

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

MAPLEDURHAM PLAYING FIELDS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 FEBRUARY 2015

Present:

Councillor I Ballsdon	(Chairman)
Councillor E Hopper	
Councillor J Skeats	
Rev K Knee-Robinson	Mapledurham Parish Council

Also in attendance:

Mr S Ayers	Friends of Mapledurham Playing Fields
Mr R Bentham	Warren & District Residents' Association
Mr S Bolton	Caversham & District Residents' Association
Ms E Miles	Warren & District Residents' Association
Mr S Quayle	Solicitor, Legal Services
Mr C Salmon	Mapledurham Bridge Club
Ms N Simpson	Committee Administrator
Mr B Stanesby	Parks & Open Spaces Manager

Apologies:

Ms L Dyke	Escape
Mr K Macrae	Friends of Mapledurham Playing Fields
Mr M Payne	Mapledurham Bridge Club
Mr D Power	Mapledurham Tennis Club
Mr N Stanbrook	Mapledurham Users' Committee

1. MINUTES & MATTERS ARISING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2014 were confirmed as a correct record, subject to the amendment of wording in the last paragraph of Minute 5 to read "Keith Knee-Robinson was appointed to the Management Committee by the Mapledurham Parish Council, but he noted that Mapledurham Parish Councillors had not had a contested election for a number of years.", rather than "Keith Knee-Robinson was appointed to the Management Committee by the Mapledurham Parish Council, but he said that he had not been formally re-appointed for some time, as the meetings had not been quorate."

Further to Minute 1 (2) of the last meeting, Ben Stanesby reported that the pothole had now been repaired, the property services team had checked the gas heaters and the replacement of the missing bollards by the pedestrian access from Hewett Avenue was imminent, if it had not already happened.

Further to Minute 7 (a) of the last meeting, regarding possible funding for adult play gym equipment mentioned by Councillor Gittings, Lead Councillor for Culture, Sport & Consumer Services, Ben Stanesby reported that he had liaised with Councillor Gittings, who had indicated that, if more Section 106 funding was obtained (further to that already allocated to the pavilion replacement), he was keen for this to be used for play equipment for the playing fields.

Further to Minute 7 (b) of the last meeting, Ben Stanesby reported that woodchip had been dropped in three places in the woodland and the Probation Service would be asked to arrange for this to be spread. He noted that there had been recent changes to the Probation Service and some problems with communication, so he encouraged the Friends of Mapledurham Playing Fields group to let him know if the work did not get done.

It was noted that there was a pile of rubbish at the front of the pavilion which had been there for some time. Councillor Ballsdon said that she had spoken to Luke Lloyd about this matter and put in a Councillor enquiry.

AGREED:

- (1) That the position on these matters be noted;
- (2) That Ben Stanesby investigate the situation with regard to the pile of rubbish at the front of the pavilion and report back to the next meeting.

2. HEIGHTS FREE SCHOOL CONSULTATION

Further to Minute 4 of the last meeting, Ben Stanesby submitted a report on the latest position with regard to the consultation on the location of The Heights Free School and proposing some steps to raise awareness of the Heights consultation with users of the facilities. The report had appended the Policy Committee report from 19 January 2015 on the request from the EFA for the Council to work with them on the consultation.

The report stated that the Education Funding Agency (EFA) was to have produced an information pack that was due to be used for a consultation about potential locations for The Heights Free School running from 2 February to 20 March 2015.

The report explained that, at the time of writing, the EFA had not produced the information packs and therefore the detail of the consultation might have changed, and the consultation period would have to change accordingly. Ben reported at the meeting that the EFA wanted to include an additional possible site in the consultation. He understood that background work was being carried out by the EFA to see if the site was a viable option and that the consultation had therefore been delayed by around three weeks.

The report stated that the consultation was planned to include writing to households, stakeholders and other interested parties, with feedback to be made online only. An open meeting was also planned.

It was important that users were made aware of the Heights consultation and made individual responses online as identified within the process. It was therefore proposed to produce laminated posters at every entrance to the Playing Fields drawing users' attention to the consultation and inviting them to comment. This would also be undertaken at other parks that might be considered within the consultation. Mapledurham's pavilion afforded the opportunity to provide more information and so, depending upon the contents of the information pack, information would be printed from that document and displayed within the pavilion.

The report stated that it was not felt appropriate to hold a separate consultation at the current time, but it was important that the Management Committee encouraged users to make their views known through the identified channels. Whilst all organisations hiring facilities should be contacted raising their awareness of the consultation and signposting how they could respond, it was for individuals to respond to the consultation rather than organisations.

There was to be an open meeting at which stakeholders could be represented. At the time of writing the report, the Management Committee had not been invited to participate. A response by the Management Committee to the consultation had not been prepared. Given that responses were being asked for from individuals, the report recommended that a response was not made by the Management Committee but that the Committee awaited the outcome of the consultation and responded to any proposals that were made subsequently.

The report stated that the Management Committee had recently requested information from users outlining their current requirements for facilities. This information had yet to be reported to the Management Committee and would identify current needs which did not relate to the forthcoming consultation.

Keith Knee-Robinson reported that he had spoken to Nigel Stanbrook before he went on holiday and Nigel had said that he had received a letter from the Council saying not to go ahead with the consultation with users discussed at the last meeting. It was reported that Nigel had asked users for feedback relating to the Heights School issue and it was suggested that Nigel be asked to present to the next meeting all the information he had received from users and where it had been sent, so that the Committee could look at appropriate next steps.

AGREED:

- (1) That the report and position be noted;
- (2) That onsite advertising of the Heights consultation be undertaken and all organisations hiring facilities be written to, drawing their attention to the consultation;
- (3) That Nigel Stanbrook be asked to present to the next meeting all the information he had received from users and where it had been sent, so that the Committee could look at appropriate next steps.

3. MAPLEDURHAM PAVILION REPLACEMENT - UPDATE

Ben Stanesby submitted a report giving an update on the latest progress with the pavilion replacement project for Mapledurham Playing Fields.

The report stated that improvements by Mapledurham Lawn Tennis Club, funded by Sport England, had now been completed, with the exception of the construction of the disabled toilet, which was expected to be done in the first half of 2015. The Tennis Club was also to install a new notice board as part of the Sport England-funded improvements.

The report explained that Parks pavilions had been identified as Priority 4 for the implementation of Fire Risk Assessment improvement works. There was regular dialogue between the Council's Building Services, the Health & Safety Team and Berkshire Fire and Rescue reviewing progress on works across the whole of the

Council's estate and it was anticipated that works to those Priority 4 buildings would be undertaken during the next financial year, including the Mapledurham Pavilion. Work to buildings was being grouped in like works and let as large contracts. The Property Services Team did not wish to break up works into individual items as both controlling what was happening and costs would become very problematic and so there was not the opportunity to separate out elements of the work and get voluntary working parties to carry it out, as had previously been suggested.

Following completion of architectural drawings, a draft specification had been completed by a Quantity Surveyor and documents issued to a number of contractors to establish firm costs for the rebuild. Once costs had been established, it would be possible to identify which elements of the work were deliverable. A Building Control application for those elements of work would be submitted and a decision would have to be made on how to procure and manage those works. It was noted that it was not felt appropriate to delay the process because of the EFA's consultation on possible Heights Free School sites.

AGREED: That the report and position be noted.

4. MAPLEDURHAM PLAYING FIELDS DRAFT ACCOUNTS AND USAGE INFORMATION

Ben Stanesby submitted a report setting out the draft accounts for the Mapledurham Playing Fields for the year ending 31 March 2014 and giving information on recent usage of facilities. He had also circulated additional more detailed background information on income and expenditure prior to the meeting.

The report had appended the draft income and expenditure account for the playing fields for the year ending 31 March 2014 which, once approved, would be reported to the Charity Commission. The report also set out information about lettings at the pavilion for 2014-15, giving details of the hirers and numbers of sessions, compared with the same periods in 2012-13 and 2013-14.

Ben gave further details of some of the changes in costs, such as increases in gas bills, leading to installation of smart meters, changes to the way cleaning bills were calculated, and changes to the way football was provided at the playing fields, resulting in a drop in income, but also a drop in costs. He noted that there had been no lettings at the pavilion in April 2014 as that had been when the legionella works had been carried out.

It was queried why there was no inflationary increase in the income from the Tennis Club over the last four years, and Ben said that he would find out.

AGREED:

- (1) That the report and position be noted;
- (2) That Ben Stanesby find out why there had been no inflationary increase in the income from the Tennis Club over the last four years.

5. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

AGREED: That the next meeting be held at 6.30pm on Thursday 14 May 2015 at the Pavilion.

(The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 7.21pm)