

A MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT BOARD

WAS HELD ON 30 OCTOBER 2006

The Mayor (Councillor Mrs Cully)(ex-officio); Chairman of the Policy and Organisation Board (Councillor Hook)(ex-officio)(P), Councillors Ms Ballard (P), Carr (P), Champion (P), Clinton (P), Dickson (P), Edgar (P), Kimber (P), Smith, Wright (P) and Mrs Wright (P)

In accordance with Standing Orders, it was reported that notice had been received that Councillor Foster-Reed would replace Councillor Smith for this meeting.

16. APOLOGIES

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were submitted on behalf of The Mayor and Councillor Smith.

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

18. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Board meeting held on 4 September 2006 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

19. DEPUTATIONS

It was reported that no deputations had been received.

20. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No questions had been received from the public.

PART I

21. ANN'S HILL CEMETERY – MEMORIAL TESTING RESULTS

Members had received a report of the Leisure and Cultural Services Manager (a copy of which is affixed in the Minute Book as Appendix A), which informed the Board of the outcome of the memorial testing procedure that had been conducted at Ann's Hill Cemetery earlier this year.

The Council had conducted a survey to assess the stability of all memorials in the Cemetery and it was reported that the work had addressed the health and safety concerns and the risk assessment had identified the issues that the Council would need to consider. The report outlined the options available to the Council for remedial action.

The costs of the initial survey and interim works had exceeded the original estimated budget and at present there was no capital or revenue budget provision for any future works. The capital programme included a budget of £30,000 in respect of this matter against which £59,000 had been spent to date. The remedial cost options available to the Council outlined in the report were all unbudgeted and, if approved, would impact on the Council's capital resources and revenue budget.

The legal considerations for the Council and powers as the Local Burial Authority, under the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977, were also detailed in the report.

A Member expressed the view that consideration of this matter should be debated by Council and that this Board should refer any recommendations to full Council. The majority of Members of the Board felt that a resolution was within their terms of reference and therefore consideration should be given to advising officers of recommendations for action. Under Standing Order 6.10 (Minority Order), two Members requested that the matter be referred to full Council.

Notwithstanding the Minority Order and that the Borough Solicitor had not received any requests for deputations, Members agreed that Mr Bone, a local resident, could address the Board. Mr Bone made the following points:

- headstones were the ownership of families concerned;
- it would be theft if the Council removed them;
- if headstones were not replaced or repaired would they be taken away?
- it was emotional blackmail to suggest they would be removed and tantamount to vandalism.

The Chairman read out to the Board the contents of a letter received from Mrs B Sharp, a local resident, referring to the manner in which the procedure had been carried out.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Manager explained in detail the reasons, on health and safety grounds and the Council's duty as owners of the cemetery, for undertaking the memorial testing, the extensive consultation that had ensued and the comprehensive methods of communication, how the work had been undertaken with sensitivity, and the number of memorials tested and of those repaired.

A Member proposed a recommendation, which was duly seconded, as follows:

'That, on this occasion, the Council pays for the cost of reinstatement of gravestones laid down or temporarily staked as a result of this process.'

The recommendation was put to the meeting and declared LOST.

Two Members reiterated their wish that this matter be referred to full Council under Standing Order 6.10 (Minority Order).

RECOMMENDED: That Council be requested to consider the outcome of the memorial testing procedure that was conducted at Ann's Hill Cemetery earlier this year and advise officers of its recommendation for action.

PART II

22. TEMPORARY HEALTH CENTRE, JUNCTION ROWNER LANE AND GRANGE LANE

The Board considered a report of the Development Services Manager seeking approval for the renewal of a lease of land at the junction of Rowner Lane and Grange Lane for a period from 31 October 2005 to 31 December 2010.

The Hampshire (formerly Fareham and Gosport) Primary Care Trust had approached the Council with a request to renew the lease to enable continued use of the accommodation at temporary health centre buildings in order to decant some of the facilities from Gosport War Memorial Hospital whilst works were taking place at the hospital.

The Board were reminded that the PCT had originally proposed using the building for a limited period only whilst the Rowner Health Centre was being built. A Member expressed the view that, as this was situated in a conservation area, the land should be returned to an open space and that an extension to the lease should not be granted. He commented that, rather than further developing the Gosport War Memorial Hospital, better use of the excellent facilities at the Royal Hospital Haslar should be encouraged.

Members were mindful of the Council's vote of 'no confidence' in the PCT at its meeting on 20 January 2005 and confirmed their view that Haslar should be promoted at every opportunity, in compliance with the wishes of the community.

Following a vote on the recommendation, the Board were unanimously against approving an extension to the lease.

RESOLVED: That the proposed granting of a lease of land at the junction of Rowner Lane and Grange Lane to the Hampshire Primary Care Trust for a period commencing on 31 October 2005 and terminating on 31 December 2010 be not approved.

23. ELSON AND LEESLAND ALLOTMENTS

The Leisure and Cultural Services Manager submitted a report seeking approval for the use of funding received by the Council from the sale of land at Camden Allotments in order to upgrade the existing perimeter boundary fencing at both Elson and Leesland Allotments.

The Allotment Stakeholders Consultative Group had identified that the existing perimeter fencing at those locations was in need of urgent improvement and provided only a low level of security for the sites. As the Group did not have any delegated authority, it was necessary to submit any proposals requiring funding to the Board for approval.

RESOLVED: That the expenditure of £12,400 from the funding received from the sale of land at Camden Allotments be approved, in order to upgrade fencing at Elson and Leesland Allotments.

24. IMPROVEMENTS TO LEE-ON-THE-SOLENT PLAY AREA, LEESLAND PARK AND ROWNER BOWLING CLUB

Consideration was given to a report of the Leisure and Cultural Services Manager seeking approval for the use of Developer Contributions in order to undertake a range of improvement works to leisure facilities at the locations identified above.

The report outlined the proposed improvements and identified how they would address any risks that had been assessed with the current provision. Each of the proposals set out in the report sought to enhance and upgrade equipment and security, contributing to an improved quality of facilities for residents local to the areas identified. As such, the schemes were within the permitted use of planning developer contributions.

A Member expressed disappointment at the lack of developer contributions that were available for the Bridgemary area and suggested that Groundwork Solent be invited to a future meeting of the Board to inform Members of progress on work being undertaken in the Borough.

RESOLVED: That:

(a) the use of £48,600 from Developer Contribution funding for improvements to Lee-on-the-Solent Recreation Ground Play Area, Leesland Park and Rowner Bowling Club be approved.

(b) Groundwork Solent be invited to attend a future meeting of the Board to update Members on work being carried out in the Borough.

25. FORTON RECREATION GROUND

The Board considered a report of the Leisure and Cultural Services Manager seeking approval for the use of additional Developer Contributions in order to continue the upgrade of the open space facility at Forton Recreation Ground by providing an additional pathway and a Teenshelter.

The route of the additional proposed pathway, as shown in the report, would overcome concerns of an informal pathway being formed over the existing grassed area and would facilitate the current users of the recreation ground.

The installation of the Teenshelter would assist in providing a recognised meeting place for youngsters using the recreation ground facilities.

RESOLVED: That the use of £22,000 from the East Gosport Children's Playing Space fund, which currently has a balance of £34,177 of which £12,210 related to sites where development has not yet started, be approved.

26. DEDICATION OF LAND ALONG HOWE ROAD

The Board considered a report of the Leisure and Cultural Services Manager seeking approval for the dedication of the area of land along Howe Road to Hampshire County Council for the use of the public as a public highway.

It was proposed that the portion of land incorporating the footway verge and street lighting, referred to in the report and shown on the plan, be dedicated as public highway. Hampshire County Council had expressed its willingness to undertake maintenance of the land within its role as highway authority.

If approved a Deed of Dedication would be drawn up as a formal recognition of this arrangement.

RESOLVED: That the area of land along Howe Road, referred to in the Leisure and Cultural Services Manager's report, be dedicated for use by the public as a public highway.

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and concluded at 7.12pm

CHAIRMAN