

Runnymede Borough Council

ENGLEFIELD GREEN COMMITTEE

28 June 2006 at 7.00 p.m.

Members of the Committee present      Councillors J.E. Haas, Miss M.N. Heath, M.T. Kusneraitis, H.W.V. Meares, P.I. Roberts and N. Thewlis

Residents' Representative: Mrs M.E.J. Bairstow

Member of the Committee absent:      Residents' Representative: Mr A.E. Panter

Councillor J.R. Furey also attended.

106. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

**RESOLVED that -**

**Councillor P.I. Roberts be elected Chairman for the Municipal Year 2006/2007.**

107. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

**RESOLVED that -**

**Councillor M.T. Kusneraitis be elected Vice-Chairman for the Municipal Year 2006/2007.**

108. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23 November 2005 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

109. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mr A.E. Panter.

110. ENGLEFIELD GREEN - OVER 5's PLAY AREA – PETITION

The Committee received a petition signed by 54 children and 160 adults requesting the provision of play facilities for children over the age of 5 years on land adjacent to the existing play area on the Green.

Members noted that the existing play equipment was designed only for use by children of up to 6 or 7 years of age. While there was no budgetary provision for an additional facility it was possible that the capital costs of approximately £35-45,000 could be met from external sources of funding. The Association for the Improvement of Runnymede, a not for profit voluntary organisation dedicated to sourcing funding for environmental projects of all types, principally through the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme, was prepared to approach grant providers for up to 90% of the project costs on the Council's behalf. The County Councillor for Englefield Green, Mrs C.Y. Jones, had indicated that she would contribute the balance, up to £5,000, from her budgetary allocation for local schemes. The Borough Council would, however, be liable for all future maintenance and upkeep costs, which would inevitably impact on the availability of funds for other improvements and maintenance tasks on the Green.

The Committee was, in principle, supportive of the provision of play facilities for children of up to 10/11 years of age. It was felt that such an upper age limit should be applied for the sake of consistency with the byelaws regarding the use of play equipment and to help ensure that the facilities did not attract inappropriate usage by teenagers or adults. There was also a desire, however, to balance the needs of the petitioners with those of other users of the Green and prevent a significant encroachment of hardstanding. To this end Members were of the opinion that any new play equipment should either be incorporated within, or require only a modest extension of, the footprint of the existing play area. In no circumstances should it extend beyond Cricketers Lane onto the main section of the Green. Care would also have to be taken to minimise the visual impact of any new equipment. Officers were therefore instructed to work up a costed proposal for such a facility following discussions with suppliers on an appropriate design and further investigate the availability of external funding. A detailed report on their findings would be presented to the next meeting of the Committee.

**RESOLVED that -**

**the provision of play equipment for children over 5 years of age on the Green be supported in principle, and the Director of Administration and Leisure be authorised to work up a costed proposal for such a facility and investigate the availability of external funding, with a view to the presentation of a detailed report to the next meeting.**

111. ENGLEFIELD GREEN - CRICKET CLUB PRACTICE NETS

The Committee considered a request from the Englefield Green Cricket Club for permission to erect practice nets on the Green. Members noted that the Club felt this would assist in the re-establishment of a Colts section and the promotion of cricket in the village. Outdoor training opportunities were presently severely limited, which greatly hindered the recruitment of players.

The Club had originally suggested the provision of a flat concrete base with matting, and nets which could be erected and dismantled as required, at the top of the Green, close to the woods. While the Committee was supportive of the concept of removable nets in principle, it was noted that the Club appeared to have amended its proposals in discussions prior to the meeting. The Club now wished to see the nets complemented by the installation of an all weather pitch to be located next to the existing square. It was believed that a concrete base would no longer be required. Members therefore agreed that Officers should enter into talks with the Club to properly establish the detail of the new proposals and report their findings back to the Committee. As the Club wished to install the facilities during the current playing season it was noted that it might be necessary to convene a special meeting of the Committee in order to receive the report. The precise timescale for implementation would, however, be dependent on the conclusion of negotiations in respect of the Club's new 28 year Pavilion lease and the progress of its fund raising efforts.

**RESOLVED that -**

**the principle of the Englefield Green Cricket Club erecting removable practice nets on the Green be approved, subject to all necessary consents and consideration of the detailed proposals by this Committee.**

112. ENGLEFIELD GREEN - CRICKET PAVILION IMPROVEMENTS  
(Ref: Minutes of Planning Committee 24 May 2006, page 6, para. 21)

The Committee gave consideration to a request from the Englefield Green Cricket Club for permission to undertake improvements to the Pavilion on the Green.

Members noted that the Club, which had been offered a 28 year lease of the Pavilion, had secured planning consent (RU.06/0326) for the erection of fencing to create a storage area and the construction of a disabled persons ramp and viewing deck to the front and side of the building. The fencing was to be close boarded and approximately 1.8 metres in height. It would be erected in two places, firstly a length of 4m by 2.5m on the south-eastern elevation of the Pavilion enclosing the gap between it and the adjoining toilets. The second area would be created on the north eastern elevation of the Pavilion, the fencing being 2 metres by 4 metres adjoining the proposed ramp and

viewing area. The proposed access ramp was to cover the north-eastern and south-eastern elevations of the Pavilion, projecting approximately 1.2 metres from the south-eastern elevation with a viewing deck projecting approximately 3 metres from the north-eastern elevation. The ramp would be brick built with steel painted rails. The Club had agreed to plant a replacement for an alder tree to the north-east of the Pavilion which would need to be removed in order to accommodate the works.

The Committee was of the view that the proposals would enhance the Pavilion and was, in principle, content for the works to proceed once the new lease was in place. It was noted that draft Heads of Terms for the lease had now been circulated to interested parties for comment. Members agreed, however, that in view of the prominent location of the Pavilion, the choice of external materials should first be approved by the Director of Administration and Leisure, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman. The Committee also expressed the hope that some form of agreement could be reached with the Club in order to extend the period in which the soon to be repaired conveniences adjacent to the Pavilion could be opened for public use.

**RESOLVED that –**

**Englefield Green Cricket Club be granted permission for the improvements to the Sports Pavilion set out in planning application RU.06/0326, subject to the successful conclusion of negotiations with the Club in respect of the Pavilion lease and the approval of external materials by the Director of Administration and Leisure in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee.**

113. ENGLEFIELD GREEN - EVENTS ON THE GREEN

The Committee gave consideration to the public events which had been, or were due to be, held on the Green in 2006 and the renewal of the three year staging agreements with Beach's and Carters Fairs.

Members noted that the Council had received applications for three events on the Green during the course of 2006, namely;

- Beach's Fun Fair 18 – 21 May
- Englefield Green Village Fair – 18 June
- Carters Steam Fair – 1-3 September (setting up on 30 August, departing 5 September)

The decision by Officers to accept the booking for the Village Residents Association's Fair was reaffirmed by the Committee. It was noted with some concern, however, that Beach's use of the Green (approved by the Director of Administration and Leisure in consultation with the Chairman under Standing Order 42), had resulted in damage to the grass. The event had coincided with a spell of heavy rainfall, causing Beach's vehicles to disturb the surface around the access point and across the Green. There had also been problems with the spillage of fuel. It had consequently been necessary to move cricket matches to other venues because of the poor condition of the outfield. The cost of reinstatement of the damaged areas, estimated at £400-500, would be met from the refundable deposit paid by hirers for such activities.

The Committee, seeking to balance the valuable income yielded from the hire fee against the potential damage to the Green, was of the view that the agreement with Beach's should not be renewed until discussions had taken place with the operator in order to establish whether the fair might be held at a different time of year or on other Council owned land in the vicinity. With this in mind, Officers were asked to examine the possibility of differential pricing structures being applied to Council land in order to encourage use of alternative sites and minimise any potential loss of income to the Authority. If Beach's was, nevertheless, to continue to use the Green it would be necessary to identify proposals to minimise damage to the site. It was noted that while it would be possible to relocate the Fair to a drier part of the Green if similar weather conditions prevailed in future years, the need for extended vehicular access routes across the site would in itself be problematic.

The Committee was of the view that Carter's Steam Fair did not present the same difficulties as Beach's as it was held at a time when the ground was firmer. The event was considered to be a significant attraction for local residents and issues previously identified in respect of the number of advertising boards and uncontrolled parking would henceforth be regulated through the conditions of use. Members therefore approved the use of the Green for the forthcoming fair and the subsequent three year period between 2007 and 2009 inclusive.

**RESOLVED that –**

- i) the decision by Officers to permit the use of the Green for the Village Fair on 18 June 2006 be reaffirmed;**
- ii) the use of the Green between 30 August – 5 September 2006 by Carters Steam Fair be approved;**
- iii) the Director of Administration and Leisure be authorised to negotiate and conclude terms with Carter's Steam Fair for the annual use of the Green for funfairs for the period between 2007-2009 inclusive; and**
- iv) the Director of Administration and Leisure be instructed to undertake discussions with Beach's in order to explore the possibility of alternative dates and sites and identify proposals to minimise damage to the Green, and report the outcome to the Committee.**

114. NORTHCROFT ROAD FOOTWAY IMPROVEMENTS

(Ref: Minutes of Englefield Green Committee, February 2005, page 751, para 543)

The Committee received and considered detailed proposals from Surrey County Council for highway improvements at the junction of Northcroft Road and Barley Mow Road.

Agreement had previously been given in principle to the loss of a small strip of grass verge on the traffic island at the junction in order to facilitate the works, subject to the final scheme detail. Members now noted that the County Council intended to construct a new junction on the Crown Estate verge with a footway parallel to the boundary with The Coach House and Englewick. At the same time, the service road parallel to the boundary with The Crown House would be stopped up and the carriageway restored to Crown Estate verge while reinstating the existing vehicular access to Cricketers Lane. Some 238.5m<sup>2</sup> of Crown Land would need to be transferred to the County Council with 278.4m<sup>2</sup> of highway being returned to the Crown Estate. The scheme had already been approved by Surrey County Council's Local Area Committee and received a favourable initial reaction from the Crown. In consenting to the necessary land transfer, the Committee welcomed the proposals which, it was felt, would significantly enhance road safety.

**RESOLVED that –**

**the proposals for improvements to the Northcroft Road/Barley Mow Road junction and associated land transfer be approved as set out in Appendix 'A', subject to the consent of the Crown Estate.**

115. ENGLEFIELD GREEN - MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF THE GREEN

(Ref: Minutes of Englefield Green Committee, November 2005, page 601, para. 386)

The Committee received a report outlining matters of current interest concerning the management and maintenance of the Green.

Members noted that following its review of public convenience provision across the borough, the Leisure and Environment Committee had now agreed to the repair of the public toilets at the pavilion. The cost of £15,000 was to be met by the Council's insurer. However, the facilities, which had been badly damaged by vandals earlier in the year, would henceforth only be opened to the public during the summer months in order to reduce operating costs. Furthermore, it was unlikely that the works would be completed in time for the conveniences to be reopened during the current summer season. Further to the discussions earlier in the meeting, it was suggested that Officers enter into talks with

the cricket club in order to establish whether it might be possible to secure an agreement which would extend the period during which the conveniences, once reinstated, were open for public use.

The Committee was also informed that its request for a reduction in the speed limit on Cricketers Lane to 20mph in the interests of pedestrian safety had now been raised formally with Surrey County Council and was due to be considered shortly. Meanwhile, the 'No commercial vehicles' signs had been relocated from the edge of the Green to the hedge adjacent to the lay-by behind the Green, in an attempt to deter commercial vehicles parking there, and timber posts installed at both ends of the Green to prevent vehicular incursions. The new byelaw signage would be erected upon the approval of the draft byelaws by the Secretary of State.

116. URGENT ACTION - STANDING ORDER 42

Members noted the following action which had been taken after consultation with the Chairman of the Committee under Standing Order 42.

<u>Officer</u>	<u>Action Taken</u>	<u>Central Index No.</u>
Director of Administration and Leisure	Agreement to the holding of Beach's Funfair on the Green between 18 – 21 May 2006.	615

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 8.25 p.m.)