

RAUNDS TOWN COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT, LEISURE AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

Minutes: 17th November 2022 Time 7:30pm

PRESENT: Cllr O Curtis (Chair), Cllr K Harrison, Cllr L Wilkes.

Also Present:

S Tucker, Clerk (Minutes)

S Smart, Operations Manager

399.22 To Receive Apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Cllr R Beattie, Cllr B Cross, Cllr D Hughes and Cllr R Levell.

400.22 Notification of requests from members of the public to address the meeting in compliance with adopted protocol.

Two representatives of the Friday Market attended the meeting to speak in relation to agenda item 404.22.

401.22 Notification of members questions in compliance with the council's standing orders.

None received.

402.22 Declarations of Interest

COUNCILLORS ARE REMINDED THAT IF THEY HAVE EITHER A DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST OR OTHER INTEREST IN ANY ITEM THEN THEY SHOULD DECLARE THE INTEREST AND IN THE CASE OF A PECUNIARY ITEM LEAVE THE MEETING FOR THAT ITEM.

None.

403.22 Minutes: To approve the minutes of the Environment, Leisure and Recreation Committee meeting held 14th July 2022.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 14th July 2022 be confirmed as a true record.

404.22 Friday Market Feedback: To consider feedback received in relation to recent issues arising at the Friday Market.

The Committee welcomed two traders from the Friday Market to present feedback in relation to both recent and ongoing longer term issues. A number of observations were made to the Committee, which included:

- Lack of staff supervision;
- Movement of vehicles/parked vehicles on the Town Square on market day;

- The need for improved signage;
- Suggested rearrangement of flower planters to prevent vehicles mounting the pavement to access the market square;
- Installation of a lockable barrier or bollards;
- The lack of an out of hours contact phone number for traders to seek assistance, particularly where parked vehicles need to be moved by the returning owners.
- Lack of publicity for the Friday Market.

The Committee thanked the traders for their feedback and proposed a number of mitigating actions, which included:

- Contacting Northamptonshire Police to request that the Raunds PCSO adds the Friday Market to their routine patrols;
- Instructing the Clerk to arrange for an out of hours telephone to be set up, and for the number to be circulated to the market traders;
- Permit the market traders, under Council supervision, to rearrange the flower planters to prevent vehicles mounting the pavement, and to purchase any additional planters as required;
- Investigate the possibility of a solar powered spotlight to illuminate the existing market signage, and consider appropriate forms of additional signage;
- Instruct the Operations Manager to collect three quotes to either fix or replace the existing bollard infrastructure;
- Instruct the Clerk to arrange for promotion of the Friday Market through its communication channels, including the recently renewed Raunds Town App; and
- Instruct the Clerk to arrange for promotion of stall availability for the Friday Market through its communication channels.

RESOLVED that the mitigating actions proposed by the Committee be progressed by the Clerk and the Operations Manager.

405.22 Dog Park Issues: To consider correspondence from a resident in relation to ongoing issues at London Road Dog Park.

The Committee gave consideration to an email received from a resident describing a number of ongoing issues taking place within London Road Dog Park causing disturbance to neighbouring properties, and reviewed the existing signage at the two park entrances for adequacy.

The Committee expressed sympathy with the resident's concerns, and suggested that whilst existing signage does already request that park users show consideration to neighbouring properties, higher positioned signage with more of an image based focus rather than words might prove more effective. It was suggested that the signage may also need to be reflective, given the early morning usage of the park.

RESOLVED that the Operations Manager be instructed to obtain quotes for three appropriate designs of signage, and to delegate

to the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair, authority to approve the preferred quotation.

406.22 Speed Watch: To note statistics from recent Speed Watch activity, and consider potential dates for 2023.

The Committee reviewed the Speed Watch data for October 2022, and noted that 11 Police warning letters had been posted out to the registered keepers of detected vehicles. The Committee welcomed the results achieved but noted that a shortage of volunteers had led to staff and Councillors providing the resource for many of the dates undertaken. It was suggested that publicity should be increased with a view to recruiting more volunteers, but if there are insufficient volunteer numbers for particular dates in future then it would not be reasonable for them to proceed.

With regard to future dates, it was suggested that availability of the equipment should be checked for March and April 2023, and that organising a Saturday exercise may increase the availability of volunteers. It was also suggested that a call for volunteers be sent to resident groups.

RESOLVED that the Speed Watch statistics for October 2022 be noted.

407.22 Hanging Baskets: To consider hanging basket requirements for 2023.

The Operations Manager advised the Committee that efforts to find a company to provide an all-inclusive service had so far not identified any leads. There had, however, been an approach from a local volunteer to make up a small number of baskets for display at Saxon Hall, and options to fund further potential involvement by the voluntary sector were discussed.

The Committee noted that funding had been set aside in the current budget for purchase of a water bowser, and requested that quotations be gathered ahead of the next meeting for consideration.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) Quotations be obtained prior to the next meeting of the Committee for hanging basket design, installation, stress testing and watering; and**
- (ii) Quotations be obtained prior to the next meeting of the Committee for a towable water bowser.**

408.22 Water Filling Station: To consider quotations received for a Water Filling Station in the Town Square.

The Committee gave consideration to the three quotations obtained, but noted that on top of the purchase cost, there would also be a continued financial commitment required for testing and servicing.

In view of the ongoing cost commitment and other emerging budgetary considerations, as well as concerns over potential vandalism, the Committee considered that other projects should now be prioritised.

RESOLVED that the purchase of a Water Filling Station will not proceed at the current time, but could be revisited in future should demand exist.

409.22 Skate Park: To review funding requirements for progressing the long-term regeneration of Raunds skate park.

The Committee were advised that there was approximately £65,000 set aside in Youth Facilities working reserves, alongside £10,000 currently unspent in the annual budget.

The Committee noted that Desborough Town Council has recently completed a similar project involving a skate park and pump track, and it was suggested that Cllr Howell be requested to facilitate a visit for Raunds Councillors to the site, and that the Clerk be asked to contact the Desborough counterpart to gather information on the project costs.

Councillor Harrison advised the Committee that he is acquainted with a company involved with skate park installations who could be contacted and invited to deliver a presentation to members. Councillor Harrison also advised of a skateboarder who could guide the Committee on potential design ideas.

It was suggested that once indicative costings have been identified, and funding opportunities via North Northamptonshire Council and Sport England have been investigated, a meeting of the Working Party should be convened to discuss how the project can be progressed.

RESOLVED that the current funding available for Raunds skate park regeneration be noted.

410.22 Saturday Market: To review Saturday Market survey results and cost information, and consider potential dates for 2023.

The Committee noted that the feedback received in relation to the Saturday Market was generally very positive, and whilst noting that the cost is picked up by the Council, the relatively small annual investment was having a positive community benefit in bringing more people into the Town. It was suggested that further publicity to promote the Saturday market would be required to promote increased footfall and encourage a more diverse range of stall holders to participate.

The Committee also noted the schedule of dates for the Saturday Market to take place between April-September 2023.

RESOLVED that the Saturday Market survey results and cost information be noted.

411.22 Litter Picking: To consider dates for community litter pick events in 2023.

The Committee reviewed the options for litter picking dates in 2023, and requested that the Autumn date be combined with community bulb planting, in keeping with the arrangements for this year's event.

RESOLVED that the Spring Litter Pick be scheduled for Saturday 25 March 2023, and the Autumn Litter Pick be scheduled for Saturday 30 September 2023.

412.22 Community Orchard Signage: To consider options for signage at the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Community Orchard.

The Committee reviewed the design options for signage presented by the Operations Manager and selected option 4 as its preferred choice, subject to changes to the colour scheme, removal of dotted lines, removal of the Town watermark, insertion of the Council's social media details and a QR code at the foot of the design to link to the Council's website, and insertion of 'no dogs allowed' messaging.

The Committee also reviewed initial options for the display structure and stated a preference for the wooden design, ideally with anti-vandal paint or a similar deterrent.

RESOLVED that the fourth option for signage at the Community Orchard be selected, subject to the proposed design amendments.

413.22 Annual Town Inspection: To receive a report and consider further works.

The Committee gave consideration to the kitchen works quotations and determined that Quote 3 (ready-built) was its preferred design, whilst Estimate 1 (ready-built) was its preferred fitting option.

Although raised as part of the Annual Town Inspection which came within the Committee's remit, it was noted that the Committee did not hold the budget for Town Hall maintenance, therefore the funding would need to be agreed by the Finance and Policy Committee.

The Committee reviewed the progress achieved in relation to the other items raised from the Town Inspection, and were pleased to note that satisfactory progress was being made, with a number of items completed since the last meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

- (i) To recommend to Finance and Policy Committee that £7,480.15 be allocated from the Town Hall Repairs and Maintenance budget to fund the required kitchen works (at a cost of £6800.15, with a further 10% contingency budget of £680 built in); and**
- (ii) To note the updated Town Inspection progress report.**

414.22 Progress Report: To receive a progress report on current projects and discuss any amendments, updates or additions required.

The Committee reviewed the list of current projects which had been assigned a Red/Amber/Green (RAG) priority rating since the last meeting.

It was noted that a number of projects were awaiting further information from external organisations in order to progress. In respect of the Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) it was confirmed that the Section 50 licence information had now been obtained, so resident consent for particular locations could now be sought. It was also noted that there would need to be a rotation schedule as the sign cannot be placed in one location for a period longer than five weeks.

RESOLVED that the Progress Report be noted.

415.22 Flood Relief Centre: To consider the option of designating Saxon Hall as a Flood Relief Centre.

The Committee took the view that in the absence of another willing provider in the Town, it would be reasonable for the Town Council to take the lead in providing a relief centre in the event of a flooding emergency. It was noted that the exact requirements would need to be fully scoped, but as a minimum it would be likely that an out-of-hours phone number would need to be provided, which would need to be monitored by a member of staff. There may also be a need to provide other items to assist any relief effort, such as sandbags. It was suggested that the Operations Manager could investigate the cost of flood diversion barriers.

RESOLVED that Saxon Hall be designated as a Flood Relief Centre.

RESOLVED to extend the meeting to the conclusion of the business set out in the agenda.

416.22 Budget for 2023/24: To set the Environment, Leisure and Recreation Committee Budget for the next financial year.

The Committee noted the resolution from Finance and Policy Committee at its meeting on 20 October 2022, advising Committees to assume budgetary increases in line with inflation at 10%, but with a view to identifying potential efficiencies that could mitigate this to a 5% increase.

The Committee considered that although there remained a number of important projects which were likely to escalate in cost due to inflationary pressures, some elements were aspirational rather than time critical, and on that basis the Committee would seek to carefully manage expenditure for the next financial year based on a 5% budget increase.

RESOLVED to request that the Environment, Leisure and Recreation Committee Budget for 2023/24 be increased by 5%.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.55pm.

Approved: (Chairman)

Meeting date:24 January 2023..... (Committee)