

## ALICE PARK TRUST SUB-COMMITTEE

### Minutes of the Meeting held

Wednesday, 3rd February, 2021, 2.30 pm

Councillor Rob Appleyard (Chair)	- Bath and North East Somerset Council
Councillor Paul Myers	- Bath and North East Somerset Council
Councillor Joanna Wright	- Bath and North East Somerset Council
Graham Page	- Independent Member
Bill Shaw	- Independent Member

#### 21 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. He welcomed Bill Shaw to his first meeting of the Sub-Committee as the newly appointed independent member.

#### 22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTION

There were no apologies for absence.

#### 23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 24 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There was no urgent business.

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

Questions were submitted to the meeting by Paul Hooper, Janet Marton and Derek Swift. The Chair confirmed that responses would be sent within 5 working days of the meeting. *(A copy of the questions and responses is attached as an appendix to these minutes).*

Graham Page, Independent Member of the sub-committee made a public statement. He stated that, as an independent member, he felt that it was his role to bring the concerns of park users to the attention of the sub-committee. It was important for decisions made by the sub-committee to adhere to legal requirements and to be made in a transparent way. He felt that some previous decisions made by the sub-committee had been overridden and ignored. He also felt that some decisions had been taken without the approval of the sub-committee and in the absence of any formal delegation. He had requested that certain items be placed on the agenda for consideration, but this request had been declined. He also felt that some of the responses provided to questions submitted by members of the public were incomplete. He stressed the obligation on the sub-committee for business to be

conducted in an open, lawful and timely manner.

Cllr Appleyard explained the need for agenda item requests to be submitted through the chair to ensure a balanced and well-managed agenda. The sub-committee noted the statement and agreed that the concerns raised would be discussed at a future meeting.

## 26 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 7 DECEMBER 2020**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

Graham Page queried the accuracy of the minutes as he believed that he had raised some issues relating to the skatepark under the Chair's Update.

*(Note: Having reviewed the YouTube recording of the meeting it was confirmed that the issues referred to by Graham Page were not raised during the public meeting).*

## 27 **CHAIR'S UPDATE**

The Chair gave updates on the following issues:

- Alice Park Trust Accounts - Discussions have taken place between the Council and the Charity Commission about how the Alice Park Trust accounts should be produced. The Charity Commission has agreed an extension for the submission of the accounts, which must now be submitted by 31 March 2021. The issues discussed have now been satisfactorily resolved and the sub-committee will be asked to approve the accounts and annual report at its next meeting once they have been independently examined.
- Tennis Courts – An operator has now been appointed to run the new tennis court provision. This means that park users can now look forward to an improved provision, refurbishment of the tennis courts and a high-quality service. The Chair was not aware of the exact timescale for these works, but he agreed to find out more details and to send further information to sub-committee members.
- Workshop – 15 February – A workshop has been arranged for members of the sub-committee to discuss the 10-year plan, community engagement plan and the policy for memorial trees and benches. The Trust needs to become more financially self-sufficient and will need to increase its income to a reasonable and achievable level. This will enable the Council subsidy to reduce over a 10-year period.
- Skatepark – Graham Page requested an update regarding the skatepark, as park users and local residents were keen to know the latest position. The Chair informed members that the skatepark is a Council run project. He understood that officers are still awaiting the delivery of the new fencing which will be positioned between the skatepark and the sandpit. Discussions have taken place about whether to open the skatepark with the existing fencing in place, but this is not considered to be the right solution. The groundwork is

underway, but the wet weather has impacted on this work. Cllr Wright explained that members are working with the Council on this project and ask for regular updates regarding the delays. However, it was acknowledged that the Covid-19 pandemic has caused some hold up on this project. The Chair confirmed that the fencing will be provided to the required standard.

Cllr Myers felt that the issues raised by Graham Page regarding the governance of the sub-committee and the skatepark project should be discussed further. It was agreed that Graham would put his concerns in writing, including examples, for consideration.

## 28 **POLICIES FOR ALICE PARK**

The sub-committee discussed whether to adopt policies on particular activities within Alice Park, taking into consideration the current policies on drones and barbeques for parks managed by B&NES Council and existing byelaws.

### (a) Drones

RESOLVED: To adopt the B&NES Council policy regarding drones which states that drones are not permitted without permission.

### (b) Sky Lanterns

It was noted that B&NES Council does not currently have a policy regarding sky lanterns.

Members discussed the following issues:

- Cllr Myers felt that sky lanterns should not be permitted without express permission from the Trust (for example when releasing lanterns is an integral part of an event).
- Bill Shaw was concerned at the proximity of the park to the London Road and felt that lanterns could present a safety risk.
- Graham Page and Cllr Wright felt that sky lanterns should not be permitted.

Shaine Lewis, Legal Services Manager, advised that the Trust would only have control over the use of lanterns within the park. The lanterns could land outside of the park grounds and this could pose a fire risk which was, ultimately, a risk for the Trust.

Following consideration of the legal advice provided, it was:

RESOLVED: To prohibit sky lanterns within Alice Park.

### (c) Barbeques and Open Fires

It was noted that in B&NES Council-run parks barbeques are prohibited unless there are designated facilities (which are only provided in the Royal Victoria Park). However, even with the correct equipment provided,

barbeques can still represent a fire risk.

The following issues were discussed:

- Graham Page felt that there should be a complete ban but that this should be kept under review. He noted that the risks can be high.
- Cllr Appleyard pointed out that Alice Park has a café which serves food and so there is less need for people to have barbeques.
- Bill Shaw did not think that barbeques should be permitted.
- Cllr Myers raised the issue of open fires and whether these should be prohibited. It was noted that the forest school have made a request to use a fire pit and members felt that that this could be an exception as long as it can be controlled.
- Cllr Appleyard explained that, if given express permission, the forest school would use a fire pit in a designated position in the fenced off area by the pond.
- Cllr Wright stated that that forest school should be treated as an exception and also that the community garden area should be permitted to have a “Kelly fire”.
- Shaine Lewis, Legal Advisor, explained that the local byelaws prohibited damage to any turfed areas, and this would effectively rule out barbeques which would cause damage to the grassed area.

RESOLVED:

- (1) To prohibit barbeques in Alice Park.
  - (2) To prohibit open fires in Alice Park without prior written approval from the Chair of the Alice Park Trust Sub-Committee or a designated officer.
- (d) Byelaws

The Sub-Committee noted the B&NES byelaws which were circulated with the agenda papers, some of which apply to Alice Park. Shaine Lewis advised members that it would be preferable to have a policy on the byelaws and how these are applied than to amend the existing byelaws.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Rob Appleyard, Paul Pearce (Parks Manager) and Shaine Lewis (Legal Services Team Leader) meet to discuss the application of the existing byelaws and to consider this issue at a future meeting.

## 29 **COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES IN ALICE PARK**

The Sub-Committee considered a discussion paper put forward by Graham Page, Independent Member. This raised a number of issues which needed to be considered when permitting commercial activities within Alice Park. These included data processing, safeguarding, fee structures and the need for an appeal process.

Cllr Appleyard explained that the objective is to generate an income for the Trust. This work started with the negotiation of a new lease for the café. A number of commercial enterprises use the park and the sub-committee previously agreed to

adopt the Council rate card when charging for the use of the park. However, a different approach has now been adopted and discussions are taking place with park users to ensure that any charges are not prohibitive. Most commercial users have responded positively. It is important to build a good relationship with the users of the park. A sum of £2k has been generated in this financial year from commercial activities.

Cllr Appleyard proposed that the sub-committee consider appointing someone to act as a booking agent for events taking place in the park, including the management of an online diary. There could be a small remuneration for this role.

Cllr Wright pointed out that it is important to realise that some people using the park make very little money from these activities but provide a valuable service for local people, enabling them to be active.

Cllr Myers supported the idea of appointing someone to manage the bookings process and other administrative tasks. He pointed out that it is important to be mindful of the costs involved and that the park is unlikely to make a profit on these small-scale activities. He noted that there are also opportunities to organise larger events in the park which would generate more income.

Bill Shaw noted that policing this type of event could be difficult. He pointed out that income generated from commercial activities would provide a contribution towards the upkeep of the park. He felt that someone may be able to assist with this role on a voluntary basis.

Graham Page pointed out that he had previously produced a draft events policy which could be used as a working document.

It was noted that the Council Events Team is no longer able to support the Trust with events held in Alice Park and that the charges for using the services of the Council team are likely to be high.

RESOLVED: To further explore the creation of an Events Co-ordinator role for the Alice Park Trust.

## 30 **MULTI-USE GAMES WALL**

The sub-committee discussed the possibility of installing a multi-use games wall within the park. It was noted that the wall could not form part of the tennis court provision and would need to be a stand-alone facility. Graham Page stated that it would be difficult to find a suitable location within the park for this type of facility.

RESOLVED: That no further action be taken on the provision of a multi-use games wall.

## 31 **OUTDOOR GYM EQUIPMENT**

The sub-committee discussed whether outdoor gym equipment should be provided within the park.

Cllr Appleyard stated that the provision of this type of equipment is good value. Six

or eight pieces of equipment is likely to cost around £15k.

Cllr Myers stated that the equipment is beneficial for people who cannot afford to join a gym. However, it does need to be regularly inspected and maintained. He would support its installation if a funder could be found.

Bill Shaw stated that he endorsed these comments but pointed out that the park is currently very muddy. A paved access area to the equipment would also be required.

Graham Page supported this proposal and felt that it would prevent some of the fitness groups in the park using trees as gym equipment. A suitable location would need to be identified.

Cllr Appleyard stated that the play area and gym equipment could be the two key areas for the sub-committee to focus on over the next 18 months. Funding for both projects will have to be identified.

**RESOLVED:** To agree to the provision of outdoor gym equipment in principle subject to funding.

## 32 **SOCIAL MEDIA ISSUES**

The sub-committee discussed whether there is a need for the Alice Park Trust to have a social media presence in its own right. It was noted that the café currently hosts most of the social media content relating to the park.

If an Events Co-ordinator is appointed, then this person will need a social media platform. It would be helpful if people could contact the Trust in this way regarding park maintenance and other issues.

## 33 **PATHWAYS**

Bill Shaw was concerned at the state of the pathways in the park near the gate to the pond area. He stated that these should either be paved or filled in with some hardcore.

Graham Page suggested that this work could be carried out at the same time as the remaining skate park work.

## 34 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will take place in March at a date to be agreed.

The meeting ended at 4.20 pm

Chair .....

Date Confirmed and Signed .....

**Prepared by Democratic Services**