

# WEST BYFLEET RECREATION GROUND PROJECT

## MEETING NOTES

Meeting held at Woking Council Chambers on 7th September 2023 at 17.00 hours

### In attendance

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Julie Fisher (JF)          | Chief Executive - Woking Borough Council                            |
| Mark Ferguson (MF)         | Senior Property Surveyor - Woking Borough Council                   |
| Beverley Kuchar (BK)       | Strategic Director for Place - Woking Borough Council               |
| Arran Henderson (AH)       | Senior Green Places Development Officer - Woking Borough Council    |
| A N Other                  | Woking Borough Council  |
|                            |   |
| Councillor Amanda Boote    | Ward Councillor (AB)  |
| Councillor Daryl Jordan    | Ward Councillor   |
| Councillor Josh Brown      | Ward Councillor (JB)  |
| Councillor Ellen Nicholson | Portfolio Holder for Green Space and Play/Leisure/Community Centres |
|                            |   |
| Stewart Dick               | } West Byfleet Neighbourhood Forum                                  |
| Keith Creswell             |   |

### **1. Introductions**

### **2. Introduction by JF - matters discussed**

#### **(a) *Update Statement from Councillor Lyon Lyons on Community Infrastructure Levy.***

Confirmation from JF that New (i.e. received post the Section 114 Notice) NCIL/CIL funds are immediately available to spend subject to the existing application etc. procedures and approval by the Financial Control Panel. This panel comprises senior Councillor Officers which might at times include the Commissioners.

[ Notes:

- (i) as regards membership of this panel no names were provided and there appeared to be some hesitation
- (ii) West Byfleet has £13,216.88 of new NCIL available to spend
- (iii) Bear in mind that so far we have been charged circa £55,000 by WBC for them to administer our funds!
- (iv) I am not convinced that this approach to new receipts is in accordance with the statements from Brendan Arnold and the first statement from Councillor Lyons. (What about suspension until negative reserves are addressed?) Further the CIL/NCIL under PLAN2020/0907 was received on the 7th June the date of the issue of the S114 Notice. I suspect that this change of approach has more to do with the arrival of the new interim S.151 Officer. However I will not be debating it as it is to our advantage both now and longer term.]

#### **(b) *Book keeping recording of New receipts in WBC's General Ledger***

There had been no ring fencing with all receipts being recorded in the General Ledger. This system will continue. However new cash received will be kept separate in a different ledger account.

[ Note - I find this unpersuasive and concerning]

JF made a clear statement that NCIL fund belonged to the Community. This is very helpful as too many appear to believe that it is within the gift of the Council whereas it is a legal obligation.

JB asked whether in the current circumstances might the 75% new CIL receipts be spent in WB to compensate for those funds that are currently not available, This received a positive response. Not sure if the question was understood.

### (c) *Operation of Recreation Ground*

JF was clear, indeed dogmatic, that WBC would neither manage nor maintain the facility. The Community must take ownership and assume responsibility. This view is not new as JF had made this abundantly clear at meetings prior to the S.114. This is clearly a problem for WBNF.

### 3. **Presentation (MF) - Recreation Field and Pavilion**

An excellent slide presentation on the Recreation Ground. Various options had been considered but given the likely budget only one was presented to us. This involved reducing the current building to its footprint and building a modern sports pavilion with appropriate facilities.

MF stressed that this was merely a starting position and it would require community discussion and input and would of course change in its journey through to completion.

- a) entrance would be of the Camphill Road. It would be in a new position (avoiding the Roman Wall) and would involve taking a small piece of land (in any event owned by WBC) from the Bowls Club. They are happy about that. There would be parking for around 25 cars (accepted as perhaps controversial but viewed as essential).
- (b) discussion on pathways seemed positive.
- (c) at the car park position there would be power should a pop-up cafe need it.
- (d) four changing rooms/toilets/disabled toilet/no lift/upstairs balcony
- (e) Issues:
  - > too small
  - > no facilities for referees and officials
  - > facilities for guides and scouts not clear
  - > storage for guides and scouts.
- (f) Surrey County Council. MF has had ongoing discussions with SCC regarding their agreement to incorporate their field into the overall recreation ground. There was a brief discussion as to the mechanics and transfer of title. The view of WBC was that there was no need to transfer title and it was simpler to leave it with SCC. We will need to consider the possible implications should that be the route that is followed.
- (g) A very inconclusive discussion on public toilets.
- (h) Lamppost lighting
- (i) **COST AND PROJECT TIMELINE.** Around £850,000 and 16 months. That was before the recent problems.

### 4. **Ownership of Recreation Ground**

JF was "reminded" of the current ownership structure being a Trust with the sole trustee being WBC. No Accounts are produced so we have no ideas as to the annual costs etc, There is a note to that effect in the WBC accounts (as and when they are produced!). Nothing is sent to the Charity Commission for England and Wales.

It was suggested that JF might wish to confirm the status.

[Note:

As a result of the Marston's pub episode and the complaint to the Charity Commission, WBNF has rather a lot of information on this topic. Also because the Recreation Ground is now an Asset of Community Value which we did not mention.]

## 5. **Tennis Courts etc.**

AH presented an update to the meeting though I rather gained the impression that discussions with the LTA had slowed down.

It was also rather rushed in that the meeting was due to finish at 6.00 pm and it was already past that time.

Anyway the project is certainly still alive though the timing has slipped and if other issues are agreed then installation is likely to be Spring 2024. The LTA contractor has agreed to stand by his price if everything is agreed by next March. We should aim to submit an NCIL Application to the October meeting. LTA will contribute £56k with a matched amount coming from WBNF. It is possible that the LTA will be in a position to increase their contribution to £61k which will reduce our requirement. There are still many unknowns which can be summarised as what the agreement with the LTA will actually say. In the event of cost overruns AB generously volunteered her SCC Community Budget to meet them.

Cost to use will be £7.50 per hour.

The basketball court will improved but the space is insufficient to meet international requirements.

Gym equipment. Ran out of time but further discussions are necessary. It is not clear why as I thought we had agreed our requirements.