

**A MEETING OF THE PARKS AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE HELD
ON MONDAY 11 February 2019 at 7.00 pm in the Meeting Room, Hall for
Cornwall Offices, Second Floor, Penhaligon House, Green Street, Truro**

PRESENT: Councillors Allen, Biscoe, Mrs Butler, Mrs Callen, Mrs Eathorne-Gibbons (Chairman), Ellis, Miss Jones, Mrs M Nolan, Smith, Ms Southcombe (the Mayor), Wells and Wilson.

APOLOGIES: No apologies were received.

Also in attendance:

Richard Budge – Parks and Amenities Manager

Kate Ball – Compliance Officer.

Mr Peter Kessell - Parks and Amenities Department and Unite Health and Safety Representative.

319 DISCLOSURES OR DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

320 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 November 2018, having been before Council on 10 December 2018, were signed as a correct record.

321 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 January 2019, having been before Council on 28 January 2019 were signed as a correct record.

322 HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK – PARKS AND AMENITIES DEPARTMENT (EP11/1)

(i) Training of Staff – Update Report

The Parks and Amenities Manager updated the Committee on training undertaken by Parks and Amenities staff since January 2018. He reported a range of training courses had taken place including: use of blowers, use of brush cutters, management of health and safety, health and safety, use of a pedestrian and ride on mowers, use of tractors, use of abrasive wheels and petrol disc cutters, working at heights, first aid and maintenance of winter pitches. The report was noted.

(ii) Parks and Amenities Department – Report of any recent accidents

The Compliance Officer reported since she had been appointed there had been eight reported incidents of ill-health or accidents at work. No particular trends had been identified. Factors of personal protective equipment (PPE) and manual handling were currently being addressed. One issue relating to PPE was being addressed via the Council's Staff Disciplinary process. The report was noted.

(iii) Shop Steward, Unite.

In the absence of a Shop Steward, Unite, the Parks and Amenities Manager reported there were no matters to report.

(iv) Report by Parks and Amenities Department and Unite Health and Safety Representative

The Parks and Amenities Department and Unite Health and Safety Representative made the following report:

- i. He would be requesting the Parks and Amenities Manager to add an item to the next Staff Meeting agenda regarding the current lack of a Unite Shop Steward (a position which was separate from Unite Health and Safety Representative).
- ii. He highlighted an increase tidiness and safety of the yard and an improvement in site safety and security, including the standard locking of site gates.

- iii. He emphasised the need to maintain a training budget, highlighting the benefits of keeping up-to-date with legislative requirements and new learning.
- iv. He requested the Parks and Amenities Manager consider the purchase of a small cherry picker for the Council, to be used, for example, to install hanging baskets. He explained that ladders could not be used because three points of contact were required by the person undertaking the task.
- v. He would be attending Parts 3 and 4 of the Unite Union Health and Safety training course in March.
- vi. In response to a significant water ingress through the flat roof of the staff accommodation in Victoria Gardens, the Parks and Amenities Manager advised the roof required replacement.
- vii. Mr Kessell further requested an update on the timescale of planned improvement to staff accommodation at both Boscawen Park and Victoria Gardens.
- viii. In response, the Parks and Amenities Manager outlined plans to make improvements at Boscawen Park which had been subject to recent staff consultation.
- ix. Regarding Victoria Gardens, the Parks and Amenities Manager advised there were no firm plans currently in place, The Friends of Victoria Gardens were planning to relaunch in 2019. Following the unsuccessful Heritage Lottery Fund bid (reported at previous meetings) they were concentrating on smaller projects. In the meantime, he suggested temporary replacement accommodation might be an option for the Committee to consider. During discussion, Councillors suggested a portacabin-type building or wooden temporary building be considered. It was generally agreed the Parks and Amenities Manager investigate the potential costs and further details of a temporary portacabin-type or wooden building to provide appropriate accommodation which met staff welfare standards at Victoria Gardens and report back to the next Committee meeting.

The report was noted.

[Councillor Miss Jones arrived at the meeting at 7.07pm.]

(v) Report by Compliance Officer.

The Compliance Officer made her first report to the Committee regarding health and safety at work. Since her appointment she had undertaken a health and safety audit and fire risk assessments.

- i. Key issues arising were consistency of records, communication and standards.
- ii. Immediate action had been taken to stop work on the new Nursery site at Idless pending the completion of health and safety documentation, risk assessments and training requirements.
- iii. Work was on-going regarding the records held on Council contractors' insurance, risk assessment and method statements.

Following the audit of health and safety, a number of issues had been identified:

- i. The disparity between the current standard of staff/ welfare accommodation in the Parks and Amenities Department compared to the Tourist Information Office and office staff (currently based in the Library) had a negative impact on staff morale.
- ii. There had been an increase in reports of alcohol, drug and aggression related behavior by members of the public in the past few months. There was a need to move forward to improve this situation and reduce the negative impact on staff.
- iii. Prioritization of the delivery of the many on-going projects which the Council

- was attempting to deliver at the current time, was required.
- iv. There was a clear need for communication. For example, staff working away from the offices did not work with Council computers so had no access to staff email.
 - v. Staff health and safety meetings of departmental representatives were being held on a monthly basis. Issues raised by staff at these meetings were raised by her on their behalf with the Town Clerk and reported back.
 - vi. A particular issue faced by the Toilet Cleaning Team was the increase in anti-social behaviour experienced by staff in the vicinity of the Moorfield Car Park public conveniences. This had led to the recent closure of these toilets and had been well-received by staff. In response to a question, she was aware this issue was being taken forward with the Police and relevant partners; however, it appeared a conclusion had not yet been reached and frontline staff had not been informed. She emphasized that this had a negative impact and views of staff needed to be heard.
 - vii. Councillor Jones, who operated a business in the vicinity of Moorfield Car Park and toilets, confirmed this was a daily issue and expressed concern that a serious incident might occur if the situation was not addressed.
 - viii. The Chairman reminded Members the issue of anti-social behaviour (in the Council's parks and gardens) had been discussed following the Committee's annual Inspection by the Committee on 10 September 2018 (Minute 150 refers). The Parks and Amenities Manager confirmed that to date, he had not received a reply from Inspector Milburn to an invitation to discuss the response of local police to reported incidents of anti-social behaviour. Further, the Committee had agreed that the Police and Crime Commissioner be invited to attend a meeting of Full Council to discuss these concerns, as necessary. The Chairman suggested that it was appropriate for such an invitation to be sent.

Following further discussion relating to the complex nature of this issue and concern that a serious incident might occur in the future:

It was moved by the Chairman, that it be

RECOMMENDED that the Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Commissioner (or a senior appropriate representative) be invited to attend a meeting of Full Council and answer questions about the response of local police to reported incidents of anti-social behaviour. A copy of the letter of invitation to be sent to the Chief Constable for Devon and Cornwall.

The Chairman thanked the Parks and Amenities Department and Unite Health and Safety Representative, Compliance Officer and Parks and Amenities Manager for their reports, on behalf of the Committee.

323 BICYCLE RACKS IN TRURO

The Committee had agreed at the last meeting, that the following matter be discussed (Minute 291 refer). Councillor Allen raised concerns regarding the loss of bike storage on Lemon Quay (following on-going works to the Hall for Cornwall) which she hoped would be reinstated following completion of the works. She suggested that provision be increased on Lemon Quay (near Marks and Spencers) and in Pydar Street, by the Library. A number of bicycles had also, it appeared, been abandoned. Copies of photographs were circulated at the meeting for the Committee's attention. Following a brief discussion, Councillor Allen agreed to contact the relevant officer in Cornwall Council Highways Department to seek advice on the appropriate process to be followed for the removal of the abandoned bicycles.

324 **PARKS AND GARDENS LITTER BINS**

APPENDIX A

The Parks and Amenities Manager requested Members consider using a publicity poster designed for use at Daubuz Moor on other litter bins located in the Council's parks and gardens. A copy of the final completed poster was circulated at the meeting for Member's information. The poster had won first prize in a competition run by the Friends of Daubuz Moor. During consideration, the Parks and Amenities Manager advised that, despite recycling bins being located at Boscawen Park, such bins received all kinds of rubbish. Dog faeces could also be disposed of in any general waste bin.

It was moved by the Chairman, that it be

RECOMMENDED that a colour version of the poster attached at Appendix A be placed near bins located in the Council's parks and gardens.

325 **TREMORVAH PLAYING FIELD (EP5/11)**

The Parks and Amenities Manager presented a request (from a local resident) to use the playing field for a youth football team base for the next football season (2019-2020) to increase local use as a playing field. He advised no changing facilities would be required and both Boscawen Park and Kenwyn Playing Field football pitches were under pressure. Any further request for storage or changing facilities in the future would need to be considered separately.

During consideration, and in response to a query the Parks and Amenities Manager confirmed there was currently no funding available in the budget to set up such a temporary facility; however, the team was prepared to raise funds for such a project, should permission be granted by the Council.

It was moved by Councillor Biscoe, seconded by Councillor Jones, and

RECOMMENDED that permission be granted for Tremorvah Playing Field to be used as a youth football team base.

326 **BOSCAWEN PARK AND THE SWANPOOL (EP7)**

(i) Swanpool

The Chairman had requested a progress report on the dredging of Swanpool which had been delayed. The Parks and Amenities Manager set out the background to the planned project. The plan was to use amphibious piping to agitate the silt in the silt trap and pump it up to the new Cemetery land for spreading across the fields. These works had been ordered but the contractor had since failed to respond to requests to finalise the arrangements. The Parks and Amenities Manager would be meeting a prospective new contractor in the next week or so, with a view the necessary works being undertaken before the summer. The Parks and Amenities Manager confirmed that the area to be dredged would be checked for frogspawn prior to the work taking place. It was agreed an update report be submitted to the next Committee meeting on 11 March 2019. The report was noted.

(ii) Request for Use

A request was reported from Polperro Rowing Club to use the top part of the Boscawen Park car park on Saturday 13 April 2019 for the Debbie Rendle Memorial Row (starting at 11:00).

It was moved Councillor Biscoe, seconded by Councillor Jones, that it be

RECOMMENDED that permission be granted for Polperro Rowing Club to use the top part of the Boscawen Park car par, subject to the usual terms and conditions.

(iii) Riverbank Reinforcement

The Parks and Amenities Manager reported he had attended a recent meeting with the Harbour Master for Truro. The issue of erosion of the river bank alongside the Riverside Walk was discussed, including rubbish being eroded out of the exposed riverbank in December 2018. On investigation, he concluded old rubbish had been covered by composted waste containing rubbish, along with dredgings to reinforce the riverbank, a practice which had ceased in the mid/ late 1990s. The nature of previous work to build up the riverbank was outlined. The riverbank was now compromised at several points and rubbish was being washed out. He would be meeting a representative of the Environment Agency on site to discuss the matter shortly. He would also be investigating the scope of potential work required to undertake appropriate works. (The Harbour Master was also planning to dredge the slipway of mud which would also be deposited along the riverbank.)

During a brief discussion, in response to a query, the Parks and Amenities Manager was unable to estimate how much such work might cost at this stage. Members generally considered, in acknowledging the Council's responsibility to maintain this stretch of riverbank, the construction of an appropriate robust wall was important to mitigate erosion. It was agreed that regular update reports be considered by the Committee at future meetings. The report was noted.

327 HENDRA PLAYING FIELD (EP8/1)

Requests for Use

(i) Thomas Rowland Amusements

A request was reported from Thomas Rowland Amusements to hire Hendra Playing Field from Thursday 25 April to Saturday 4 May 2019 to operate a funfair.

Following consideration:

It was moved by the Chairman, that it be

RECOMMENDED that permission be granted for Thomas Rowland Amusements to hire Hendra Playing Field, subject to the usual terms and conditions.

(ii) South West Inflatable Theme Parks

A request was reported from South West Inflatable Theme Parks to hire Hendra Playing Field from Saturday 3 - Sunday 4 August 2019, 10:00 – 17:00. The Parks and Amenities Manager had received some documentation and would forward this to the Compliance Officer. Following consideration:

It was moved by the Chairman, that it be

RECOMMENDED that permission be granted South West Inflatable Theme Parks to hire Hendra Playing Field, subject to the usual terms and conditions.

(iii) South West Water – Hendra Road Surface Water Separation Works

The Parks and Amenities Manager reported the Council had received notification from South West Water under Sections 159 and 168 of the Water Industry Act 1991 of a proposal to construct and lay a sewer on Council land at Hendra Playing Field (Dreadnought Playing Field). The Parks and Amenities Manager had arranged for the initial date for works to start to be changed from 24 April to 4 March, to avoid a clash with an event planned to take place in Hendra Park Playing Field from 25 April (See (i) above). The planned works included the laying of a sewer from Hendra Road, towards the trees and out to the river as part of a water overflow system. The report was noted.

328 NATIONAL PLAYDAY AND PLAYFEST (EP8/1/3)

At the meeting on 8 October 2018, the Committee had recommended as an interim position (pending an events review meeting) that the Council wished the National Play Day and Playfest events should continue in the future, but it felt that it could no longer take a lead on financing activities, subject to meeting appropriate legal requirements. This was ratified by Full Council at its meeting on 29 October 2018. The review meeting had taken place on 15 October and the Committee was requested to consider making a final recommendation to Council. (Minute 200 refers.)

The Parks and Amenities Manager reported, following further discussion with the Compliance Officer and Town Clerk it was considered that, if the Council continued its involvement in organisation of these events, it remained vulnerable to issues of liability and responsibility. The Committee was reminded that in 2018 the Council had supported both events at a cost of approximately £4.5K plus additional staff costs. He clarified if the Council withdrew from involvement in the organisation of these events, Swamp Circus would be required to arrange such services as car parking and litter picking (which had been previously provided by the Council).

During discussion:

- i. Members noted they were not considering if a financial contribution should be made at this meeting, but whether the Council was satisfied that appropriate liability and responsibility requirements were in place before it considered whether to support these events.
- ii. Several Councillors expressed concern that these events had outgrown the Council's involvement and the Council should withdraw.
- iii. In response to a query, the Parks and Amenities Manager said he believed that Swamp Circus was already planning these events for 2019.
- iv. A Councillor expressed concern that if the Council decided to withdraw from involvement, it should be managed in consultation with Swamp Circus.

Following discussion there was general agreement by the Committee that the Council should withdraw from any involvement due to the failure of the event organiser to provide appropriate assurances regarding liability and responsibility.

It was moved Councillor Ellis, seconded by Councillor Mrs Callen, that it be

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL that Truro City Council withdraw from any involvement in the National Play Day and Playfest events because of the failure of event organiser Swamp Circus to provide appropriate assurances regarding liability and responsibility.

(Councillor Biscoe and Councillor Miss Jones requested that their names be recorded as voting against the above motion.)

329 IDLESS NURSERY (EP20)

The Parks and Amenities Manager reported that the project was moving forward:

- i. A timeline for the new nursery project was in the process of being finalised.
- ii. Lloyd Richards had been appointed to a project manager role.
- iii. A topographical survey of the site had been completed.
- iv. The electrical cables were of sufficient height to allow construction to take place on site.
- v. Lloyd Richards was conducting a tender process for the design and construction of the buildings.
- vi. The Parks and Amenities Manager would be attending a meeting in the following week to progress the development of a sewage treatment plant on site.
- vii. Staff currently working on the Redannick Park playground improvement project would be moved on to the Idless Nursery project.

Further to a query raised at the Council meeting held on 28 January, the Chairman requested that:

- a. The Parks and Amenities Manager send a copy of this progress report to Councillor Mrs Carlyon for her information.
- b. The Parks and Amenities Manager circulate a copy of the completed project timeline to all Councillors for information.

The report was noted.

330 PUBLIC CONVENIENCES (F10)

The Compliance Officer reported that:

- i. The Toilet Cleaning Team were spending an increasing amount of time in a 'social counselling' type of role linked to issues of alcohol, drugs and rough sleeping.
- ii. As mentioned earlier in the meeting (Minute 322 refers) the public conveniences in Moorfield car park remained shut until the on-going issues stabilised.
- iii. She highlighted the helpfulness, respect and courtesy shown to others by the Team which was clearly evident in their everyday work, regardless of the issues encountered.
- iv. In response to a query regarding staff training and support, the Compliance Officer confirmed staff usually worked in pairs. If there were concerns about a particular situation they were advised to walk away and contact her for guidance.

The report was noted.

331 PARKS AND AMENITIES MANAGER'S REPORT (EP18) APPENDIX B

The Parks and Amenities Manager apologised for the delayed circulation of the report via email due to illness. The report was tabled at the meeting. On behalf of the Beechwood Parc Resident's Association, Councillor Smith expressed thanks to the Council for the work which had been undertaken to date. The report was noted.

332 LETTERS OF APPRECIATION (EP11/4)

The following messages of appreciation were reported to the Committee:

- i. The Friends of Furniss Island thanked the Parks and Amenities Department for their hard work in installing a water bowser, maintaining the flowerbeds and restoration of the arch on Furniss Island.
- ii. The Penhaligon's Friends Charity thanked the Council for its support in enabling the Friends of Tremorvah Playing Field to donate £1,250 following the fireworks event on 5 November 2018.

The report was noted.

333 CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to report.

The meeting closed at 8.08 pm.

CHAIRMAN