

## **GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a Meeting of the General Services Committee held at 6.30pm on Tuesday, 4 June 2013 in the Town Hall, Banbury.

Present: Councillor Clarke (Chairman)  
Councillors: Donaldson, Harrison, Kilsby, Mepham, Morris, Parish and Ross.

Alternate Members: Councillor Hussain (for Councillor Johnson); Councillor Milne Home (for Councillor Bonner); and Councillor Woodcock (for Councillor Beere).

Officers: Mark Recchia (Town Clerk)  
Mark Hassall (Deputy Town Clerk/RFO)  
Mike Hall (Recreation & Amenities Manager)

**GS.4/13 Apologies for Absence**  
Councillors Beere, Bonner and Johnson.

**GS.5/13 Declarations of Interest**  
None.

**GS.6/13 Minutes of the last Meeting**  
**IT WAS RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meetings held on 2 April 2013 and 14 May 2013 be approved as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

**GS.7/13 Parks and Open Spaces Monitoring Report**  
The Committee considered a report on the condition of the parks, recreation grounds and open spaces in Banbury, including comments and complaints received, and on the work of the Park Ranger Service. The number of queries, comments and complaints received between March and May was 31, being a reduction against the same period in the preceding year. A list of tasks undertaken by the Park Rangers was also appended to the report. One of the team had recently retired and the team was currently down to 2. However a new Ranger had now been appointed. Richard Slatter, who had joined from Sanctuary Housing with a construction background, would be commencing work with the team on the 17 June to bring it back up to 3.

### Hanwell Fields Cricket Square

The Recreation & Amenities Manager advised Members that under the Section 106 Agreement in place it was beholden upon Banbury Town Council to maintain the cricket facility at the site, notwithstanding the current lack of interest from clubs in using the facility on a regular basis. As such consideration had been given to reinstating the artificial wicket. The UK's leading manufacturer of artificial wickets was therefore invited to visit the site and give their opinion on the required works to bring it up to a reasonable standard. To bring the wicket back to a playable condition the minimum cost would be £2,035.00 although it would be more practical to undertake the full reinstatement of the area at a total price of £3,672.00.

Moorfields Recreation Ground

The Recreation & Amenities Manager reminded Members that it was agreed in the November 2012 meeting that Moorfields Park play area would be the latest site to be redeveloped, which followed on from Browning Road, Trinity, St Louis Meadow, Princess Diana and People's Parks.

As part of the refurbishment of the site some of the better items would be reused at Hastings Park and Dover Avenue play areas if cost effective to relocate them. In addition to the play equipment the project would include the replacement of the fitness equipment around the park, reinstatement of the paths in the play area and the removal of all loose-fill safer surfaces.

Consultation had now been completed with local children from Dashwood and St Leonards Schools. Following this consultation the contract would be going out to tender in early June for installation of new equipment to be undertaken in September to avoid installing equipment during the school holidays.

Grounds Maintenance Working Group

Members also noted that consultants had been sought to aid the Council in the retendering process for its Grounds Maintenance Contract, with 3 submitting proposals to undertake the work. These had been invited to give a presentation to the Working Group on Tuesday 18th June.

**IT WAS RESOLVED:**

- (1) to note the report; and
- (2) to agree to the works (options 3 and 4 in the report) being undertaken on the artificial wicket at Hanwell Fields Recreation Ground to provide a playable and safe surface.

**GS.8/13      Budget Monitoring Report – Income & Expenditure**

The Committee considered a report prepared by the Deputy Town Clerk/RFO comparing year-to-date income and expenditure with the projected annual budget to 22 May 2013.

The Deputy Town Clerk/RFO responded to a range of detailed questions from Members relating to various budget codes. He drew attention in particular to the fact that overall the Committee's expenditure was within forecast.

Principal items of note were:

- Cemeteries under budget by £5k, principally due to higher activity related income.
- Parks & Open Spaces underspend of £2k. Timing of tree works in Peoples Park were awaiting the receipt of related grant income. This was more than offset by the timing of expenditure on playground equipment repairs and the purchase of floral bedding.
- Horton View overspends of £1k related to higher than anticipated prior year utility charges.

- Capital costs underspends of £9k referred to the timing of retention payments related to Browning Road Park refurbishment.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** to receive and note the Income and Expenditure report.

**GS.9/13**

**Confidential Business Exclusion**

It was proposed by the Chairman and WAS RESOLVED that, in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the item set out below on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the general interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

The Meeting ended at 7.05pm.

**SUMMARY of items discussed during confidential session**

**GS.10/13      Grounds Maintenance Working Group**

The Notes of the Grounds Maintenance Working Group meeting held on 4 March 2013 had been circulated to all Members.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** to receive and note the Notes of the Grounds Maintenance Working Group meeting held on 4 March 2013.