

Runnymede Borough Council

Englefield Green Committee

Tuesday, 27 June 2023 at 7.30 pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors T Gates (Chairman), A King (Vice-Chair), A Berardi, E Kettle, N Prescott

Residents' Representatives: N Bromilow and R McGregor-Johnson.

1 Election of Chairman

Resolved that:

Councillor T Gates be elected Chairman for the municipal year 2023/24

2 Election of Vice-Chairman

Resolved that:

Councillor A King be elected Vice-Chairman for the municipal year 2023/24

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st February 2023 be agreed with the following amendment:

The first sentence in the last paragraph of item 524 be amended to:

The Committee voted in favour (with 1 vote against) moving the meetings to a more suitable venue.

Mr Bromilow requested that his vote in favour of the amendment to the minutes be noted in the minutes of the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 39.3

4 Apologies for absence

No apologies for absence received.

5 Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest received.

6 Update on expenditures and interest paid since the disbursement of the Englefield Green Fund to Runnymede Borough Council

The Committee received a comprehensive list of all expenditure and interest paid since the disbursement of the Englefield Green Fund to Runnymede Borough Council, along with the remaining ear-marked funds available to the Committee.

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

The £275,000 was placed in an earmarked reserve and interest was added each year.

The balance of the fund as of 31 March 2023 was £227,845.

7 **Replacement Bench**

The Committee was advised that a bench had been removed as it was unrepairable. It could be replaced with the Council's selected Cavendish bench at a unit cost of £900, additional costs including matrix paver, delivery and installation which gave a total cost of £1,290. This cost would be taken from the Englefield Green earmarked reserves.

There were currently no applications to erect a memory bench on Englefield Green. Memory benches had space for an inscribed plaque.

Officers advised the Committee that requests for memory benches were infrequent and when requested applicants normally wanted a specific place and location.

The Committee was keen to see if there was a benefactor who would be interested in purchasing a memory bench on the Green, prior to replacing it with a standard bench.

Officers were therefore asked to seek and agree arrangements with an applicant, but agreed, that if no application came forward within three months Officers be given authority to purchase and install a Cavendish bench.

Resolved that:

Delegated authority be given to the Corporate Head of Environmental Services to seek and agree arrangements with an applicant for the installation of a memory bench on Englefield Green; and

Should an application not be received within three months, the Committee agreed to the replacement of the broken bench on the Green for a sum of £1,290, with the cost to be met from Englefield Green earmarked reserves.

8 **Grounds Maintenance**

Members received an update on progress made with the implementation of new grounds maintenance procedures on the Green.

Officers advised the Committee that there had been a number of delays due to various factors throughout the Spring.

Considerable strides had been taken since with the operation of the ground's maintenance service. A new tractor would be delivered shortly and would be fitted with wide rotary and cylinder cutting decks. In addition, a new wide angled mower had now been delivered, and had already been used on the Green to give a better finish.

Officers were advised that there were extensive areas of nettles around the ditch area. Officers would arrange to meet with members of the Committee to discuss the correct approach to dealing with this. The use of herbicides was not the preferred option.

It was noted that on Saturday 24th June Englefield Green had held their village fair. Officers were advised that members of the public had reported to Councillors that they felt the Green was looking very good.

Officers would send out maintenance schedules for the Green to the Committee for their information.

9 **Feedback on the BBC filming**

The Committee was advised that on 4th April the BBC had conducted a filming session for the series 'Silent Witness' around the cricket club pavilion. The session was carried out in accordance with the Council's procedures for the holding of an event on public land.

A fee of £2,000 was charged for the granting of filming rights, and as the BBC were unable to make donations, Runnymede Borough Council charged an additional fee of £500 which was forwarded as a donation to the Englefield Green Cricket Club.

It was believed the Cricket Club was looking to use the donation to purchase equipment for the Colts section of the Club.

10 **Events on the Green**

The Committee was asked to consider an application received to hold a one-day event on the Green on the evening of 21st September 2023.

The funfair would be fairly small in size, and would consist of a slide, an inflatable football game, a train ride, juvenile jets, and a fun castle. A candy floss stall and hot dog stall would also be in attendance. Set up was proposed to start at 8am on Tuesday 19th September.

It was anticipated that two hundred people would attend. Toilet facilities would be provided in the form of three mobile units.

Given the nature of the rides and the duration of the event, Members were supportive of the application.

Resolved that:

Officers to approve application from Guyatt's Funfair to hold a one-day event on the Green on the evening of Thursday 21 September 2023.

11 **Bin Strategy**

The Committee was advised that at a recent Environment and Sustainability Committee it was resolved that a public consultation for the proposed new litter bin strategy should be undertaken. The consultation had now closed, and Officers were currently going through the responses.

It was noted that all new bins across the Borough would be lidded. The bins currently on the Green were all lidded but the Committee highlighted their continuing concerns with regards to foxes getting into bins and spreading litter over the Green.

The option of 'fox proof' bins was discussed, and the Committee was asked to forward any options they were aware of to Officers for consideration. All bins would need to comply with the draft bin policy.

In the interim, the Committee asked Officers to review the bin collection day from Wednesday to Monday. It was considered this would help to alleviate some of the litter problems as the Green was used more over the weekend period.

In addition, the Committee had previously been advised that Officers would look at signage designs for the litter bins to educate the public on how to use the bins and to encourage large groups to take their rubbish home with them. Officers were, therefore asked to now expedite this following the resolution last year.

A report on the approved bin strategy would be brought to the next Englefield Green Committee on 17th October 2023 following approval by the Environment and Sustainability Committee in September.

12 Coir Matting

The Committee was advised that the potential use of coir matting under benches was not a sustainable material and therefore Members were asked to consider the use of matrix paving as a suitable alternative.

Matrix paving was a strong, interlocking, cellular, porous, plastic, paving system. It was used for grass reinforcement and ground stabilisation for regular trafficked pedestrian and vehicle areas. Therefore, Officers considered this would be suitable under the benches on the Green.

Members were supportive of this approach which would be placed under the two current benches on the Green.

Resolved that:

The purchase and installation of 4 square metres of matrix paving be approved at a total cost of £580. The matrix paving being placed under two benches with the cost being met from Englefield Green earmarked reserves.

13 Wildflower Planting

The Committee was advised that wildflower planting agreed at the February Committee had commenced in early May.

With the help of 10 volunteers the initial planting took place along the raised grass bank adjacent to St Jude's Road. This was followed by a second planting, where twenty students helped. On this occasion a tool was used that carved out 25cm holes and mixed up the soil, this gave the wildflowers more space to grow. No strimming of the bank would be carried out this season to ensure it established.

A 3rd set of planning was scheduled to take place on Sunday 2nd July.

A lot of community had been involved with the events which would improve the biodiversity of the Green.

On 29th July, at The Hub, in Englefield Green a community wildflower and seed sharing event was taking place.

14 **Woodland Management Plan**

The Committee was updated on the works which had been completed in accordance with the Woodland Management Plan.

The works had been managed by the Council's Tree Officer, Matthew Godfrey.

Works undertaken had included removing holly and laurel 2-3 metres each side of the public footpath 19. This had opened up the area and allowed more light onto the woodland floor. A glade was also opened up to the north of the footpath by removal of more holly and laurel. This was the first tranche of work prescribed in the Woodland Management Plan. It was intended that work would continue in Winter 2024.

Members of the Committee reported that they had received positive comments from residents. It was a great improvement and encouraged light and biodiversity.

15 **Additional Meetings of the Englefield Green Committee**

The Committee was advised that at its last meeting in February an additional meeting of the Englefield Green Committee was discussed. Members felt that the current time lapse between meetings made it difficult for maintenance issues to be agreed in a timely manner.

The Englefield Green Committee had historically met 3 times a year in February, June and either late October or early November.

If the frequency were to increase Officers proposed to reschedule all meetings evenly throughout the municipal year and would aim to follow the pattern of June-October-January-April. Officers would review the Council calendar and consult with Members on proposed dates.

The Committee had also previously expressed an interest in meeting informally with Surrey County Council (SCC) Officers to discuss highway matters and were asked if they wished Officers to try and facilitate this. Members felt that meeting with SCC could form part of the new proposed Englefield Green Member Working Party, which would be held in the Englefield Green locality.

Resolved that:

The number of meetings of the Englefield Green Committee be increased to four.

16 **New Qualifying Property**

The Committee was advised that after consultation with the Crown Estate an additional property, The Coach House, had been added to the qualifying properties list.

The Crown Estate advised Officers that following their assessment of the location of The Coach House, whilst the view of the Green was limited, it was adjoining the eastern most point. The Crown Estate therefore approved adding the property to the list. However,

they noted that this property appeared to be the most easterly property in the vicinity that would be considered a qualifying property, certainly at this time.

17 **Exclusion of Press and Public**

There were no part II items.

18 **Exempt information**

There were no exempt items.

(The meeting ended at 9.00 pm.)

Chairman