

**MEETING OF THE PARKS AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE (ESTIMATES)
HELD MONDAY 7 JANUARY 2019 at 7.00 pm**

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs Eathorne-Gibbons (Chairman), Allen, Biscoe, Mrs Callen, Ellis, Ms Southcombe, Smith and Wells.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Mrs Nolan.

Also in attendance: Roger Gazzard (Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer)
Richard Budge (Parks and Amenities Manager)
Joanne Trevelyan (Finance Officer).

289 DISCLOSURE OR DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures or declarations of interest reported.

290 TRAFALGAR ROUNDABOUT (EP5/5)

Waterloo Bank

With the permission of the Chairman, Ms Alison Mandeville and Ms Alison Cameron of Truro Morlaix Twinning Association presented their plans for a planting display to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Morlaix Twinning Association. They clarified the plan was for a display on Waterloo Bank, not Trafalgar Roundabout. Ms Cameron reported the focus of the planned display was the City of Truro. A group of Breton visitors were due to visit Truro from 17 to 20 May culminating in an official reception hosted by Truro School (due to the Municipal Buildings not being available.)

The Parks and Amenities Manager commented, having initially viewed the proposals, they appeared to be simple to grow and plant except for a black and white shield design. He considered this design to be too intricate, requiring expensive, specific bedding plants which were likely to grow too quickly in the planned timescale. However, there was an alternative shield design (based on an earlier successful planting). The beds might also need to be replanted, depending on planting timescales in the Town Centre. Overall, he felt the proposed designs were achievable by the Parks Department, subject to finalisation of the details with the Twinning Association at an early meeting (prior to the ordering of seed and materials).

It was also suggested a Celtic nations flag be flown from the flagpole on Waterloo Bank as part of the celebrations.

[Ms Alison Mandeville and Ms Alison Cameron left the meeting at 7.10pm.]

291 ESTIMATES 2019/2020

The Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer reported on the draft Estimates, having been previously circulated, and drew Members' attention to the factors affecting the City Council as a whole including the impact of external changes including an increase in pay rates of 1% on average, increase in Living Wage to £9.00 per hour, increase in the Council's contribution to the Pension Fund, conversion of short term lease to freehold transfer of Tremorvah Playing Field from Cornwall Council (no further costs expected) and the freehold transfer of Newbridge Sports Field as public open space by Cornwall Council (funding agreement awaited). It was also noted Cornwall Council was preparing a schedule of opens spaces it would favour transferring to the City Council.

The Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer pointed out the draft estimates resulted in a 1.7% increase (£4.06 per annum for Band property) in the precept for 2019–2020 over the 2018-2019 charge.

Parks and Amenities Committee Estimates

The Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer drew attention to paragraph 4 page 25 and the staffing structure for the Parks and Amenities Department (which had been queried at the last meeting of Full Council held on 16 December 2018). Following the recent transfer of Coosebean from Cornwall Council, work to appoint to the Countryside Ranger vacancy would begin shortly.

Summary of Net Revenue Spending

He reported, with reference to pages 26-27 paragraph 7, the reasons for changes to Net Revenue Spending including: Loan repayments – reflecting refurbishment works to the tennis courts at Boscawen Park; Purchase of Sale Items - reflecting that the previous operator of the Café in the Park had not provided accurate figures; Admin Recharge - which related to the Café. He acknowledged the summer tennis court closures had been very disruptive; however, £21,000 had been saved on Parks Department staffing by Café staff dealing with tennis court payments and public convenience locking up. When the planned replacement tennis pavilion was in place (including new public conveniences) a more accurate assessment of the benefits would be possible.

Cornwall Council had granted permission for sponsorship of roundabouts to be sought but, to date, there had been a disappointing response to requests for interest. He also referred to paragraph 8, reminding Members the allocation for vehicles and plant had been agreed at the last Parks and Amenities (Estimates) meeting held on 8 January 2018.

The Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer clarified that there had been some initial interest in sponsorship of roundabouts. More than one body could also sponsor a roundabout. In response to general support indicated by the Committee, the Parks and Amenities Manager agreed to install signs on the roundabouts advertising availability for sponsorship (subject to any usual restriction).

Additional Items

The Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer then reported on two additional items which the Committee had previously indicated they wished to consider including monies for in the future: these were the Ten Year Development Plan and the redevelopment of the Town Centre public conveniences. Currently no money had been set aside in the budget. He explained that if, for example, Members wished to consider contributing £10,000 to either project, this might equate to a 2.2% increase in Band D Council Tax (rather than 1.7% referred to above).

In response to concern expressed at the lack of a Changing Places Public Convenience in the City Centre, the Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer noted the planned replacement tennis pavilion and the Hall for Cornwall (currently being refurbished) would both have such facilities.

Members expressed general support for a suggestion that the £20,000 which would be saved in 2020-21 (when business rates were no longer payable on public conveniences) could be allocated to a new Capital Fund for the future repair, maintenance and improvement of public conveniences.

Schedule of Fees and Charges 2018-2019

The Parks and Amenities Manager reported on the schedule of proposed fees and charges for 2018-19 on pages 34-35. No changes to existing charges were proposed, given the summer tennis court closure. Charges for football and cricket had not increased for some years so a small increase was recommended. Cemeteries and Churchyard charges were recommended to increase by current inflation. New charges for burial searches, permit re-printing and permits to remove a headstone were also recommended, reflecting the administrative demands undertaken by the Council. He also reported changes to the published draft schedule, as follows:

Heading	Item	Item detail	Recommended charge from 1 April 2019
Cemeteries and Churchyards	Interment	Extra depth for triple grave	£254
Other Charges	Grave Reservations (reservation fee). The remaining fee would be payable at the time of interment.	Single grave Double grave Triple grave Cremated remains plot	£149 £200 £300 £89
City Boxes, Baskets and Tubs Scheme	Watering	Winter	£12.00

The Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer corrected a typographical error: under the heading “City Boxes, Baskets and Tubs Scheme” – Tubs – replacement of “£258” with £25”.

In response to a query, the Parks and Amenities Manager clarified that a new annual family membership charge had been requested by the Lawn Tennis Association as part of their loan requirements (for the tennis court refurbishment). Such membership was restricted to off-peak hours. It was generally agreed the term “family” be changed to “household” to minimise restrictions on families.

During further discussion, Members agreed to recommend that an additional £10,000 be made to the Capital Funds for the Ten Year Development Fund. Such funding might be utilised in the future to cover borrowing costs for improvements and initially to pay for surveys and pre-contract investigations. The Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer confirmed any suggestion to use the money saved following the forthcoming abolition of business rates payable on public conveniences in 2020-21 would be considered at the next Estimates meeting in 2020.

In response to a concern about the limited bicycle storage in the City Centre (currently outside the Library and on the Morlaix Avenue side of Lemon Quay) the recent reduction in storage following the on-going works to the Hall for Cornwall; and abandoned bicycles at these locations, the Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer confirmed this was the responsibility of Cornwall Council. The Chairman agreed that this matter could be placed on the agenda for discussion at the next Committee meeting.

In response to a query from Councillor Wells, the Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer agreed to check the number of car parking vacancies, expected annual income and deficit on the Hendra Development site (pending the residents' parking scheme coming into effect in that locality in April) and respond following the meeting.

It was moved by the Chairman that it be

RECOMMENDED that:

1. The Revised Estimates for 2018 – 2019 be approved;
2. The Estimates 2019 – 2020 be approved;
3. The Financial Forecasts for 2020 – 2021 and 2021 – 2022 be agreed in principle;
4. The contributions to the Capital Funds be approved subject to the following amendment: the addition of £10,000 for the Ten Year Development Fund (line 15 Parks Committee Capital Fund) page 14);
5. The Schedule of Fees and Charges for 2019 - 2020 (pages 34 – 35) be approved, subject to the following changes:
 - a. Tennis Courts – Changing “Annual Family Membership” to “Annual Household Membership”;
 - b. Cemeteries and Churchyards - Addition of the following charges;
 - (i) Interment – Extra depth for triple grave £254;
 - (ii) Grave Reservations (reservation fee) – Single £149 Double £200 Triple £300 Cremated remains £89.
 - c. City Boxes, Baskets and Tubs Scheme:
 - (i) Addition of “Summer” before “£19 £20” for clarification; and
 - (ii) Addition of “Winter Watering £12.
6. The Parks and Amenities Committee consider at the next Estimates meeting scheduled for 6 January 2020, setting aside £20,000 each year into a Public Conveniences Capital Fund following the abolition of business rates charged for public conveniences from 2020 – 2021.

The meeting closed at 8.52pm

CHAIRMAN