

12241 ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE COMMITTEE DRAFT BUDGET 2023/24

Members received the officer draft budget for 2023/24, along with explanatory notes for the Environment & Leisure Committee.

The draft budget reflected on ongoing budgetary commitments along with anticipated budgetary commitments arising from the Council Vision 2020/24.

The following points were highlighted:

The draft budget put forward an increase in this committees expenditure of £95,653
Additional significant areas of spend were:

- Painting the Green bow top fencing
- External decoration of the Green pavilion
- External decoration of the Orchard Close pavilion
- Playground fence painting at Parkside and Orchard Close
- Increase for play areas repairs
- Increase for refuse disposal
- Provision for 3 yearly tree survey
- Provision for professional services to enhance Parkside Pavilion to provide community consultation and possibly community space
- Increase to provide for a replacement of 1 vehicle with an electric vehicle
- Increase to provide for enhanced play / exercise provision at Parkside recreation ground

Also noted in relation to Tithe Farm sports provision project:

This project development would span 2 financial years. It was anticipated that the development of the pitch would be completed in 2022/23 and the development of the pavilion, refurbishment of the car park and the remodelling of the existing pavilion would take place in 2023/24. In the draft budget for 2023/24 the income and costs associated with the second phase of this project were included.

12242 ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE FEES 2023/24

Members were requested to consider the hire charges under the control of Environment & Leisure Committee for 2023/24.

Members received the schedule of fees for 2022/23 for reference.

As the Committee was aware officers usually recommend a fee structure to members to consider, this was based on the previous years charges plus a level of inflation, often at around 2%. However, the cost of labour, utilities and materials had increased significantly in recent months. Labour had increased by around 5-7%, utilities by 20% (as budgeted) and materials by 20-40%.

Although the council had been working towards an overall sports and facilities subsidy level of 30% or so, it was suggested that an increase in fees to cover the increase in costs may be unaffordable to the local clubs who use the facilities and the council may choose to vary its level of subsidy.

It was suggested however, that the football fees were excluded to enable discussions to take place with the Beds FA so that a co-ordinated approach to football fees was achieved. Members were supportive of this.

Members were requested to consider the current years fee structure and to determine a suitable fee structure for 2023/24.

Members discussed the community value of the clubs for maintaining the social wellbeing of residents and raised concerns that clubs could fold if the increase in fees proved to be unaffordable for clubs to sustain.

Members agreed that approaching the clubs to better understand their capacity for a fee increase, and to gain an overview of the demographic of the group's members with a possibility of offering advice of grant funding may be available for their group to apply for.

Members agreed to gain further information from individual clubs to gather an accurate overview before committing to fee confirmation.

12243 TITHE FARM ALL WEATHER UPDATE

Members received an update report on the Tithe Farm Recreation Ground Sports Project.

Members acknowledged their disappointment that this project had not yet started on site but recognised that a considerable amount of work was being completed behind the scenes.

12244 VILLAGE GREEN - FAIR AND CIRCUS VISITS 2023

Members were advised that the following dates for fair and circus visits on the Green had been requested:

Tom Smith's Fun Fair

Pull on site 10th May 2023

Open 12th May till 21st May 2023 – 10 days of opening

Pull off site 22nd May 2023

Members agreed that 10 days of the Fair opening during May was too long and could prove problematic for local residents. It was requested that this be reduced to 5 days of opening with a day either side for setting up and packing away between the dates of 10th May 2023 and 22nd May 2023

Pull on 4th September 2023

Open 7th till 10th September 2023 – 4 days of opening

Pull off site 11th September 2023

John Lawson's Circus

Pull on 9th October 2023

Open 11th October to 17th October 2023

Pull off site 19th October 2023

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In addition to these usual annual requests the following requests were made. The council was under no obligation to accept any additional bookings.

A request was received from Thurston Attractions for the use of a recreation ground to host a pop up fun park. The following dates were requested:

Monday 10th July - Sunday 23rd July.

Operating dates:

Thursday 13th July - Sunday 16th July.

Thursday 20th July - Sunday 23rd July

Depart site - Monday 24th July

Members were provided with an overview of activities and attractions that would be provided by Thurston Attractions.

Members discussed options for the possible siting of the Pop-up Fun Park, and felt that the attractions were very large and as such members agreed that suitable recreation ground was not available in Houghton Regis.

Tom Smiths fair also offered to provide a children's fun fair (no big rides) on 4th – 6th August (pull on 3rd August and leave 6th August) in an alternative location to The Village Green.

Members suggested the possibility of tying this in with National Play Day. It was agreed that Parkside Recreation Ground would be suitable to accommodate the children's fun fair, however it was requested that the number of rides be agreed along with a confirmed finish time of 8pm.

Gumbles

A request had been received from Gumbles for the use of a recreation ground to host a children's event. The following dates were requested:

Pull on site 21st August 2023

Open 24th August until 27th August 2023

Pull off site 28th August 2023

Members were provided with an overview of activities and attractions that would be provided by Gumbles.

Members felt that this would be too many events in a short space of time and questioned the affordability for families of having too many attractions during August and September.

- Resolved:** 1. To approve the following dates for fair and circus visits on the Green:

Tom Smith's Fun Fair

5 days of opening agreed to be within the scope of the requested dates of 10th May – 22nd May 2023

Pull on 4th September 2023

Open 7th till 10th September 2023 – 4 days of opening

Pull off site 11th September 2023

John Lawson's Circus

Pull on 9th October 2023

Open 11th October to 17th October 2023

Pull off site 19th October 2023

1. To approve the following fair visit on Parkside Recreation ground:

T Smith – Children's fun fair

Pull on 3rd August 2023

Open 4th – 6th August 2023 with an 8pm finish time

Pull off site 6th August 2023

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.02pm

Dated this 13th day of February 2023 (PS)

Chairman



