

Runnymede Borough CouncilEnglefield Green CommitteeTuesday, 17 October 2023 at 7.30 pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors T Gates (Chair), A King (Deputy Chair), A Berardi, E Kettle, N Prescott and N Bromilow.

Members of the Committee absent: Councillors R McGregor-Johnson.

19 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th June 2023 were agreed

20 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr McGregor-Johnson.

21 Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest received.

22 Proposed Maintenance Plan and Maintenance Updates

The Committee was updated on issues relating to ditches, nettles, maintenance schedules for the grassed area and the Section 27.4 (d) request for a costed management plan for the Green.

Officers advised the Committee that in September the meadow and wildflowers on the ditch were trimmed as part of the scheduled annual meadow cut. The nettles were also cut as part of this operation. The in-house team had no capacity to rake and collect the arisings. The Committee was, therefore, asked to approve the use of volunteers to rake meadow hay arisings.

Officers reported that the Cricket Club maintained the Cricket Square to their own schedule. In the last week of September, the Cricket Club had soiled and reseeded the Cricket Square. The Cricket Club had been reminded that the use of ropes and road pins was not permitted to protect the emerging growth. Open Space Officers would consider instructing legal Officers to write a letter if these had not been removed. The Runnymede Grounds Maintenance team cut the outfield weekly and the wider amenity grass approximately every 3 weeks. Some members of the Committee expressed their dissatisfaction with a 3 weekly rota particularly when there was more rapid growth. Officers advised the Committee that all Green Spaces in the Borough had the same cutting schedule and a bespoke service for the Green wasn't possible from normal grounds maintenance funds. If the Committee wished to consider more frequent cuts in the next cutting season, these would need to be funded from the Englefield Green earmarked reserves.

The Committee notified Officers that the grassed area adjacent to the play area and the grassed triangle had not been cut during the Summer. Officers would seek clarification on whether those areas were the responsibility of Surrey County Council or Runnymede Borough Council.

The Committee was asked to approve the use of contractors to complete the overseeding in Autumn 2023/Spring 2024 at a cost of no greater than £2000 from the Englefield Green's earmarked reserves. Adding weed killer or fertiliser was not recommended and would not fall in line with the Council's sustainable planting policy.

Officers reported that in accordance with the approved Woodland Management Plan, works to remove holly, laurel and Rhododendron ponticum from the west woodland would continue. The cost of these works would not exceed £4000 and would be taken from the Englefield Green earmarked reserves.

The Committee was advised that Officers planned to produce Borough-wide Green Spaces Management Plans and one would be written specifically for Englefield Green. The Plans would be written over the next 2/3 years with the Englefield Green Management Plan due to be drafted during 2023/24. A draft of the plan, when available would come to a future Committee.

The Committee was advised that Officers would need to obtain costings for any leaf blowing, top soiling and reseeding from the Englefield Green earmarked reserves. An informed decision could only be made when costings had been received. As this was urgent Officers would obtain costings and prepare a Standing Order 42 to enable the works to be carried out as soon as possible.

Resolved that:

Volunteers to rake meadow hay arisings to encourage wildflowers and discourage nettle and grass growth.

Contractors complete overseeding in Autumn 2023/Spring 2024 at a cost no greater than £2000 from Englefield Green's earmarked reserves.

23 **Site furniture on Englefield Green**

The Committee received audit information regarding existing site furniture including benches, posts and bollards, bridges and signage. Members also received an update on the proposed bench replacement. Most posts and bollards were in relatively good condition. Officers would prepare a cost proposal to replace those in poor condition for the next Committee meeting.

Officers advised the Committee that there were 14 wooden benches situated around the Green, with a further two metal benches in the children's play area. All the benches currently had a Green RAG (risk) rating. However, the benches would be monitored as part of the on-going management plan.

Following on from communication to local residents regarding the opportunity to donate a memory bench, Officers received 4 responses. The first person on the list was contacted but despite several follow up emails no reply was received.

Officers contacted the second person on the list and the donation of a memory bench had been progressed. The bench would be installed by the end of November on the Barley Mow plinth. Additionally, two other families were looking to arrange memory benches on the Green.

The matrix paving had not yet been installed. This would be included at the foot of the previously identified benches during the scheduled renovations where no other concrete

base exists.

All the bridges were structurally sound, these would also be added to the long-term management programme and continually monitored.

The Committee was advised that Runnymede Borough Council's Communications team was currently leading on a project to improve branding and refresh signage in green spaces across the whole borough. Officers reassured the Committee that different signage would be used to areas with different characteristics and on Englefield Green this would incorporate existing messaging and messaging previously approved by the Committee. Officers would bring an update on the new signage proposals to the next Committee meeting in January.

Resolved that:

Site furniture should be added to the Englefield Green's long-term management programme.

The installation of two memory benches as detailed in the report be approved.

24 **Events on Englefield Green**

Guyatts Funfair

The cancellation of the funfair due to take place on 21st September was noted.

My Time, My Fitness

The Committee was advised that Officers had received an application from My Time, My Fitness. The application requested use of the Green weekly on Saturdays from 9am – 10am for a bootcamp. The personal trainer hoped to recruit 10 participants initially, rising over time to 20 or 30 participants. The event holder had demonstrated adequate Public Liability and Professional Indemnity Insurance. The Committee was supportive of the application.

Beach's Funfair

The Committee was asked to consider allowing Beach's Funfair to operate on the Green. Mr Beach had advised Officers the funfair was run professionally and would like to demonstrate their new high standards.

Members recalled the problems in the past relating to Beach's Funfair using the Green but appreciated the community benefit of having a Funfair on the Green. The Committee, therefore, sought further reassurance from Mr Beach that previous issues would not be repeated. Officers were, therefore, asked to obtain references pertaining to Beach's Funfair prior to Mr Beach completing the Runnymede Borough Council application process. The option of an informal meeting with Members and Mr Beach to obtain more information etc. was also discussed.

Resolved that:

Information relating to Guyatts Funfair be noted.

The application from My Time, My Fitness be approved.

Officers to obtain more information in relation to James Beach's Funfair

25 Adopted Bin Policy and Fox-proof bins

The Committee was advised that the new Borough-wide Litter and Dog Waste Bin Policy had been adopted at the September Environment and Sustainability Committee.

Signs had been added to bins to indicate that they could be used for both litter and dog waste. The signs also included a QR code for reporting purposes. These signs were temporary whilst a more permanent solution as to how they are attached was sought.

Officers would look to retain rural style bins on Englefield Green should any need to be replaced in the future.

With reference to fox proofing bins, Officers had received no details of fox proof bins from the Committee.

26 Exclusion of Press and Public

There were no Part II items

27 Exempt information

There were no exempt items

(The meeting ended at 9.08 pm.)

Chairman