

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

MINUTES OF CHARITABLE TRUST BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, 29th June, 2021

Present:- **Councillors** David Wood (Chair), Rob Appleyard, Sally Davis, Mark Roper and Joanna Wright

Independent Member: Graham Page

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Democratic Services Officer read out the emergency evacuation procedure.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTION

There were no apologies for absence.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There were no items of urgent business.

6 ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC - TO RECEIVE DEPUTATIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS OR QUESTIONS

Graham Page, Independent Member on the Charitable Trust Board made a public statement. He expressed concern about the ability to discharge his role as an independent member. He had submitted a number of items to the Alice Park Trust Sub-Committee which had not been accepted by the Chair for inclusion on the agenda. He stated that the right to scrutinise decisions of the Sub-Committee by its parent body, the Charitable Trust Board, had been compromised and that independent scrutiny of decisions by both local authority and independent members was being denied.

He also stated that he had submitted a freedom of information request to the Council for information regarding the sale of Cottage No. 2, Alice Park. This information had subsequently been withheld as it was not deemed to be in the public interest.

Cllr Appleyard asked whether Graham Page was aware that when items are submitted for inclusion on an agenda consideration must be given to the length of the agenda. He explained that the items submitted had been deferred to a future meeting and that some of the items had been considered by the sub-committee at previous meetings.

Graham Page stated that he was not aware that the items had been deferred to a future meeting.

Cllr Appleyard asked whether Graham Page was aware that the sub-committee has reviewed the position regarding Cottage No. 2, Alice Park and that this matter has been resolved to the satisfaction of both the Trust and the Charity Commission. The minutes of the sub-committee meeting held on 7 December 2020 state:

“The Sub-Committee considered a report which provided an update on the sale of Cottage No. 2 at Alice Park. It was noted that the Sub-Committee had accepted this position in 2016 and that the Charity Commission has now closed its enquiry into this matter following receipt of the Council’s explanation.”

Graham Page stated that he was not aware of this.

Shaine Lewis, Legal Services Manager, explained that any concerns or allegations should be underpinned by evidence. The evidence should be submitted firstly to the Alice Park Trust Sub-Committee to give it an opportunity to comment. If the concerns are not satisfactorily addressed, then the Alice Park Trust Sub-Committee could then be asked to draft a report to the Charitable Trust Board for consideration. Alternatively, the matter could be reported to the Charity Commission or a complaint could be submitted under the Council’s Corporate Complaints system.

Ultimately, if the Charitable Trust Board is concerned about a Trust that it oversees then it could remove its delegated powers and take over the management of the Trust itself.

Cllr Appleyard invited Graham Page to write to him as Chair of the Sub-Committee so that the concerns raised could be addressed.

7 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 28 OCTOBER 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 October 2020 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

8 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ALICE PARK TRUST SUB-COMMITTEE

The Board considered the Annual Report of the Alice Park Trust Sub-Committee.

Cllr Appleyard, Chair of the Sub-Committee highlighted the following points:

- This has been a difficult year for the park due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, it has managed well during this time.
- A new lease has been agreed with the Alice Park Café and members recognise the value of the café within the park.
- There is now more control over commercial activities taking place within the park.
- As the Trust is still running with a deficit which requires a subsidy from the Council, a 10-year plan will be adopted with the aim of raising more funds towards the upkeep of the park and becoming more self-sufficient.

- Cllr Appleyard thanked the B&NES parks team for their support with the running and upkeep of the park. He also thanked Marie Todd, Democratic Services Officer, for her support.
- To provide more transparency around day to day finances, it would be helpful if there was greater separation between the Alice Park Trust accounts and the Council accounts.
- A new independent member has just been appointed to the Sub-Committee.

Cllr Appleyard then responded to questions as follows:

- The work to upgrade the tennis courts in the park is nearing completion and the skatepark is now open for use. The children’s play area has not enjoyed the same support as other parks in the city. A survey has been undertaken regarding the play area and this will be submitted to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee for adoption. A masterplan for the play area will be drawn up along with proposals as to how the improvements can be funded. This project could cost in the region of £200k.
- The toilets in Alice Park are part of a general Council contract run by the company Healthmatic. The money raised by the use of these facilities is used to offset the running costs. The charge subsidises the public convenience service but does not generate a profit.
- It was noted that the annual report could do more to highlight the positive work being carried out in the park.

RESOLVED: To note the annual report of the Alice Park Trust Sub-Committee.

The meeting ended at 4.30 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services