

**MAGHULL TOWN COUNCIL**  
**AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**HELD 18<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2020**  
**VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM**

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

**ALSO PRESENT** –A. Spencer (Amenities Manager) and S. Larking (Minutes)

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – Apologies received from Cllr Carr
2. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS** – The Amenities Manager advised that all Cllrs, as precept payers, declare an interest in the agenda item about the budget.

NOTE: 6:35pm: Standing Orders suspended while Officers tried to resolve a technical issue to allow live streaming. Unable to resolve issue so meeting continued from 6:40pm. The meeting was recorded and will be made available to view.

3. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** – No requests received
4. **MINUTES OF AMENITIES COMMITTEE 23<sup>rd</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020.**

Cllr K. Hughes asked for it to be noted that the group of volunteers referred to at agenda item 9 (page 4) was not party political. All volunteers welcome.

**RESOLVED that the Minutes of Amenities Committee held on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020 were approved as a correct record. Note: Minutes to be signed at the next opportunity.**

5. **AMENITIES MANAGER UPDATE – COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS**

The Amenities Manager reported on resolutions in progress (highlighted in grey in report) as follows:

- Mersey Forest: Officers continue to work with Mersey Forest. Applying for grant funding. Progress to be reported at next meeting
- Council's Vehicles/Fleet: Procurement Policy and Service Level Agreement (SLA) now in place with Knowsley Council. Work on fleet is one of several projects that will now be progressed
- Judo Hut: Building demolished. Winterburns of Rochdale had done an excellent job.
- Alternative Legal Provision: This had not been progressed to date
- Bid Writer: This had not been progressed due to capacity issues
- Grounds Maintenance Operations 2020/21: Work on appraisals ongoing. 3 completed including training and development needs identified; 3 in progress
- "Friends Of" Groups: Update on projects circulated with papers Projects will complement Council's work in parks. Further discussion at Agenda item 7.



Cllrs Mckinley noted that information had been put on social media about the use of Whinneybrook Playing Field on Saturday mornings for football coaching. He said the Council would be happy to support free coaching if relevant insurance and safeguarding policies were in place. He didn't believe that information on social media was sufficient. He asked for further investigation. The Amenities Manager reported that legal advice had been sought from Sefton. The advice was that Maghull Town Council did not have enforcement powers to stop usage unless it was for illegal activities.

Other key points noted:

- Issue is about income/profit. Welcome that someone is giving up their time to coach young people. However, if they are making a profit by using Council land free of charge that's a different issue. Reported that the coach runs sessions in a local school and pays rent
- Liability/insurance an issue
- There is a precedent. Room hire charged for Maghull Art Group as tutor was charging for classes
- Exercise class held in Old Hall Park since first lockdown
- Council is committed to supporting Community Groups; offers grant funding
- Maghull residents are paying for the upkeep of parks; someone running a business should not be able to use the park for free
- The Council need to exploit its assets
- Officers to contact Football Coach and check that they are DBS cleared, have safeguarding policies and relevant coaching qualifications, and are insured

On the point about insurance/liability the Amenities Manger reported that the Council must ensure that parks/open spaces it owns and maintains are free from hazardous and safe to use.

**RESOLVED that**

- 1. Officers to contact the coach using Whinneybrook Playing Field on Saturdays**
- 2. The report be noted**

**6. UPDATE ON THE REFURBISHMENT OF CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA AT GLENN PARK PROPOSED 2020/21**

The Amenities Manager provided a short verbal report. Major works to the park had been completed. Some minor works to be completed including installation of bins. It looks good. Play area has been expanded to the green gym. New fencing with 2 access gates at either end. The site is muddy after the works. No immediate plans to reopen the park as need to reseed some areas and allow time for grass to grow. There's an area of the park that looks sparse. Maghull in Bloom are considering planting options. Positive feedback from residents. Residents want to know when park will reopen. Would like to keep closed for the next 4 weeks if Cllrs agree.

**RESOLVED that**

- 1. Glenn Park to remain closed for a further 4 weeks to complete all works and allow for reseeding**

*Handwritten signature in blue ink*

## 2. Verbal report be noted

## 7. UPDATE ON THE ROLE OF "FRIENDS OF" MAGHULL GROPS

The Amenities Manager ran through the proposed community projects including planning, creation of flower beds, tree planting and a rockery/wall.

Projects as follows:

- KGV Park: Replant flower beds in former rose garden to create a community picnic area
- Dodds Park: Build wall around memorial at entrance to park with support
- Mersey Avenue: Plant 5 flower beds
- South Meade Park: Replant a flower bed
- Old Hall Park: Plant trees from Mersey Forest scheme
- Pimbley Field: Plant trees from Mersey Forest scheme

Database of Community Members set up. Amenities Manager working with Community Services Manager to set up and progress groups. Some projects require procurement.

Cllrs noted that it was good to see progress.

### **RESOLVED that**

#### **1. The report be noted**

## 8. PROPOSED AMENITIES SERVICE BUDGET 2021/22

The Amenities Manager ran through the context of the report:

- Each Committee had an opportunity to consider budget proposals and financial implications in advance of Finance and General Purposes Committee on 9<sup>th</sup> December
- Proposals will be presented to Full Council in January 2021
- Amenities Budget is in 2 parts
  - Operation costs
  - Asset Maintenance. 5-year plan agreed by Cllrs.
- Tax Base: Expect to remain same for 2021/22. Maybe an increase due to house building. Final figures will available from Sefton in next few weeks
- Rental income: Income from football/bowling likely to be the same for 2021/22 – 2 football clubs and 2 bowling clubs. There may be a third bowling club, but this is to be confirmed
- Income from assets (ATC and Bowling Pavilion): expected to be the same for 2021/22
- Income: Will be reduced. No further funding from Sefton for Bobby's Wood and Old Hall Park and unclear if any income for hire of Tennis Pavilion and courts. Discussion with Tennis Club ongoing about outstanding hire charges
- Staff costs: Assume pay rise of 2% and covers pay increments for some staff.

In summary, under the proposed budget there is a shortfall of £22,072 for Operation Costs. This would require an increase in precept of £3 to meet the shortfall.

*Gull Suez*

## Points raised by Cllrs:

- Breakdown of nominal code 5204 (Parks Management) requested. Noted that this includes planting, playground equipment and benches
- What discussions have been held with those who hire Council's assets about continuing to hire next year. Noted that no discussion held but expect the RAF/ATC and Scrummies to continue to hire assets
- Need to review/refresh how the Council raises money. Concerns that response to deficit is to put up Precept. Need to look at how the Council can be more creative in generating income rather than putting the burden on rate payers
- Funded Town Clerk to achieve a qualification (CiLCA) which gives Councils powers under the General Power of Competence to raise funds. Little evidence
- Council has two elements – core functions (e.g. running costs and parks) and events. Appointed a Community Services Manager to add social value/capital. The idea was that the post would try and generate income and not be a drain on Council business.
- Need to evaluate external grant aid and milk Council's assets. Consider external expertise to support this work – noted that Cllr Sharp has secured £60,000 for works in Bobby's Wood. Consider what was achieved previously e.g. Arm's Length Company received £100,000 from external funding. Funding used to set up Maghull Radio and a business incubator.

In response the Amenities Manager noted the request for a financial refresh. He reported that the Community Services Manager was working with community groups and Sefton CVS on funding options. External funding under pressure with limited opportunities. It was unlikely the gap in funding could be met by grants.

The Amenities Manager moved on to discuss the Asset Maintenance Plan:

## Key points:

- Bigger gap in budget if deliver the approved Asset Maintenance Plan
- Want to avoid managing decline in parks if unable to replace play equipment
- Recommend increasing precept as risks of using reserves. Needed if any unforeseen circumstances e.g. a death in service
- Covid pandemic has had an impact on income
- Agree that there should not be an automatic call on raising the precept. However, need to be clear what the financial situation is

## Key comments by Cllrs:

- Lydiate have secured grant funding for changing rooms
- Concern about impact on rate payers as proposals are for Amenities only
- Clarification need on limits on reserves. Could keep 20%
- Need to consider cuts to some maintenance projects – e.g. flooring for Town Hall and air conditioning for radio station. Is this required if broadcasting from home?
- Residents use parks. Concerns about time taken to replace play equipment, works get pushed back
- Review plan for year 2 works to making savings. Some projects to be put on hold. Works to parks should not slide because of works to the Town Hall

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Work (£5,000) to separate Electricity supply to outside buildings identified as a saving. Air conditioning works be completed in Year 1 (2020/21).

The Amenities Manager reported that the revised plan would leave a budget shortfall of around £30,000. This would require a precept increase of £4.52. The total proposed precept increase was £7.78 (£3.26 for Amenities Team and £4.52 for revised Asset plan.) This is a 3% increase on 2020/21. The proposed Precept increase for the Town Hall as £9.78

Summary of closing comments made by Cllrs:

- Concerns about affordability of Precept increase for residents, particularly those not in work. Need to consider other options
- Concerns that Police, Fire and Sefton Council are likely to increase their Precepts.
- Precept increase should be a last resort
- Any increase should be as low as possible and less than £10.00 across all budgets
- Understand that need to pay wages, pensions etc but concerns that may need to review staffing in the future
- Propose Precept increase of £3.00 to cover amenities costs
- Revised Asset Maintenance Plan to be reviewed by Finance and General Purposes Committee
- Financial refresh to be arranged as soon as possible
- All funding options to be explored

**RESOLVED that**

- 1. Undertake a financial refresh**
- 2. Recommend a raise in precept of £3.00 to cover the core running costs of the Amenities Service**
- 3. Revised Asset Plan to be reviewed by Finance and General Purposes Committee**
- 4. Consider use of reserves for capital items**
- 5. The report be noted**

**9. CHAIRS REPORT**

No report given



**CHAIRMAN**

- Capital items to be refunded from reserves

In response the Amenities Manager noted the following:

- Clerks network and share skills and experience. Happy to work with Lydiate and draw on their expertise
- Need to present a balanced budget to Full Council
- Page 26 of the report set out the agreed asset maintenance plan for year 1 (2020/21).
  - Demolition of the Judo Hut had been completed. Some additional costs incurred (approx. £900 due to ground works)
  - Cemetery Risk Assessment to be completed by St Andrews not Maghull Town Council. Saving of £3,000
  - Bins for Parks. Costs to be met from s106 funding. Saving of £6,069
  - Some project delayed as Procurement Policy only recently agreed
- Noted that current level of reserves is £546,580. Advice from SLCC and NALC is that councils should hold reserves for 6-9 months operating costs. The Council's annual running costs are £769,710.
- Can replace some items of play equipment quickly but can take longer to replace others. Procurement policy should help. Also issues about surface when replacing play equipment which increases costs

Cllrs agreed a revised plan for Year 2 works as follows:

Works	Estimated Cost (£)	Rationale
Install new electricity meter at Whinneybrook (Pump)	3,000.00	Required
CCTV at Glenn Park	4,000.00	Important to protect investment in park
Demolish Pavilion Whinneybrook	5,000.00	Demolish rather than refurbish as not used
Replacement play equipment for parks as per ROSPA report	30,000.00	Important to maintain parks
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>42,000</b>	

The following works to be moved to Year 3:

Works	Estimated Cost (£)
Reflooring Town Hall	5,000.00
More CCTV around Town Hall and overflow car park etc	1,600.00
Repaint indoors at Town Hall to improve appearance	7,000.00
Shutters to Town Hall Main entrance	7,000.00
<b>Sub Total Two</b>	<b>20,600</b>