

**REPORT of the Meeting of the Playing Fields
and Cemetery Committee held 26th June 2008**

Present: Cllr: Lesley Jones (Chairman)

Cllrs: Penny Baker
Clive Parkinson
Guy Rawlinson
Ann Rogers
Jim Woodford (St. Mary's Church)
Judith Payne (Town Clerk)

Apologies: Cllrs: Gill Brooks (Out of Thornbury)
Phyllida Parsloe (Other Commitment)
Bob Griffin (Out of Thornbury)

1. MATTERS ARISING FROM LAST REPORT

(a) St. Mary's Closed Churchyard

Jim Woodford reported that the grass cutting at the churchyard was being regularly carried out by volunteers. Mr. Woodford enquired whether Council had a set programme for replacing mowers and the Clerk advised that Council's mowers were only replaced when they were no longer serviceable. Mr. Woodford requested that Committee give consideration to including the purchase of a new small mower for the churchyard in next year's budget.

Mr. Woodford also reported that one of the protective grilles was missing from a floodlight in the churchyard and the Clerk agreed to ask the Open Spaces Supervisor to investigate. Members were also advised that the loose finial on the tower had now been repaired and that, since remedial work had been undertaken by South Gloucestershire Council, the flooding problem had been cured.

The Clerk reported that a letter had been received from Marjory Entwistle, Honorary Treasurer of St. Mary's Church, drawing attention to the fact that the Church and Council had an agreement that Council would meet the cost of the electricity for the church floodlighting. As part of that agreement the Church was to provide a sub-meter reading and a copy of the electricity bill to enable Council to calculate the amount of reimbursement due to the Church. It appeared that the Church had never submitted any bills and Council had not paid any reimbursement. The Clerk had not been aware of any agreement as it had been made with her predecessor and she had not been alerted to the situation as the Church had submitted no bills. Mrs. Entwistle enquired how far back Council would be prepared to reimburse the Church bearing in mind that the floodlighting had been installed in 2000.

It was agreed that the Church be requested to provide details on how much electricity had been used since 2000 and that the Clerk ask the opinion of the Internal Auditor on an acceptable time limit for reimbursement. The Clerk would also contact HM Customs and Excise to ascertain the time limit on claiming back VAT.

As Mr. Payton of Thornbury Town Football Club was in attendance it was agreed to take Item (i) as next business

(i) Pavilion Dressing Room Improvements

The Chairman welcomed Mr. Payton to the meeting and commenced discussions by reading a section from Committee's report of the April meeting which indicated that the Football Club would be responsible for submitting an application to the Gloucestershire Football Association (GFA) for funding towards the refurbishment of the dressing rooms. Mr. Payton felt that there had been some confusion as he understood that, as the refurbishment would form part of the overall bid being prepared by Club Thornbury for sports redevelopment in the town, Council would be responsible for submitting the application to the GFA.

It was agreed that Thornbury Town Football Club would now submit an application for the changing rooms refurbishment to the GFA but it was obvious that, even if the application was successful, funding would not be available in time to carry out the works before the commencement of the next football season in August. Mr. Payton asked if Committee would be willing to repaint the dressing rooms, install extra lighting and rescreed the floors before August. Members agreed that the repainting and extra lighting could be carried out by Council staff but felt that a price should be obtained for the floor screeding before a decision be made. Committee was mindful that any work to the floor would be undone when the refurbishment was undertaken.

It was agreed that the Clerk would obtain quotations for the floor screeding which would be considered at a special meeting of Committee on Monday 28th July 2008.

Mr. Toni Watola of Thornbury Falcons Football arrived and it was agreed to take Item (f) as next business.

(f) Development of Land at Poulterbrook – Future Plans

The Chairman welcomed Toni Watola, Chairman of Thornbury Falcons Football Club, to the meeting and referred to Committee's meeting of the 29th November 2007 where it was reported that Toni and Kim Hazeldine would produce a 5 to 10 year vision of football requirements for the whole town. The Chairman asked Mr. Watola how the Vision preparation was progressing and he advised that the document would be completed within the next couple of months with a view to submitting an application for funding in September/October this year.

The Falcons had, with South Gloucestershire Council, been investigating the possibility of acquiring the land to the south of the Leisure Centre which would accommodate two full size pitches, two junior pitches and changing facilities. Alan Sherratt of South Gloucestershire Council had undertaken a survey of the land and confirmed that the project was feasible and could be done at fairly low cost.

Even with the acquisition of the land at the Leisure Centre, the two proposed pitches at Poulterbrook were essential to satisfy the requirements of the Thornbury based Football Clubs. Part of the Vision was to bring together Thornbury Town Football Club and Thornbury Falcons to eventually form one club with adults based at the Mundy Playing Fields/Poulterbrook and the Falcons at the field adjacent to the Leisure Centre.

Mr. Watola reassured members that South Gloucestershire Council was aware that Poulterbrook formed part of the overall vision for football facilities for the town and advised that Alan Sherratt would be attending the next Club Thornbury meeting when the project would be discussed.

The information was noted.

Mr. Payton and Mr. Watola were thanked for their attendance and left the meeting.

(b) Skatepark

(i) Lease

The Clerk had written to South Gloucestershire Council's Chief Executive requesting her to investigate the reasons for the delay in formalising the lease and asking for her help in progressing the matter. An acknowledgement had been received.

(ii) Summer Event

Cllr. Penny Baker advised that the skatepark event would be held on 26th July 2008. Volunteers would be painting the equipment on the 19th and 21st July 2008 and Clerk advised that she had ordered the paint. Cllr. Penny Baker requested that 10 rollers and 6 extension poles be provided for the volunteers and the Clerk would make the necessary arrangements.

Cllr. Penny Baker also reported that there was some damage to the tarmac and the Clerk was asked to investigate the matter. A graffiti workshop had also been organised for the 26th July and members were asked if they had any objection to the finished boards being displayed on the sides of the skatepark equipment. Members had no objections. Cllr. Penny Baker would not be able to attend the event and asked that as many members as possible visit the event from 2pm onwards.

The Clerk confirmed that South Gloucestershire Council had agreed to cut a pathway between the gate and the skatepark in time for the July event. The information was welcomed.

(c) Proposed Play Area – Eastland Avenue/Park View Avenue -Construction of Natural Play Environment Area

The Chairman had met with Alison Brown of South Gloucestershire Council on 3rd June 2008 and Alison had agreed to produce an outline plan for the play area. The plan was still awaited and the Chairman had sent a reminder recently but had been unable to obtain a response.

(d) Club Thornbury – Report of Meeting of 16.5.08

Cllr. Clive Parkinson reported on his attendance at the meeting. The changing rooms at the Castle School sixth form were discussed and youngsters were waiting to be advised by the Big Stash when they could make their presentation in support of the bid for funding. It was now apparent that the Changing rooms would not be completed in time for the next football/rugby season and Thornbury Falcons were applying to the school for permission to site a portacabin next to old changing rooms for use during the next season.

The development of the land at Poulterbrook had also been discussed as part of the whole football project for the town.

Members were also advised that Club Thornbury AGM was being held on 9th July 2008 and the Thornbury Festival of Sport would take place at the Castle School on 27th September 2008.

(e) Provision of Play Equipment – Chantry Road Play Area

Copies of Working Group report, produced by Ann Rogers, had been circulated to members via e-mail prior to meeting. The report identified three items of play equipment that the Group recommended for installation at the play area and these were a slide, a pole spin and a single basket goal.

The Clerk had requested a quotation from the manufacturers of the equipment which included supply, installation and safety surfacing. It was agreed that the quotation for the equipment be considered at the Special Committee Meeting on 28th July 2008.

It was agreed that one of the ranger seats that Council had in stock should be located at the Chantry Road Play area.

Councillor Clive Parkinson advised that the seesaw on the play area had a loud squeak and the Clerk agreed to investigate the problem.

(g) Footpath through the Garden of Rest

The Clerk was pleased to report that the new footpath through the Garden of Rest had now been completed and was a great improvement to the area.

(h) Construction of Electricity Substations at the Mundy Playing Fields

A letter had been received from Council's Solicitors advising that the Charity Commission had confirmed that Council needs to seek their authority for the disposal of the land for the substations as the Mundy Playing Fields charity governing document does not include a power of sale.

The Charity Commission would also need assurance that the Lease and Easement with Central Networks would be in the best interest of the charity. To comply with section 36 (8) of the Charities Act 1993 Council would be required to give public notice of the proposed disposition inviting representations to be made to the Charity Commission within a time specified in the notice being not less than one month from the date of the notice.

The Clerk agreed to confirm with Council's Solicitors that Central Networks were responsible for all costs in connection with this matter including the fee for the public notice. It was also suggested that the Clerk's time be included in the calculation of costs.

(j) Installation of Swings for Children with Disabilities

The Clerk was pleased to report that, following the installation of the safety surfacing, the new swings had been put up in Osprey Park and Streamleaze Green Play Area. The information was welcomed.

2. MATTERS IN PROGRESS

(a) Electricity Sub Station at Chantry Road Play Area – New Fencing

The Clerk had once again contacted Central Networks about the condition of the fencing surrounding the electricity sub-station at the entrance to the play area. She had received assurances that the matter would be placed on the task list as needing urgent attention. The Clerk would contact Central Networks in ten days if no action has been taken.

(b) Summer Inspection

It was agreed that the Summer Inspection would take place on Monday 28th July 2008 meeting at 6.30pm at the Skatepark. The inspection would include the skatepark, the Chantry Road Play Area and finish with the Mundy Playing Fields. A Special Committee Meeting would be held in the Pavilion after the inspection.

(c) Funding for Tractor

The Clerk had investigated several options for funding of the new tractor. Lease purchase had proved to be too expensive and above the £4,000 budget, contract hire was also slightly above budget and did not include servicing. The Clerk recommended, therefore, that Committee consider borrowing the money via the Public Works Loan Board for the purchase of the tractor.

It was unanimously agreed that the purchase of the new tractor should be paid for in full by a loan and the Clerk would commence the procedure of obtaining permission of the Secretary of State to borrow the money.

3. OPERATIONAL REPORT

- (i) Since the last meeting the cemetery had accommodated three burials and five interments of cremated remains.
- (ii) A letter had been received from seven residents of The Close asking Council to consider installing a gate at The Close entrance to the Mundy Playing Fields to reduce incidences of anti-social behaviour on Friday and Saturday nights. The contents of the letter were noted and the Clerk advised that the matter would be referred to the next Finance and Policy Committee Meeting for further consideration. South Gloucestershire Council had advised the Clerk that the Chairman of the Safer and Stronger Community Group should be informed of the situation and the Clerk would be writing to him.
- (iii) Cllr. Clive Parkinson reported that brambles were growing out of the hedge at the Chantry Field across the pavement on Church Road and also along the lane leading from Church Road to Gloucester Road. The Clerk would ask the Open Spaces Supervisor to investigate the situation.

4. CORRESPONDENCE

(a) Damage to Child's Clothes at Osprey Park Play Area

A letter had been received from a local resident complaining that her child's shorts had been damaged by tar from one of the embankment sleepers and seeking £4 compensation. Members felt that the complaint was justified and agreed to reimburse the resident for the damaged shorts.

The Clerk advised that she was investigating ways of resealing the sleepers to prevent further seepage.