

CHEPPING WYCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

LEISURE FACILITIES COMMITTEE

Report of the meeting held on Thursday 1 March 2012
in the Council Chamber, Cock Lane, Tylers Green, High Wycombe, Bucks HP10 8DS

Present:	Cllr L Willis - Chairman	Cllr S Herron
	Cllr C Jordan - Vice Chairman	Cllr J Herschel
	Cllr J Gurney	Cllr B Sadler

Also present: Cllr. M Wilkes and Cllr. D Johncock, together with 15 members of the public and press

Minutes

1. **Apologies for absence.**

Cllr. S Digby, Cllr. I Forbes, Cllr. D Onslow, Cllr. M Patel (illness or other approved meetings)
District Councillor J. Savage also tendered his regrets.

2. **Declarations of members' interests in Items on the agenda.**

Cllr. J Herschel - Item 12 : expenses

Cllr. D Johncock – a member of the council but in attendance as a representative of the FHRA
to make a presentation: agenda item 3.2

3. **Straight Bit Recreation Ground**

Since items **3.1 Anti-social Behaviour** and **3.2 BMX Facility** may be linked the chairman
decided to consider item 3.2 first and then item 3.1

The committee received a presentation from David Johncock of the FHRA that provided
additional information about the development of the existing skateboard facilities at the
recreation ground to make them more suitable for BMX riders.

A copy of the presentation is attached. The proposal was for additional features that would sit
on the existing tarmac area, though in order to achieve this basketball post, youth shelter and
football goal with its basketball ring would need to be placed nearby.

The BMX facility would cover an approximate area 12m x 13m with ramps no more than 1m
high; constructed using plywood on an open steel frame which would minimise maintenance
and not provide a place behind which to hide. The designer used by the FHRA had given them
assurances that the equipment would meet British Standards and that the layout met
approved guidelines for spacing and layout. The FHRA confirmed that planning permission
would not be required for this project.

The youth shelter with a new tarmac surface below would be re-located where those waiting
their turn could sit and watch riders. The football goal would be placed to one side
immediately beside the new facility on a grassed area; the FHRA did not consider it necessary
to provide a reinforced surface in front of the goal mouth.

The total estimated cost was £22,200 which includes dismantling some skateboard equipment
and erection of the new BMX equipment. The costs would be met by the FHRA using their own
funds, grants and hopefully by a grant of £5,000 from the parish council.

Once the facility had been built and inspected the council would it was anticipated become responsible for the future maintenance of the facility.

Members of the public present expressed some support for the provision of facilities for youth in the village, but some felt that the new facility would increase the number of youths using the site beyond that which the facility was able to support. Concerns were raised by the site becoming an even greater magnet for older youths who often stayed on until the early hours of the morning drinking alcohol and disturbing neighbours with excessive noise.

Information provided to the chairman of the committee by the police did not appear to substantiate the views being expressed at the meeting. This was refuted on the grounds that residents were not keen to make repeated complaints as when selling their homes they would be obliged to draw the attention of would-be purchasers to the problems they had reported. Nor had the police shown any significant interest in attending promptly when complaints were made, or did so in a manner that advertised their imminent arrival allowing youths to disperse.

The issue of having an 'open car park' that allowed car-borne visitors from further afield to congregate was discussed. It was noted that the rising bollards at the entrance which had in the past enabled local residents to close the car park when necessary were no longer operable.

On the recommendation it was AGREED to recommend to council that in principle the committee supported the FHRA proposal to enhance the existing facility to make it more suitable for BMX riders, subject to the council undertaking a consultation with local residents and also satisfying itself that the facility met any safety guidelines and that the facility once completed would meet any conditions likely to be required by the council's insurers.

It was AGREED that the rising bollards should be replaced or a gate provided, together with signs showing that the car park was likely to shut at a particular time or at dusk. The committee's representative on the bowls club committee was asked to seek the views of the club who use the car park when matches are being played.

3.3 Exercise equipment

The committee APPROVED the quote and location for the static exercise equipment.

3.4 Fencing around the perimeter of the bowls club

The committee APPROVED the lower quote of £8,250 from ESB Fencing.

4. Protection of Leisure Facilities Land from damage and encroachment

The committee unanimously ENDORSED the council's renewed efforts to protect the council's property (including land in our ownership or care) from damage or degradation and INSTRUCTED the Clerk to robustly assert and enforce the council's policies and rights either as the landowner or our obligations as lessee.

The committee unanimously ENDORSED the council's renewed efforts to robustly protect the council's property from encroachment (including land in our ownership or care) and RE-CONFIRMED the council's policy of requiring those who wish to open up an access onto our land first obtain a licence to do so. Members endorsed the fee structure recommended at the Amenity Land meeting on Thursday 16 February.

5. Green Dragon Recreation Ground - parking on mown verge

The committee NOTED the complaints made about inappropriate parking on the grass verge opposite the entrance to the recreation ground at Green Dragon Road in Flackwell Heath. Members noted that the grassed area in question is not in parish ownership and that the issue

is one for Bucks Highways to address. Members received a verbal report from the Clerk about initial discussions with the Bucks Highways Local Area Technician and the promise of some financial support from County Cllr M Appleyard's ward budget if it was necessary. The Clerk was INSTRUCTED to write to the Sports Club pointing out that under their lease they have an obligation not to cause a nuisance to local residents and ask that they: advise members of visiting clubs not to park on grassed verges and that their past practice of providing a steward in their car park had both maximised the use of on-site parking and discouraged parking on the verge. Cllr. D Onslow, the council's representative to the FH Sports Club, was asked to raise the issue at the next meeting of their executive and to report back to the committee.

6. Derehams Park Recreation Ground

6.1 Rejuvenation of site

Members NOTED with satisfaction the steady progress being made to bring the site back into well-managed but still 'semi-rural' recreation ground with a strong emphasis of combining community use alongside it being a haven for wildlife.

6.2 Parking

Members of the committee discussed the issues repeatedly raised by the bowls club regarding more convenient car parking for their older club members. Essentially the problem is one of the both the bowls club and the football club both wanting to use the same area at the beginning and the end of their respective seasons –one for car parking, the other for training - and the area not having sufficient time to recover to the satisfaction of either club. The ideal solution is for them to agree for consideration of the committee a solution acceptable to both clubs. Alternatively for the bowls club to bring to the committee other options for consideration together with details of what costs they might incur and how they would intend to fund their proposals. The Clerk was INSTRUCTED to write to the bowls club explaining the committee's RECOMMENDATION and to copy the letter to the football club.

6.3 Pavilion

Members NOTED that the club have been given a detailed answer to their claim for £1,480 from the council for un-recovered electricity charges.

Members NOTED that the issue of a water leak on site remains unresolved and that the Clerk and RFO are awaiting details of any surveys the club has undertaken and any recorded meter readings they have taken in order to ascertain if and where a water leak may be present. The football club's treasurer has also been asked to provide the council with copies of water bills and details of the re-charges passed on to the bowls club.

Members expressed concern that the condition of the pavilion as shown by the survey undertaken earlier in the month. Concern was raised about whether or not the football club were capable of managing the maintenance of the pavilion. Members AGREED that to protect this council-owned asset the pavilion should be brought back into a proper state of repair by August 2012. The Clerk was INSTRUCTED to draw up with the council's Warden, for consideration by the RFO, a plan to bring the building into a proper state of repair and to discuss with the football club what if anything they might be able to contribute to the project, but time is of the essence if the refurbishment is to be completed on time.

7. Ashley Drive Recreation Ground

The committee NOTED with satisfaction the repairs and environmental improvements.

8. Allotments

8.1 Rent increase

Members NOTED that as many positive comments had been made about the rent increase as those who had complained, particularly as it meant the council could continue to be pro-active in improving the two allotment sites providing not only produce for tenants and their families but exercise and for many a happy social environment.

8.2 Chapel Road

The chairman of the committee remarked that he visited the site in the past week and was pleased to see how much the site had improved over the past few years, thanks to both Community Payback groups and the efforts of our staff.

Members unanimously AGREED that subject to funding and bearing in mind the need to obtain best value over a period of time, the access track to the allotments, the entrance area and the apron in front of the Scout & Guide HQ should be repaired and the lowest estimate of £9,780 be accepted; the contract being undertaken by a contractor whose work had over a number of years been shown to be satisfactory.

8.3 Ashley Drive

Members NOTED that work in the centre of the site to improve car parking was due to start soon, but expressed slight concern that by comparison to Chapel Road the Ashley Drive site was not being as well maintained. The Clerk confirmed that it was a matter of manpower resources and timing; improvements would continue this spring until both sites were of the same high standard, including work to the tracks.

9. Questions from council members and the public

Cllr . J Gurney asked about the provision of additional litter bins at Derehams Park and was advised that three additional bins had been ordered and would be placed on-site soon after their delivery.

Cllr. S Herron asked about progress in rejuvenating play areas, especially the one at Ashley Drive. The chairman advised that he was keen to see the Loudwater area started first since in his opinion it was the poorest of the three. The Clerk suggested that if progress was to be made ward members would need to become more directly involved in seeking grants, especially as applications that had the support of community groups appeared to be favoured over those sponsored by local authorities.

10. Accounts for Payment

The lists of accounts for payment were circulated to members and were approved. The list to be attached to the minutes of the meeting so that they were available for scrutiny by the public.

The chairman thanked members for their attendance at the meeting which ended at 9.58pm

Date of the next meeting of the committee: Thursday 24 May 2012

Signed **Date**