



## **RECREATION AND PROPERTIES** **COMMITTEE**

You are summonsed to attend a meeting of the Recreation & Properties Committee at the following, place and date.

Date: Tuesday 25 November 2008

Time: Immediately following the Planning Committee Meeting

Venue: Council Chamber, Town Hall, Devizes

Enquiries: 01380 722160

Chairman: Councillor Parsons  
The Town Mayor (Councillor Mrs Burton)

Councillors: Beinhorn                      Callow                      Mrs S Evans  
Gudgeon                                  Leighton                  Smith  
A R Taylor                                C S Winchcombe

## **AGENDA**

### **1. MINUTES**

To approve as a correct record and authorise the Chairman to sign the minutes of the meetings held on the 14 October 2008, which have been circulated with the agenda.

### **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

### **3. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

To receive any disclosure(s) of interest by a Councillor or an officer in matters to be considered at this meeting, in accordance with provisions of Sections 94 or 117 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the National Code of Local Government Conduct.

**4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

At the Chairman's discretion, members of the public attending the meeting will be allowed to ask questions, make a statement or address the Council upon a matter of concern to that person which is relevant to the Council. A time limit of 5 minutes per person will be permitted, but this may be extended at the Chairman's discretion and a maximum period of 20 minutes has been allocated by the Council for this item of business.

**5. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – VENUES INCOME FIGURES**

Income figures for the Council's venues for the period April 2007 to October 2008 are attached (doc 5/1-5/3). These figures indicate the monthly income and cumulative income against budget.

**6. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – VENUES – CUSTOMER SATISFACTION FEEDBACK**

Attached to this agenda (doc 6/1) is the Venues Customer Feedback information received up to the end of October 2008.

Feedback on the venues this month was slightly down, due to one score of average being given for the Assembly Room (Town Hall). The user, who said that the sound in the room was not so good for a training room, but that they felt this was an issue for them when booking, qualified this rather than something that was under our control.

All other feedback was good or excellent, with particular mention of "helpful and attentive staff" on most feedback forms.

**7. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – WAR MEMORIAL GARDEN**

The garden area behind the War Memorial, which has been giving growing concern due to an increase in anti social behaviour, has been maintained to give a clear line of sight across the area. After consultation with the Church, the redundant oil tank has been removed and the relevant shrubs and trees have been attended to.

This project was undertaken in partnership with North Wessex Training who provided 3 supervised young people, pre-briefed by the Direct Services Manager and Parks Staff.

Officers have also gained consent from Kennet District Council to remove an old diseased cherry tree, which will enable the existing maple to grow and flourish. This tree will be replaced with a young oak but this is unlikely to be on the same site. The memorial bench has been removed for safekeeping until the tree work has been completed.

The partnership with North Wessex Training is to help develop skills for the long term unemployed and young people to find work and is due for review in December.

Should the partnership continue, it is felt that the further development of the War Memorial Garden would give continuity to the work.

The project will involve replanting the lawn and shrubs, which will open up the area for responsible community use.

**8. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – SOUTH WEST IN BLOOM RESULTS**

Following the council's entry in to the 2008 South West in Bloom competition, we have now received the feedback for the Judges, which has been attached for member's information.

In summary, the judges were impressed by the effort put in by local community, but have set out areas that could be improved particularly in relation to trade displays. Working with youth groups and schools will also help the town's chances of gaining a gold award.

Officers have noted the comments made and will work with the 'In Bloom' committee to try address them in our 2009 entry.

**9. REPORT FOR DECISION – HILLWORTH PARK AND FRIENDS OF HILLWORTH PARK ACTIVITIES**

Following the notification of the Stage 1 pass by the Heritage Lottery Fund's 'Parks for People' scheme, officers have been working with the case officer at the HLF to progress the project.

The official contract has been signed by the Town Council representatives and has been returned to the HLF for their part of the document to be completed. Once this process is undertaken the Town Council will be given permission to start work on the development phase.

It is hoped that the Town Council will be able to use the same Landscape Designer – having undertaken a competitive tendering process for appointment before submitting an application at stage 1. Advice is being sought from the case officer on this matter, but it is anticipated that the Town Council will be able to appoint Claire Glasspoole Design without re-tendering the work.

A project plan of the development required to lead to a stage 2 application is being developed by officers.

The Friends of Hillworth Park have organised a Christmas in the Park event on the early evening of Sunday 14 December.

This will run from 5pm to 7pm and will include Father Christmas's grotto in the Garden Pavilion, a lantern parade, Christmas songs and carols performed by local groups. There will also be the opportunity to undertake consultation and members are asked to help support the consultation if available. A memo is circulated alongside the agenda to confirm availability.

**10. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – PLAY AREA ON THE GREEN**

The work to install the play area on the Green was completed some time ago, but due to the ongoing inclement weather officers have been reluctant to allow the facility to open.

There are a number of areas of standing water including where vehicles had to access the site, people walking over the area has continued to churn it up and the grass seed has not taken.

Part of the scheme involved the laying of turf but again where the contractor accessed the site at the end of the project this became very muddy. It has been agreed that the contractor will replace this, but they are unwilling to do this until the site dries out.

Officers will keep update the committee when the conditions change to allow the site to be opened.

**11. REPORT FOR DECISION – CATERING AT CHARITY EVENTS AT THE CORN EXCHANGE**

**Recommendation**

That the committee considers an appeal by the PHAB Club not to charge the Commercial Fair Rate to organisations who are of charitable intent but wish to use the kitchen to serve refreshments.

**Purpose of the Report**

To allow officers to respond to the appeal against the Council's decision to charge the fair rate to all hirers who wish to hold a sale at the Corn Exchange.

**Background**

The current policy agreed by members is quite clear. Should a hirer who is running a fair style event wish to provide catering they can do so provided they pay the appropriate fee "the Fair Rate" and hold the necessary food hygiene certificates. In forming this policy, the council was minded that should it not allow organisations to undertake their own catering, it would be undertaken by the council from which it would have derived some income.

Each year the PHAB club hires the Corn Exchange for their autumn fair. It appears that for some reason for the last two years they have been charged the charity rate, as it is believed that they have not used the kitchen.

RECREATION & PROPERTIES COMMITTEE  
25 NOVEMBER 2008

It has now been found that this assumption was incorrect and therefore for next year the hire rate has been adjusted to take account of their use of the kitchen. The PHAB Club are concerned that the change in the price will impact on the amount of money they will be able to raise from the event.

The PHAB Club asked that the Council consider its position again in relation to fair style events run by organisation of charitable intent.

The cost for hiring the Corn Exchange for a fair is currently £409 and the cost of hiring the venues for the same period under the Community Rate is £274.

In the last year we have undertaken approximately five events, which under the fair rate generated an income of £2045. Had those events been charged at the Charity Rate the income would have been reduced to £1370.

### **Options Considered**

The committee needs to decide if they wish to review the charges for fairs organised by charitable organisations.

Should they wish to undertake such a review, the committee will need to determine the qualifying criteria and boundaries to which the policy can be interpreted.

An example of this may be a charity event where half the hall is used as a conference and at the back of the hall there are some stalls. It is unlikely that in such circumstances the council would wish the organisers to be allowed to provide their own teas and coffee and lunch.

Should the committee be minded that should they review the rate for this category of hirer, then they need to decide at what level the fee needs to be set. Members may wish to consider a 30% discount and reduce the length of the event to ensure that the hire period finishes by 3pm to allow the building to be used again in the evening.

### **Implications & Risks**

#### **Financial and Resource Implications**

By reviewing the hire charges to make allowance for a charity to undertake their own catering revenue will be diluted with no reciprocal increase in bookings.

#### **Legal Implications and Legislative Powers**

The Local Government Act 1972 s 144 gives the Council powers to provide and encourage the use of conference facilities.

#### **Environmental Implications**

Officers are not aware of any environmental implications.

**Risk Assessment**

Officers have highlighted the risk associated with this decision within the report.

**Crime and Disorder**

Officers are not aware of any issues the Council should consider under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder act 1998.

**12. EXEMPT REPORT FOR DECISION – RELATING TO HIRING CHARGES**

**13. EXEMPT REPORT FOR DECISION – RELATING TO COMMERCIAL PROPERTY**

**14. QUESTION TIME**

Members will be allowed a short period in which to put questions on matters within the remit of this Committee, which are not contained in the reports of matters formally, considered by the Committee at this meeting. The question may be answered at the meeting or may be referred back to the Committee at a later date. The question may not be the subject of any further details.