



MINUTES

Committee: Amenities Committee
Date and Time: Monday, 4 February 2019, 7:00pm
Venue: Younghayes Centre, 169 Younghayes Road EX5 7DR

Present

Cllr Les Bayliss
Cllr Kevin Blakey
Cllr Kim Bloxham
Cllr Colin Buchan (in the Chair)
Cllr Matt Osborn

Also Present

Janine Gardner, Cranbrook Town Council

A/19/1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Cllr Barry Rogers.

A/19/2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

A/19/3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2018 were accepted as a correct record.

A/19/4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No requests were made by members of the public (none present) to answer questions or give evidence in respect of the business on the agenda.

A/19/5 COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO SELF-BUILT PLAY STRUCTURES

The Committee considered a report detailing the Council's recommended policy approach to self-built play structures, such as unauthorised rope swings in the Country Park.

The Committee noted that the Council's grounds maintenance contractor already undertook annual walk-around tree surveys with a qualified surveyor to survey trees on Council land.

A response from the Council's insurers had also been received ahead of the meeting as follows:

"Whilst the situation is not ideal, it seems the Council are trying to respond to it proactively by inspecting and managing any self-build play areas on your land. Presuming you do this in accord with the Forestry Commission guidelines then Insurers can confirm they will accept this situation.

Signed:

25 March 2019

They would like to think that most individuals who use these items would recognise they do so at their own risk and that no one would expect these to operate to the same standards as professionally designed and installed equipment in designated play areas. However, they recommend the Council do not promote their actions externally so as to avoid giving the impression that they are accepting responsibility for any injuries [which] occur when people choose to use these items.”

It was proposed by Cllr Kim Bloxham, seconded by Cllr Matt Osborn and **resolved** to recommend to the Town Council:

- a) to adopt a general policy of permitting self-built play structures in order to facilitate the benefits associated with those.
- b) to follow the guidance published by the Forestry Commission (2006): *Rope Swings, Dens, Treehouses and Fires. A Risk Based Approach for Managers Facilitating Self-Built Play Structures and Activities in Woodland Settings* and to subject any self-built play structures to the Council’s in-house regime of play area inspections, i.e. weekly (routine) and quarterly (operational) inspections in order to ensure that they remain safe and fit for purpose.
- c) to carry out individual risk assessments in relation to each self-built play structure.
- d) to separately list trees with self-built play structures attached to them in the tree surveyor’s findings in future together with any detailed recommendations, e.g. more in-depth surveys.
- e) to not tolerate any swings over open water.

A/19/6 PLAY EQUIPMENT IN HAYES SQUARE

At its meeting on 17 December 2018, the Town Council had resolved to remove the trampoline in the Hayes Square play area because of continued vandalism, health and safety concerns and the need for recurring significant repair costs (ref. Council minute 18/313).

The Committee was asked to consider options for replacing the trampoline with a different piece of play equipment and to formulate a recommendation to that effect, including regarding community engagement about the proposal(s) and/or the decision(s).

The Committee recommended that any replacement piece of equipment would need to fit the environment, be compatible with the design of the area, fit the space and provide variety over and above the existing play equipment, be durable and low-maintenance with as few moving parts as possible.

It was proposed by Cllr Kim Bloxham, seconded by Cllr Kevin Blakey and **resolved** to invite the manufacturer of the current play equipment in Hayes Square to submit proposals for the replacement piece of play equipment which would be selected by the Council for a community vote and installed utilising the in-year contingency budget.

A/19/7 PLAY AREA INSPECTIONS

The Committee noted that following completion of the RPII Operational Playground Inspection Course in December 2018, the Council had commenced its in-house routine and operational play area inspections on 1 January 2019.

The meeting closed at 7.24pm.

Signed:

25 March 2019