

Englefield Green Committee

Tuesday 24 June 2008 7.00pm

**at the Jurgen Centre
Harvest Road
Englefield Green**

Members of the Committee

Councillors D R Hamilton, Miss M N Heath, M T Kusneraitis, H W V Meares, J W C Perschke and P I Roberts

Residents' Representatives: Mrs L Lawson and Mr A E Panter

AGENDA

Notes:

- 1) Any report on the Agenda involving confidential information (as defined by section 100A(3) of the Local Government Act 1972) must be discussed in private. Any report involving exempt information (as defined by section 100I of the Local Government Act 1972), whether it appears in Part 1 or Part 2 below, may be discussed in private but only if the Committee so resolves.
- 2) The relevant 'background papers' are listed after each report in Part 1. Enquiries about any of the Agenda reports and background papers should be directed in the first instance to **Mr B A Fleckney, Administration and Leisure Department, Committee Section, Runnymede Civic Centre, Station Road, Addlestone KT15 2AH (Tel: Direct Line: 01932 425620). (Email: bernard.fleckney@runnymede.gov.uk).**
- 3) Agendas and Minutes are available on a subscription basis. For details, please ring Mr B A Fleckney on 01932 425620. Agendas and Minutes for all the Council's Committees may also be viewed on www.runnymede.gov.uk.

LIST OF MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

PART I

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PART II

Matters involving Exempt or Confidential Information in respect of which reports have not been made available for public inspection.

- a) Exempt Information
(No reports to be considered under this heading)
- b) Confidential Information
(No reports to be considered under this heading)

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

To elect a Chairman for the Municipal Year 2008/09.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

To elect a Vice-Chairman for the Municipal Year 2008/09.

3. MINUTES

To confirm and sign, as a correct record, the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 27 February 2008 (attached at Appendix 'A').

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

If Members have an interest in an item please record the interest on the form circulated with this Agenda and hand it to the Legal Representative or Committee Administrator at the start of the meeting. A supply of the form will also be available from the Committee Administrator at meetings.

Members who have previously declared interests which are recorded in the Minutes to be considered at this meeting need not repeat the declaration when attending the meeting. Members need take no further action unless the item in which they have an interest becomes the subject of debate, in which event the Member must leave the room if the interest is personal and prejudicial.

6. MRS BAIRSTOW (RETIRING RESIDENTS' REPRESENTATIVE) AND MRS L LAWSON (REPLACEMENT RESIDENTS' REPRESENTATIVE)

Mrs Maria Bairstow had resigned as one of the residents' representatives and Annual Council at its meeting on 15 May 2008 had reappointed Mr Panter and appointed Mrs Lisa Lawson as the replacement residents' representative.

(FOR INFORMATION)

7. ENGLEFIELD GREEN PLAY AREA EXTENSION (DAL)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 **To provide an update on progress in obtaining the various consents for the play area extension.**

2. Background Information

2.1 The Englefield Green Committee at its meeting on 28 June 2006 received a petition signed by 54 children and 160 adults asking for the provision of play facilities on the Green for the over 5's due to the existing play area only being able to cater for younger children.

2.2 Officers were asked to investigate options for a playground extension to cater for an older age group and report back to the Committee on how this could be provided for and funded.

2.3 At the meeting on the 22 November 2006 officers provided some illustrative proposals for an extension and details of the estimated cost which was approximately £45,000. An initial expression of interest was made to the Association for the Improvement of Runnymede (AIR) for this funding through landfill taxes as there were no capital resources available to cover this investment into the facilities. AIR advised the Committee that the project was one that could potentially be funded but before an application was made all relevant permissions for the project would be required.

2.4 The plans for the play area were agreed in principle at the meeting of the Committee on the 7 February 2007. This was pending necessary consents being obtained and the provision of CCTV and lighting to the area, to address concerns from local residents about an increase in anti social behaviour from the new extension.

- 2.5 Designs for the play area incorporating the required CCTV and lighting were developed to enable the various consents to be applied for, these being;
- Planning permission for the lighting and CCTV, but not the play area itself as this is permitted development.
 - Permission from the planning inspectorate for the whole scheme due to the site being on common land.
 - Permission from the Crown Estate who own the land.

3. Report

- 3.1 The application to the planning inspectorate was made in February 2008 and the required notices were displayed and advertised to allow residents to make comments for or against the scheme. Details of the comments back to the planning inspectorate were as follows;

- Total responses to the consultation 59
- Numbers against the whole project – 27
- Numbers for the project – 12
- Against the CCTV and Lighting but little or no reference to play area – 20

A letter of objection from the Campaign to Protect Rural England is attached at Appendix 'B'. Sport England also objected on the grounds that it may affect the future of the Cricket Club.

- 3.2 The planning inspectorate advised the Council that based on the number of responses to the project, in particular those against the scheme, a public inquiry would need to take place to determine if permission was to be granted. Officers did respond to the inspectorate and asked if the removal of the CCTV and lighting from the existing application would negate the need for the inquiry but were advised this would make no difference due to the number of overall responses. Officers sought further clarification on whether a brand new application without the CCTV and lighting included would be considered. It was confirmed that this would be the case but that everyone making representation on the first application would be advised and their original representation could be considered with the new application if requested.

- 3.3 The planning application for the lighting and CCTV was made and then withdrawn when it became apparent that one of the main concerns from residents was the aesthetic impact these elements would have on the green. This was despite initial resident's feedback requesting the CCTV and lighting be incorporated into the project design. The situation is currently that there are no plans to resubmit a planning application for the CCTV. There would be no need to submit a further application for the lighting as it was confirmed that this is permitted development.

- 3.4 The Crown Estates have advised Council Officers that, in principle, they would support the Committee with the project providing they were able to obtain all the necessary consents.

- 3.5 Officers are of the view that a public inquiry will be a very time consuming and potentially costly process, after which there is no guarantee that the application would be successful. As funding for the project has still yet to be sourced it has been recommended that this course of action not be pursued.

4. Council Policy

- 4.1 The Strategic Plan states that the Council will 'promote healthy lifestyles through the greater use of parks'

5. Resource Implications

- 5.1 The initial estimate for the project was £45,000, to be funded through external contributions from AIR and the local County Councillor. Neither of these are confirmed sources of funding as the various consents are required before they can be pursued. The latest estimated costs for the play area is £36,350, CCTV £10,900 and lighting £6,300. Removing the CCTV and

lighting from the scheme would significantly reduce the cost of the overall project and the funding required to be applied for from landfill operators.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -

the Committee consider the following options available and advise officers of their preferred course of action;

- i) The application to the planning inspectorate for the installation of the extended play area be withdrawn.**
- ii) The existing application is pursued and the Council agree to participate in a planning inquiry.**
- iii) A new application is made to the planning inspectorate without the CCTV and lighting elements bearing in mind that representations on the initial application could be considered.**

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

Leisure Services Project Files

8. GRASS CUTTING (DAL)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 **To consider options for future maintenance of the cricket outfield.**

2. Background Information

2.1 Grass cutting on the green is provided through the Council's Grounds Maintenance Contract. This provides for grass cutting, shrub maintenance, hedge cutting and seasonal bedding at Council sites throughout the Borough. The contract is for six years and runs until December 2010, with an option to extend beyond this date. There have been problems this season with the timing and the quality of grass cutting provided by the contractor in several locations across the borough and this has been the case on the Green. Officers are dealing with these failings by enforcing the terms of the contract and the situation is improving.

2.2 At times the Cricket Club has expressed concern about the standard of grass cutting on the outfield which is cut at the same standard and frequency as the rest of the Green, i.e. fortnightly from March to September with a final cut in October. The club maintains the cricket square and prepares the wickets for matches.

2.3 In May 2006 the cricket outfield was damaged as a result of heavy rainfall during the occupation of the green by one of the annual fairs and the subsequent movement of the fair's vehicles on the wet surface. This damage was repaired by the Council, utilising the deposit paid by the fair, and further damage has been avoided by re-locating this fair to the southern end of the green. A full report on the location of this years fairs and their impact on the green and the surrounding area will be presented for the Committee's consideration at its meeting in November.

3. Report

3.1 In March a site meeting was arranged with The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) who had been approached by the cricket club. This meeting was attended by the Chairman and Council Officers and its purpose was to assess the condition of the pitch and to evaluate arrangements for its maintenance and the positioning of the annual fun fairs. The cricket club also met with the ECB's pitch inspector which resulted in the ECB producing a report which is attached at 'C'. A follow up meeting between the ECB, the Chairman and Officers was scheduled for early June, to discuss the pitch report and look at the improvements identified. A verbal report on this meeting and the options being considered will be given at the meeting.

- 3.2 Officers have been looking at a number of options for the future maintenance of the outfield including continuing with the current grass cutting arrangements, investigating arrangements whereby the cricket club maintain the outfield in addition to the square and looking at the possibility and costs of increasing the frequency to weekly cuts and investigating whether the Club would contribute to these costs. A verbal update will be given at the meeting.
- 3.3 **The Committee is asked to consider these options at the meeting and advise Officers of their preferred approach.**

9. ENGLEFIELD GREEN CRICKET SQUARE (DAL)

At the request of Councillor Roberts, and to inform some of the newer Members of the Committee of the reasoning for the previous relocation of the cricket square, the extract from the Minutes of the Englefield Green Committee held on 28 November 2000, is set out below:-

"Management of the Green - Cricket

(Ref: Minutes of Englefield Green Committee, November 1999, page 728, para 495)

The Committee gave further consideration to the best means of reducing the risk of injury to the public arising from the playing of cricket on the Green.

An independent risk assessment had previously highlighted the dangers to children in the newly refurbished play area and users of St. Jude's Road from stray cricket balls. Upon the recommendation of the risk assessors it had therefore been agreed that a system of 6m high temporary netting and mounting poles should be erected along the boundaries of the cricket field with St. Jude's Road and the play area. However, Members now noted that it was not practical for Englefield Green Cricket Club to erect the netting before every game and dismantle it immediately afterwards as originally intended owing to the time consuming and labour intensive nature of the process.

In view of the risks that had been identified the Club could not be allowed to continue to use the existing square without the safeguard of the netting. However, the Committee, in expressing concern at the terms of a petition being raised by the Club, emphasised its continuing commitment to the use of the Green for cricket. It was considered that the only means of preserving this tradition was to move the square northwards to the point where the Green was widest, a solution which had previously been rejected due to the estimated cost of £30,000. The risk assessors had confirmed that this would significantly reduce the danger for both children in the play area and road users.

Members recognised that in the unlikely event of an accident there was no guarantee that the Council would be free from all liability in negligence or nuisance. Nevertheless, it was felt that relocation of the square would give the Council a much better chance of showing that it had complied with any duty of care. Temporary fencing could be erected to protect the square during the annual fairs on the Green. The fairs would be able to remain largely in their normal location, with only a small proportion of the attractions displaced further south on the Green.

Members noted that the Cricket Club was satisfied with the proposed location of the new square. Provisional agreement had already been reached with the Club for the Council to undertake the capital works in return for a rental payment of £2,200 p.a. for the first two years and £2,500 p.a. thereafter. This would ensure that there would be no net revenue cost to the Council in carrying out the works. The Club, which would need to find an alternative venue for the 2001 season whilst the new square bedded in, would continue to be responsible for the maintenance of the pitch.

RESOLVED that -

- i) subject to ii), the cricket square be relocated northwards to the widest point of the Green;**
- ii) the Executive Committee be requested to recommend a capital estimate in the sum of £30,000 in respect of the re-siting of the cricket square; and**
- iii) the Englefield Green Cricket Club be granted a licence to use the Green upon payment of £2,200 p.a. for the first 2 years and £2,500 p.a.**

thereafter, and subject to such other terms and conditions as the Borough Secretary and Leisure Services Officer deems appropriate."

(FOR INFORMATION)

Background Papers

None stated

10. BRUNEL SITE - DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS (DAL)

A planning application is expected to be submitted in July 2008 for development of the Brunel site.

In the event that any such application involves alterations to the road network on the Green, consent of the Crown Estate and this Council, as lessee, would be required.

A report would be made to this Committee, as and when appropriate. If necessary a special meeting would be arranged with the agreement of the Chairman.

(FOR INFORMATION)

Background Papers

None

11. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

If the Committee is minded to consider any of the foregoing reports in private session, it is the

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that –

where appropriate the press and public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of reports under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the reports in question would be likely to involve disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in the appropriate paragraphs of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

(TO RESOLVE)

PART II

Matters involving Exempt or Confidential Information in respect of which reports have not been made available for public inspection

a) Exempt Information

(No reports to be considered under this heading).

b) Confidential Information

(No reports to be considered under this heading).