



BURGESS HILL TOWN COUNCIL

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6 February 2008

To: **MEMBERS OF THE PROPERTY COMMITTEE**

A **MEETING** of the **PROPERTY COMMITTEE** will be held in the Council Chamber on **MONDAY, 11 FEBRUARY 2008** at **19.30 hours**, when your attendance is required.

David Carden
Town Clerk

A G E N D A

1. **OPEN FORUM**

Members of the Public are invited to put questions or to draw relevant matters to the Council's attention, prior to the commencement of business. This is for a period of up to fifteen minutes and shall be limited to three minutes per person.

2. **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE PROPERTY COMMITTEE FOR THE ENSUING YEAR**

3. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

4. **SUBSTITUTES**

Members of the Property Committee – Mrs Kathy Dumbovic, Denis Jones
Mrs Pru Moore, Mrs Heather Ross, Ian Simpson, Chris Thomas-Atkin,
Julian Thorpe.

5. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In respect of any matter on the agenda.

6. **MINUTES**

To consider the Minutes of the meeting of the Property Committee held on Monday 12 February 2007 (copy previously circulated).

7. **SIDNEY WEST COMMUNITY AND LEISURE BUILDING**

8. **COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTRE – 38 CHURCH ROAD**

9. **BATCHELORS FARM**

10. **CYPRUS HALL**

11. **SITE UPDATES**

12. **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

13. **BURIAL GROUND**

7. SIDNEY WEST COMMUNITY AND LEISURE BUILDING

- 7.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee with progress on the Sports and Community Centre. Construction work has commenced and the steel frame has been erected. The heavy rain has caused some delay to the bricklaying and the contractor is currently 6 days behind schedule.
- 7.2 Regular liaison meetings continue to be held with the Ward Councillors and the representatives of the adjoining streets. The communication system that has been set up is working well. Recent concerns raised by residents and local Councillors include:
- drainage problems due to the recent heavy rains and water being pumped into neighbours' gardens;
 - concern about the safety of the water holding tank;
 - damage to the surface of Leylands Road and pavement, and Wyberlye Road;
 - concern about the noise that will be generated by the air conditioning unit, which, despite the residents' concerns voiced at the planning meeting, has been sited on the east side of the building;
 - insufficient space left for landscaping and planting as so much of the bank has been cut away;
 - damage to the French drain across the playing field;
 - mud on the roads left by lorries exiting the site;
 - health and safety standards on the site;
 - concern about noise and potential anti-social behaviour by local youths related to the use of gravel surfacing in the car park.
- 7.3 These issues are being raised with Mid Sussex District Council and the contractor.
- 7.4 Meetings are also being held with the user sports clubs to ensure a smooth transition to the new building. St Andrew's Cricket Club is concerned that the 21.00 hours closure will create difficulties as there are 14 weekends with home fixtures and last summer they sometimes had not finished and cleared up until 21.45hours. The Cricket Club would also like to be able to sell alcohol at social and fundraising events and has enquired about the Town Council's views on this.
- 7.5 Meetings have been held with the operators of Scaynes Hill and Oxted Community Centres, the latter being constructed by Farnrise, the builders of Sidney West. The benefit of their experience of managing similar facilities has been very useful.

RECOMMENDATION

The views of the Committee are sought regarding the sale of alcohol.

Environmental Charter Implications – None.

Financial Implications – None at this stage.

Implications to Partner Organisations – This is a partnership project with Mid Sussex District Council

8. **COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTRE – 38 CHURCH ROAD**

- 8.1 The purpose of this report is to summarise the current operation at the Community Resource Centre (“CRC”) at the Town Council’s former offices at 38 Church Road. Following the Town Council’s relocation to 96 Church Walk in 1996, the CRC was created. This option was taken after the Council had failed to secure any interest for a commercial let on the open market. It provides affordable office space for voluntary sector organisations that could not afford the high cost of commercial rents locally and would otherwise be “priced out” of the area. Similar initiatives have been developed elsewhere in recent years, notably Community Base in Brighton. The accommodation comprises 5 offices, a kitchen, foyer area and a meeting room.
- 8.2 The Town Council’s lease on the building runs until 2016. The rent and other charges paid by the Town Council currently totals £31,786 per annum and the rent received from the voluntary organisations is £12,708. The Town Council therefore currently makes a net contribution of £19,078. In 2008/09 the cost to the Town Council will be £32,174 and rental income from the voluntary organisations is projected to be £13,153, therefore the Town Council will make a net contribution of £19,021. This contribution makes the rent affordable to local voluntary organisations, which would not otherwise be able to afford to rent premises in the town.
- 8.3 The offices at the Community Resource Centre are currently occupied by the following voluntary organisations:
- Mid Sussex (South) Council for Voluntary Service (CVS)
 - Volunteer Information Point (VIP)
 - Help at Home Plus
 - Mid Sussex YMCA (which rents 2 offices)
- 8.4 FurniHelp rented one of the YMCA offices until December, following their successful relocation from East Grinstead to the south of the district. The organisation is now on a much more stable footing and has now moved to their warehouse in Horsted Keynes.
- 8.5 The voluntary organisations based at the CRC all work with Burgess Hill residents who are most in need. The activities of the organisations and their client groups are summarised in the table overleaf.

ORGANISATION	SERVICE PROVIDED	CLIENT GROUP
Council for Voluntary Service	Information, training & support for the voluntary & community sector (VCS). Representing the interests of the VCS on outside bodies. Small Groups Development Project. Umbrella organisation for It Happens young parents peer support project.	Voluntary organisations & community groups (including its 127 member groups)
Volunteer Information Point	Matching individuals interested in volunteering with voluntary organisations & community groups that need volunteers	Individuals, voluntary organisations & community groups
Help at Home Plus	Shopping & home help (but not personal care).	Older people & people with disabilities
YMCA	Teenage parents group, special needs family group, children's sports activities.	Children, families & young people, young parents, children with special needs/disabilities.

- 8.6 In addition to affordable accommodation, without which these voluntary organisations would find it difficult to survive, the groups based at the CRC benefit from being able to share information, training, mutual support, personal security (when staff are working in the office alone), and shared use of the meeting room and equipment such as photocopier, laminator, display boards etc.
- 8.7 The community meeting room is managed by the CVS and is used by a wide range of organisations and community groups. Discounted rates are offered to the 127 CVS member groups (membership is free). The income generated provides an important source of revenue for the CVS. The CVS also uses the room for voluntary sector training courses, which enables them to keep course fees affordable for local groups. The CVS liaises with the management agency, Clifford Dann, and other tenants regarding building-related issues as well as co-ordinating fire risk assessments. The CVS taking on this role saves the Town Council a considerable amount of management time.
- 8.8 The VIP and the CVS are the “twin pillars” supporting the local voluntary and community sector. The VIP recruits and places volunteers, the life-blood of all voluntary groups, without which they cannot function. They enable a vibrant voluntary sector to flourish, without which the town would be a dormitory rather than a community. The CVS helps new groups get started and builds the capacity of established groups to run safely and effectively.

The Burgess Hill CVS is also part of a consortium of West Sussex CVSs that have recently been awarded 3-year funding, enabling it to employ a small groups Development Worker for the south of the district.

- 8.9 The “added value” to the local area contributed by the organisations based at the CRC is considerable. An analysis (based on 2003/04 data) was presented to Council in February 2005 and is attached at Appendix I. Although there have been a number of changes since this analysis was carried out, the report nevertheless illustrated the additional income they generated and the value of the time contributed by volunteers. It amounted to a value of £411,727 to the local area.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report.

Environmental Charter Implications – None.

Financial Implications – Contained in the report.

Implications to Partner Organisations – Contained in the report.

9. **BATCHELORS FARM**

- 9.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on recent improvements undertaken at Batchelors Farm. During 2007 additional earth was transported to site to carry on with the filling in of the old pond. The aim was to return the site to its natural condition. The previous owner had created a “fishing pond” which continually leaked and caused regular safety problems. An excavator was hired to take away 75% of the bulrushes as they had become very invasive but this has exposed some new steep sides that will have to be regraded this year. Native black poplar trees were donated by the Sussex Black Poplar Group and have been sited around the newly created stream area. The Mobile Maintenance Team has installed a temporary fence around this site to protect it whilst it settles and the trees get established. The Council also received donated trees from the Mid Sussex Tree Group who also gave up their time to spend a day planting them on site with the Team. This was advertised as part of the 2007 National Tree Week scheme.

- 9.2 The Monday Group was also commissioned to make and erect a replacement bridge for the south side of the site over the stream. This was an excellent working partnership project with the Mobile Maintenance Team who assisted by delivering supplies to site and helping with lifting the heavy parts of the bridge that had been constructed off site.

9.3 **RECOMMENDATION**

The Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report.

Environmental Charter Implications – These were considered with the

Management Plan for the site.

Financial Implications – The works have been funded from the site improvements budget.

Implications to Partner Organisations – None.

10. **CYPRUS HALL**

10.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee that the Cyprus Hall Community Association, who leases the hall from the Town Council, is planning a major refurbishment of the kitchen.

10.2 The refurbishment is necessary as the current kitchen is a domestic kitchen in a commercial environment and is ten years old. The cooker and fridge need replacing, a commercial dishwasher is needed for health and safety reasons and the cupboards need replacing and relocating. They have gone out to three different companies for a quote and have provisionally accepted one for £22,867.53. The Committee has employed Sandra Lamont as a fund raiser. They have chosen this route as they found applying for lottery funding too time consuming and they were not optimistic that they would be successful. Sandra is applying to many different organisations for small amounts of funding rather than a big amount from one body. She is currently applying to the Sussex Community Foundation and the Town Clerk is acting as a referee. Once the Association has a clearer picture of the financial situation they will be formally applying to the Council for landlord's consent and a grant.

10.3 **RECOMMENDATION**

The Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report.

Environmental Charter Implications – None.

Financial Implications – None at this stage.

Implications to Partner Organisations – None.

11. **SITE UPDATES**

11.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with a position statement on current projects/initiatives.

Folders Lane Play Area

The play area has had a quiet spell with no reports of anti-social behaviour or criminal damage. The latest scheduled play equipment inspection undertaken by Zurich (the Council's insurers) came back with recommendations for remedial repairs which are in the process of being undertaken and new signage will be placed at the Singleton Way entrance. After the 2007 Traveller incursion onto the site, new security gates were erected on the south

entrance. There have been several complaints during the last year about the lack of new play equipment on the site; this is in abeyance until the future of the adjacent site has been decided. Members will be aware that the Inspector's Report on the Small Scale Housing sites recommended that it be developed.

West Park Reserve

KPS Contractors undertake litter picks, grass cuts and an annual hedge cut. The Mobile Maintenance Team carries out weekly visual audits and then undertakes any work required. At present they are cutting back brambles adjacent to householder properties in Denham Road. As per the Management Plan the Team is currently putting together a project checklist to dig a pond in the south west part of the old allotment site. Once the project is ready to go there will be community liaison particularly with the Denham Road Community House and contact made with the local schools to get them involved.

Allotments

Due to the long waiting lists there is a procedure in place to ensure that tenants work their plots consistently or their tenancy agreement will be terminated. There are currently 58 people on the waiting list for Chanctonbury allotments, 56 people for Leylands, 52 for Poveys, 40 for Eastdale and 61 for Junction Road. Approximately 75% of these people are listed for all sites. During 2007 a replacement fence was erected on the Leylands Site and a new tap was installed at the Chanctonbury allotment.

11.2 RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is requested to note the contents of this report.

Environmental Charter Implications – None.

Financial Implications – The above works will be undertaken within existing budgets.

Implications to Partner Organisations – None.

12. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

12.1 In view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is proposed that, in the public interest, the public and press be temporarily excluded and they be requested to withdraw from the meeting.