

## **REPORT OF LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**(Meetings held 31 August and 30 September 1999)**

### **1. FACILITIES STRATEGY FOR FAWLEY (REPORT B - 31.8.99) (MINUTE NO 25).**

At its meeting in March 1999 the Committee considered a report on possible funding for works at Holbury Hall, which is leased by the Parish Council from the District. At that time the Committee agreed that a review of community provision in the parish be undertaken in order to help ascertain the best way forward in respect of future investment.

Since then, the Officers of the two Councils have been in discussion and a joint paper on the subject has been prepared, and agreed by the Parish Council.

Members were assured that if this strategy was adopted the provision of facilities would not be given special priority over other schemes.

The Document was adopted by the Committee as a basis for joint working between the District and Fawley Parish Councils on matters related to recreation, open space and community halls, and it was agreed that a progress report be submitted to the Committee within 12 months.

### **2. DEVELOPERS' CONTRIBUTIONS: CCTV AT BARTLEY PARK, TOTTON (REPORT D - 31.8.99) (MINUTE NO 27).**

The Committee considered a request from Totton and Eling Town Council, who are the joint managers of Bartley Park, for funding to be made available from Developers' Contributions for the installation of closed circuit television (CCTV) on the site. There were problems with vandalism from a minority of users and, in addition, there were safety issues for users when the site was not supervised. It was noted that the Council's policy indicated that CCTV would only be appropriate in this District in exceptional circumstances. Initial discussions with the Police and users suggested that a case could be made for provision. It was noted that the scheme was proportionate to the investment already made in developing Bartley Park and the installation of CCTV met the other criteria for funding from Developers' Contributions.

It was agreed that a sum of £29,000 be allocated from Developers' Contributions towards the scheme, subject to an agreement being reached between the parties involved that the scheme would make a significant contribution to monitoring the use of the site, and Totton and Eling Town Council adopting a policy specifying that the system may be monitored only by themselves and the emergency services.

**3. OPEN SPACE WORKING PARTIES. (REPORT F – 31.8.99) (MINUTE NO 29).**

The Committee considered whether to disband the Open Space Working Parties which had been established to promote joint working relationships between this Council and the Town and Parish Councils.

The Committee was advised that considerable progress had been made through such forums, but alternative methods of negotiating for open space provision had evolved over time.

It was agreed that the Hythe and Dibden, Marchwood and Ringwood Public Open Space Working Parties be disbanded, but that the need for any such Working Parties in the future be considered on the merits of each case.

**4. REVIEW OF THE POLICY ON THE PROVISION OF SUNBEDS IN RECREATION CENTRES (REPORT G – 31.8.99) (MINUTE NO. 30).**

The Committee considered whether to amend the policy for the use of sunbeds in Recreation Centres, which included provision that all sunbeds were to be removed from the Centres by 2001.

The review had come forward in the light of demand from customers, and on the basis that there was no definitive medical evidence that the use of sunbeds increased the risk of development of skin cancers. The Committee was reminded that all sunbed users were registered at the Recreation Centres and their usage was restricted to 20 sessions per annum. The potential dangers of using sunbeds were drawn to users' attention at registration, and notices were also displayed in the sunbed rooms. It was reported that a survey of users suggested that the warnings were being heeded and customers were taking an informed decision about the risks involved, limiting their use of sunbeds to an average of 5 sessions per annum. There was no doubt however that there was a continuing demand from Centre users and these customers would seek the use of sunbeds even if they were not provided through the Council's Recreation Centres. The Council was very meticulous in maintaining its sunbeds, to minimise risks, and this might not be the case for alternative providers.

Some members considered that as there was no medical evidence to demonstrate that the use of sunbeds carried a risk to health, it was legitimate to allow customers to make informed decisions about the use of sunbeds, and to continue to provide them. Other members felt that this was failing to recognise other situations in which initial warnings about potential risks to health had been ignored, but subsequently demonstrated to have been well founded. They did not feel the income generated justified placing customers' health at risk.

Having debated the issues, the Committee agreed that sunbeds continue to be provided at the Recreation Centres.

**5. PURCHASE OF LAND AT NEW MILTON (REPORT I – 31.8.99) (MINUTE NO. 32).**

The Committee was advised that land at Fernhill Lane, New Milton, was required to facilitate the provision of badly needed recreation facilities in the area. Members noted that negotiations for purchase with one of the owners of the land had been unsuccessful to date. The acquisition of this land was essential for the overall scheme to proceed and for it to qualify for Lottery funding.

New Milton Town Council, who were working in partnership with this Council, were anxious to see the site acquired by agreement, but in the face of the continuing failure of negotiations, had formally requested this Council to consider acquiring the land through a Compulsory Purchase Order.

The Committee agreed that Officers should investigate the feasibility of making a Compulsory Purchase Order, taking into account a number of factors, and requested that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee to determine whether a Compulsory Purchase Order should be made. New Milton Town Council were asked to continue to lead negotiations with the owner of the land for its purchase by agreement.

**6. MAJOR REFURBISHMENTS FOR THE RECREATION CENTRES (REPORT A – 30.9.99) (MINUTE NO. 34).**

The Committee has agreed to include in the Expenditure Plans for 2001/02 the sum of £300,000 for a scheme of major refurbishments at the Recreation Centres.

For a number of years the Council has sought to re-invest in the building fabric of the Recreation Centres in order to protect its investment and to provide facilities in line with customer expectation. Recent research has shown that the quality of the changing rooms at Recreation Centres was one of the major factors influencing usage. The work was therefore necessary to maintain the Recreation Centres' standing in the market place.

The proposals provide for a range of schemes across the Recreation Centres, which include refurbishments to wet and dry changing rooms at New Milton, Totton, Applemore and Ringwood, as well as other works.

The allocation of £300,000 in the Expenditure Plan for this purpose was agreed, and detailed schemes would be submitted at future Committee meetings before implementation.

**7. JUBILEE FIELD, SWAY (REPORT B – 30.9.99) (MINUTE NO. 35).**

The Committee has agreed the allocation of £110,000 over the next 2 financial years towards the provision of recreation facilities at Jubilee Field, Sway.

Sway Parish Council has been pursuing the provision of a recreation ground at Jubilee Field, Sway for a number of years. The Committee has assisted with the sum of £10,000 towards the acquisition of the land in March 1998. Since then, the Parish has been working with local clubs and individuals to progress the scheme. The Committee made a further allocation of £10,000 to assist with partnership funding for the layout of the site. Successive bids to the Sports Lottery have been unsuccessful, which has meant a change of approach to a phased scheme. The basis for need in Sway is well founded, and the scheme as proposed comprises: pavilion, 3 tennis courts, 1 senior and 2 junior football pitches, cricket square and support facilities, multi-sports area, car park and external works.

To date, the Parish Council has invested a total sum of £220,000 – a significant sum for a parish of this size.

As a next step it was suggested that a further allocation of £55,000 be made by the District Council in 2000/01 and £55,000 in 2001/02 to facilitate this much needed scheme coming forward in reasonable time. This proposal was agreed by the Committee for consideration in the overall Expenditure Plan.

**8. HIGHWOOD ROAD, BROCKENHURST (REPORT C – 30.9.99) (MINUTE NO. 36).**

The Committee has agreed the allocation of £50,000 in the Expenditure Plan towards the acquisition of land at Highwood Road, Brockenhurst, for community purposes.

The Leisure Services Committee has over a very long period recognised the importance of Highwood Road, which was a site owned by Hampshire County Council and was declared surplus to requirements, following this Committee's representations for the release of the site to serve local interests.

The total cost of acquisition was £150,000, and the Committee's input amounted to an existing allocation of £20,000 in the Capital Programme for the current year. The Committee has agreed a new allocation of £50,000 in 2000/01 to match the £50,000 from each of the Parish and Trust sources.

The scheme is intended to fulfil a number of identified community needs which include: day nursery; baby care; youth facilities; day centre, extension to the village hall, parish office and centre for equipment for disabled people.

**Councillor J A G Hutchins JP  
CHAIRMAN**