

MAGHULL TOWN COUNCIL
AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD 23rd SEPTEMBER 2020
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM

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

ALSO PRESENT – A. McIntyre (Town Clerk), A. Spencer (Amenities Manager), S. Larking (Minutes) and B. Greenaway (Mersey Forest)

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – Apologies received from Cllr Carr
2. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS** – None received.
3. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** – No requests received
4. **MINUTES OF AMENITIES COMMITTEE 4th MARCH 2020.**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of Amenities Committee held on 4th March 2020 were approved as a correct record. Note: Minutes to be signed at the next opportunity.

5. **PROPOSED TREE PLANTING SCHEME WITH MERSEY FOREST**

Ben Greenaway from The Mersey Forest explained that he was working with Maghull Town Council to increase tree planting in Maghull. Funding streams were available to support planting. The focus has been on 8 public green spaces and one privately run space:

- Hall Lane Park
- Pimbley Playing Fields
- Mersey Avenue Playing Fields
- Moss Park
- Dodds Park
- Round Meade
- South Meade
- Bobby's Wood
- Moss Side Cricket Field

There are 34 hectares of green spaces in Maghull which includes 14 parks and 19 open spaces. Using data from Fields in Trust the Green Space Index for Maghull is 20m² of green space per person; the average is 29.37m².

The offer from Mersey Forest is as follows:

- Woodlands and micro forests: Hall Lane, Pimbley, Round Meade and Bobby's Wood. Cost £21,000
- Standard Trees and additional hedging: Mersey, Dodds, Moss, South Meade and Moss Side Cricket Club.

Notes:



- Money not secured for standard trees
- No funding for street trees
- Urban Tree Funding requires 50% match funding
- No rush to do work. Funding to be spent in a timely manner. Good quality woodland and green space is the priority
- Mersey Forest may comment on local plans but do not comment on individual planning applications. Recommended looking at a development in North Knowsley which incorporated green space

Key points made by Cllrs:

- Amenities and green space a priority for Maghull residents
- Surprised by amount of green space in Maghull. Thought Maghull was green compared with other areas
- Developers on Land East of Maghull sites making claims about biodiversity. Concerns about infrastructure and flooding. Will ask Sefton if the proposals meet the requirements for Green Space
- Noted that planting trees is a mitigation against climate change

The Amenities Manager made the following points:

- Community engagement needed to get support for proposals. Will build on Cllr Sharp's work in Bobby's Wood
- Two of the sites owned by Sefton Council (Old Hall Park and Bobby's Wood) and there will therefore be a requirement to consult.
- Planting provides an opportunity for the Amenities Team to develop their skills. Team have capacity to deliver planting scheme as winter works started early.
- Aim of presentation was to flag up work to Committee and get agreement to firm up proposals and start community consultation.

RESOLVED that

- 1. Officers to develop proposals and work with the Community and Sefton Council**
- 2. The presentation be noted**

6. AMENITIES MANAGER UPDATE – COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS

The Amenities reported that 6 resolutions were in progress. Updates by exception for the actions in progress (highlighted in grey in report) as follows:

- Mersey Forest: Presentation to Members
- Council's Vehicles/Fleet: Progress delayed by Covid 19 pandemic and waiting for agreement of Procurement Policy. Procurement Policy and agreement with Knowsley Council was approved by Finance and General Purposes Committee on 9th September. Work on fleet will be progressed as part of Procurement Policy
- Judo Hut: Update to be provided as part of the Agenda (item 11)
- Alternative Legal Provision: This has not been progressed due to savings required due to Covid 19 Pandemic

- Bid Writer: This has not been progressed due to savings required due to Covid 19 Pandemic
- Grounds Maintenance Operations 2020/21: Update to be provided as part of the Agenda (item 7)

RESOLVED that

- 1. The report be noted**

7. REVIEW OF GROUNDS MAINTENANCE OPERATIONS 2020/21

At its meeting on 4th March 2020 Amenities Committee had approved proposals for 2020/21 Grounds Maintenance Operations. The ambition was to enhance parks and open spaces. Work had been impacted due to lockdown during the Covid-19 pandemic. Following return to work the Grounds Maintenance Team have prioritised work to achieve pre lockdown standards. They have achieved, and in some areas exceeded pre-lockdown standards and some winter works e.g. hedge cutting have started early. However, maintenance of play equipment and assets such as pavilions was behind schedule.

The Amenities Manager asked for the Committee to consider five changes to the work programme:

1. Removal of Play Equipment identified as posing a danger to health and safety in the annual ROSPA report
2. Repainting of play equipment and assets (pavilions, entrance barriers and park signs)
3. Installation of bins as part of phase two of bin replacement programme
4. Installation of benches as part of council's celebration bench scheme
5. Tree planting. As well as improving parks and open spaces would be an investment in the team and meet training needs

Key points raised by Cllrs:

- Positive feedback about grass cutting in Old Hall Park
- Concerned that equipment removed and not replaced. Long term funding strategy required as core duty of Council to provide and maintain parks and equipment
- Update requested on Maintenance Operative vacancy

The Town Clerk noted that Personnel Committee would need to meet to agree to fill the vacancy – the budget had been approved. Preference was to hold face to face rather than virtual interviews which may need to wait until local lockdown restrictions were lifted.

RESOLVED that

- 1. Additional works approved for the 2020/21 autumn/winter operations window**
- 2. The report be noted**

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

The Amenities Manager reported that he had liaised with Wicksteed regarding the refurbishment of the play area at Glenn Park. They are aiming to start work in the second week of October. There are some works for the Facilities Team to complete in advance e.g. removal of concrete posts. There is ongoing ASB in the park. Priority is to protect

YS

the play equipment. Hedgerow had been retained. Considering a two-metre high fence with access gates at either end. He noted a comment from Cllrs about fencing being scrambled and potential liability. His informal view was that if anyone fell after climbing the fence that contributory negligence could be used in defence

RESOLVED that

1. Verbal report be noted

9. PROPOSED PARTNERSHIP WITH MAGHULL IN BLOOM TO SUPPORT LITTER PICKING IN GLENN PARK

The Amenities Manager reported that he had received a request from Maghull in Bloom (MiB) to support litter picking in Glenn Park. Three regular park users had volunteered to litter pick. The Council could provide litter pickers and high viz tabards (without logos) if needed. Litter picking on Council land is covered by Council's insurance. Residents are keen to form "Friends Of" groups in Balls Wood and Round Meade. Work on-going with the Community Services Manager to formalise groups.

Key points from Cllrs:

- Conservative Group have up to 10 volunteers available to help with litter picking in parks: litter pickers, glove and high viz tabards
- Would like an update on "Friends Of" Groups at the next meeting

RESOLVED that

- 1. Members supported the partnership with Maghull in Bloom for litter picking in Glenn Park.**
- 2. Update on "Friends Of" Groups for next meeting.**
- 3. Report be noted.**

10. FOOTBALL PITCH HIRE 2020/21

The Amenities Manager reported that work by Sefton Council to improve drainage at Pimbley Playing Field had been successful. Water logging had been reduced. Sefton District School Boys Under 15s FC had played on one pitch last season with no adverse impacts. Both pitches ready for hire for 2020/21 season. Lots of interest from clubs. Sefton District School Girls Football Club had enquired first (February 2020) and should be offered the pitch. Changing rooms are not be available. Covid-19 risk assessments will be required from both clubs to support the Council's own risk assessment. Clubs also providing/will provide contact details for Government's trace and test programme. Details will be kept for 21 days and destroyed thereafter.

Key points raised by Cllrs:

- A football club is providing Football Coaching at Whinney Brook on Saturday mornings. Up to 60 parents and children attend. Cars parked on verges causing a nuisance to residents. If this is a business, they should be charged as they are using a Council asset which incurs costs to maintain. Officers to investigate.
- Noted clubs hiring MTC facilities are providing contact details for Government's trace and test programme.



The Town Clerk suggested using social media to make residents aware that the organisers of the coaching sessions do not have permission to use Council land and that their insurance may be invalid

RESOLVED that:-

1. **Both football pitches at Pimbley Playing Field are reopened for the 2020/21 football season.**
2. **One pitch is made available to Sefton District Schoolboys Under 15's Football Club.**
3. **The reopened second pitch is made available to Sefton District School Girls Football Club.**
4. **Officers to explore use of Whinneybrook Playing Field on Saturday mornings and issue message on social media that Council has not agreed the hire and that insurance may not be valid**
5. **The report be noted**

11. DEMOLITION OF FORMER JUDO HUT AT SITE OF MAGHULL TOWN HALL

The Amenities Manager reported that despite efforts to secure the judo hut, it is blighted by high levels of vandalism and puts the tennis pavilion at risk. The cost of demolition is £7,320 and £200 + VAT to disconnect the electricity.

Cllrs noted the following

- Building not been used in recent years
- Options to retain skeleton and refurbish considered as a base for Grounds Maintenance Team. Council has other assets it could use
- Access an issue for use as a garage
- Plan to rationalise the estate going forward and bid for funding for a sports facility

RESOLVED that

1. **The former Judo hut is demolished by Winterburns of Rochdale Ltd and electricity disconnected**
2. **The costs associated with demolition of the former judo hut to be met by asset maintenance nominal code within the 2020/21 Facilities Budget**
3. **The report be noted**

12. RESPONSE TO SEFTON COUNCIL'S CONSULTATION ON PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER (DOG CONTROL)

The Amenities Manager reported that Sefton Council's Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) (Dog Control) had been in place for 3 years. Sefton Council is carrying out a consultation about its effectiveness and any improvements. Closing date is 5th October. Key points from MTC response:

1. State the names of Town/Parish Parks and Open Spaces within the annex of the new PSPO to give greater certain in terms of enforcing the order



2. Universal signage across Sefton would help as currently each Parish/Town Council has different signage.
3. A contact point within Sefton Council should be identified to help inform where patrols should be deployed where dog control is an issue.
4. Funding should be made available to support community clear ups

RESOLVED that

1. **The verbal report be noted**

13. FUNDING APPLICATION – FRIENDS OF MAGHULL AND DISTRICT

Friends of Maghull and District have requested funding for two crowd funding signs (£95.00) to help promote the work of the Friends of Maghull and District. The cost will be met from the Parks Management nominal code.

Cllrs commended Cllr Sharp for his work to improve the local environment. They noted that he had raised over £66,000 for projects in Maghull

RESOLVED that

1. **Funding of £95.00 agreed for Friends of Maghull and District to purchase crowd funding signs to be installed at Bobby's Wood**
2. **The report be noted**

14. CHAIRS REPORT

No report given

15. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that

1. **The press and public be excluded due to the confidential nature of the item under discussion.**

16. HEDGE PLANTING AT DODD'S PARK

A resident, whose property borders Dodds Park, requested that a hedge is planted on the boundary of the property due to privacy issues from an item of play equipment. The resident has made a number of complaints which have been investigated by Officers. The resident has planted a laurel hedge along their boundary, but growth is slow. The resident claims that poor growth has resulted from the proximity of two silver birch trees and has requested one or both are felled. The Council's policy is not to remove trees unless they are damaged or diseased. Knowsley Council's Tree Officer (who carried out the 2018 Tree Survey) advised that it was not necessary to fell either tree which were both in good health.

The Town Clerk confirmed that she had visited the property. Part of the laurel hedge was not growing as fast as in other parts of the garden. This could be due to a number of reasons. Silver birches are not known to take up large quantities of water. The Council has been working to reduce the height of hedges across Maghull's parks, in response to feedback from residents and was something which members supported within council's Parks Review. Hedges are cut to a uniform height rather than by household preference.

AS

Cllrs carefully considered the request to plant a hedge to the rear of the property in Dodds Park. A majority decided to reject the request to plant a hedge and agreed that there should be no works to either silver birch trees.

RESOLVED that

- 1. Rejected request to have hedging with the boundary of Dodd's Park to the rear of a property on Dodd's Lane**
- 2. The Town Clerk should write a letter to the resident explaining the resolution of members.**
- 3. The report be noted**


CHAIRMAN

