

Runnymede Borough Council

ENGLEFIELD GREEN COMMITTEE

26 November 2003 at 7.00 p.m.

Members of the Committee present : Councillors Miss M.N. Heath, H.W.V. Meares, and N. Thewlis
Residents' Representatives: Mrs. M.E.J. Bairstow and Mr A.E. Panter

Members of the Committee absent: Councillors J.E. Haas, Mrs C.Y. Jones and K.J.T. Walmsley

520. COUNCILLOR A.G. COLLINS

The Committee observed a minutes silence as a mark of respect for Councillor A.G. Collins who had passed away on 18 September at the age of 84. First elected to Runnymede Borough Council at its inception in 1974, Councillor Collins had been Mayor in 1978/9 and had at various times been Chairman of both the Planning and Housing and Community Services Committees. He had been Chairman of the Englefield Green Committee from 1998 to the time of his death.

521. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Following the death of Councillor A.G. Collins it was necessary to appoint a Chairman for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

RESOLVED that -

Councillor H.W.V. Meares be elected Chairman for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2003/2004.

522. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Consequent upon the election of Councillor H.W.V. Meares to the Chair, it was necessary to appoint a Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

RESOLVED that -

Mr A.E. Panter be elected Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2003/2004.

523. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 25 June 2003 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

524. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors J.E. Haas, Mrs C.Y. Jones and K.J.T. Walmsley.

525. FOOTBALL GOALPOSTS

(Ref: Minutes of Englefield Green Committee, October 2002, page 594, para 324)

The Committee gave consideration to the future of the childrens' football goalposts on the Green following a twelve-month trial period.

Members recalled that junior sized goalposts had initially been erected on the Green in order to provide an informal childrens' 'kickabout' area at Easter 2002. There had been wear on the Green and more use by older children than had been intended. Consequently these had subsequently been replaced, on an experimental basis, with two separate and smaller goals, one at the southern

end of the Green for the summer months only, and one at a more discrete location at the northern end, which was to remain in place for a 12 month trial period.

The Committee was of the view that the experiment had been a worthwhile exercise and the objective, to create a positive recreational outlet for children's energies in a safe and secure environment, was laudable. However, the posts did not appear to have been widely used recently by the young children for whom they had been intended. The post at the northern end of the Green had been rarely used while it was felt that the post at the southern end had been utilised by children older than the target group. There had also been occasions when adults had used the posts for organised team games, although this had now ceased following the intervention of the Honorary Wardens. The overall effect, however, had been to discourage usage by young children, who had reverted to more traditional and improvised forms of 'kickabouts'.

Members emphasised that the use of the Green for informal sporting and recreational purposes, particularly by children, was welcomed. As had been proved, however, goalposts were not necessary for informal 'kickabouts'. There was also concern that permanent posts altered the character of the Green, detracting from its open aspect and visual amenity. The presence of the posts was considered to have encouraged people to loiter in the vicinity and to have attracted vandalism. Having regard for representations from residents, both for and against the goalposts, and the views of a representative from the Englefield Green Village Residents Association, the Committee was now of the view that the present experiment should be discontinued. In order to encourage alternative provision for young children in the area, it was agreed that the Leisure and Environment Committee should be asked to consider improvements to facilities at the Kings Lane site. It was noted that the Kings Lane facilities were presently more suitable for older children. Officers had been examining schemes to increase the range of facilities for older children at the site but there would be a need to reconsider in order to provide a suitably secure play environment for children of a younger age.

RESOLVED that –

- i) the experiment with the goal posts on the Green be discontinued; and**
- ii) the Leisure and Environment Committee be asked to consider improvements to the facilities at Kings Lane, with particular emphasis on the needs of young children and the provision of an appropriate, secure environment.**

526. CAR PARKING

(Ref: Minutes of Englefield Green Committee, June 2003, page 239, para 146)

At its previous meeting the Committee had given consideration to the issue of parking on the roads around the Green, particularly at the southern end. Officers had been asked to seek the views of Surrey County Council on the introduction of waiting restrictions on the Green side of the road, opposite the Barley Mow Pub, and to ask them to investigate a traffic management solution to the parking difficulties in this area, specifically around the triangle of grass. Members now noted that the County Council's Local Transportation Service was currently undertaking a review of all waiting restrictions in the Borough in preparation for the introduction of decriminalised parking enforcement. While this review was underway no new waiting restrictions would be introduced, unless there were proven urgent safety reasons for doing so. Although the County Council was not prepared to give further consideration to changes in the road layout, it was currently examining whether it would be possible to introduce a footway at the end of Northcroft Road, where it joined Barley Mow Road.

The Committee noted that a resident had put forward a suggestion that the existing line of wooden anti-parking posts be mirrored along the back of the Green up to a point opposite the Cricket Pavilion in order to deter parking on the verges. There was concern, however, that if vehicles could not park at least partially on the verge it was likely that they would do so on the road itself, thereby blocking access for other motorists and emergency vehicles. The Committee, mindful that no serious damage had been caused to the Green by the parking thus far, therefore agreed that the proposal should not be pursued. The resident was thanked for his interest in the matter.

RESOLVED that –

the proposal for the erection of wooden anti-parking posts be not pursued.

527. SHRUB PLANTING

The Committee considered a suggestion from a resident that shrubs be planted in order to improve the appearance of a small grass verge at the southern end of the Green, on the junction of Barley Mow Road and St. Judes Road. This part of the Green was shaded by a couple of trees which prevented lush grass growth and was sometimes missed by the grass cutting contractors. Litter also collected in the area on a regular basis.

Members noted that it would be possible to plant low growing, shade tolerant shrubs but this would not stop the build up of litter and, in the autumn, leaves. Shrubs would also entail additional maintenance costs and further obscure motorists sightlines, which were already poor at that point. The Committee was, however, of the opinion that the planting of daffodils might be acceptable as an alternative. The Englefield Green Village Residents Association, which had previously proposed that bulbs be planted elsewhere on the Green, was invited to submit representations on the matter.

RESOLVED that –

- i) the proposal to plant shrubs on the grass verge at the southern end of the Green be not pursued; and**
- ii) the Englefield Green Village Residents Association be invited to submit representations in respect of the possibility of planting daffodils on the verge.**

528. MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF THE GREEN

(Ref: Minutes of Englefield Green Committee, June 2003, page 238, para 144)

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

Members expressed continuing reservations regarding proposals by the County Council for the use of a tarmac surface on a new footway along the north side of Coopers Hill Lane. Following concerns outlined at the previous meeting of the Committee, representations had been made to the County Council in favour of a more natural surface, such as hoggin. However, it was now noted that the County Council considered an unbound surface to be unsuitable for people with disabilities. In order to achieve a more sympathetic appearance, the footway would, instead, be set back from the edge of the road, thereby enabling a grass margin to be retained between the two. There would be no kerb along the edge of the road and the existing soft grass edge was to remain in place. The Crown Estate had given its consent to the proposals and contractors had been issued with an instruction for the works. The Committee, nevertheless, remained of the view that the appearance of the path should be softened by an appropriate surface material. The County Council would therefore be asked to consider the use of green asphalt, which could be laid at relatively modest cost on such a small area, chippings or some other surface finish.

Members noted that works to clear the woodland paths, reinstate an overgrown horse route and cut back the roadside verges in Coopers Hill Lane had all now been completed. This was considered to have brought about a considerable improvement in the amenity of the Green. The paths, verges and horse route would continue to be kept clear of encroaching vegetation and there would be regular safety and maintenance inspections of the woodland area. The Committee was also informed that the Englefield Green Village Residents Association had agreed to give more attention to the collection of litter in its planning for the next annual summer fair. Concern had been expressed at the previous meeting regarding the amount of litter that had been left on the Green after the fair in June.

RESOLVED that –

the County Council be requested to use green asphalt, chippings or some other form of softening material for the Coopers Hill Lane footway.

529. HONORARY WARDEN'S REPORT

The Committee received details of the issues and observations reported by Mr. P. Winkworth, the Honorary Warden for the Green. Members noted that the white line solution used by the Cricket Club to mark the boundaries on its pitch had contained a weak herbicide which had adversely affected the growth of the grass. Following discussions with Officers, the Club would be employing a more modern solution for the next playing season. In the meantime, a survey of the Cricket Pavilion was shortly due to be undertaken in order to establish the renovation works that would be required prior to the grant of a lease to the Club. Members asked that a report on progress with the lease negotiations be presented to the next meeting of the Committee.

Members decided not to pursue a suggestion that a supply of plastic bags be attached to the dog waste bins so as to encourage more owners to clear up after their pets. Experience suggested that few dog owners would use the facility and the plastic bags could litter the Green if misused. In noting details of a Memorial Bench which had been installed on the Green by Officers acting under delegated powers, Members requested that all future decisions in respect of benches and similar structures should be approved by the Committee.

The Committee noted that Mr A Power, a local resident, had been appointed as a second Honorary Warden. Members were of the view that two wardens were sufficient for the purposes of monitoring the Green. Both Mr Winkworth and Mr Power were thanked for their valuable assistance in this regard.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 8.20pm)