

MINUTES of a Melksham Without Parish Council Joint Sports Field Forum held at Crown Chambers, Melksham Market Place, Monday 6th February 2012 at 8.00 p.m.

Present: Melksham Without Parish Council: Cllr. Mike Mills (Chairman); Cllrs. Richard Wood; Alan Baines; Rolf Brindle; John Glover, Mike Sankey and Pat Nicol

Group Representatives: Russ Hillier Chairman of Melksham United Football Club; Janet Jory, Pavilion Club.

Apologies: Tony Lewington for Model Aircraft Flyers; Wiltshire Cllr Roy While.

424/11

Maintenance Cash Settlement: The Chairman reported that he would be meeting Wiltshire Council Officer Steve Ibbotson with Wilts. Cllr Roy While and the Clerk on Wednesday, 8th February to discuss the sum required to be paid by Wiltshire Council as part of the package Transfer of the Sports Field to the Parish Council. The Parish Council had originally been told by Wiltshire Council officers that a sum of approx. £20,000 was to be paid when the contract with English Landscapes ended in 2012 but now appeared reluctant to make a payment. The Clerk reported that Roy had mentioned the possibility of Wiltshire Council financing a further year's contract in lieu of payment. Cllr. Baines opposed this proposal because not only had Wiltshire Council recently agreed a much reduced works specification with English Landscapes, but this company was also collecting all the income for the field. Once the field was managed by the Parish Council a much better maintenance contract could be set up at far less cost. He emphasised the need for Wiltshire Council to honour the original transfer terms to pay the one year's maintenance cost; estimated to be about £20,000. It was noted that Wiltshire Council had originally suggested this sum and the Parish Council's own calculations, based on actual figures given by Wiltshire Council a few years ago came to about the same amount. Those present expressed concern that the service being given by English Landscapes was minimal and did not meet the requirements of their own original contract. The new works specification was totally inadequate because it made no provision for cleaning the changing rooms, toilets or showers or for replenishing soap and toilet rolls etc. Russ Hillier emphasised that for the last ten years, there had been no proper safety checks or regular pitch inspections prior to matches for dog fouling , no filling of potholes etc. He had also had to query some income invoices received from English Landscapes which had been in excess of the rent due (This year £4,800) The Chairman, Mike Mills emphasised he had refuted the claim that the new works specifications was a new contract Cllr. Glover emphasised that the works specification could not be deemed a contract and any extra service given in lieu of payment could only be based on the original proper contract even if there were continuous enforcement problems. It was agreed that there were just two options open to the Parish Council in negotiating the transfer sum: Option A: For Wiltshire Council to pay the full amount due in the sum of approximately £20,000 or Option B: For the Parish Council to accept Wiltshire Council's offer for English Landscapes to carry out one year's extra maintenance of the Sports Field, based on the original contract. The Clerk cautioned that in view of the changed works specification, English Landscapes may not consider itself still bound to the original contract and Option B could then flounder.

Recommended: *Parish Council representatives propose Option A at the meeting with Wiltshire Council with Option B to be reserved as a fall-back position in the last resort, subject to English Landscape still being under the original contract.*

- 425/11 **Legal Agreement:** The Chairman reported that he had met with John Chapman of Fields in Trust who was very supportive of Bowerhill Sports Field becoming a Jubilee Field. The Legal Agreement would need to be amended with the correct wording to ensure this could happen but Wiltshire Council had already agreed a similar transfer at Calne, where a clause had been inserted to stipulate that if the field were ever taken back, Wiltshire Council provide an alternative playing field of the same size which could then become the Jubilee Field. It was important the Legal Agreement was completed as soon as possible to ensure the Parish Council had time to register the Field as a Jubilee Field prior to the Jubilee Celebrations at the beginning of June. The Clerk reported that the Solicitor was now working on the Agreement and would be holding a teleconference with Wiltshire Council's Solicitor so that all the issues could be agreed at the same time. It was agreed that members of the Sports Field Working Party needed to be available on the end of a phone when that took place, in case of any queries. The Clerk reported that the Solicitor was hopeful completion could take place by end March. This would then leave April and May to register the field in the Jubilee Scheme
Recommended: *The Council ask the Solicitor to let the Council know when he would negotiate the Agreement by conference so that Members could be available in one room to answer queries.*
- 426/11 **Minutes of last Sports Forum, 18th July 2011:** These Minutes were noted.
- 427/11 Arising from Min. 145/11 **New Pavilion, Bowerhill:** A second amended draft plan, prepared by Cllr. Baines was considered. Cllr. Baines explained that he had added additional rooms for the Youth Club similar to provision in the present building, but with two external doors and a 2nd toilet. He had included a stairwell to show what would be possible with this layout although use of an upper room was not envisaged immediately. Any upstairs room would need to have an external fire escape. Cllr. Glover suggested that if there was allowance for the stairwell, this area could be used initially for storage. Janet Jory asked where the new kitchen was proposed. Cllr. Baines emphasised there were various possibilities within this layout as there were water connections all over the building. Janet Jory emphasised the new building would also need a phone line and an internet connection for use for a future homework club. The present building had a connection which was not in use. Cllr. Baines reported he had based the design on the Malmesbury Pavilion to which he had added the youth club rooms and the canopy across the front. Eventually it would need to be formally designed. The existing Pavilion was 20m X 9m and Melksham Without Parish Council had obtained outline consent for a replacement Pavilion of 30m X 10 m. The amended design was 24m X 12m ; just 2 m wider than the proposed replacement. Although it differed from the agreed specification in having four changing rooms plus those for officials it met current principles of Sport England. Russ Hillier felt it was a very good size. The Chairman thanked Cllr. Baines for his hard work.
- 428/11 Arising from Min. 146/11 **Meeting with Wiltshire Council:** The Sports Forum agreed that the first priority was to finalise and complete the Legal Agreement. Once this had been done, the Council would then present the Plan to Wiltshire Council as detailed in Min 146/11
- 429/11 Arising from Min. 150/11 **Specification for future Sports Field maintenance:** Teresa reported that she had invited an estimate of the annual cost of maintaining the Sports Field from a local grass-cutting contractor. It was felt the Council would benefit from at

least two estimated budget figures from independent local contractors as an extra guide to the overall cost of maintenance, prior to working out a detailed specification. It was noted the Council already had prepared a detailed spreadsheet of estimated costs of English Landscape charges per annum up to 2013/14, based on figures given by West Wiltshire District Council 1997/98 – 2002/03. An estimated amount of £20,000 had been given by Wiltshire Council in 2010 but no actual breakdown had been supplied since 2003, despite many requests.

Meeting closed 9. 20 p.m.

Chairman, 20th February 2012