

DEREHAM TOWN COUNCIL

28th November 2023

At a meeting of the **Recreation Committee** held at the Memorial Hall on **Tuesday 28th November 2023 at 7pm.**

Present: Councillors K Cogman (Vice Chairman), H Clarke (Substitute for A Brooks), P Duigan, A Greenwood and P Morton.

Also in attendance: Town Clerk Tony Needham, Deputy Town Clerk Jillian Barron, Councillors C Coleman, S Green and R O'Callaghan.

1. **To receive apologies for absence.**
Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Brooks and H Jones-Seymour.
2. **Declaration of Interest**
Councillors K Cogman, R O'Callaghan and H Clarke declared an interest in agenda items 3 and 4 as they are District Councillors.

Councillors P Duigan and S Green arrived.

3. **To consider a response to a letter sent to Breckland Council.**

The committee recommended that the Town Clerk write to Breckland Council asking again what methodology they would use to assess whether there is a deficit or surplus of open spaces in the settlement. This information would be requested under the Environmental Information Regulations.
The Clerk would arrange a face-to-face meeting to discuss the other matters not answered in the letter.

The committee agreed that with regards to protecting open spaces owned by Dereham Town Council the possibility of dedicating land in its ownership through the Fields in Trust should be placed on the Balanced Score Card.

4. **To consider adopting play areas from Breckland Council.**

The committee recommended that the Town Clerk go back to Breckland Council stating that the Town Council does not accept that Breckland needs to impose additional covenants to protect the open spaces if the Town Council covenants to agree to dedicate the sites with Fields in Trust. If Breckland Council insists on their covenants being imposed then the Council would consult residents to gauge public opinion. Breckland Council would be given 4 weeks notice between notification of a survey and any survey taking place.

5 Update on new play equipment in the north of Dereham.

Old Becclesgate is currently owned by Breckland Council – we have requested that the area be handed over to the Town Council with the condition that we register it with Fields in Trust to protect it as a public open space in perpetuity, but Breckland have not yet accepted the offer.

Old Becclesgate Play area was designed to be a quiet area for younger children and for people to sit. The location is less suited to active play. The design has now been finalised and residents consulted on the design. 40 questionnaires were sent out to residents with 11 responses returned. All except two responses were positive. All concerns raised would be taken up, considered as part of the planning process and modifications made as required.

The designs for Sandy Lane and School Lane are still being finalised. Girling Road design is complete but consultation with residents has not yet taken place.

Recreation Ground – Councillors requested consideration be given to additional play items to better cater for children with disabilities – these additional items would add £20-£30k to the budget, options for external funding for these items are being looked into.

6 Update Countryside Park.

In consultation with the Chairman of this committee and the Chairman of Finance and Governance the Clerk commissioned FWAG to start the process of applying for grants for tree planting. The areas for tree planting are sketched out below, with some more detailed draft proposals enclosed. If the applications are successful then planting would take place over two years starting in the winter of 2024. The design for the woods is set out to create a variety of habitats and as wide a range of tree species as permitted to reduce the risk of a single species being affected by climate change. There will be areas which, in the future, would be managed by rotational coppicing.

7. Update on identifying additional land for Sport and Recreation.

The first phase of identifying suitable land for sports pitches is nearly complete, with a number of areas having been identified as being suitable.

8. Exclusion of press and public

<p>Proposed by Councillor K Cogman, seconded by Councillor A Greenwood it was agreed to pass a resolution to exclude the Press and Public from the meeting on the grounds that the Business to be transacted is confidential and publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest.</p>

9. **To consider next steps in identifying and securing additional land for sports.**

The committee recommended that the council move on to phase 2 to narrow the sites down to 1 or 2 and appoint Agrostis to further assess these sites. A budget of £20,000 would be set to take the project forward. The Clerk would bring a progress report back to each Recreation Committee.

Chairman