

Runnymede Borough CouncilLEISURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE20 March 2003 at 7.30 pm

Members of the

Committee Present: Councillors C. J. Norman (Chairman), Mrs C. Y. Jones (Vice Chairman)
A. J. Davis, A. M. Moore, R. J. Ray, B. J. Relph
and Ms C. M. Simmons.

Members of the

Committee absent: Councillors A. G. Collins, P. C. Elding, and Mrs S. E. Jacobs

Co-opted Members
of the Committee

absent: Mrs B. Miller and Mr T. Watson

Councillor Mrs L. M. Gillham also attended.

724. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23 January 2003 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

725. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. G. Collins and Mrs S. E. Jacobs.

726. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor B J Relph declared a personal interest under the Runnymede Code of Conduct for Members in respect of the report 'Association for the Improvement of Runnymede (AIR) Funding' of which he was the Project Manager.

Councillors Mrs L. M. Gillham and B. J. Relph declared a personal interest under the Runnymede Code of Conduct for Members in respect of the report 'Frank Muir Memorial Field, Rosemary Lane, Thorpe – Capital Scheme for Vehicular/Pedestrian Access and Car Park'. As both were Council appointed representatives on the Management Committee they remained in the room and participated in discussion of the report.

727. ASSOCIATION FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF RUNNYMEDE (AIR) FUNDING

(Ref: Minutes of the Former Executive Committee, 2 August 2000, page 361, para. 209; Minutes of Housing and Community Services Committee, 12 September 2001, page 290, para. 225)

The Committee received a report which recommended further funding of the Association for the Improvement of Runnymede (AIR).

AIR was established in 2000 as an Independent Environmental Body for Runnymede; utilising the Landfill Tax Credits scheme for the benefit of local community projects.

Members noted that the Housing and Community Services Committee, at its meeting in September 2001, had agreed to provide funding to AIR for 2002/03 in the sum of £10,000 to be paid in two equal instalments. AIR had received the first payment in April 2002 but had subsequently informed the Council that the second instalment would not be needed. Therefore, the provision of £5,000 had been removed from the budget.

The Committee learned that AIR had been successful in securing financial support from within the borough. However, landfill operators had been more reluctant to commit funds in recent months due to uncertainty about the Government's intentions towards the Tax Credits scheme.

In view of this, AIR had asked for the provision to be reinstated into the budget so that the second instalment could be paid as originally agreed by the Housing and Community Services Committee.

More recently, AIR had again expressed concern about the level of support they might receive and had requested an additional payment of £5,000 for 2003/04, if it was necessary, to help them maintain a reasonable solvency margin and was justified by their performance.

Members commended the beneficial works done by AIR in the borough, and accordingly, the Committee

RESOLVED that –

- i) £5,000 be awarded to AIR in 2003/04, in accordance with the original decision of the Housing and Community Services Committee in September 2001;**
- ii) a second payment of £5,000 be granted subject to a satisfactory appraisal of the progress with AIR projects by the Director of Administration and Leisure in consultation with the Chairman of this Committee, and the Runnymede representative on the AIR Management Committee;**
- iii) the additional grants be made on the condition that should AIR fees generate adequate income, they should be repaid to the Council; and**
- iv) the Corporate Management Committee be requested to approve a supplementary revenue estimate for this purpose in the 2003/04 financial year.**

728. FRANK MUIR MEMORIAL FIELD, ROSEMARY LANE, THORPE – CAPITAL SCHEME FOR VEHICULAR/PEDESTRIAN ACCESS AND CAR PARK
(Ref: Minutes of the Former Leisure Services Committee, 20 September 1995, page 312, para. 309)

The Committee received and considered a report seeking approval of a Capital scheme to create a new vehicular and pedestrian access to Frank Muir Memorial Field in Thorpe.

The Field was held by the Council not in its own right but as Trustee. Members noted that the Council had assumed responsibility for the management of the 10 acre open space in 1994 in place of the Management Committee, and had carried out a number of improvement projects over the years.

The proposed scheme had been a long term aim of both the Council and the Management Committee. It was hoped that the improved access, via a newly acquired piece of land off Rosemary Lane, would also lead to greater use of the field. Officers anticipated that the installation of a height barrier at the new access point would prevent unauthorised access and allow an existing access via a gate on Thorpe Bypass to be permanently closed off.

The proposed Car Park would consist of parking for ten cars, including one space for use by the disabled. In addition, subject to the Council obtaining the appropriate permission, a finger post direction sign would be erected in Green Road at the junction with Rosemary Lane. Accordingly, the Committee

RESOLVED that –

- i) the Corporate Management Committee be recommended to approve Capital Programme Provision and a Capital Estimate in the sum of £25,000 for the provision of a vehicular access point together with car parking and associated works as set out above; and**

ii) subject to the approval of a Capital Estimate by the Corporate Management Committee and the granting of relevant planning permission, Officers implement the scheme.

729. CO-OPTED MEMBERS FOR MATTERS AFFECTING THORPE GREEN

(Ref: Minutes of the former Leisure and Public Services Committee, 11 June 1974, page 51, para. 132)

The Committee considered a report which set out the case for the Council to discontinue the practice of appointing two Thorpe Green residents to serve as co-opted Members of this Committee from the Municipal Year 2003/2004.

Members were informed that the practice had first been introduced in 1973 and that the representatives had had an active role for the next 12 years. Much of their involvement was generated by the need for a Committee decision on issues relating to vehicular access across Thorpe Green. However, in 1987, the then Leisure and Amenities Committee agreed a new policy on this issue. As a result the authority to grant new vehicular accesses across the Green was delegated to Officers.

The Committee acknowledged that the number of reports directly affecting Thorpe Green had dwindled since 1987 and the last recorded attendance at a Leisure Committee of the co-opted Members had been in 2000.

It was proposed that, in future, Officers would consult with Ward Members on relevant matters on the Leisure and Environment Committee Agenda and would carry out wider ranging consultation where appropriate.

Members were pleased to note that the practice had already been successfully employed by Officers in the Parks section on the proposed anti-incursion protection measures as approved at the last meeting of this Committee in January 2003.

The Thorpe Ward Members together with the Thorpe Ward Residents Association were also actively interested in matters concerning the Green and could be involved in any future consultations. Accordingly it was agreed that the Committee

RECOMMEND that –

the practice of co-opting two Thorpe Green residents to the Leisure and Environment Committee be discontinued as from the Municipal Year 2003/2004 and the Council uses the methods set out above, together with any others which may be appropriate, in order to consult Thorpe Green residents in the future.

730. ALLOTMENT RATIONALISATION – CHERTSEY ALLOTMENT SITES – PROGRESS REPORT

(Ref: Minutes of the Corporate Management Committee, 6 February 2003, page 1057, para. 606; and 6 March 2003, page 1101, para 664)

The Committee received two reports that had recently been submitted to the Corporate Management Committee regarding progress with the Bemonds, Painesfield and Roakes Avenue Project and proposals for a new Chertsey allotment site.

Members noted that the Corporate Management Committee had been designated as the lead Committee on such issues.

Members were advised that an interim report on the contaminants found at the Bemonds Allotment site was being studied by Officers in the Environmental Protection division, and that further work would be needed to identify the provenance of the contaminants (if this were possible) and the level of remedial action required.

The Committee was informed that part of Barrsbrook Farm in Guildford Road was being considered as a replacement location for both the existing Bemonds and Painesfield allotment sites.

On-going surveys would establish the suitability of the proposed area, and Officers would be meeting with GOSE shortly to obtain an interim view on the proposals and assess the likelihood of a consent being granted for the closure of the Painesfield allotment site.

Further progress with the projects would be reported to a future meeting of this Committee.

731. CABRERA TRUST MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabrera Trust Management Committee held on 6 January 2003 as attached at Appendix 'A' were received and adopted.

It was confirmed that as a result of a fall in the Trust's investment income, options for the future of the Committee would be discussed at the Trust's Annual General Meeting in June 2003.

Officers reported that a report setting out the options and recommendations following the Trust's meeting in June would be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee which would include progress on the Broadwalk Replacement Scheme.

732. RUNNYMEDE ARTS DEVELOPMENT STEERING GROUP – MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Arts Development Steering Group held on 4 February 2003 as attached at Appendix 'B' were received and adopted.

733. ABBEY FIT JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Members noted that the Director of Administration and Leisure had in agreement with the Chairman of this Committee and the Leaders of all political groups, and in accordance with Standing Order 42, appointed Councillor Mrs C. E. Gant as a voting Runnymede Borough Council representative on the Abbey Fit Joint Management Committee. This was to fill the vacancy which had arisen following the departure of Councillor G. J. Thomas.

Members noted that a report on the future of Abbey Fit would be submitted for consideration at the next meeting of this Committee in June 2003.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 7.54 p.m.)