

COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

TUESDAY, 3 NOVEMBER 2020

PRESENT: Councillors John Bowden (Chairman), Greg Jones (Vice-Chairman), Gurpreet Bhangra, Jon Davey, Catherine Del Campo and Parish Councillor Margaret Lenton

Also in attendance: Councillors Baldwin, Rayner, Singh, Stimson and Martin Denny (The Old Court)

Officers: Chris Joyce, Louisa Knight, Stephanie Lewis, Shilpa Manek, Suzie Parr and David Scott

WELCOME FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Helen Price. Councillor Jon Davey was substituting.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Bhangra declared a personal interest as he was a member of the Grenfell Park User Group for Item 7 and Councillor Bowden declared a personal interest as he was a critical member/friend of The Old Court for Item 5.

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meetings held on 3 September 2020 and 1 October 2020 were a true record. These were proposed by Councillor Bhangra and seconded by Councillor Greg Jones.

The Actions arising from the minutes on 3 September 2020 were as follows:

Action 1: David Scott to send a briefing note on the Community Safety Partnership – Still to Action

Action 2: Suzie Parr to provide a comprehensive report to the Panel for Norden Farm with an overview of all reports from the SLA period before the next meeting – To Action before January 2021 meeting, after Norden Farm AGM.

Action 3: SportsAble to do further breakdown of figures into categories and report back to David Scott – David Scott to follow up although it was noted that the club has been closed due to Covid and Lockdown for a significant period.

Action 4: David Scott to explore new ways of signposting with SportsAble – David Scott to follow up.

Action 5: David Scott to work with SportsAble and BLC to explore ways of working together – David Scott to follow up.

Action 6: Clerk to arrange an additional meeting ASAP for the SERCO Contract waste collection discussion – Complete.

THE OLD COURT ANNUAL REPORT

Suzie Parr, Museum and Arts Team Leader, introduced the report and informed the Panel that Martin Denny had managed The Old Court since 2017. It had been a challenging and interesting time as reopening in December would be the fourth time that The Old Court would have been opened since Martin Denny had taken over. Suzie Parr informed the Panel that the funding from the grant from RBWM had been reduced and The Old Court was now looking at ways in which to fill the gap such as additional corporate hire.

Councillor Bowden added that The Old Court supported the local brewery too and they supplied the alcohol to the bar attached to The Old Court.

Councillor Del Campo found the presentation very inspiring and could see the effort and love that went into The Old Court. Councillor Del Campo suggested that it would be useful for the Panel to see the number of attendees against the required numbers in tabular form for future updates. Councillor Del Campo thought it was worrying to see the negative capital figure.

Councillor Del Campo commented on the SWOT analysis, she had assumed it had been prepared by an external company. The strengths and opportunities were very clear but the weaknesses and threats seemed quite woolly, she felt it needed to include the pandemic and the country's security threats, both of which were a concern. Councillor Del Campo asked if The Old Court had any links with Norden Farm where they shared good practice and supported each other through the crisis. If there were none, would this be something that would be of interest to The Old Court?

Martin Denny informed the Panel that the negative capital figure on the published accounts was a concern but they were working to improve it and believed that they would have improved it this year, partly because of the Arts Council support directed at covering ongoing costs that could not be mitigated during the lockdown. In the year in concern, the deficit was in part covered by Martin Denny Management as the linked organisation through support of investment that was being made in the building that over time would balance out so the overall picture was not as much of insecurity as the deficit number may have suggested.

The SWOT analysis had been prepared by Martin Denny and related to the year being reported on.

The Old Court and Norden Farm had many informal conversational links and information was shared between both organisations but there were no formal partnership links at present.

Suzie Parr informed the Panel that the accounts in Part II were in a tabular form showing performance against KPI's.

Councillor Davey complimented the brilliant job that Martin Denny had done with the Windsor Festival. Councillor Davey continued to talk about the Green Room and the fantastic things they were doing. Councillor Davey had also had conversations with The Theatre Royal and suggested that Martin Denny should speak with them and the Green Room about activity that may generate revenue. He had been advised that there was the capacity to do this.

Councillor Greg Jones complimented Martin Denny on the venue. Councillor Jones commented that he felt that the corporate bookings were very low especially with all the technology, marketing and media companies on their doorstep, Councillor Jones that it was a funky venue for corporate events. Were there ways to explore to get more business from this avenue. Martin Denny commented that they were ready for these kinds of bookings now. In the reporting year, the venue was not quite ready to advertise for this. The Old Court would now be pursuing this actively.

Councillor Rayner thanked Martin Denny and complimented him on the job he had done. Councillor Rayner said that Martin Denny had managed to capture a great audience of different ages doing so many different activities. Councillor Rayner informed the Panel that Martin Denny had been brave and ambitious, trying new ways of working and introducing new things and had really let the Friends of The Old Court get involved. The Old Court had played a large part of the cultural offer to the residents in the borough, along with Norden Farm.

Councillor Davey pointed out that the Friends of The Old Court seemed only to be Conservatives and no other parties. It would be beneficial to include all as there was a lot of thoughts and benefits to offer.

MUSEUM SERVICES UPDATE REPORT

Suzie Parr introduced the report and gave a presentation to the Panel. Some of the points covered by Suzie Parr included:

- The museum actively collects and shares for the present but also preserve for our collection for the future generations.
- The museum collection is 70 years old this year.
- The museum was opened by Her Majesty the Queen, ten years ago, next year.
- As a service, the museum supported equally the established organisations such as Norden Farm, The Old Court, Windsor Festival, Windsor Fringe and the arts and sports bursaries through annual grants.
- The service delivery was very broad, the museum was based at the Guildhall before closure in March 2020 due to covid 19 restrictions, the museum had six satellite exhibitions across the borough. The team worked closely with volunteers to offer tours, events and activities in the museum.
- The museum holds one of the longest established archive collections in the borough.
- The aims of the museum service were highlighted.
- Information about the museum accreditation was presented to the Panel by Louisa Knight, Museum Arts and Local Studies Officer. The renewal date for this was April 2021.
- Stephanie Lewis, Museum Arts and Local Studies Officer, updated the Panel about visitor numbers. The visitor targets had always been met. Since March, the team were trying to capture online involvement and engagement using social media.
- The income targets had also always been met, with an increase in 2019-20 due to the Royal wedding. The team were currently looking at alternate ways to raise funds since being closed in March 2020.

A volunteer/friend, Brigitte Mitchell, of the museum gave a small talk on the role that they had in supporting and assisting the museum.

Councillor Del Campo complimented the presentation. Councillor Del Campo thanked the volunteers of the museum. Councillor Del Campo asked about the consultation that was mentioned in the presentation and how far that had come along. Suzie Parr informed the Panel that the team were in the process of applying for a Arts Council project grant to do some external consultation to review how the service operates moving forward and recognising that the service needed to diversify the income and look at different funding opportunities and different ways that could be worked on to build on audiences. This would be submitted in the next few weeks. The team were hoping that this would run alongside the museum's 10th birthday and trying to focus on 10 events of significance.

ACTION: Suzie Parr to share the application to the Arts Council with the Panel, after it had been submitted.

Councillor Davey suggested having a restricted content where schools paid a license fee or something like that to access the more detailed information, to raise revenue. Councillor

Davey also suggested famous people coming into the museum and presenting something about their thoughts about the history from the past. It might be a good idea to work with The Old Court as there was already a team there who could assist.

Parish Councillor Margaret Lenton asked if the future of the museum was now totally secure? People in and around Windsor were deeply concerned. Parish Councillor Lenton asked what was being done with activities for older people particularly those suffering from dementia where history and background were very important to them. Suzie Parr informed the Panel that the museum had previously worked with older people, particularly with dementia and on Monday's when the museum was closed, local care homes could come and visit the museum before the lockdown. In the future this could be looked at again. Chris Joyce, Head of Infrastructure, Sustainability and Transport, informed the Panel that there had been some misunderstanding from the interim corporate strategy that had been produced. The intention was to reopen the museum at the appropriate time when it was safe to do so. Chris Joyce was working with the team to look into ways to get the museum open before its 10th birthday, subject to government guidance.

Councillor Rayner thanked the Officers for the presentation and Brigitte Mitchell for being a friend and a volunteer.

Councillor Baskerville asked that since it was the centenary of the office of prime minister next year, especially as we've had a recent prime minister from the royal borough, would the borough be doing anything? Suzie Parr suggested that she would raise this with the Maidenhead Heritage Centre.

UPDATE ON REVIEW OF LIGHTING AT GRENFELL PARK

David Scott, Head of Communities, gave an update report. The item had been presented to the Panel as a resident suggestion and after discussing the Panel agreed that it would be appropriate for the issue to be considered by the Grenfell Park User Group. The group had been established for a while and it was fortunate that the Group was able to meet at the beginning of March 2020, just before the national lockdown. The issue of the lighting in the park was discussed and the issues that were raised by the group were to suggest would be developed and suggested. The officers have therefore progressed those.

The Parks and Countryside Officer, Jackie Wheeler had been engaged in doing that including some work with the tree officer to revisit the assessment that was undertaken in the last site-specific tree survey and there were some works programmed and Members were probably aware that there was a refresh on the five-year leap cycle and so this was an opportunity for an interim update which was done, and as a result some minor works had been ordered by the tree officer to address some of the interfering overgrowth that there had now been improved therefore light distribution particularly in relation to the light columns on the central path. Also, a significant hanging branch from the large lime tree in the corner of the park had been addressed. Other works had been done or were in the process of being done either by Tivoli as the main grounds maintenance contract for the borough or through volunteers who could assist with simple tasks. A significant defect was found in a large beech tree in the south western corner of the park and due to rot the arrangements had been made for the felling of that tree for safety reasons. The other element was in relation to the small car park area that's on the south eastern corner, off Grenfell Road, this was still work in progress. There was a suggestion that motion sensitive lighting could be used, however it was considered that this was not realistic given that it could be triggered and indeed may cause more problems and disruption by lights going on and off at all sorts of hours rather than a fixed lighting and some more work was being done. It looks like a couple of columns in that corner and that could be done by trenching round through the soft ground in the park, adjacent to the car park surfaced area and that bit of work was still being progressed.

Councillor Bhangra confirmed that at the last meeting in March the group had discussed the lighting as it was quite poor, and Jacqui Wheeler had the issues in hand.

Councillor Singh wanted to raise some resident concerns as the lighting issue had been going on for a couple of winters. Councillor Singh said that residents understood that motion sensitive lighting was not appropriate and that they had suggested solar powered lighting and if this would work in that part of the car park. David Scott would ask for this to be looked into this and ask for an update to Councillor Singh by email. Councillor Singh had met Jackie Wheeler on site and was very grateful for that. Councillor Singh wanted to know if any designs had been made and he would like to see them and be involved.

ACTION: David Scott to review the designs with the Lead Member and then would update Councillor Singh.

ACTION: The detail be discussed with the Ward Members, Councillor Singh and Councillor Stimson and then progress to avoid delay.

Councillor Bhangra suggested that the information be brought back to the user group and officers.

Councillor Stimson, Lead Member for Parks and Countryside, reminded the Panel that finances also needed to be considered before any work was carried out. They would all work together to resolve the issues.

UPDATE ON BATTLEMEAD COMMON

David Scott, Head of Communities, gave an update report following earlier discussions.

It had been committed that an update would be brought back to the Panel following the earlier activity in relation to working with the Friends of Battlemead Common.

The borough had bought this piece of land a couple of years ago and a masterplan was being developed which was trying to seek the balance and the mixed benefits of protecting the biodiversity but also providing access to what was a valuable asset. A virtual meeting had taken place with the Friends in September 2020, which was very well attended and there were some very thorough discussions of the issues that had been considered over period of time. As a result of the debate, a revised masterplan was created incorporating comments from the debate and the issues discussed in that meeting. An opportunity was given for the Friends to come back with further comments by a deadline. An initial bit of work had been carried out to look at the responses and the analysis was just being completed. There was a total of eight sets of responses received, some were from individuals and some from group representatives. There was a good level of response, given the different groups who sat as part of the Friends.

David Scott went through some of the things that had been raised, these included dogs on or off leads in the west field, the causeway path and whether that should be seasonal use or something else, in the east field, there was a number of comments in relation to the new seasonal path. In the north field, the area to the northwest corner of the site as a whole and the rewilding of that area and comments on the pond and adjacent west field. Also, comments were received on the White Brook and the need for hydrological study of the area and the ecological plan would be supported by the hydrological plan. And then finally the wet willow woodland which in the southeast corner and the proposals to support the best use and protection of that area and there would be an annual review of the site and masterplan. Next meeting is due to take place at the beginning of December 2020.

Councillor Del Campo commented that it was a more productive way of progressing. The only question that Councillor Del Campo raised was the point about monitoring the masterplan on an ongoing basis and reviewing it annually in discussion with the Friends, she wanted

reassurance that this would not slip back into the previous mode of making decisions and then letting people know and that the momentum would not be lost.

David Scott reassured the Panel that this would not be the case.

RESIDENT SCRUTINY SUGGESTION - LIGHTS IN OSGOOD PARK

David Scott, Head of Communities, reminded Panel members that residents could bring forward items to be discussed at Overview and Scrutiny Panels and this was one such example of this. The suggestion was to look at lighting in Osgood Park in West Windsor. This issue had been looked at in a couple of previous years when it had been raised previously. The matter was subject to capital bid to see if funding could be identified to support the request and although the item had been raised previously, it had actually been unsuccessful at securing against the other competing requirements for funding, so to date, the item had not been progressed. The request had been looked at in respect of the costs and the benefits and obviously during the winter months and the much shorter days then the request really was in connection with trying to make sure that people could continue to use the central path across the park at times of darkness. This did not reach the criteria threshold to be successful in capital bid process and as a result the proposal had not been taken forward.

The report which the scrutiny officer had put together has gone through the process and the conclusion from the overall process is that Panel members noted the report and that accept that there was nothing further action to take on this occasion.

Councillor Davey said that Members and residents had been told time and again that there were no funds, and this had to be accepted and alternate arrangements investigated. Councillor Davey informed the Panel that three sides of the four of the park, had paths that were lit by street lighting so there were safe ways to get through the park without having to use the central path.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: that the Panel agreed with the recommendation in the report to note the report and accept that there was no further action to take on this occasion.

WORK PROGRAMME

Councillor Davey asked for full financial information and breakdown of how many fines had been issued and in what category they fell into, for the next meeting. The Chairman informed the Panel that this information may not be available, but he would discuss with the Lead Member and the Lead Officer. He would also ask how many complaints had been received to date.

Councillor Del Campo requested that the SERCO contract be kept on the work programme as the issues were still ongoing. Councillor Del Campo suggested the Citizens Advice Bureau and the additional work they would have and they be invited to come and talk to the Panel.

ACTION: Add SERCO Contract to be kept on work programme until issues resolved.

ACTION: Add invite be made for an update to be provided by CAB in light of additional work

ACTION: An update on the new Braywick Leisure Centre

The clerk suggesting moving the update on the Parks and Open spaces and the update on the Allotments to a future meeting.

ACTION: Chairman suggested a Teams meeting in early December to look further at work programme.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY; That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting whilst discussion takes place on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 of part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

The meeting, which began at 6.15 pm, finished at 8.52 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....