

MINUTES

Committee: Amenities Committee
Date: Monday, 02 December 2024
Time: 7:00 pm
Venue: Younghayes Centre, 169 Younghayes Road EX5 7DR

Present

Cllr Kim Bloxham (Chair)
Cllr Les Bayliss
Cllr Kevin Blakey
Cllr Colin Buchan
Cllr Lisa Goudie
Cllr Kevin Kendall (from Item No.06)
Cllr Barry Rogers
Cllr Vincent Wilton (Vice Chair)

Also Present

Cllr Ray Bloxham
Andrew Chapman-New, Cranbrook Town Council
Alexandra Robinson, Cranbrook Town Council

A/24/63 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received, all members were present.

A/24/64 DECLARATION OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATION

No interests were declared or dispensations granted.

A/24/65 MINUTES

It was proposed by Cllr Vincent Wilton seconded by Cllr Les Bayliss and **resolved** to accept and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 2 September 2024 as a correct record.

A/24/66 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No Members of the public were in attendance.

A/24/67 AMENITIES MONITORING REPORT

The Committee noted the Amenities Monitoring Report.

A/24/68 PLAY STRATEGY WORKING GROUP - UPDATE

The Chairman referred to the updated report from the Play Strategy Working Group which incorporated the Committee's feedback from the last meeting. The Working Group had reviewed these matters and brought forward an updated draft Play Strategy and a draft Graffiti Policy for consideration. Members raised the following points as part of the Committee's consideration;

- An explanation of the 'Play Along the Way' approach to play park design to be included in the Strategy document.
- Proposed 'Keep Cranbrook Beautiful Campaign'
- The treatment of graffiti and what might appropriately be considered as 'Street Art' and to redefine the strategy to specify between commissioned artwork and non-offensive graffiti.

- Where graffiti is deemed to be of artistic value or some amenity value, a decision to be taken by the Chair and the Clerk in consultation with members of the Amenities Committee as to whether to be retained or not.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Vincent Wilton seconded by Cllr Colin Buchan and **resolved**

1. Note the update report from the Working Group.
2. Recommend to Council the approval of the updated Play Strategy subject to agreed amendment as follows:
 - a. An explanation of the 'Play Along the Way' approach to play park design to be included in the Strategy document.
 - b. Pursue development of 'Keep Cranbrook Beautiful' Campaign with Communications Officer
 - c. The treatment of graffiti to be contained within the Graffiti Policy and the Play Strategy to remove graffiti management and instead make reference to the specific policy.
3. Where graffiti is deemed to be of artistic value or some amenity value a decision on its retention would be taken by the Chair and the Clerk in consultation with members of the Amenities Committee.
4. Recommend to Council the approval of the draft Graffiti Policy subject to any agreed amendments.

A//24/69 RANGER REPORT

The Chairman referred members to the Ranger Report outlining the activities carried out since the last meeting and proposals for forthcoming activities.

Members commented on the following points:

- Ranger Educational sessions at the Education Campus
- Cranbrook Country Park Habitat Management Plan

The Committee noted the Ranger report.

A//24/70 COUNTRY PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN WORKING GROUP - UPDATE

Cllr Ray Bloxham reported that the Working Group had discussed the requirements needed for the updated Hedgerow Management Plan as a combined document with the Country Park Management Plan. Both documents had been progressed with a view to ascertain future management of the Country Park.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Kim Bloxham and **resolved** to

1. Note the report
2. The Working Group to bring a further report to the next meeting and for the matter to be retained as a regular standing item to the Committee

A//24/71 COUNTRY PARK – GREAT MEADOW - UPDATE

The Committee considered an updated report on the future of the designated Nature Reserve, located in the south western area of Great Meadow, Country Park. The Chairman updated members on the proposed development in neighbouring parcels and how this might impact the development of the Nature Reserve. The area was now part of the England Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO) Tree Planting project.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Kim Bloxham and **resolved** to

1. Note the report
2. Manage the land in accordance with successful natural colonisation by:
 - a. Controlling dense vegetation and weed growth
 - b. Supplementary planting without cost
 - c. Collecting seeds from nearby trees and shrubs and dispersing them.
3. Manage the land in accordance with the implementation of Habitat Management Plan.
4. The Ranger to obtain relevant information, topics and installation quotations for appropriate signage in the Nature Reserve.
5. Review the success of the Nature Reserve by monitoring its biodiversity.

A//24/72 COUNTRY PARK – GROUND MAINTENANCE WORKS

During the November Walkabout meeting with the Council's Grounds Maintenance Contractor the Ranger identified two areas for improvement and brought forward for the Committee to consider. The first was to widen the ditch outlet near the area known as the Event Space in Long Meadow. This would require the installation of a larger pipe and raise the surface level, to improve drainage and ground quality as the current arrangements are not working efficiently. It was noted that this should also improve the ground quality at the location which is a popular walking area and a route used by the Park Run. The second suggestion was to clear the access to a compost site in Stone Meadow. Members noted that the designation of a compost site is supported by the Habitat Management Plan. Following discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Barry Rogers seconded by Cllr Colin Buchan and **resolved** to

1. Note the report.
2. Approve the attached quotation and instruct the Council's Grounds Maintenance Contractor to carry out the two areas of improvement to the locations specified within Long Meadow and Stone Meadow as identified by the Ranger at a cost of £1,001.00 plus VAT.

A/24/73 MEMORIAL BENCHES - UPDATE

The Chairman referred to the updated report on the arrangements for the Memorial Bench Scheme. The Ranger reported that the application form and specification of suitable street furniture had been reviewed. Members raised points to be clarified, which included the terms and conditions of repairs and replacement, the options for payment and the number of words on a memorial plaque. Following discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Barry Rogers seconded by Cllr Vincent Wilton and **resolved** to

1. Note the report and attachments.
2. Delegate to the Clerk in consultation with the Chairman to finalise the document incorporating the points raised and to circulate a revised document to members of the Committee for agreement.

A/24/74 COMMUNITY SPEED WATCH UPDATE

The Committee expressed its thanks to the Community Speed Watch Volunteers for their efforts and involvement in the scheme and noted the report.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Barry Rogers seconded by Cllr Vincent Wilton and **resolved** to

1. Note the report
2. The Deputy Clerk to work with the Communications Officer to advertise the position of Community Speed Watch Co-ordinator.

A/23/75 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Due to the sensitive or confidential nature of the following item it was proposed by Cllr Kevin Blakey seconded by Cllr Barry Rogers and **resolved** to exclude the press and public from the remainder of the meeting on the basis of Section 1 paragraph 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 which stipulates that a council may, by resolution, exclude the public from a meeting (whether during the whole or part of the proceedings) whenever publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons stated in the resolution and arising from the nature of that business or of the proceedings.

Cllr Lisa Goudie recorded a vote against.

A/24/76 CRANNAFORD ALLOTMENTS – CONDITIONS OF RENTAL

The Committee reviewed the Conditions of Rental for plot holders at Crannaford Allotments. The report was brought forward to improve and streamline the guidance document. Members noted some typographical errors to be corrected and discussed the appropriate use of power tools on the allotment sites.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Vincent Wilton, seconded by Cllr Les Bayliss and **resolved** to:

1. Update the layout of the conditions of hire and clearly set out rules and guidance in one place, in particular Section 5 "Behaviour on Site" to ensure that the information was contained in one section of the document
2. Amend the document to incorporate corrections raised by members.
3. Agree to the use of power tools, to be permitted only during the hours of 09:00-18:00 Monday – Sunday.

4. Defer the purchase of the noticeboard and to delegate to the Property Administrator in consultation with the Clerk and the Chairman to bring forward the most cost effective way to proceed.

A/24/77 CRANNAFORD ALLOTMENTS – ALLOTMENT MANAGEMENT

The Committee reviewed the fees and charges for the Crannaford Allotments for 2025/26 and beyond. Following discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Kevin Blakey, seconded by Cllr Kevin Kendall and resolved to:

Implement an increase of 4% to the plot rental charges in April 2025/26; charges would be £78.00 and £39.00 respectively from 1st April 2025.

A/24/78 COUNTRY PARK – MEADOW GRASS – EVALUATION

The Chairman reminded Members of the decision to instruct a contractor to cut, bale and remove the Meadow grass during the Summer 2024. Since the works had been completed for the season, the Committee were in a position to evaluate the project. On the basis of the evaluation, it was proposed by Cllr Kim Bloxham and **resolved** to:

1. Note the report.
2. The Ranger to bring back details of the proposal from Lee Farm Services for 2025, together with a quotation to the next meeting of the Committee.
3. The quotation to include two cuts of the meadow grass in the year (Spring and late Summer) to prevent the ground becoming over nutritious, as this would not promote biodiversity.

Cllr Lisa Goudie abstained from the vote.

The meeting closed at 21:01