

Runnymede Borough Council

ENGLEFIELD GREEN COMMITTEE

10 December 2002 at 7 p.m.

Members of the Committee present : Councillors A.G. Collins (Chairman), H.W.V. Meares (Vice-Chairman) J.E. Haas, Mrs C.Y. Jones and N. Thewlis

Residents' Representatives : Mrs. M.E.J. Bairstow and Mr. A.E. Panter

Member of the Committee absent : Councillor K.J.T. Walmsley

473. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 1 October 2002 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

474. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor K.J.T. Walmsley.

475. ENGLEFIELD GREEN PAVILION

The Committee gave consideration to the future arrangements for the management and maintenance of the Sports Pavilion on the Green.

Members noted that the Pavilion had been erected in the mid 1950's after the former Egham Urban District Council had loaned the cost of the construction to the Englefield Green Football and Cricket Clubs. A 60-year lease was granted in 1957 to Trustees representing both Clubs, with the rent being reduced to a peppercorn once the construction costs had been repaid. The terms of the lease required it to be kept available for both Clubs and other sporting activities which the Council might permit on the Green. Although the Trustees were legally responsible for the management of the facility, this function had been undertaken on a day-to-day basis on their behalf by a Management Committee drawn from representatives of both Clubs. This had, however, been defunct for many years and the Football Club now played elsewhere in the village. Thus the Cricket Club had, for a prolonged period, been the only regular user of the Pavilion.

The Trustees were currently in breach of a number of the repairing obligations in the lease. Allegations had, from time to time, been made about matters such as health and safety issues and the disappearance of the Pavilion clock. Occasional complaints had also been received about parties held on the premises. However, the Trustees claimed that they had found it difficult to communicate with the Cricket Club and had been relatively inactive in recent years as a consequence. The Cricket Club had effectively managed the facility but as it was not itself responsible for the covenants in the lease it had been difficult to achieve a dialogue about their observance. Of the four Trustees one had recently passed away and another wished to retire. Although four was the minimum number of Trustees required by the lease no replacements had yet been nominated.

The Committee felt that it was important to ensure that the Pavilion had a tenant which was actively prepared to accept responsibility for the building and offered clear lines of communication. Various options were considered but the favoured means of achieving this was to secure the termination of the present lease (for breach of covenant or, preferably, by surrender) and grant a new lease direct to the Cricket Club. Members felt that such an arrangement would encourage the Club to fully devote its energy and resources to the active management of the facility. The Club itself, represented at the meeting by its Chairman Mr I. Miles, was now committed to the Green following a two-year period playing elsewhere while the new square was established, and would welcome the opportunity to assume direct responsibility. It was emphasised that as Lessee the Club would be better able to access grant funding for a planned improvement programme.

A further advantage of this proposal was that it would provide an opportunity to resolve the presently anomalous arrangements for the maintenance of the cricket square. Although the Englefield Green Cricket Club was almost the only user of the wicket it was currently maintained by the Council under an arrangement completely separate from the occupation of the Pavilion. If the maintenance obligation for the square was transferred to the Club there would be a net betterment to the Council of approximately £1,800 per annum.

The Committee therefore agreed that the position should be discussed further with the Pavilion Trustees with a view, if possible, to agreeing a surrender of the existing lease. Both the remaining Trustees, Mr Humphreys and Mr Read, were present at the meeting and indicated that they were, in principle, likely to be agreeable to such a request. Upon surrender, a new 3-year lease would then be granted to the Trustees of the Cricket Club. A short term lease was favoured so that both parties could be sure the operation was viable before committing to a longer arrangement. The terms of the lease would include:

- the current nominal rent to continue for the short term lease.
- an obligation to make the Pavilion available for alternative uses agreed by the Council which did not prejudice the Cricket Clubs' needs.
- a licence to use the Cricket square, running for the same period as the lease, and subject to an obligation to maintain the square.
- an obligation for the Cricket Club to produce a longer term business and sports development plan.

The operation of the lease, and the business and development plan produced by the Club, would be reviewed by this Committee during the third year of the lease and a decision taken on whether to enter into a longer term arrangement.

The Committee concluded the discussion by taking the opportunity to thank the present Trustees for their efforts over the years. It was suggested that the Cricket Club may like to consider co-opting them onto its Management Committee in order to benefit from their experience and expertise.

RESOLVED that -

- i) the Borough Secretary and Leisure Services Officer be instructed to discuss a surrender of the lease with the Pavilion Trustees;**
- ii) subject to agreement with the Trustees being reached on i) above, then subject to contract and all necessary consents, the Borough Secretary and Leisure Services Officer be authorised to agree and grant a new lease of the Pavilion to the Trustees of Englefield Green Cricket Club including the terms mentioned above and on such other terms as he thinks fit; and**
- iii) a progress report be made to this Committee at its next meeting.**

476. MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF THE GREEN

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

Members noted that the reinstatement of the worn areas around the former 'kick about' goal posts had been delayed by adverse weather but was now complete. The new goal post to the north of the Green had been erected. A free football coaching course for 8-12 year olds organised by Fulham Football Club during the school half term holidays had proved to be extremely popular with the 25 places considerably oversubscribed. Similar activities across a range of sports were now being considered for other half term and Easter holiday periods.

The Committee was also informed that comments had been received from a member of the public with regards to the post and wire protection around the new cricket square and the use of non

indigenous species of shrubbery in a planting scheme designed to protect St Jude's Road from stray cricket balls. The fencing was intended to protect the square from other users of the Green, particularly during the annual fairs, and was of a type consistent both with standard practice elsewhere and the previous arrangements for the old cricket square. It had not proved possible to use indigenous species of shrubbery in the protective planting but the species eventually chosen would blend in with the location.

The Committee also took the opportunity to examine a draft design for the new interpretation signs to be placed on the Green. The signs included not only a plan of the Green and the bye law details but also a synopsis of the history of the area. Meanwhile replacements had been ordered for signage near the cricket pavilion which had been vandalised or damaged. Finally, the Committee noted that work was in hand to ensure that the ditch surrounding the Green was kept clear of debris and other infill in order to try and protect against further traveller incursions.

477. BISHOPSGATE ROAD FOOTWAY - EXTENSION

The Committee welcomed a proposal from Surrey County Council to install a 2 metre wide tarmac footway with timber edging between the horse trough at the junction of Bishopsgate Road and St Jude's Road and the existing footway on the north side of Bishopsgate Road. Officers were currently seeking the relevant approvals from the Crown Estate for the works, which were to be funded and undertaken by the County Council.

RESOLVED that -

subject to the approval of the Crown Estate, Surrey County Council be authorised to install a footway to the north side of Bishopsgate Road as set out above.

478. MAINTENANCE OF WOODLAND

The Committee noted that works to reinstate an overgrown horse route, identified during a recent inspection of the woodland area of the Green by Members, had now been completed. The maintenance of the remainder of the woodland would be restricted to keeping public footpaths, horse routes and other paths clear of overgrowing vegetation and cutting back the roadside verges in Coopers Hill Lane so that pedestrians could step out of the road if necessary. The removal of litter and fly tipping would continue as normal, as and when required.

479. TELECOMMUNICATIONS MAST - PLANNING APPLICATION

Members noted that an application for planning consent for the erection of a telecommunications mast on the Green (RU02/1247) had been refused by the Planning Committee at its meeting on 4 December.

480. CROWN LEASE - DISPLAY ON WEBSITE

The Committee noted that a request had been received from the Englefield Green Village Residents Association for permission to display the Crown Lease in respect of the Green on its website. The Crown Estate operated a policy of confidentiality between landlord and tenant and was therefore reluctant for the whole of the lease to be published in this manner. There was, however, no objection on the part of either the Crown or Members to suitable extracts of the agreement being made available to the general public.

RESOLVED that -

the Borough Secretary and Leisure Services Officer be authorised to provide the Englefield Green Village Residents Association with suitable extracts of the Crown lease for display on its website.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 8.06 p.m.)