

Runnymede Borough Council

ENGLEFIELD GREEN COMMITTEE

24 June 2008 at 7.00pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors H W V Meares (Chairman), J W C Perschke (Vice-Chairman), D R Hamilton, Miss M N Heath, M T Kusneraitis, and P I Roberts

Residents' Representative: Mrs L Lawson

Members of the Committee absent: Mr A E Panter

89. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED that -

Councillor Meares be elected Chairman for the Municipal Year 2008/09.

90. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED that -

Councillor Perschke be elected Vice-Chairman for the Municipal Year 2008/09.

91. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 27 February 2008 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

92. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mr Panter.

93. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Perschke declared a personal interest under the Runnymede Code of Conduct for Members in the report on Grass Cutting.

94. MRS BAIRSTOW (RETIRING RESIDENTS' REPRESENTATIVE) AND MRS L LAWSON (REPLACEMENT RESIDENTS' REPRESENTATIVE)

The Committee was informed that Mrs Maria Bairstow had resigned as one of the residents' representatives and Annual Council, at its meeting on 15 May 2008, had reappointed Mr Panter and appointed Mrs Lisa Lawson as the replacement residents' representative. The Committee expressed its gratitude to Mrs Bairstow for her contribution to the Committee over the years and welcomed Mrs Lawson. The Chairman would write a letter of appreciation to Mrs Bairstow.

95. ENGLEFIELD GREEN PLAY AREA EXTENSION

The Committee was updated on progress in obtaining the various consents for the play area extension.

Following publication of the proposal under the Commons Act 2006, the Planning Inspectorate had received 27 letters against the whole project, 12 in favour and 20 against the CCTV and lighting, with little or no reference to the play area. The Parks Manager would inform Members of the number of objectors who lived in the vicinity of Englefield Green.

The Planning Inspectorate had advised the Council that based on the number of responses to the project, in particular those against the scheme, a Public Inquiry would need to take place to determine if permission was to be granted. Officers had asked the Inspectorate if the removal of the CCTV and lighting from the existing application would negate the need for the inquiry but were advised this would make no difference due to the number of overall responses. Officers sought further clarification on whether a brand new application without the CCTV and lighting included would be considered. The Planning Inspectorate confirmed that this would be the case but that everyone making representation on the first application would be advised and their original representation could be considered with the new application if requested.

The planning application for the lighting and CCTV had been made and subsequently withdrawn when it became apparent that one of the main concerns from residents was the aesthetic impact these elements would have on the Green. This was despite initial residents' feedback requesting that CCTV and lighting be incorporated into the project design. Currently, there were no plans to resubmit a planning application for the CCTV and that there was no need to submit a further application for the lighting as it was confirmed that this was 'permitted development'.

The Crown Estate had in principle, supported the project provided all the other necessary consents were obtained.

The Committee emphasised that the Green was a valuable facility for use by the whole community of Englefield Green and that safe high-quality facilities should be made available. In order to address some of the concerns of residents, and in order to progress the scheme, the Committee considered that a new application be made to the Planning Inspectorate without the CCTV and lighting elements. The financial and resource implications associated with a future Public Inquiry were noted.

Separate from the issue of the play area and in order to specifically address the concerns of the Cricket Club over vandalism to the Pavilion, the Committee asked Officers to investigate, in conjunction with the Cricket Club, the possibility of provision of low cost, visually less obtrusive CCTV to cover the Pavilion, and the availability of funding from AIR. A report thereon would be made to the next meeting.

RESOLVED that -

- i) a new application be made to the Planning Inspectorate for the Play Area Extension, excluding the CCTV and lighting elements, bearing in mind that representations on the initial application could still be considered; and**
- ii) Officers be authorised to investigate, in conjunction with the Cricket Club, the possibility of provision of low cost, visually less obtrusive CCTV, specifically to cover the Pavilion and approach AIR regarding the availability of funding.**

96. GRASS CUTTING

The Committee considered options for future maintenance of the cricket outfield.

Grass cutting on the Green was provided through the Council's Grounds Maintenance Contract. The Contract was for six years and ran until December 2010, with an option to extend beyond that date. There had been problems this season with the timing and the quality of grass cutting provided by the contractor in several locations across the Borough as well as the Green. Officers were enforcing the terms of the contract in order to improve the situation.

The Cricket Club had expressed concern about the standard of grass cutting on the outfield which was cut at the same standard and frequency as the rest of the Green, i.e. fortnightly from March to September, with a final cut in October. The Club maintained the cricket square and prepared the wickets for the matches.

In May 2006 the cricket outfield had been damaged as a result of heavy rainfall during the occupation of the Green by one of the annual fairs and the subsequent movement of the fair's vehicles on the wet surface. The damage was repaired by the Council, utilising the deposit paid by the fair, and

further damage had been avoided by re-locating this fair to the southern end of the Green. A full report on the location of this year's fairs and their impact on the Green and the surrounding area would be presented to Committee in November.

In March, a site meeting had been arranged with the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) who had been approached by the Cricket Club. This meeting was attended by the Chairman and Council Officers and its purpose was to assess the condition of the pitch and to evaluate arrangements for its maintenance and the positioning of the annual fairs. The Cricket Club also met with the ECB's pitch inspector which resulted in the ECB producing a report, which set out a series of recommendations for improvement, the contents of which were noted. A follow up meeting between the ECB, the Chairman and Officers had been held recently to discuss the pitch report and look at the improvements identified. At the follow up meeting, there was concern over the quality of the outfield and its unsuitability for junior cricket, and to address these problems it was concluded that the outfield would benefit from increased maintenance.

The Committee was keen to support the continuation of cricket on the Green and considered two options, namely -

- i) purchase of the appropriate mowing machinery and cutting of the outfield as necessary by the Cricket Club;
- ii) increase the number of grass cuts through the current Grounds Maintenance Contract.

The first option was considered prohibitive on cost grounds, although the Club would be asked to contact Egham Football Club, who might have a surplus mower following its move from Coopers Hill Lane.

The Committee supported, in principle, the increase in frequency of cuts of the outfield during the cricket season to a weekly cut. The additional costs would be £450, and Members asked Officers to liaise with the Cricket Club regarding funding of the additional cuts so as to avoid the cost falling on the Council's Budget.

RESOLVED that -

the frequency of cuts of the outfield during the cricket season be increased to a weekly cut and Officers be asked to liaise with the Cricket Club regarding funding of the additional cuts.

97. ENGLEFIELD GREEN CRICKET SQUARE

At the request of former Chairman, Councillor Roberts, and to inform some of the newer Members of the Committee, the Committee was reminded that the cricket square had been relocated to its current position in order to significantly reduce the danger for both children in the play-area and users of St Jude's Road from cricket played on the Green.

98. BRUNEL SITE - DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

A planning application was expected to be submitted in July 2008 for development of the Brunel site.

If the application involved alterations to the road network on the Green, consent of the Crown Estate and this Council, as lessee, would be required.

A report would be made to this Committee, as and when appropriate. If necessary a special meeting would be arranged with the agreement of the Chairman.

99. CRICKET CLUB EVENTS

By reason of special circumstances, namely that the events would take place before the November meeting of the Committee, former Chairman, Councillor Roberts, had agreed to this report being considered as a matter of urgency.

The Englefield Green Cricket Club had applied to the Council for permission to hold the following events on the Green this year:-

Sunday 13 July, 2.00pm to 9.00pm - 'Jamaica Style' cricket match.

Sunday 29 September, noon to 11.00pm - Club Day.

25 June, 2 July, 9 July, 16 July, 23 July, 31 July, 6 August, 20 August, 5.00pm to 9.00pm - 'Twenty20' cricket matches.

Councillor Roberts had been consulted and these applications had been approved.

The Council's Licensing Section had been made aware of these applications and would liaise with the Club about necessary licences.

The Committee requested the Club to give earlier notice of such events in future.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 8.27pm)