

MAGHULL TOWN COUNCIL
AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD 4th MARCH 2020

PRESENT - Councillor Y. Sayers (In the Chair) and Councillors (Cllrs): Carr, Desmond, K. Hughes and J. Sayers.

ALSO PRESENT – A. Spencer (Amenities Manager), Kevin Watkins (Grounds Maintenance Supervisor) and S. Larking (Minutes)

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – Apologies received from Cllr McKinley.
2. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS** – None received.
3. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** – No requests received
4. **MINUTES OF AMENITIES COMMITTEE 4th December 2019.**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of Amenities Committee held on 4th December 2019 were approved as a correct record.

5. AMENITIES MANAGER UPDATE – COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS

This is a standing agenda item. The Amenities reported that most resolutions had been completed. Updates by exception for the actions in progress (highlighted in grey in report) as follows:

- Mersey Forest: Committed to replanting trees. Alex Spencer and Cllr Sharp meeting Mersey Forest in mid-April to finalise sites and species of trees. Considering what trees to plan in Roundmeade to help reduce impact of flooding. Will work with schools and “Friends of” groups about planting. Trees are free. Considering best way to protect from vandalism.
- Culvert along Hall Lane: Officers continuing to liaise with Sefton Council about responsibility for trees in culvert. Maghull Town Council not liable until lease signed. Cllrs raised concerns about possible conflict of interest as Maghull’s legal advice is provided by Sefton (issues about advice for Governors at Lydiate Primary given as an example). Amenities Manager reported that 2 separate solicitor working on the case. Cllrs asked that Officers explore alternative provision of legal services e.g. from Knowsley MBC or Liverpool City Council.
- Indoor Sport Facility: Cllrs suggested that underspend from Amenities Team salaries be used to fund a bid writer to help with applications for funding.

RESOLVED that

1. **Officers to consider alternative provision for Legal Services**
2. **Officers to consider using underspend on salaries to fund a bid writer**
3. **The report be noted**

6. AMENITIES COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20

The Amenities Manager reported progress on the ambitious work programme as set out in the Council’s Business Plan. Progress as follows:



- Parks Review: Funding agreed for upgrades in KGV Park and Glenn Park; Monthly meetings scheduled to discuss s106 funding and procurement of goods; Grounds Maintenance Team prepared for summer operations to agreed standards
- Fleet of vehicles: Considering options including use of s106 funding
- Appraisals. Adopted a light touch approach. Identified training needs. Training will be prioritised in the Autumn and Winter
- Review of leases: A review of lease arrangements is required
- "Friends of" groups: Progress made; have details of residents who want to be involved. Will be developed further in 2020/21
- Partnership working: Working with the Community Services Manager; communications improved e.g. about tree planting but there's a lack of positive engagement from the community and negative feedback
- Health and Safety: Review planned to ensure full health and safety compliance
- Tree Works: works almost complete Trunk of one tree on Whinney Brook to be collected
- Internal Audit: Team working hard to deliver on recommendations, vast majority implemented. Some work to do e.g. petrol usage spot checks. Trying not to make things too onerous.

Cllrs noted that:

- outsourcing of Procurement will help as Officers are not procurement specialists
- as agreed at Finance and General Purposes Committee, further quotes being sought to provide Procurement service

RESOLVED that

1. The report be noted

7. PROPOSED 2020/21 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE OPERATIONS

The Amenities Manager reported that the outcome of the grounds maintenance operations in 2019/20 had provided an opportunity to take stock. The Team had made massive inroads into the work programme and he could not thank them enough for their hard work. He had a good team with the right equipment. Training, e.g. on chain saws had made a difference.

The Amenities Manager ran through a presentation which set the context of the Team and the work achieved:

Overview of the team:

- 1 x manager;
- 2 x grounds maintenance supervisors;
- 4 ground maintenance operatives (1 vacancy)
- 1x Maintenance Engineer (part time) and
- 1 x Maintenance Officer (part time and vacant)

Vacant posts advertised in the Champion and on the Council's website. Interviews to be held later in March

Cllrs discussed making the Maintenance Officer post Full Time so that the post was commensurate to the job description. It was noted that the Staff Review in December 2018 had identified savings to posts and budgets for 20/21 were based on 2 part time posts

Achievements:

- Comprehensive work in parks: Hedges taken down and concrete posts removed to allow better maintenance and management in the future
- Improving Assets: Responding to lack of maintenance over a number of years e.g. pavilions in Glen Park and Balls Wood need painting and moss removed
- A series of slides showed the impact of works and the difference made with before and after photos: e.g.
 - Bobby's Wood: brambles cleared
 - Balls Wood: Hedge and concrete posts cut down
 - Glen Park: Hedges cut down to open up park and reduce drug dealing
 - KGV: Most visible changes. Rose garden overgrown; paving cleared including entrance to play area
 - Mersey Avenue: overgrown with brambles/bushes and pathways. Plants and shrubs to be planted
 - Moorhey: very overgrown. Work completed in 3 days
 - Tree Felling: Priority 1 and 2 work completed. Chain saw work carried out by Team
 - Pimbley: Reduced hedge and concrete posts.
 - Bin cleaning: to tackle graffiti and vandalism bins cleaned and made tidy. Helps improve the life span on bins.
 - Welcome to Maghull signs: cleaned to present a positive image of Town

The Amenities Manager reassured Cllrs that before hedge cutting checks are made for wildlife. Concerns that hedge work looks brutal but will grow back. Some complaints about mud and churned up grass

Key points made by Cllrs:

- Pass on appreciation to team
- Concerns about planting trees at right time of year and guarantees
- Queried if enough work for grounds maintenance team given progress made in parks

The Amenities Manager ran through resolutions which had shaped the grounds maintenance service and would influence the service in 2020/21:

- a. Parks Review: Proposals accepted for maintenance/service standards; investment agreed for KGV and Glenn Park
- b. Needs Based Model: Adopted in summer 2019. Proposed that model continues in 2020/21
- c. Current standard of Parks and Open Spaces: Autumn/winter works ahead of schedule which has allowed areas previously not maintained to be tackled. For example in Glen Park: Some areas of land around park not maintained as not owned by MTC. Complaints that land an eyesore. MTC took responsibility to improve area (broken window syndrome). Complexities about land transfer. MTC could do work on this and other pockets to improve the area



- d. "Friends of" Groups and Schools: Work crosses over with Community Services Committee. Encouraging adoption of parks by schools.
- e. Future Investment in Parks and Open Spaces: 2020/21 budget focuses on maintenance not investment. Officers working closely with Sefton ward Councillors to access s106 funding for investment in parks

Key points by Cllrs:

- Land on Hall lane by St George's school that not been maintained since 2019. It's an eyesore Unclear if responsibility is with school, One Vision or Sefton
- Land on Dover Road been left to overgrow
- Ownership of land at The Dell is unclear
- Local authority has statutory responsibilities. There should be a Service Level Agreement (SLA) which sets out maintenance terms. If MTC do the work they should get paid for it.

Proposed 202/21 Grounds Maintenance Operations:

- Spring/Summer Operations: will begin on 9th March and run to 14th September. Standard from Parks Review 2019 will apply e.g. bins to be emptied weekly and washed monthly; playgrounds cut weekly; Tennis courts to be deep cleaned and inspected regularly to remove moss; play inspections to be carried out monthly with the aim of moving to weekly inspections.
- Needs Based working model: will continue to be implemented
- Enhancement weeks: Will focus on a park for a week to go above and beyond normal maintenance standards to carry out works including edging flower beds, reclaiming pathways, painting assets.
- Autumn/Winter works: Will run from 14 September to 15 February 2021. There will be a focus on leaf collection this year
- Further areas of work: Will continue to work with Community Services Manager to deliver "friends of" groups; training about tree health; work with Cllrs about investment in parks

Amenities Manager noted that if proposals agreed the team would be at maximum capacity and would not be able to take on any additional work.

Key points by Cllrs

- Noted that works based on a full team; carrying 1 vacancy
- Consider spraying to keep paths clear. Noted that some of team qualified to do spraying. Strimming will help keep grass down.
- Ensure that dates of bin collections are available to "Friends of" groups so they can tie in litter picks to days when bin will be emptied. This would prevent bin bags piling up next to bins
- Noted that team will be at full capacity to deliver work programme

RESOLVED that

- 1. Grounds Maintenance operations for 20/21 approved**
- 2. Report be noted**

8. PARKS REVIEW 2019 – PLAY EQUIPMENT AND PLAY AREA UPGRADES AT KING GEORGE V FIELD AND GLEN PARK

The Amenities Manager reported that:

- KGV Park: play equipment and play upgrade about 5 weeks behind schedule. The weather and lone working has been an issue. Majority of equipment installed, some restitution works needed. Park should be open in next 5 weeks.
- Glen Park: Funding approved including for bins.
- S106 Funding: Monthly meetings to be set up with Ward Cllrs and Sefton Officers to discuss s106 funding

RESOLVED that

- 1. Report be noted**

9. CELEBRATION BENCHES

The Amenities Manager reported that four benches on order. The resident who had requested a bench had been notified and invoiced.

RESOLVED that

- 1. The report be noted**

10. MAGHULL TOWN COUNCIL PARTICIPATION IN "KEEP BRITAIN TIDY" CAMPAIGN

The Amenities Manager reported that Keep Britain Tidy is an annual Campaign. Contacted local schools about getting involved. 1 responded. Any costs to support campaign e.g. litter pickers would come from the parks management budget

RESOLVED that

- 1. The report be noted**

11. CHAIRS REPORT

No report given.


CHAIRMAN

