

LEISURE, ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Of a virtual meeting on Wednesday 13 January from 7.30pm to 8.20pm

Councillors present:

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| Chris Lloyd (Lead Member for Leisure) | Phil Williams (Lead Member |
| Roger Seabourne (Lead Member Community | Environmental Services and |
| Safety and Partnerships) | Sustainability) |
| Paula Hiscocks | Alison Scarth |
| David Major | Jon Tankard |
| David Sansom | Alison Wall |

Also in attendance:

Ray Figg – Head of Community Services
Malcolm Clarke – Waste and Environment Manager
Rebecca Young – Acting Head of Community Partnerships
Joanna Hewitson - LA1 Contract / Project Manager
Jayne LaGrua – Principal Lawyer
John Rumble – Hertfordshire County Council
Andy Hardstaff – Hertfordshire County Council
Sherrie Ralton - Committee Manager

Councillor Phil Williams in the Chair

LEC 41/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Stephen King and Donna Duncan with Councillor David Sansom as substitute member for Cllr Duncan.

LEC 42/20 MINUTES

The minutes of the Leisure, Environment and Community Committee meeting held on Wednesday 25 November 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and would be signed by the Chair of the meeting when it was possible to do.

LEC 43/20 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None received.

The questions received from Members of the Committee had been answered provided or would have within the next 10 working days. These would be circulated to all Committee Members.

LEC 44/20 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

To receive any declarations of interest.

LEISURE

LEC 45/20 TO RECEIVE A PETITION UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 18

The Committee received a petition signed by 347 residents which stated:

“Heavy rain regularly results in sewage flooding the Harefield Road area in Rickmansworth in Herts. It floods out of the ground near a local primary school and blocks a main road; trapping local residents in their homes as they defend their property from the foul water. It also impacts a long term care home for adults and sheltered accommodation.

When the water is pumped away, a brown residue is left on the roads and footpaths posing a health hazard to pedestrians and children walking to nearby St Mary's Primary School.

We need everyone responsible to get together to find a permanent solution to this problem. As well as responding rapidly with road closures and support for vulnerable people we need other agencies to stop the flooding as quickly as possible and invest in the infrastructure which is failing.”

In accordance with Rule 18(5) of the Council's Constitution, the Lead Petitioner presented the petition to the Committee.

A representative from the Lead Local Flood Authority at Hertfordshire County Council explained that they had powers under the Flood and Water Management Act to deal with these matters and a duty to investigate flooding. This would not usually include sewer flooding but would in this circumstances due to the fact that the flooding was due to excess rain and they were fairly certain, due to the amount of rain that had fallen that weekend, that this would have been the causal factor.

At the beginning of December they had written to 104 addresses in: Harefield Road, Heron Close, Malm Close, Sherfield Avenue, Moss Close and Stockers Farm Road to determine how many properties were impacted by the flooding. They had received 14 responses reporting being affected by the flooding, with 13 described as external property flooding. Because of the effect on the highway, under their policy in the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, this would trigger a Section 19 investigation, however this did not come with great punitive or enforcement powers. It was there to set out what happened, who might be able to do something about it and whether they intend to do something about it. They would try to take it beyond the legal minimum and have some recommendations so people knew what the next stages would be. They would now start to gather evidence, put the event into context, and develop a draft report which they would share with the relevant Risk Management Authorities, which in this case was largely Thames Water although the

Council and County Council were also both Risk Management Authorities. Once the draft report had been shared with the Risk Management Authorities and they were happy with the content and discussed any differences it would then be shared with affected residents and they would support this sharing with a public meeting. This would be convened dependent upon how many people were involved. It could be through this Committee if that was felt to be a useful way of doing it. Following the public meeting having received feedback from the public they would then finalise the report and publish the report (which was legally required). Their interpretation of publishing was that it would go onto the County Council website.

In terms of this investigation, a large part would come from Thames Water because they had the knowledge about the network and it was not a localised issue. It was not just the rain in Rickmansworth but a much wider issue with water getting into the sewer network. It was not known the catchment area served by the pumping station but it would be quite a large area going up towards Watford. This investigation would bring an overview of the flooding and that would be the structure for the information from Thames Water rather than just Thames Water disseminating the information themselves.

The Chair of the meeting advised that the Committee did have concerns about the flooding and thanked the Lead Petitioner for submitting the petition and bringing it to the meeting. Together with Hertfordshire County Council, Three Rivers would be doing their best for the affected residents.

RESOLVED:

Noted receipt of the petition and that a letter would be sent to the Lead Petitioner confirming receipt

LEC 46/20 UPDATED CEMETERIES RULES AND REGULATIONS

Proposed amendments are made to the *'The Woodcock Hill & Chorleywood Road Cemeteries: Rules and Regulations Updated July 2018'*.

The Chair advised that the Committee were being asked to accept the two changes to the rules/regulations, to add Covid as a notifiable disease, and the addition that the BW Foundation had been the leaseholder at the Cemetery since 1988.

The Chair advised that only these two changes were being discussed at the meeting and had requested that Officers prepare a full report on the Cemetery to come forward to the Committee at a future meeting.

In accordance with Rule 35(B) of the Council Constitution, a member of the public spoke against the recommendation.

Members raised the following points:

Could the member of the public forward their speech to the Council so it could be used in the report that would come to the Committee at a future meeting? They asked if the question on the Lawn Cemetery could be addressed. The Member was in favour of the word Covid being included to the rules/regulations.

The Principal Lawyer advised that the Lawn Cemetery Policy was not a new policy and had been in existence for approximately five years.

Why was Covid being made a notifiable disease a year after the issue? If the Lawn Cemetery had been so for five years why was it now part of the report? The report mentioned that this was a box ticking exercise but why did the terms and conditions not reflect that? The Member had submitted two written questions prior to the meeting, including a request for the Committee to have background information on the BW Foundation. The Chair advised that this information would be provided in the full report.

Did the Council have a break clause in the 125 year lease agreement?

Councillor Alison Wall proposed a recorded vote on the recommendations be undertaken, duly seconded by Councillor Paula Hiscocks.

The Principal Lawyer clarified that it was a requirement of BW Foundation's lease that they had to comply with the Council's rules and regulations.

A Member said the changes within the report were to clarify that the BW Foundation were running that part of the cemetery as this was not currently clear in the documentation. They said a very thorough investigation would be carried out as to whether the lease had been complied with and if it had why it had caused so much distress and upset. Also why, until very recently, had there not been any publication of BW Foundation rules and guidelines. The Member was in agreement that the documentation should be made up to date with the situation.

Councillor Roger Seabourne proposed an amendment, duly seconded by Councillor Chris Lloyd to accept the recommendation in the report.

Councillor Roger Seabourne then proposed a further amendment to the previous motion, seconded Councillor Phil Williams that a full report be presented to the Leisure, Environment and Community Committee at a future meeting.

Councillor Chris Lloyd proposed that there be one vote to approve the changes outlined within the report and commit to a full report to be brought to a future meeting.

Councillor Paula Hiscocks proposed an amendment that the report be split into three parts and three votes, duly seconded by Councillor Alison Wall as follows:

- List of notifiable diseases to include Covid.
- That reference to the BW Foundation lease be included in the Rules and Regulations
- A Full report to come to the Committee

The Chair then took the three votes in the order proposed.

On being put to the Committee the recommendation for the List of notifiable illnesses to include Covid was declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being 9 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions. In accordance with the request for a recorded vote (Rule 23(3) the voting was as follows:

For: Councillors Chris Lloyd, Roger Seabourne, Phil Williams, Paula Hiscocks, David Major, Alison Scarth, Jon Tankard, Alison Wall and David Sansom

Against: 0

Abstentions: 0

On being put to the Committee the recommendation for reference to the BW Foundation Lease be included in the Rules and Regulations was declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being 6 For, 3 Against and 0 Abstentions. In accordance with the request for a recorded vote (Rule 23(3)) the voting was as follows:

For: Councillors Chris Lloyd, Roger Seabourne, Phil Williams, David Major, Alison Scarth, Jon Tankard

Against: Councillors Paula Hiscocks, Alison Wall and David Sansom

Abstentions: 0

On being put to the Committee the recommendation for a full report on the Woodcock Hill Cemetery to come to a future meeting of the Committee was declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being 9 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions. In accordance with the request for a recorded vote (Rule 23(3)) the voting was as follows:

For: Councillors Chris Lloyd, Roger Seabourne, Phil Williams, Paula Hiscocks, David Major, Alison Scarth, Jon Tankard, Alison Wall and David Sansom.

Against: 0

Abstentions: 0

RESOLVED:

1. That the list of notifiable diseases include COVID;
2. That reference to the BW Foundation lease be included in the Rules and Regulation and
3. That a full report on the Woodcock Hill Cemetery be brought to a future committee.

LEC 47/20 WORK PROGRAMME

To review and make necessary changes to the Committee's work programme.

The following points were raised by Members:

Under item 8, the Sustainable Tree Resilience Strategy, it was noted that a Principal Tree and Landscape Officer had started working for the Council in December and wondered when a report would come forward to the Committee. The Head of Community Services said Officers would update the work programme for the next meeting on when a report may come forward although it was noted the Strategy would need to be presented to the Policy and Resources Committee as it would be a new policy. The timescales would be clearer at the end of March.

A Member asked for flooding and sewage spillage in the Chess River to be included in the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. The Acting Head of Community

Partnerships advised there was a section in the Strategy on water and the Project Manager was sitting on the Water Partnership at Hertfordshire County Council.

The report on the Cemetery would be added to the Work Programme and would be brought to a future meeting, date to be confirmed.

On being put to the vote, the recommendation in the report, including the above amendments were declared CARRIED by the Chair having been agreed by general assent.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee agreed the items included in the Work Programme to include the amendments.

CHAIR