

Runnymede Borough Council

Community Services Committee

Thursday, 21 September 2023 at 7.30 pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors C Howorth (Chairman), S Lewis (Vice-Chairman), M Darby, T Gates (In place of A Berardi), M Harnden, A King, J Mavi, M Smith and S Walsh.

Members of the Committee absent: Councillor C Mann.

In attendance: Councillors A Balkan and R King.

**19 Notification of Changes to Committee Membership**

To record that Councillor T Gates substituted for Councillor A Berardi.

**20 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2023 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**21 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor C Mann.

**22 Declarations of Interest**

To record the Other Registrable Interest of Councillor A King in the item concerning the lease of Larchwood Drive, as she was a member of the organisation leasing the building and a volunteer at the Hub. Councillor King left the chamber for this item and did not participate or vote.

**23 Safer Runnymede Annual Report**

The Committee noted the annual report for the CCTV side of Safer Runnymede for 2022.

Officers reported another successful year for CCTV; highlighting its policy objectives and compliance with the National Strategy for Public Space CCTV and their accreditation with the Surveillance Camera Commissioner Code of Practice.

The Committee noted that 6,070 incidents had been recorded across Runnymede and Spelthorne compared with 784 recorded when Safer Runnymede had been operating for its first full year in 1998. In addition 255 videos had been uploaded at the request of Surrey Police to their forensic video evidence portal NICE. The Police had complemented Safer Runnymede for their assistance during the year, demonstrating service excellence and professionalism.

Members reviewed statistics relating to the categories of incidents recorded; the most reports relating to Violence Against The Person and anti-social behaviour.

Officers were asked to consider indirectly advertising the option for members of the public to contact CCTV directly for evidence with regard to accidents. This was in the context of providing evidence to assist people with making insurance claims. Officers were always

happy to assist where they could with the caveat that a charge was made for providing footage and not all incidents could be captured.

Officers were thanked for their report and Safer Runnymede's valued service to the Borough.

## 24 Halls Fees and Charges

The Committee's approval was sought to continue the discounted Halls fees and charges previously approved ahead of the 2023/24 financial year. These had been applied during the recovery from Covid period in order to boost the number of hires of the Council owned Hythe Centre and Chertsey Hall.

Members recalled that a review of the Halls took place in 2019 prior to their move from Community Development to Community Services. At the time Officers involved with the project had agreed to introduce two charging structures, one for 'Individual and Community' and the other for 'Commercial'.

An opportunity to properly test the new structures had been suspended whilst both centres were shut during lockdown and then used as Covid Vaccination Centres, before re-opening in September 2022 and March 2023.

Officers had introduced a 'welcome back' 30% discount to the 'commercial' charge in response to feedback that some regular users classed as 'commercial' could no longer afford to hire the halls. Often these were small organisations or a single person business but because the commercial rate was applied to any service or activity that sought to make a profit, regardless of size and scale of the business, or the nature of the services provided it proved too difficult for them to carry on at one of the Council's venues.

In order to address this issue Officers proposed to provide a mid range charge for commercial use where the hirer provided a community benefit. The Committee was fully supportive of this in order to preserve the existing regular hires, as well as hopefully attract additional hirers.

Members noted the minor financial implications of approving the proposals but agreed the potential benefits to the community outweighed the loss of approximately £9,000 income, and possibly more if the hirers did not return.

In the long term, Officers would consider a review of how Community Halls should be delivered which Members were supportive of so that the Council's assets were used in the best way and taking on board feedback from hall users.

Officers in Community Services agreed to gather statistics on use of halls by hirers by category; 'individual and community' and 'commercial'.

### **Resolved that –**

**The continuation of the discounted hire charges for 2023/2024 be approved.**

## 25 Contain Outbreak Management Fund

The Committee received an update on how the Council was applying the funding from central government for local organisations to assist with their recovery from the Covid pandemic.

Members recalled that the Council had originally received a total of £907,650 in Contain Outbreak Management Funding (COMF) in 2021-2023. Members were advised that

£213,829 was left and must be spent by 31 March 2024, to avoid it being reclaimed by central government.

Members approved the table of proposed projects and recipients, noting an email received from the Director of Public Health at Surrey County Council, confirming that £165,000 could be applied to the Play Area Replacement Programme. The caveat being that the funding could only be used in areas of relative deprivation in the borough.

The other recipients were the Runnymede Foodbank (£20,000), Citizens Advice Runnymede and Spelthorne (£20,000), and Chertsey Hall (£10,000). Officers reported that as a result of Chertsey Hall being used as a vaccination centre, repairs were needed to the main hall floor, so it would be appropriate to use funding in this way. The proposed use of funds for all the projects met the criteria and guidance issued on how COMF monies could be applied.

It was noted that all the projects also met the Council's Corporate priorities of Empowering Communities and Health and Wellbeing.

Members were content to support all the projects. Officers advised that there was a slight shortfall of £1,174, for which approval would be sought from Corporate Management Committee to meet from the existing Communities First budget held in Community Services.

Officers were asked to record thanks in the Minutes to the Director of Public Health at Surrey County Council for consent to utilise funds for the play area replacement programme in areas of relative deprivation.

#### **Recommend that Corporate Management Committee –**

- i) approves the proposed expenditure plans for the remaining COMF funding held by the Council, in 2023- 2024; and**
- ii) approves the use of existing Communities First budgets to fund the balance of £1,174**

#### **26 Play Area Programme 2023/2024**

The Committee was updated on the Play Area Programme and how that might be delivered.

Members were advised that the Council currently maintained 43 play areas across the borough, within Green Spaces and Housing areas. A full survey had been undertaken to identify where key repairs and/or replacement of individual items of equipment were needed and then to develop a longer term plan for replacement in consultation with local Ward Councillors.

The Committee was presented with a Repairs Budget Expenditure Plan to cover 20 play areas. Officers reported that surfacing repairs had almost been completed and several other minor repairs not included in the report. This totalled £195,000.

Members also received a pre and post consultation list ranking all 43 sites which identified 9 sites in urgent need of attention, 4 of which were in the Egham area, a further 16 classed as amber and the remaining 18 low priority. This totalled £799,000 to be drawn (subject to approval) from 10 identified areas including Section 106 monies, the Housing Business Unit, Runnymede Pleasure Grounds Trust and Community Services budgets.

Officers advised there was a shortfall of £2,000 which would be covered by the

Contingency budget within the Youth Development Fund. It would also be necessary to carry forward some funding into 2024/2025 as not all the works could be carried out in 2023/2024.

Ref	Budget	Amount	Type of Funding
1	S106 Chertsey Recreation Ground	£80,000	Developer Contributions
2	S106 Englefield Green	£80,000	Developer Contributions
3	S106 – relating to Magna Square	£43,000	Developer Contributions
4	Capital Replacement Programme 23-24	£100,000	Budget Provision
5	Youth Development Fund 23-24	£60,000	Budget Provision
6	Housing Contribution – Garfield Rd	£69,000	Budget Provision
7	Housing Estates Programme	£45,000	Budget Provision
8	Runnymede Pleasure Grounds Trust	£110,000	Future Trust Balance
9	Contain Outbreak Management Fund	£165,000	See COMF reference elsewhere on this agenda
10	Youth Development Budget 24-25	£47,000	Provisional Budget
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£799,000</b>	

Play Area	Ward	Estimated Cost	Replacement Year	Funding Ref (see above table)
Beomonds	Chertsey St Ann's	£45,000	23/24	7
Chertsey Recreation Ground	Chertsey Riverside	£80,000	23/24	1
Surrey Towers	Addlestone South	£69,000	23/24	6
Pooley Green (young children)	Egham Hythe	£80,000	23/24	9
Hamm Moor	Addlestone South	£50,000	23/24	9, 5
King George V	Virginia Water	£60,000	23/24	5, 10
Manorcrofts	Egham Town	£100,000	23/24	4
Hythe Park	Egham Hythe	£80,000	23/24	9
Runnymede Pleasure Grounds	Egham Town	£150,000	TBC	8, 3
Englefield Green	Englefield Green West	£80,000	TBC	2
	Total:	£794,000		

An Equalities Screening Assessment had been completed since drafting the report which identified positive implications for the protected characteristic of age and that accessibility would be an important part of the process.

The Committee agreed that it was an ambitious programme but one which they supported in order to improve facilities for young people in the borough.

Officers were thanked for their inclusive approach and for taking into account Councillors' views so readily which had made the consultation with them positive and productive.

It was noted that because the capital estimate was above £250,000, Corporate Management Committee would need to recommend approval by full Council on 19 October of recommendation vi) below.

Officers in Community Services were asked to amend the reference to Warwick Avenue to

clarify it was in Thorpe Ward.

Also regarding Thorpe Officers were asked to discuss the feasibility of re-locating the play area at Frank Muir Memorial Field owing to its current location frequently flooding making the play area unusable.

Officers were also asked to submit a report on the play area at Englefield Green to a future meeting of the Englefield Green Committee in consultation with Officers in Legal owing to the unique status of its location.

**Recommend to Corporate Management Committee that –**

- i) the proposed health and safety works and play area replacement plan, be approved;**
- ii) a capital estimate in the sum of £229,000, be approved for the replacement plan for Surrey Towers, Pooley Green and Hythe Park as set out in table 3 of the report to be funded from the resources set out in table 2, subject to any additional approvals required;**
- iii) in approving recommendation ii) above, also agree to release the £100,000 for Play area replacement programme provisions in the capital programme for 2023/24;**
- iv) an allocation of £47,000 from the 2024/2025 youth development revenue budget for the play area replacement, be approved;**
- v) the virement of the revenue budgets earmarked for the replacement of play equipment to fund the capital expenditure, be approved, noting that this will show in future revenue reports as contributions to capital expenditure on the summary page of the budget; and**

**Corporate Management Committee be asked to Recommend to Council that -**

- vi) a capital estimate in the sum of £565,000, be approved for the replacement plan for the remaining locations set out in table 3 of the report to be funded from the resources set out in table 2, subject to any additional approvals required**

**Resolved that –**

- vi) the release of £30,000 provision set aside in the General Fund Revenue Budget and Business Plan for this purpose to be added to the 2024/2025 and future years' budgets; and**
- vii) the business case for ongoing maintenance of play areas to the improved standards**

**27 Water Play Facilities in Runnymede**

The Committee noted progress with the review of Water Play facilities in the borough.

Members recalled that two new roles had been recruited to within the Open Space Development Team to take forward some of the priorities previously reported to the Committee.

One of these was the paddling pool facilities in the borough and the potential for future

water play facilities in Runnymede. Members had previously expressed disappointment that the paddling pools at Chertsey Recreation Ground, Heathervale Park and Victory Park had remained closed since the pandemic, for both practical and financial reasons. However, work undertaken by Community Services at Runnymede Pleasure Grounds (RPG), enabled this facility to be reopened for the summer of 2023, as a short term solution, with the work funded by the Runnymede Pleasure Grounds Trust budget.

It was confirmed that following approval of a capital budget of £500,000 for the replacement of facilities (excluding RPG), Officers were working to establish the options for Members to consider, albeit in the context of the Council's current financial position. Officers confirmed that the actual location of water play facilities would remain the same but that all options would be considered if the budget was not sufficient to deliver three new facilities.

The Committee was advised that work had already begun to appoint a consultant to provide support to the Open Spaces Development team, in working out the future requirements, costs and options around provision at each of the four sites in the borough (including RPG). This would be paid for by way of a virement from existing community services budgets. Officers hoped it would cost less than the budgeted sum.

Members noted that the consultant would be asked to consider a number of factors, including the feasibility of splash pads, infrastructure requirements, site location, environmental impact, maintenance, operational delivery and health and safety.

An Equalities Screening Assessment had been completed since drafting the report which identified positive implications for the protected characteristic of age and that accessibility would be an important part of the process.

Officers in Community Services would expedite the necessary work in order to submit a report to a future meeting of the Committee on longer term provision options and costings with the opportunity for a prior, informal discussion with Members of the Committee.

## 28 **Period Poverty - Motion from Council 20 July 2023**

The Committee was tasked with considering a motion from Council on 20 July 2023 concerning period poverty.

The Committee was advised that since the motion had been referred to Community Services, Officers had undertaken research into how the Council could deliver a service to provide period products in all of the Council's publicly accessible toilets and buildings to make a contribution towards ending period poverty.

Members noted available statistics on period poverty, exacerbated by the cost of living crisis and the rise in its occurrence. The Committee noted how it had been responded to, including government funding for a scheme to provide access to period products within education settings for girls and women up to age of 19 who could not afford to buy them and/or some other circumstances as outlined in the report.

Surrey County Council had also launched the 'period dignity' campaign, working with the charity Binti International and encouraged local authorities in Surrey to participate. To this end Officers in Community Services and Housing had identified funding of £24,000 from three budgets and sought to deliver the project in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Community Services Committee and the original proposer of the motion to Council. Councillor A King was thanked for bringing the motion forward for consideration, who in turn thanked Officers for their work and approved the idea of including leisure facilities in the project.

**Recommend to Corporate Management Committee that –**

- i) **a combined budget of £24,000 over three years, be approved; and**
- ii) **the delegation of authority for agreeing the delivery of this project to the Corporate Head of Community Services, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Community Services Committee, and the original Councillor (Councillor A King), proposer of the motion to Council, be approved**

## 29 **Service Plan Progress Report**

The Committee was advised of progress with the Community Services Service Plan which was approved by the Committee in January 2023 for the current financial year.

Members were advised that overall, the business unit showed a position where progress had been made against many of the 36 objectives set, with only a limited number that had not yet commenced.

Officers extended thanks to his team for their hard work and commitment in moving forward the objectives set, whilst also managing the business as usual work which it was acknowledged was sizeable in quantity and the time commitment devoted to it, and which would always have to be prioritised given the nature of the services and the residents supported. These sentiments were echoed by the Committee.

The Committee noted that a number of additional new objectives had been set, for example delivery of the period poverty project.

Members agreed that Community Services continued to push to do more and provide more and better to residents and communities.

## 30 **Key Performance Indicators Quarter 1 2023/2024**

The Committee received for information the Quarter 1 results for the Key Performance Indicators attached to Community Services, which were approved in March 2023, for the current financial year.

Officers sought to provide members with a holistic understanding of performance, progress and breadth of activity across Community Services, as illustrated by there being 46 different indicators.

Officers highlighted some key KPI information provided within the report, notably the high performance of Chertsey Museum, Social Prescribing, Homesafe and the Home Improvement Agency. It was noted that despite showing some room for improvement (rated amber in places) Community Alarms and Meals at Home had continued to deliver high volume and quality of service to vulnerable residents.

Officers were thanked for their efforts across Community Services.

## 31 **Community Services Appointments 2023**

The Committee was asked to make two appointments to Community Services related bodies.

There was some discussion about political balance and to this end a motion was proposed and seconded that Councillor A King be nominated as a core member of the Community Services Partnership Board. This motion was defeated.

However, a further motion was passed that Councillor King be appointed as the reserve Member for the Board.

**Resolved that –**

- i) **Councillors C Howorth, S Lewis, and S Walsh, with Councillor A King in reserve, be appointed to the Community Services Partnership Board for the remainder of this Municipal Year, 2023/2024; and**
- ii) **Councillor C Howorth be appointed to Chair the Place Based, Health and Wellbeing Partnership for the period 2023 – 2027.**

32 **Cabrera Trust Management Committee Minutes**

The Minutes of the meetings of the Cabrera Trust Management Committee were received and noted, as attached at Appendix 'A.'

33 **Exclusion of Press and Public**

**By resolution of the Committee, for the reasons set out in the agenda, the press and public were excluded from the remainder of the meeting during the consideration of the remaining 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 as set out in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.**

34 **Larchwood Drive**

The Committee was asked to approve the letting of a premises to a local organisation in Englefield Green.

The Committee was advised of the current usage of the premises by the Forest Estate Community Hub, delivered by the Journey Church, part of the River Church, who were working towards being a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) registered with the Charity Commission.

Members noted the historical use of the premises, reviewed the current and proposed lease terms and were advised of issues relating to the condition of the premises and future management arrangements when a new CIO would be formed to take the project forward.

Officers were satisfied that the proposed lease arrangements to regularise the occupancy of the premises and which it was agreed represented the best consideration reasonably obtainable.

On the basis of the information available and taking into account the financial and legal considerations, the Committee was content to recommend approval by Corporate Management Committee on the terms set out in the report, noting that if necessary, a further report would be submitted to Members regarding any future lease arrangements which might come forward.

Officers in Communications were asked to consider how assistance might be given to the Hub with publicity, Officers in Community Services with making funding applications and Officers in Assets and Regeneration with practical matters related to future maintenance of the building infrastructure.

**Recommend to Corporate Management Committee that -**

- i) **the premises in Larchwood Drive is leased to the organisation named in the**



**report for a term of 10 years on the Terms set out in the agenda report; and**

- ii) **in the event that a Development Charitable Incorporated Organisation is successfully formed, an Agreement for Lease is entered into with the CIO with delegation to the Chief Executive in consultation with Corporate Head of Law and Governance and Corporate Head of Assets and Regeneration in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Community Services Committee to finalise the terms of the Agreement for Lease**

### 35 **Virginia Water Football Club**

The Committee was asked to approve a lease of part of the King George Playing Field in Virginia Water to Virginia Water Football Club.

The Committee was advised that Virginia Water Football Club had been based in Crown Road for many years and now sought to renew the lease, undertake repairs to the pavilion and expand the club. It was intended for the car park to be included in the demise in line with other similar sports clubs.

Members were advised that a recent planning application had been submitted for a telecommunications mast on site, the terms of which were to be determined. To facilitate this delegated authority was sought as set out in the report.

The Committee was content with the proposed terms, subject to approval by Fields in Trust and other statutory consent and represented the best consideration reasonably obtainable. It was noted that the proposed lease contained a break clause to protect the interests of the Council as guardian of a community asset and the club. The Committee noted the financial and legal implications and the terms allowed the club time to make the planned improvements on site.

Some Members of the Committee had visited the site and were satisfied that the Club was meeting community needs in order to qualify for grant aid in the sum reported.

**Recommend to Corporate Management Committee that –**

**the recommendations as set out in the agenda report be approved.**

### 36 **Runnymede Pleasure Grounds Forward Plan of Works**

The Committee's approval was sought for a series of improvements to facilities at Runnymede Pleasure Grounds to be funded from the RPG Trust budget.

The Committee was reminded that for this item they were sitting as Trustees for the Pleasure Grounds and acting in the best interests of the Trust.

The Committee was advised that recent work in respect of the Pleasure Grounds included repairs to the paddling pool, the agreement of a new lease with the third party provider operating the Café and improvements to the car parking system and payment arrangements, including free parking for blue badge holders.

The forthcoming works for which approval was sought to be funded by the Trust's reserves included repairs to the toilets and pavilion, immediate play area repairs, and replacement of the play area and paddling pool facilities. Some other non-essential work was to replace the chain link fencing which was not up to modern safety standards.

An Equalities Screening Assessment had been completed since drafting the report which identified positive implications for the protected characteristic of age and that accessibility

would be an important part of the process.

The Committee was also requested to facilitate the introduction of a Park Run at the Pleasure Grounds and to waive the normal event hire charge per occasion. The Park Run Organisers intended to limit the impact on the Pleasure Grounds by rotating routes. The organisers would also need to submit an event request form and other documentation to be scrutinised if necessary by the Council's Safety Advisory Group.

The Committee was keen to promote the Pleasure Grounds as a valued asset attracting visitors from within and outside the borough.

The Committee noted the legal and financial implications, including the charitable status of the Open Space as set out in the conveyancing document of 1928.

**Resolved that -**

- i) **the sum as reported be approved, to be spent on toilet and pavilion repairs, funded by the Runnymede Pleasure Ground Trust budget;**
- ii) **the sum as reported for essential play area health and safety repairs, funded by the Runnymede Pleasure Ground Trust budget;**
- iii) **the inclusion of Runnymede Pleasure Grounds in the wider Council considerations relating to the future of water play in Runnymede, be approved; and**
- iv) **approval for Park Run, be granted, to be held on a weekly basis at Runnymede Pleasure Grounds, and that the event charge is waived for this activity.**

37 **Digital Alarms Refresh**

This item was withdrawn from the agenda as noted on the supplementary agenda.

**Appendix A Cabrera Trust Management Committee Minutes**

(The meeting ended at 9.25 pm.)

Chairman

**Runnymede Borough Council**

**Cabrera Trust Management Committee AGM**

**Thursday 13 July 2023 at 2.30 pm**

Members of the Committee present: Councillor C Howorth (Chairman), P Beasley, M Owen and P Grobien.

Members of the Committee absent: Councillor D Coen, Councillor J Hulley, T Ashby, H Lane, P Thomas

**1. Minutes**

The minutes of the last AGM held on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> July 2022 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**2. Apologies for absence**

Apologies of absence were received from Councillor D Coen, Councillor J Hulley, T Ashby and P Thomas.

**3. Chairman's opening remarks**

Councillor Howorth welcomed members of the public to the 2023 Annual General Meeting of the Cabrera Trust.

The Cabrera Trust was constituted by Deed of Trust, as amended by a scheme made by the Secretary of State for Education and Science, dated 24 March 1972, and was a registered charity. Runnymede Borough Council was the Trustee.

The Trust was responsible for the management of the open space playing area on Cabrera Avenue and approximately 52 acres of land alongside the River Bourne, known as the Riverside Walk. It was also responsible for the administration and use of the Trust funds.

The Trust Deed required that the Riverside Walk was maintained for the exercise, recreation and benefit of the inhabitants of Virginia Water and the neighbourhood, and the open space on Cabrera Avenue was to be used as a public recreation for the benefit of the same area.

The Management Committee had been set up by the Trustee to provide a clear local focus for the management of the Trust land. The Management Committee comprised of the three Virginia Water Councillors, together with two Council Officers, acting in the capacity of Honorary Treasurer and Honorary Secretary. In addition to this, the Committee had four co-opted members: Mr Ashby, Dr Beasley, Mr Grobien and Mrs Lane. The Chairman thanked the co-opted members for all their help and support over the past year.

#### 4. Annual Report

##### Honorary Treasurer's Annual Report

The Honorary Treasurer reported that during the last financial year the Trust had seen its investments fall because of the current financial climate, with funds predicted to last for a maximum of ten years. An Honorary Warden asked where the current rate of expenditure was occurring, and the Honorary Treasurer replied that around £4,000 was spent on tree care alone, although there was not a breakdown for the cost of these works.

The Honorary Treasurer reported on the last financial year for the Trust. It was noted that interest in internal investments had contributed £203 to the Trust's income, giving it a total income of £7,114 when added to the dividends from the Trust's external investments, which was an increase on last year's £6,358. This was seen to be a positive change. It was noted that expenditure had increased from £15,932 in 2021/22 to £20,813 in 2022/23 mainly due to the £3,900 of one-off coppicing works agreed at a previous meeting. It was also noted that the Trust's investments had decreased in value by £7,990. The fund balance as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 was £125,389.

It was agreed that the newly-established Friends of Cabrera Trust Group would therefore be vital in establishing an alternative income stream for the Trust. Discussion then centred around the current financial strategy around the Friends' Group. It was established that the Group had already raised just over £2,000, with £500 coming from the Virginia Water Community Trail. It was clarified that this money was made up of both subscriptions and donations.

The Friends' Group had a current target to raise £5,000 for the current financial year ending March 2024, and it was hoped that if fifty families could be persuaded to donate £100 per annum, then this target would be achieved.

A member of the public stressed the importance of building an income stream through encouraging local businesses to contribute regularly to the Trust's work. Councillor Howorth expressed his support for this and was happy to lobby local businesses for the cause. The Green Spaces Manager also wondered if the Council's Communications department could support in this venture.

The Honorary Treasurer clarified that money raised could be used in any form – as cash or investments - and it was agreed that establishing a scheme of works would make it more desirable for local businesses to invest. The Green Spaces Manager would come up with a scheme of works, stating that there was a plethora of tree work and coppicing to carry out.

A member of the public also stated that it may encourage further public donations if those who donated were invited to the AGM and be given a vote on how the money was spent.

**Action: The Green Spaces Manager to come up with a scheme of works and liaise with the Council's Communications department to see what links could be made with local businesses**

**Action: Councillor Howorth to lobby local businesses to support the Friends Group**

## 5. Annual Inspection of Trust Land

Councillor Howorth apologised for all three councillors being unable to attend the annual inspection.

Officers reported on several actions that had taken place since the annual inspection.

- The graffiti had been cleared
- It was assumed that the mattress and bedding had been cleared as they could no longer be located
- The nettles obscuring a sign had been dealt with on the day by the Tree Officer

It was agreed to discuss the trees in the waterways in the second part of the meeting.

An Honorary Warden wished for it to be minuted that special thanks should be given to Pam Thomas for organising the clearing of the area, and to the Tree Officer for carrying out the work. He noted that a lot of the holly and the Himalayan balsam had now been cleared, and that the remaining holly would be cleared in the near future.

The Green Spaces Manager noted the difficulty in removing items from the water. Whilst the Environment Agency would remove items from the water, it would not remove it from the land. It was down to the Council to arrange for its disposal, either through agreements with other councils, or the depot.

## 6. Discussion Forum

Discussion centred around maintenance of the grass. Councillor Howorth noted that the Council's move from outsourcing the cutting of the grass to completing it in-house had experienced some teething problems in sourcing the correct equipment. However, the Green Spaces Manager now confirmed that the Council now had a WAM (wide angled mower) and that such delays should lessen over time. Councillor Howorth also clarified that Surrey County Council was now responsible for verge cutting, so they should be the first point of contact for such concerns, not Runnymede Borough Council.

There was some debate over whether to continue filling in holes that were believed to be created from placing football goals on the land. Whilst some Members felt that it may be more sustainable to leave the holes, Councillor Howorth reminded members that the Council would be liable if their continued presence resulted in an injury.

Members also considered the playground that is on Trust land. Some Members felt that maintenance of a playground was no longer within the Trust's original intentions or financial capabilities, especially considering its dwindling reserves. It was asked whether it would be possible for the playground to be placed under Council jurisdiction. However, Councillor Howorth reminded the Trust that the Council's Assets and Legal Teams would need to be consulted to clarify the Trust's responsibility towards the playground, and the Honorary Treasurer reminded members that the Council may be unwilling to take on the responsibility of playground maintenance for similar financial reasons. It was agreed that Councillor Howorth would look into the playground's position in relation to the Trust and further discussion around the playground would occur at the next meeting.

**Action: Councillor Howorth to clarify the playground's position with the Council's Legal/ Assets Teams for further discussion next meeting.**

Chairman

Meeting finished at 15:32pm

**Runnymede Borough Council**  
**Cabrera Trust Management Committee**

**Thursday 13 July 2023 at 2.30 pm**

Members of the Committee present: Councillor C Howorth (Chairman), P Beasley, M Owen and P Grobien.

Members of the Committee absent: Councillor D Coen, Councillor J Hulley, T Ashby, H Lane,

**1. Election of Chairman**

Councillor Howorth proposed himself for the Chairman for the Municipal Year 2023/24 which was agreed by the Committee.

**2. Election of Vice-Chairman**

Councillor Howorth proposed Councillor Hulley as Vice-Chairman for the Municipal Year 2023/24 which was agreed by the Committee.

**3. Minutes**

The minutes of the last meeting held on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2023 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**4. Apologies for absence**

Apologies of absence were received from Councillor D Coen, Councillor J Hulley, and T Ashby.

**5. Actions since the last meeting**

The Committee was updated on various actions which had taken place since the last meeting.

- It had been clarified that ownership of the pond was split between the Council and a developer. It was acknowledged that this made dealing with the incursion in the water challenging due to the constantly changing nature of the boundary.

**Action: Councillor Howorth to follow up with Planning Enforcement to see if they had finished their actions around the pond.**

- The Tree Officer stated that it appeared that the incursion had been dealt with and had taken photos to prove this.

- The Green Spaces Manager stated that coppicing works had been successful, with new growth appearing. The total cost of removal was £3,900, and work was completed in February.

### Boundary Inspection

Committee members expressed disappointment that wardens had not been involved in the boundary inspection survey, as they believed it would give them a better understanding of issues in the area.

### **Action: Wardens to be invited to all future boundary inspections.**

The Tree Officer noted that there was one definite and one potential incursion along the northern boundary to do with green matter and that both would be followed up. The Honorary Warden for the northern part of the land asked if he could be involved in this, so that he could inform others when he was asked.

It also appeared that fifteen properties had been depositing green waste along the northern boundary, and The Green Spaces Manager stated that there would be letters going to all properties in the area reminding them of the procedure for the correct disposal of green waste.

The inspection also identified the need to carry out tree works to the north and west boundary, with eighteen issues being identified in total and eleven being on the river. Debate centred around the benefit of carrying out tree works in the short-term offset against the potential financial impact on the Trust's dwindling budget. Councillor Howorth asked what the specific issues with the trees were, and if they could have a potential impact on the health and safety of the reserve. The Tree Officer replied that most issues were on the riverside and beyond the public path, with seven known issues blocking parts of the river. Whilst the river is low, this would not cause any problems. However, there were concerns that this could lead to flooding in the winter. An Honorary Warden asked what the cost of essential tree work would be. It was believed it was around £4,500, but it could be as much as double that depending on the complexity of the issue. There was a reluctance to commit to potentially costly and unnecessary tree work, so it was suggested that the land be surveyed again in the winter, and a report brought back to January's meeting if required. Councillor Howorth wanted to clarify that waiting would not lead to a more expensive problem later which the Tree Officer did not believe it would.

**Therefore, Councillor Howorth proposed and Mrs Owen seconded the following motions:**

- 1. The Committee noted the two boundary incursions which would be investigated further with a view to taking further action as required.**
- 2. The Committee noted that action would be taken to contact properties which have deposited green waste on the northern boundary and removed some small trees in the woodland.**
- 3. The Committee noted that the inspection identified the need to carry out tree works to the northern and western boundary.**
- 4. The Committee voted to delay asking to approve tree works at an estimated £4,000 to £4,500 to be funded from Cabrera Trust reserves until the winter**



period, with a view to bringing a report to the January 2024 meeting if required.

Voting was unanimous and the motion was passed.

**Action: For the land to be surveyed in the winter months and a report compiled for January's meeting if required.**

#### Coppicing Works

The Green Spaces Manager stated that coppicing had been successful, and there was an increase in understorey species including Red Campion and Dog's Mercury. The total removal had cost £3,900 and work was completed in February 2023.

### 6. Financial Statement for Quarter ending 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023

The Honorary Treasurer clarified that the estimated cost of £4,400 for tree works at Riverside Walk mentioned in the report had been confused with a one-off payment when devising the budget, and therefore the gross expenditure was brought down to £18,547, and the net expenditure down to £13,476.

### 7. Any other business

#### Co-opting a member of The Friends of Cabrera Trust onto the Committee

An honorary warden asked that a member of The Friends of Cabrera Trust be co-opted onto the Committee, to enable them to vote in decisions affecting the Group. He requested that this not be a named person or position so that any member of the Group could substitute if required.

**Action: Democratic Services/ Councillor Howorth to look into co-opting a member of The Friends of Cabrera Trust onto the Committee.**

#### Appointment of Honorary Wardens

Honorary Warden Tony Ashby had resigned with immediate effect. It was also believed a second warden may be in ill health and unable to continue their duties, although this had not been confirmed by the warden in question. It was therefore necessary to appoint one warden immediately, and possibly a second in the short-term.

It was questioned if as many as six wardens were necessary, with the Committee feeling that four could be sufficient.

It was agreed to look for one new warden now, and to clarify the status of the second warden. Appointment of a second warden could then happen in the next meeting.

**Action: to appoint an Honorary Warden, and for Councillor Howorth to clarify the status of the second warden for a potential appointment at the meeting in January 2024.**

Councillor Howorth thanked both wardens for their work for the Trust. Councillor Howorth particularly praised the second warden for their extensive knowledge that had proved invaluable over the last twenty years and thanked all members of the Trust for their hard work over the last year.

**8. Dates of future meetings**

The next meeting of the Management Committee would be held on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 2.30pm.

The AGM and Cabrera Trust Management Meeting would be held on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2024 at 2.30pm.

Chairman

Meeting ended at 16:02pm.