

Runnymede Borough Council
ENGLEFIELD GREEN COMMITTEE

22 June 2021 at 7.30 pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors N King (Chairman), M T Kusneraitis, N H Prescott and J K Sohi

Members of the Committee absent: Councillor M Heath

Residents' Representatives: Mr N Bromilow (Vice-Chairman) and one vacancy

Councillor I Mullens also attended

83 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED that -

Councillor N King be elected Chairman for the Municipal Year 2021/22.

84 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED that -

Mr N Bromilow be elected Vice-Chairman for the Municipal Year 2021/22.

85 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20 October 2020 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

86 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor M Heath

87 MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF THE GREEN

The Committee was updated on management and maintenance of the Green and was asked for their views on additional action in relation to litter signage.

CCTV

At previous meetings the possible introduction of CCTV cameras around the Green had been discussed. For a number of reasons options for locating of CCTV cameras were few. There had, however, been some progress with the possibility of locating a camera on the existing lamp column close to the mini roundabout on St. Jude's Road. It was reported that in order for a camera to be installed on the lamp column permission would be needed from Surrey County Council and a licence obtained from Skanska. The Council's Safer Runnymede team would provide the camera and monitor at a cost of £6,500, with an annual maintenance cost of £1300 p.a. It was considered that installation of a camera on the lamppost would give a good panoramic view of the Green.

Option two would be to affix a camera or cameras to the cricket club's pavilion in some way. However, Officers reported that previously the Safer Runnymede Manager had advised that affixing a camera to the roof was not a feasible option. Members of the Committee felt that there were ongoing problems with ASB around the Green, so were keen to establish the best and most cost-effective place for camera installation.

Options on funding the installation of the CCTV would also need to be explored. It would also be beneficial if the camera could pick up road traffic incidents along St. Jude's Road.

RESOLVED that –

- i) Councillor King to email the Safer Runnymede Manager to ascertain problems relating to installation of CCTV cameras on the Cricket Club; and**
- ii) consideration be given to exploring funding options for installation of CCTV; and**
- iii) Councillor King to ascertain the number of road traffic incidents along St. Jude's Road from SCC and circulate SCC's response to all Members.**

Road Speed

At its meeting in October 2020, the Committee had received a report outlining a road speed survey that Surrey County Council had undertaken earlier that year on St. Jude's Road, adjacent to the Green. Officers reported that the measuring took place between 12 – 28 March 2020, with an average speed of 31mph being recorded and that as a result Surrey County Council had not prioritised the road for speed reducing measures. Councillor N Prescott who was a member of the Runnymede Joint Committee would raise the Committee's ongoing concerns relating to the road speed along St. Jude's Road to that Committee.

Oak Processionary Moth

The Committee had at previous meetings been advised of the health hazard presented by the caterpillar of the Oak Processionary Moth and that a small number of trees of the Green had suffered infestations. Officers had also reported on the actions to minimise risks to visitors. Officers reported that there were currently a few affected trees around the Green and in particular the small oak by the junction of St. Jude's Road and Barley Mow Road which warning notices would be placed on or near to. The caterpillars' nests would then be removed later in the season.

Resident's Feedback

The Committee was asked to consider this feedback from residents and instruct Officers accordingly.

As Residents' Representative, Mr Bromilow had been seeking feedback on the upkeep of the Green from the occupants of qualifying properties. The main points raised were:

- The need for additional signs, for example those encouraging visitors to take the litter home, restricting the use of bikes, keeping proper control of, and cleaning up after dogs and prohibition of BBQ's. Officer comment – Over the late May bank holiday, the weather was fine, and the Green well used. As a result, the litter bins around the Green were left full and overflowing for a short period but had been tidied by the Wednesday. The Committee considered whether any additional signage encouraging visitors to take their litter home, was desirable to alleviate the issue at busy times.

- Bins to be emptied more often, especially in Summer and after weekends. Bin bags are thought to be good, and are a good gesture, but foxes are a problem.
- Cricket Pavilion should be improved within its own footprint and maybe a bit more.
- Playground to be improved within its own footprint
- More brown posts are favoured, although legislation is thought to be imminent which would limit unauthorised encampments, so will they be necessary? Consensus seems to be to see how effective current posts are.
- More police patrols of the layby area in the evening to prevent what seems constant offensive behaviours
- Parking – a village wide issue. All the yellow lines are now in place around the Green which is a noticeable improvement especially on the Green close to St. Jude’s Road. More enforcement needed and yellow lines to be cleared of leaves etc. so they are visible.
- Kerb stones would be strongly supported, but not at the loss of parking along the other side of the road by making the road too narrow to pass
- Make the woodland management scheme more accessible

The Committee thanked Mr Bromilow for undertaking the survey, the summary of feedback was very interesting. In relation to litter Mr Bromilow had circulated to the Committee some examples of signage he felt would help dissuade visitors from leaving too much litter. During busy weekends, bank holidays and particularly when the weather was good the bins were often overflowing. Councillor King reported the Council’s depot had recently reported that there was statistical evidence that the removal of litter bins improved the litter problems, whereby if there was nowhere to leave litter it was taken home. Members were interested in viewing the data at the next meeting before trialling this approach on the Green .

Councillor King would meet with Mr Bromilow to discuss all the findings of the survey in more detail.

RESOLVED that –

- i) Councillor N King to provide statistical information on improvement to littering following bin removal to the next meeting; and**
- ii) Councillor N King to meet with Mr Bromilow to discuss the findings of the survey in more detail**

Woodland Management

At its meeting in October the Committee was advised of plans to commence woodland management works during the winter. The work was completed in February and involved removing holly and laurel 2-3 metres each side of the public footpath 19 which had opened up the area and allowed more light onto the woodland floor. This had improved the route for walkers and enhanced the biodiversity of this part of the woodland by allowing a greater range of woodland plants to establish. A glade was also opened up to the north of the footpath by removing holly and laurel here too. The cost of the work was £3,950 which was less than expected. This was the first tranche of work prescribed in the Woodland Management Plan. Further similar work would be planned for next Autumn and Winter, details of which would be provided at the next meeting of the Committee in October.

Officers were commended on the improvement to the woodland area since the implementation of the woodland management plan. Officers would be making the woodland plan publicly available on the Council’s new website when it was launched later in the Summer.

The Committee also wished to commend Officers on the improvements made to the Green following scarifying, vertidrainage, fertilisation and application of weed killer. Further works on the Green would be reported to the next meeting in October.

Following on from the residents survey and reports particularly in relation to the damage caused by BBQ's on the Green, Officers were asked to circulate to Members signage used in other green spaces. Following that, a report on signage would be brought to the next meeting.

The Committee discussed the possibility of planting wildflowers on the trench adjacent to St Jude's Road. Members were supportive of this and a report in this regard would be presented to the October Committee.

Verges to the front of Crown House

The Committee was advised that the owner of Crown House had approached the Council seeking permission to maintain the narrow grass verges between the front wall of that property and the road. These verges formed part of the Green so the consent of the Committee would be required, together with a cultivation licence with the Council that would limit the maintenance works they could undertake and protect the Council's interests in the land.

The Committee considered the request and asked Officers to approve the request and issue a cultivation licence. Permission for planting of wildflower along the verges to be included.

RESOLVED that –

- i) The request from the owner of Crown House to maintain the grass verges be approved; and**
- ii) Officers issue a cultivation licence to include permission for the planting of wildflowers**

88 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The Committee asked Officers to provide an annual statement to the Committee every October on the ring-fenced funds available to the Committee, with the first statement being presented to the Committee at its next meeting on 19th October

89 EVENTS ON THE GREEN

The Committee was updated on planned or proposed events due to take place on the Green in 2021.

Village Fair

Officers reported that due to the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic the annual fair organised by the Englefield Green Residents Association had been cancelled this year. Members were sorry to hear this as it was a popular event and hoped that next year's event would be able to go ahead.

Carters Steam Fair

Carters Steam Fair had not yet submitted a formal application to Officers to hold their fair on the Green again this year. They had, however, indicated that they would like to be operational over the weekend of 2 and 3 October. The Committee was asked if they were content to approve those dates, Officers would authorise the application when received, subject to the

usual checks being satisfactorily completed together with any measures that were necessary at that time due to Covid-19

RESOLVED that –

Carters Steam Fair be authorised to use the Green when the formal application was received by Officers, subject to the appropriate checks being satisfactorily completed together with any measures that were necessary at that time due to Covid -19

Yoga

The Committee received an update on the yoga sessions running on the Green. Sessions had been running on Thursday mornings, but attendance had been very low. The sessions would continue during July but if the take-up didn't improve the classes would no longer take place.

Zumba

Officers reported that they had received an application to run a Zumba class on the Green. The Committee didn't feel the Green was a suitable open space for this to be held and asked Officers to offer the applicant more suitable open spaces in the Borough.

Community Litter Pick

The Committee was advised that the local community had organised another village wide litter pick on Saturday 15 May which included litter picking on and around the Green. This was again supported by the Council's Green Space team who provided litter pickers and bags. The Council's DSO team took the litter away after the event.

90 SUMMER CANVASS

The Committee was advised that following the resignation of Mr Buchanan as residents' representative, a canvass would be carried out for a replacement during the Summer. Nominations would be considered at Full Council in October. Officers would also carry out another survey of qualifying properties in July/August ready for the next annual canvass in early 2022.

91 VENUE FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Members were advised that due to recent building work at the Jurgen Centre the Centre had not been able to be used. Following on from hosting tonight's meeting, Officers had been liaising with the Cricket Club regarding their willingness/availability to host all future meetings of the Englefield Green Committee, which the Cricket Club have confirmed they were willing to do. Given the Cricket Club's prominent position on the Green and the club's need for valuable funds the Committee was asked to consider the option of all future meetings of the Englefield Green Committee being held at the Cricket Club.

Members fully supported use of the Cricket Club for future meetings of the Englefield Green Committee.

RESOLVED that:

All future meetings of the Englefield Green Committee be held at the Englefield Green Cricket Club

By resolution of the Committee, the press and public were excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following matters 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 5 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

92 VERBAL UPDATE ON DETAILS RELATING TO THE PUBLIC ENQUIRY OUTCOME ON THE CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA EXTENSION

The Committee received a verbal briefing on the Inspector's report for the public enquiry that took place in 2009 on permission under the Commons Act 2006 to extend the Children's Play Area. The decision was to refuse permission, which the Committee noted and discussed the implications in the current circumstances. Following on from the residents feedback it was felt that there would be some support on improving the play equipment within the existing footprint. Mr Bromilow would seek the views of residents in this regard and report back to a future Committee meeting.

93 VERBAL UPDATE ON IMMINENT NEW LAWS ON TRESPASS

The Committee received a verbal update on the imminent new laws in relation to trespass. The law intended to make it a criminal offence to reside on any public or private land in vehicles without permission from the landowner if the persons have, or are likely to cause 'significant damage, disruption or distress'. The change would be brought in as part of a new Criminal Justice Bill to be introduced in Parliament in the current session. Under the new trespass offence, police would be permitted to seize vehicles and arrest any offenders, who would be liable for a fine of up to £2,500, three months in prison, or both.

The Committee was pleased to receive and note the update.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 9.20 pm)