

IVYBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

The Minutes of the Parks and Open Spaces Committee held in the Town Hall on Thursday 20 October 2022 at 6pm

Present: Cllr A Spencer (Chair)
Cllr A Rea
Cllr L Rea
Cllr T Lannin

In attendance: Cllr S Hladkij
Mr J Parsons (Town Clerk)
Mrs J Gilbert (Assistant Town Clerk)

There was no public participation session

PA22/024 **APOLOGIES:** Apologies were received from Cllr Budd

PA22/025 **INTERESTS TO BE DECLARED:** No interests were declared.

PA22/026 **PLAY AREAS:** The results of the play area survey were reviewed and improvements to the Council's play areas considered (copy of survey results previously circulated).

The Chair opened the meeting remarking on the overwhelming response to the survey, 167 received in total and thanks were given to the Administration Officer for collating these.

Cllr A Rea noted the references to skate parks and suggested these could be passed to South Hams District Council. Cllr Hladkij had observed that since summer the skate park had been a lot busier. The Town Clerk advised that the surface is not as smooth as it could be and not ideal for beginners. Repairs had been investigated but were not financially viable. Cllr Lannin commented that the huge facility proposed at Filham Park will be suitable.

Cllr Lannin had noted that the survey responses were quite conflicting and the challenge is providing equipment for all ages. The equipment removed from MacAndrews field had not been suitable for toddlers. Cllr Hladkij queried if MacAndrews Field previously had signage giving an age limit but it was confirmed that only Victoria Park had this. The Town Clerk advised that MacAndrews Field play equipment had not had moving parts, whereas Victoria Park equipment is mechanical.

Cllr Lannin highlighted the litter issue raised and that this is a problem in Victoria Park. The Town Clerk advised that the park is litter picked daily by the officers and they cover public holidays. Cllr Lannin suggested community litter pickers targeting this area. The Town Clerk

queried whether South Hams could perform a litter pick and would enquire about contributing towards this and copy in the District Councillors.

The Town Clerk provided some examples of prices of new play equipment from suppliers. Town Council officers have been trying to obtain S106 money towards off site play equipment from developments, however this has either been deployed on site or gone towards South Hams play areas in the town, and there are no more developments coming forward. He advised that tens of thousands of pounds were required to replace these play areas, and gave examples of Worthele Close, Woodburn Close and Woodlands Park in the town which had all been refurbished using 106 money. In reality the Town Council only has £7k from the Lions Club and £15k from general parks reserves which was also needed to cover tree surgery. These funds would barely cover removing or repairing existing equipment in Victoria Park whereas on average a play park costs in the region of £50-60k upwards.

Cllr L Rea enquired about the cost of raising the precept in order to spend £100k on the play areas. The Town Clerk suggested this sum could be borrowed. Cllr Lannin stated that the budget also needed to incorporate ongoing maintenance and repairs. Cllr Spencer queried if this was how the committee wished to go and was there a need for these play areas. Cllr T Rea stated that there is criticism about the location of Victoria Park and is it worth questioning if it is worth upgrading it where it is. Cllr L Rea confirmed it can be muddy for prams and wheelchair access however she liked its natural setting.

Cllr Lannin highlighted that all Parks Committee members appreciate the value the parks give to Ivybridge, and was fully supportive of spending on our green spaces. She suggested asking residents by referendum in May if they would be willing to pay an extra £12.50 a year for four years after next April. The Town Clerk advised that this would then not come into effect until the following year as the Public Works Loan Board requirement is that residents have been consulted with regard to the inclusion of the loan repayments in the budget. It was suggested to consult with residents, rather than a referendum, in advance of setting the budget, between now and January to include possible repayments in next year's precept.

Cllr Hladkij felt it was important to provide equipment for teenagers as they tend to go on the younger age equipment anyway. Cllr Spencer commented that children of different ages require different things. The Town Clerk advised that South Hams District Council's assets officer is very knowledgeable on play areas and is willing to assist the Town Council with the procurement process.

The Town Clerk suggested that the Town Council has a capital sum of £70k which had been earmarked for Filham Park. Cllr L Rea remarked that a lot had already been spent on Filham Park and it would be

beneficial to use this. She highlighted that a lot of people go out of Ivybridge to other parks and this sum could be invested in the town to benefit the whole community. Victoria Park needs a facelift and signage to market it, and this space could be a real opportunity to make this a destination park. She referred to Powderham Castle having a play castle, although themed to there something similar would be an attraction. Cllr Hladkij was also in favour of Cllr L Rea's proposal for Victoria Park to be a destination park as was Cllr Spencer who provided three options - that it could be a destination park, a casual park or where older teenagers congregate.

Cllr Lannin added that MacAndrews Field is not best placed as there is no parking and it is not a destination place. The Town Clerk confirmed that a zip wire in MacAndrews Field would complement the area and would be a big draw and agreed that Victoria Park could be made special as more central.

The Town Clerk suggested there were two options to achieve £100k to spend on play areas:

- (i) Borrow £100k or;
- (ii) use the £70k capital and borrow £30k.

The Town Clerk confirmed that planning consent would be required if the footprint of the play area in Victoria Park is extended as it is in a conservation area.

Members agreed that the repairs to the play equipment, which are currently classified as B defects requiring rectification but with no time limit given, should wait pending the Council's decision on spending on new equipment. Then it can be determined whether the equipment will be repaired or replaced.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) receive and note the results of the play area survey;
- (ii) the Town Clerk to enquire if the Town Council could contribute towards a litter pick in Victoria Park at weekends performed by South Hams District Council, and to copy in the District Councillors;
- (iii) the Town Clerk to put a proposal together for Full Council to determine whether to:
 - (a) raise £100k for play areas by borrowing this sum by firstly consulting with the community whether they wanted to raise the precept over a period of four years, to be done before the next budget is set;
 - (b) or use £70k of capital money and borrow £30k.
- (iv) not proceed currently with the repairs to the play equipment pending Full Council's recommendations.
- (v) If the decision is made to go ahead and spend on new play equipment, to engage with the Assets Officer from South Hams District Council to assist with procurement.

Meeting ended at 7.05pm

Signed.....

Date: 31 October 2022