the Chairman wrote to the Parking Strategy & Implementation Team at Surrey County Council (SCC) requesting that they review the parking restrictions around the Green again in conjunction with the Committee, to address identified parking issues. In response, it had been confirmed by SCC that a proposal would be presented to the Runnymede Joint Committee on 25 November at 7pm at The Village Centre, 68 Victoria Street, Englefield Green, all were welcome to attend.

The proposals would include:

- Double yellow lines on the north side of the junction at St Jude's Road and Barley Mow Road to stop cars parking so close to the junction (south east corner of the green).
- Double yellow lines on the east side of 'the triangle' (where 'The Green' street name plate stands).
- A time limited waiting bay to be installed alongside the Green (opposite the Barley Mow pub). The restriction proposed would be Monday to Saturday 8am-6pm 2 hours, no return 2 hours. This would allow for a turnover of vehicles during the day, but give visitors enough time to enjoy the amenity or visit the Barley Mow for lunch.

All double yellow lines proposed would be 50mm wide and primrose in colour.

With regard to the concerns expressed about the number of building contractors vehicles being parked around the Green, Officers had approached Royalton during the summer to ask them to discourage their contractors from parking there. It was, however, reported that there were still issues relating to the number of building contractors parked around the Green.

Members of the Committee were encouraged to report any illegal parking to the Council's Parking Services team so Enforcement Officers could attend.

Drainage ditches

Officers advised Members that at the site meeting in August concerns were expressed about the condition of the ditches and whether the culverts (pipes) needed cleaning out to ensure they operated effectively. Officers had subsequently raised this with the Council's drainage team and they have cleared out the accessible culverts and are checking the condition of the longer culvert, which will be cleaned out if needed. Additionally, they are investigating the condition of the ditches and culverts in Barley Mow Road into which the ditches on the Green flow.

294. FUNDING

The Englefield Green maintenance reserve was set up in 2015/16 to offset ongoing maintenance works to the village green utilising the receipt generated by the surrender of part of the long lease.

The £275,000 received was placed in an earmarked reserve and interest is added each year at a rate equivalent to the average interest rate earned on all the Council's Investments, thereby benefitting from better rates than would be found from investing in a general business bank account. Investment income added to the account last year was £2,550.

Currently the balance was £260,922.86. Officers were asked to contact Finance Officers at the Council to ascertain the details pertaining to the figure remaining.

The Committee was asked to consider several options on how to utilise the money:

1. The money could be used for one off projects until the reserve was depleted
2. The money could be used to offset the existing costs of maintaining the green (thereby reducing the overall call on Council wide balances) until the reserve was depleted
3. The money not be spent and the investment income earned from the fund could go to partially offset the existing running costs in perpetuity.

Members agreed that Option 2 was the preferred choice. It was noted that monies should be used for additional items only

RESOLVED that –

The earmarked reserve available to the Committee be used for additional works on the Green to offset the existing costs of maintaining the green (thereby reducing the overall call on Council wide balances) until it was depleted.

295. EVENTS ON THE GREEN

The Committee was advised that Carters Steam Fair had used the Green again this year. They had arrived on Tuesday 24 September and were operational over the weekend of 28 and 29, and departed on 1 October. Poor weather had resulted in inevitable damage to the surface of the Green. This had been minimised by the use of temporary trackway boards being laid by Carters for the arrival and departure of heavy vehicles. Carters had

carried out some basic repairs before they left the site but further repairs were required once the ground had dried out. There were some dips which would require top soil; this would be undertaken prior to the seeding works. Any cost was covered by the grounds bond held by the Council.

296. 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 consideration to the options to regularise the various activities and structures on the Green taking into account further information and advice from Counsel.

Members of the Committee approved the redrafted document from Counsel. Officers would commence consulting with the Crown Estate on the approved draft code of Management. In addition, Officers would obtain likely legal costs from the Council's solicitors.

RESOLVED that –

- i) The draft code of Management be approved; and**
- ii) Officers consult with the Crown Estate on the approved draft code of Management; and**
- iii) Officers ascertain anticipated legal costs from the Council's solicitors**

(The meeting ended at 9.07 pm)

Chairman