

Runnymede Borough Council

ENGLEFIELD GREEN COMMITTEE

1 October 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

Councillor C. J. Norman also attended

322. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 26 June 2002 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

323. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

324. CHILDREN'S INFORMAL 'KICKABOUT' AREA

(Ref: Minutes of Englefield Green Committee, June 2002, page 298, para. 138)

The Committee reviewed the success of the children's informal 'kickabout' area on the Green and gave consideration to the future of the facility.

Members recalled that the 'kickabout' area, including junior sized goalposts, had been erected on the Green at Easter for a trial period until the end of September. The goalposts had initially been well used, particularly during the light summer evenings which coincided with the enthusiasm for football generated by the World Cup Finals. Anecdotal evidence, however, suggested that the usage by children had now declined to a similar level to that prior to the installation of the posts. Despite complaints from a number of residents, noise levels had not been found to be excessive and initial problems of litter had been overcome. There had been no recorded crime or public order difficulties attributed to the 'kickabout' pitch.

Members acknowledged that the local community was divided on the need for the facility. The pitch was popular with young people and provided a positive recreational outlet for their energies. However, there was some concern at the use of the 'kickabout' area by adult teams for organised matches. Not only was this contrary to the original intention but it was likely to actively discourage children from utilising the pitch. A number of residents had also objected to the visual intrusion of the goalposts, which they felt to be inconsistent with the character of the Green, and questioned the extent to which the posts were necessary for children's enjoyment of 'kickabout' games. The Council had received a total of 58 letters in opposition to the facility and 15 letters, together with a 95 signature petition, in support.

The Committee therefore sought to balance the varied views of residents and devise a solution which reduced the degree of visual intrusion while maintaining the play facilities for children. Members considered that the best means of doing so would be to remove the present goalposts at the southern end of the Green and erect two single posts of reduced size at differing locations on a trial basis. It was agreed that a small goalpost suitable only for children under 8 years of age should be placed in broadly the same position as the existing 'kickabout' area during the summer of 2003 so that young children could play safely within view of their parents. Meanwhile, a slightly larger goalpost, unsuitable for adults, would be erected at the more secluded northern end of the Green for the use of older children throughout the next 12 months. In both cases the precise location of the posts would be changed periodically in order to allow for reinstatement works. It was hoped that

single goalposts of smaller size would discourage the use of the Green by adult teams. The Committee would give consideration to the outcome of this further trial period at its meeting in November 2003.

RESOLVED that -

- i) the goalposts presently on the Green be removed;**
- ii) a single small goalpost suitable for children under the age of eight be erected at the southern end of the Green for a trial period from the beginning of the next school Easter holidays until the clocks go back in the Autumn of 2003;**
- iii) a single goalpost suitable for children over the age of eight, but not adults, be erected at the northern end of the Green for a trial period of 12 months;**
- iv) the Borough Secretary and Leisure Services Officer be authorised to move the precise location of both goalposts periodically in order to reduce wear on the Green; and**
- v) consideration be given to the success of the trial arrangements referred to above at the meeting of the Committee in November 2003.**

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 7.45 p.m.)