

Central Area Committee – 6 March 2008

Minutes of the meeting of the **Central Area Committee** held on **6 March 2008** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr D G Stansby
Vice-Chairman: Cllr Mrs C A Weston

Cllr Mrs L A Butcher
Cllr M R Carter
Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn

Cllr M G B Starke
Cllr J Thomass

ALSO PRESENT

Cllr Mrs M A Weir – Hawkwell Parish Council
Cllr B Hazelwood – Hockley Parish Council
Cllr Miss A Marriott – Hullbridge Parish Council
R Baxter – Essex Police

OFFICERS PRESENT

A Bugeja - Head of Legal Services
J Bourne - Head of Community Services
R Evans - Head of Environmental Services
J Bostock - Committee Services Manager

Representing Virgin Active: T Hine and S Brown

91 AREA COMMITTEE – INITIAL BUSINESS

Apologies For Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs R Brown, P A Capon, K H Hudson and J R F Mason.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Declarations of Interest

Cllr Mrs C A Weston declared a personal interest in the item on extension to bridleway at Clements Hall horse-riding facilities by virtue of her daughter riding horses on some bridleways.

Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn declared a personal interest in any matters relating to the Hawkwell Parish area by virtue of being a Hawkwell Parish Councillor.

At this point the Committee adjourned the formal meeting to move into the community forum to hear contributions from members of the public.

92 COMMUNITY FORUM

Four requests for information had been received and a document summarising these and the responses given at the meeting is appended.

With regard to Clements Hall, it was noted that a Virgin Active were due to consider various repairs (including to seating in the pool spectator area) during the following week.

At this point the Committee reconvened into formal session.

93 SPOTLIGHT ISSUES

(1) Virgin Active Leisure Contract Progress

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Community Services providing an update on the progress and development of the Leisure Management Contract. Responding to questions Mr T Hine, Virgin Active Contracts Manager, advised that:-

- Concern that the Freight House facility was not open for users at the beginning of the 10am hire period would be investigated.
- There is special membership pricing for young people via a junior membership scheme and the charges for all children's play options are discounted.
- The facility management contract does not include the provision of a bus for customers wishing to travel from Hullbridge to Clements Hall.

It was observed that, whilst the potential value of customer bus facilities can always be borne in mind, it was understood that a previous facility had been withdrawn due to low usage.

(2) Update on Crime and Disorder in the Central Area

Figures relating to reported crimes and anti-social behaviour figures for the central area of the District had been previously circulated.

Acting Inspector R Baxter reported that the figures were 5% below targets set by the County Council and agreed by the Police Authority. In terms of the central area, reductions in criminal damage and burglaries over the last year were of note and there had been reductions in the overall basket of crime figures. Anti-social behaviour statistics showed particular improvement for the months of October/November between corresponding years. Neighbourhood Action Panels were concentrating on areas as follows:-

Hockley – vehicles parking in Spa Road/issues of alcohol/litter around the Spa area.

Hawkwell – parking issues/alcohol.

Hullbridge – vehicles speeding/weight limits at Watery Lane.

The Police had introduced additional resources on Friday and Saturday evenings to address anti-social behaviour.

With regard to the Hawkwell anti-social behaviour questionnaire, Acting Inspector Baxter observed that, whilst only 64 questionnaires had been returned, officers had visited all premises in the prevalent locations to collect information. Whilst the questionnaire had identified that 70% of people had seen vandalism, graffiti or other deliberate damage to property/vehicles, the basket of crime statistics showed that such crimes were reducing.

(3) Clements Hall – Extension to Bridleway

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Legal Services on an extension to the existing bridleway within the boundary of Clements Hall.

The Committee concurred with the observation of a Member that officers should be congratulated for coming forward with schemes capable of resolving the issues.

Responding to questions, officers advised that:-

- The footpath adjacent to the leisure centre could become quite congested with pedestrians and wheelchair users, which pointed to the merit of separating a bridleway at this location from the footpath.
- Concerns relating to cars being driven in an inappropriate manner in the leisure centre car park would be given consideration. The possibility of the car park entrance gate being locked when the centre is closed would be raised with the leisure contractor, Virgin Active, and reported back.
- Option B did not involve any hedgerow removal.
- If the principle of undertaking consultation on the options is endorsed, officers would report back on the outcome of this and the available funding.
- The costs identified in the report were based on tendered rates that reflected the level of work involved.

During discussion it was observed that, subject to appropriate fencing/the outcome of consultation, option B may be considered preferable. It was also observed that a scheme should be in place as soon as practicable.

The Chairman confirmed that an indication of financial support had been received from Essex County Council and that the horse-riding organisations would be formally approached in a similar regard.

On a motion, moved by Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn and seconded by Cllr D G Stansby, it was:-

Resolved

That the construction of a new bridleway be endorsed in principle, subject to appropriate consultation and a full investigation and report on the grant funding that would be available to cover the suggested options. (HLS)

94 CENTRAL AREA UPDATE

The Committee received the Central Area Update.

Siting of a Community Shelter on the Clements Hall Recreation Fields (14/07)

It was noted that Hawkwell Parish Council had now undertaken full public consultation and had had a positive response to proposals for community shelter siting. Particular thanks were extended to Parish Cllr Mrs M A Weir for her work on this project.

It was also noted that the shelter would not require planning consent and that the Parish Council would be funding the project and be responsible for maintenance and insurance of the shelter. The District Council's Executive Board had already agreed in principal to the siting of a shelter on the recreation fields. Under the circumstances, it was:-

Resolved

That the Executive Board be asked to give final approval to the introduction of a community shelter located adjacent to the skate park on Clements Hall Recreation Fields. (HCS).

Cars parked on the grass verges between Doric Avenue and Mansted Gardens, Hawkwell (06/08)

It was noted that there had recently been a couple of accidents in the vicinity of Ashingdon Road where students had not used the crossing.

Prior to the close of the meeting officers confirmed that they would investigate the position with regard to two derelict caravans on the Clements Hall recreation fields and that consideration was being given to the demolition of a maintenance shed on the fields.

The meeting closed at 8.44 pm.

Chairman

Date

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Question

Response

D Fryer-Kelsey, Hockley Parish Plan Group

In our recent survey there were several comments about coppicing. I understand you have held lectures or seminars in the past to tell the public about the woodlands. Are there any scheduled?

A response would be provided on this and reported to the next meeting.

D Fryer-Kelsey, Hockley Parish Plan Group

One of the issues raised by residents of Hockley when responding to our recent survey was the requirement for more seats in Hockley woods. It is our intention to put an item in our next newsletter in May inviting residents to donate seats. Would you be happy to take these seats? Presumably any maintenance would be the responsibility of Rochford District Council as the donors might move on. Have you any sites that you feel would be appropriate?

The Authority has a budget for the provision and maintenance of certain seats and would welcome working with residents to achieve this.

T Gleadall, Hockley

Tonight's local paper states 25,000 trees in Essex. Rayleigh has an allocation. Is there an allocation for Hockley?

The District Council had allocated £10,000 in next year's budget for an urban tree planting scheme in partnership with the County Council. The scheme should include most urban areas in the District.

Mrs K Ilott, Hockley

I frequently use Clements Hall swimming pool. The showers/changing areas seem very tired. Will these areas be refurbished soon?

Officers continue to liaise with Virgin Active on the condition of the wet side at Clements Hall. Virgin Active is keen to undertake refurbishment and a number of interim repairs involving tiles and cubicles are to be undertaken. Work to the showers had been included in capital funding for the forthcoming year.

If you would like these minutes in large print, braille or another language please contact 01702 546366.