

ALVECHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

YOUTH, SPORTS & RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING – 2020/07/27 - 01

MINUTES OF THE YOUTH, SPORTS & RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING
held via Zoom on Monday 27th July 2020 at 7.00 pm.

[The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020]

PRESENT: Councillor T Wallis (Chairman), Cllrs; Baxter, Cypher, Humphries, Lewis and Worrall and Mrs L Parkinson (*Co-opted Committee Member*)
Present: Mrs Nan Fellows (RGVHT) and six residents of Rowney Green.
In attendance: Mrs J Smailes – Parish Clerk/Minute Taker

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr Helmore.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Wallis – Item 7 (*Plot holder at Rectory Road Allotment site*).

3. DISPENSATION REQUESTS

None.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Approval of the YSR Committee Meeting Minutes, held on 17th February 2020, were proposed by Cllr Wallis. **Unanimous.**

Cllr Wallis moved that agenda item 12a be addressed at this point, however; the Minutes reflect the correct agenda running order.

5. PLAY FACILITIES

Cllr Wallis drew Member's attention to an incident which had recently taken place at The Wiggin.

The Clerk advised that a parent had reported an incident, citing a certain item of equipment namely the Carousel. Cllr Wallis stated he had visited site and believed the equipment was working correctly, however; it was noted that ROSPA had been instructed to re-inspect the item of equipment to confirm the apparatus was in correct working order and in line with manufacturer guidelines; the Clerk had also notified the council's insurer. **Noted.**

6. SITE VISITS

Following a number of site visits to the play/sports facilities at; Rowney Green, The Wiggin and Hopwood Cllr Wallis stated he had compiled a list of remedial work which he believed needed to be undertaken (removal of barbwire and tree limb (RG), repair to the boardwalk (The Wiggin) etc) and gave an undertaking to forward the list to the Clerk so the work could be addressed during the August Recess.

Cllr Wallis proposed that delegated powers (*LGA 1972 – s101*) be bestowed to the Clerk (*and two Members*) in order that repair work may be addressed. **Unanimous.**

Chairman **Date**

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7. ALLOTMENTS

Cllr Wallis expressed his tanks to Cllr Humphries for furthering lease extension negotiations with the Allotment Land Owner.

Cllr Humphries advised that a letter seeking a 5 year extension with a 3 year break clause had been issued by the Clerk and a response was still awaited; it was noted that if accepted, the rental for the allotments proposed an increase as of June 2021 from £750 to £1500 and it was felt that this rise would need to be covered by the plot holders.

Cllr Humphries proposed the plot hirer charge should be increased as of April 2021 to £40 per plot as such would cover the increase in land rental and provide a sum toward water rates.

Cllr Baxter felt that the allotments and the council's approach should mirror its 'recreational' approach and should form part of an overall sport and recreational strategy; that APC needed to consider the benefits such provided to the community as she felt the amenity should not be solely viewed as an income stream.

Cllr Worrall disagreed, saying that the council's lack of General Reserves required it to start to place more emphasis on the commercial value of its assets; that the allotment rental had not been increased in 8 years and the council could not continue to subsidise all of its facilities so heavily. Cllr Worrall proposed an increase of between £45 – 50 per plot (*This motion did not find a Seconder*).

Cllr Wallis felt that the majority of allotment holders were either elderly or young families and feared they may not be able/willing to afford the increase in rent.

Cllr Baxter suggested that delegated powers (*LGA 1972 – s101*) be bestowed to the Clerk (*and two Members*) in order that the plot charge could be calculated at a 'break even' sum once it was confirmed what, if any increase, the land owner would impose on the Parish Council as of June 2021.

Cllr Worrall agreed to withdraw his motion, to support Cllr Baxter's motion but requested that she accept an amendment to her motion, this being; the break even calculation plus £5.00 per plot holder? The amendment to the proposal was not accepted by Cllr Baxter, however; Cllr Baxter suggested a breakeven sum, plus £2.00 per plot increase, the motion was Seconded by Cllr Wallis. **Unanimous.**

It was noted that there was currently a waiting list for allotment plots.

Cllr Cypher felt that there was merit in exploring Cllr Van der Plank's prior suggestion which was to advertise the Parish Council was keen to secure parcels of land and to see if any residents wanted to offer use of their land for such a purpose. It was felt that an advert could be placed in the Village Magazine.

Action - Clerk.

The Clerk asked whether Members would be minded to allow her to write to Allotment Holders in December, advising them that they would be charged January 2021 – end March 2021, following which there would be a rent review (*sum to be calculated as set out above*) and that invoices showing the new rental rate would be issued for a full 12mth period as of 1st April 2021, aligning payment with the council's financial year. Proposed by Cllr Worrall, Seconded by Cllr Baxter. **Unanimous.**

Cllr Wallis spoke of his intention to undertake an inspection of the allotment site in early September.

Chairman

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8. TREE WORKS

It was noted that following sight of Tree Survey Reports for all recreational sites owned by the Parish Council, Purchase Orders had since been issued for all work that had been identified as needing to be addressed with a 12mth period. **Noted.**

9. REVIEW OF HIRES

Cllr Worrall queried how the charging structure was applied and when it was last reviewed, suggesting that the charges levied were not 'commercial' and that the Parish Council were undervaluing its asset potential. Cllr Worrall went on to suggest that more should be done in respect to advertising the use of its assets in order to attract 'custom' from within and outside of the local area as this would result in increased revenue streams and spoke of the Bromsgrove Bucks desire to find a permanent home that they could use as of 1st April 2021 saying that whilst initially he had proposed the use of Rowney Green, that given recent discussions with the Rowney Green Village Hall Trustees that he proposed consideration be given to allowing the Bromsgrove Bucks to use The Wiggin (The Meadows), advising that he believed the use of Tanyards Car Park or the Social Club Car Park would prevent there being an increase of traffic in Meadow Lane.

Cllr Wallis also felt that The Wiggin (The Meadows) could provide the ideal venue for the baseball team but felt that before a commitment could be given a site meeting should be arranged in order that Members could fully understand the Bromsgrove Bucks' requirements in relation to the marking out of a pitch, net erection, the requirement for toilet facilities to be readily accessible at The Tanyards Car Park etc. Cllr Wallis also felt that the £350 being offered for use of the facilities was insufficient.

The Clerk at this point advised that the charge of £350 was notified to the Bromsgrove Bucks as this was the current hirer rates to which the office worked and suggested that if a higher charge was to be now imposed Members would need to carefully negotiate this with the team in question. **Noted.**

Cllr Worrall said that as a 'new user' of the council's facilities he believed the sum payable by the Bromsgrove Bucks should be more in the region of £1100.00. Cllr Worrall also advised that he had issued an email to the teams representative seeking to meet on-site.

Cllr Wallis and Mrs Parkinson also expressed an interest in attending the site meeting.

Action – Cllr Worrall.

Cllr Cypher reiterated how important he believed it to be to introduce a 'marketing strategy', together with a schedule of costs for hirer of the council's facilities.

Cllr Cypher went on to add that there was already a good demand for pitch hirer within the parish and that was before any improvement works had been undertaken and that the 'expression of interests' received quantified the importance of capitalising on the council's recreational assets.

10. HOPWOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE CAR PARK & PITCH DRAINAGE PROPOSALS

Members were provide with the following quotes:

Playing Field; Clear our ditch and form soakaway

Car Park; Dig and lay pc channel, gully & drain, form soakaway, - *Total £2835 incl of VAT*

It was proposed by Cllr Wallis that this work be undertaken during the August Recess if at all possible. **Unanimous.**

Chairman *Date*

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11. THE WIGGIN (THE MEADOWS)

Car Park & Drainage Proposals.

Cllr Worrall proposed that the quote received to undertake drainage/watercourse clearance be split down and considered as follows:

- a) Clear out ditch from point A – B *Cost £1350 plus VAT* (This watercourse known to be under APC control) Seconded by Cllr Cypher. **Unanimous.**

- b) Clear out ditch from points A – C *Cost £1150 plus VAT*

A short discussion took place on proposal (b) as Members were unsure whether this watercourse came under APCs riparian ownership/responsibility. The Clerk was asked to check land title and to contact BAM to confirm land ownership and that if it were found to be land owned by the Parish Council then the work would be undertaken and a Purchase Order issued, however; if it was under BAMs control the Clerk was instructed to write advising them of their riparian responsibility and asking that they seek to clear the watercourse prior to inclement weather. **Unanimous.**

The Wiggin Bridge Repair.

Cllr Worrall explained that whilst he had met on-site with a surveyor he had been unable to gain a quote for the requisite work prior to the meeting.

Cllr Humphries explained that the Calor Grant Submission had been unsuccessful however a total of £800 had been pledged and Cllr Humphries gave an undertaking to claim this funding and to also write a letter of appreciation which the council could then place on its FB Page/in the Village Magazine. **Action – Cllr Humphries.**

It was proposed by Cllr Worrall that the money ‘earmarked’ for the bridge repair (£1480), together with the money pledged, be used toward the repair and that delegated powers (*LGA 1972 – s101*) be bestowed to the Clerk (and *two Members*) in order that quotes may be gained and work instructed. Seconded Cllr Wallis before the Winter months. **Unanimous.**

12. ROWNEY GREEN

Cllr Wallis made reference to the recent influx of emails which had been received from Rowney Green residents, acknowledged in part by the Clerk and the email he himself had sent to Chair of the Rowney Green Village Hall in which he had confirmed receipt of the many objections received by the Parish Council, opposing the proposals put forward to create additional car parking space on the playing field, adjacent to the pavilion.

Cllr Wallis spoke of the council’s desire to commercially promote the recreational facilities at Rowney Green and how by increasing parking capacity it made the facility more lucrative.

Cllr Wallis also spoke of how Rowney Green had no street lighting, pavements, not even a Public House but how this added to its tranquillity; attracting those of retirement age and families seeking a safe environment to raise their children.

A Lease Proposal.

Cllr Wallis opened the debate by making reference to the paper which had been circulated prior (Appendix A). The paper sets out proposals which give consideration toward Rowney Green Village Hall Trustees (RGVHT) being offered a Lease Agreement in respect to the Rowney Green Playing Field and Pavilion.

Chairman *Date*

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Cllr Wallis made mention to how Rowney Green residents were against the Car Park proposals per-say and how a Lease Agreement would not only potentially save the Parish Council circa £11k per annum but how such an arrangement would also allow the Rowney Green residents and visitors from further afield to continue to use and enjoy the facility without the council having to maintain such as the maintenance could be addressed under the Lease Agreement by volunteers/RGVTs.

Cllr Cypher proposed an amendment to Cllr Wallis's Lease Agreement proposal, suggesting instead a 'partnership' agreement be considered; the proposal being:

'To consider a motion re. the formation with the RG village hall trust of a partnership between the trust and the parish council for shared management of the use, maintenance, and future development of the RG playing field and pavilion. And for negotiations to take place for the partnership agreement to be operating for the next council financial year (April 2021 onwards).'

Cllr Wallis stated that before he consider accepting Cllr Cypher's amendment he wished to hear from the RGVHT Representative Mrs Fellows.

I am speaking on behalf of the Trustees this evening.

The trustees of the Village Hall and representatives from the Rowney Green Association attended a Zoom meeting last Tuesday night. Marc Worrall set out the Parish Council's proposals to address two main issues facing APC: a budget deficit resulting from the costs of running the facility being higher than any income, and the need to fulfill District Plan obligations of 'improving sports, leisure and recreation facilities'

The proposal included a new car park, improvements to drainage of the football pitch and modernization of the pavilion including, showers, heating and solar panels. John Cypher for the Parish stated that, the playing fields would be advertised and marketed so that the fields and pavilion could be used "seven days and nights a week".

We were very concerned by these proposals, which would ultimately be to the detriment of current users which include not only Rowney Green villagers but also people from the rest of the parish and beyond who use our park on an informal basis for recreational family picnics/activities/walks/running etc.

These activities benefit all visitors to the park (everyone who visits) not just physically but their overall wellbeing and helps to promote good mental health by spending time in the lovely environment of our peaceful park. Mental wellbeing and family time are significant current issues which should not be undervalued,

The enquiries that APC have received for use of these improved playing field facilities have come from Redditch and a suburb of Birmingham as there appears to be no requirement locally. The APC proposals of promoting football and baseball at the peak times of weekends and evenings would not only cause further problems with parking in the small village lanes but also exclude the parish residents from recreational and leisure use in the park.

Chairman

Date

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Traffic

There are many concerns expressed by the community due to extra traffic through narrow lanes with no pavements as well as the very poor access via Newbourne Hill, which will be losing the extra parking behind the lock up garages resulting in more residents' cars having to park on the road.

Costs

It was explained that the current maintenance costs to the parish were around £11,000 per year. These must increase as there as running costs of the new facility will increase in line with the number of users. This would mean APC residents would bear the financial burden with little benefit as well as suffering the associated inconveniences particularly as the only interest so far is from teams outside the parish.

The trustees of the village hall are putting forward their own proposal and this is the one that I am voicing tonight. The trustees as a charity would request up to a 15-year lease, from the parish at a peppercorn rate. This would enable them to apply for grants to make improvements e.g. replacing the childrens play equipment.

The trustees have experience with obtaining funding and running successfully our village hall.

Whilst this may seem to be innovative we understand that Wythall has already agreed the same method for dealing with their park.

The parish would therefore have the benefit of an extra "income", or lost deficit of at least £11,000 a year.

Under the terms of the lease the trustees would be responsible for the total maintenance of the playing fields and pavillion and would ensure availability for informal exercise, recreation, sport and leisure, not only for the villagers and the wider parish, but also for people from outside the area so that the park is inclusive. This is not new, there are already visitors from further afield and we would like to keep them coming.

In just five days since the Zoom meeting we have so far obtained huge support for this proposal from the residents and hopefully you have been impressed by the number of emails sent to the Parish Clerk confirming this. The emails explain all the concerns of the residents and so I am not going into these in any greater detail here.

In this short time, we have received signed support from everyone we have spoken to and so far, it stands at approx. 55%. We are mindful that we are still in a Covid-19 social distancing world so only social media has been used and direct approaches have not been made.

This is truly amazing considering we do not have contact details for everyone and a lot of people are away at the moment.

We are confident that we will get even more support when we manage to contact more of the Rowney Green residents.

Chairman

Date

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Our intention would be to call for a village meeting at the hall (when Covid allows) to discuss plans and ideas so that a formal strategy plan will be drawn up. This could be referenced in the lease.

We have also spoken with the Charity Commission and have been informed that it is a straightforward process to add the park into our constitution.

There is tremendous enthusiasm within Rowney Green to take over the fields to ensure their sustainability for the future providing sports, leisure and recreation activities for all to enjoy. and I do hope that you will be able to endorse this proposal as it addresses both concerns raised about funding and the promotion of sport, leisure and recreation within the district plan.

We would not be interested in supporting any joint venture with APC. The residents would prefer 100% of the management from within our community.

On a personal note, yesterday afternoon as I walked through the park with my son in law and young granddaughter,

a young mum with her family and their granny were in the children's play area, some men from outside our parish were playing tennis, someone else was sitting enjoying the sunshine on a bench halfway up the field , 2 people were walking their dog and three teenagers arrived to kick a football around

– I strongly believe this is what our park is about.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity to make a statement at this meeting.

Cllr Cypher stated that he did not wish to block but instead support an approach that considered 'partnership' working; an approach that shared maintenance and operational responsibilities; that APC had a directive, namely the NDP which had received 96% of support from those voting and which emphasised the need for improved leisure facilities.

Cllr Worrall made mention that the Car Parking proposals were in fact in their infancy; that he had only recently spoken with RGVHTs and no decision to implement such proposals had been taken as the council was still in the consultation period.

Cllr Cypher felt that it would be possible to find a way in which both parties could work together for the betterment of all concerned, however; Cllt Wallis did not feel that a 'partnership' approach would work without the formality of a Lease Agreement.

Cllr Humphries stated that he too wished to put forward an alternative amendment to Cllr Wallis' Lease Agreement Proposal, that being;

'To note recent leasing / partnership options for Rowney Green playing fields and to delegate their further investigation to a Council /RGVH trustee working group. The Working Group to then present specific proposals to Full Council no later than the end of September 2020'.

Chairman

Date

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Cllr Baxter explained that Wythall playing field differ as although maintained by volunteers they were not owned by the Parish Council and instead were run by a Trust.

Cllr Baxter stated that she did not understand Cllr Cypher's proposal and felt that it would be important to RGVHTs to have a Lease Agreement that was legally binding and allowed them to prove security of tenure; that no decision could be taken that night in respect of a Lease Agreement without sight in the first instance of Terms and Conditions and that she felt Members were getting hung up on terminology and that whether the document be titled a 'Partnership Agreement' or Lease Agreement' the important element was to work harmoniously for the betterment of the community.

Cllr Wallis also stressed how important he too felt it was for there to be a legally binding document in place.

Cllr Worrall stated that a lot of discussions had taken place over the last 6 days and he felt it was sensible to 'take stock', to accept Cllr Humphries suggested amendment, and to allow both parties the time to consider the Terms and Conditions of a document they would like to then 'table'/discuss.

At this point Cllr Cypher withdrew his amendment in favour of Cllr Humphries amendment.

Cllr Baxter spoke in the necessity for the council to formulate a robust recreational/sports strategy for use of all of its facilities.

Following a further lengthy debate in which a number of councillors expressed differing views, Cllr Wallis confirmed he was willing to accept Cllr Humphries amendment to his original proposal; the proposal therefore being:

'To note recent leasing / partnership options for Rowney Green playing fields and to delegate their further investigation to a Council /RGVH trustee working group. The Working Group to then present specific proposals to Full Council no later than the end of September 2020'. Proposed by Cllr Humphries, Seconded by Cllr Cypher. **Vote Carried.**

It was agreed that representatives from RGVHT and the Council would arrange to meet as soon as possible (early September) to discuss acceptable proposals, and that in the meantime both parties would consider what they consider to be acceptable Terms and Conditions for inclusion in such a document.

It was agreed that a 'face to face' meeting would be preferred but if this could not be facilitated safely that a Zoom Meeting would instead be arranged.

Cllr Wallis queried whether the document to be 'drawn up' would be a 'Partnership Agreement' or a 'Lease Agreement'?

Cllr Worrall explained that at this point it was merely terminology and that there needed to be a starting point and that the 'drawing up' of a document, whatever it be called' was it! Cllr Worrall proposed delegated powers (LGA 1972 – s101) be bestowed to the Clerk (and two Members – named as being Cllrs Wallis and Baxter in this instance) in order that a draft document be produced and circulated to Members ahead of future discussion with RGVHTs. Cllr Humphries also offered to assist in drawing together relevant information. **Action – Clerk/Cllrs Baxter, Humphries & Wallis**

Chairman

Date

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12. Car Park/Drainage Proposals

B.

Cllr Cypher stated that the New Homes Bonus Application was a serious application and one that would assist in achieving part of the council's Recreational Sports Strategy if it resulted in the car park proposal reaching fruition; resulting in betterment for the parish as a whole. Cllr Cypher believed that despite the now on-going discussions with RGVHTs, it would be foolish not to continue to pursue the grant sum.

Cllr Baxter suggested if the council were successful in its bid then the implementation of the Car Park proposals may be a condition of any 'Partnership/Lease Agreement offered.

Cllr Worrall expressed the view that Rowney Green recreational facilities could not reach their full potential without increased car parking capacity and that he too felt the grant application should continue to be pursued.

Cllr Cypher inquired who would represent the council if asked to present the grant application in detail to BDC?

Cllr Humphries spoke in favour of attending as did Cllr Worrall; the Clerk also to attend if available. **Noted.**

12. Whether to undertake Car Park improvement work if no funding is secured.

C.

Cllr Baxter proposed that consideration of this point be deferred and that whilst not dismissed, given the council's financial position, grants needed to be sought for the work to be undertaken should the NHB grant not be forthcoming. Seconded Cllr Wallis. **Unanimous.**

13. VILLAGE PLANTERS/GREEN OPEN SPACES

Members considered the quote provided (£1025.50) and resolved to provide delegated powers to the Clerk in order she may negotiate the maintenance element (*a further £684*) of the quote given that only 6mths remain.

Proposed by Cllr Wallis, Seconded Cllr Worrall.

Unanimous.

14. REMEMBRANCE

Members noted that the Road Closure had been applied for and that Headway had been requested to assist with the marshalling. **Noted.**

Cllr Humphries confirmed that he was willing to act as 'lead' councillor for the event. **Noted.**

Cllr Wallis proposed that delegated powers (*LGA 1972 – s101*) be bestowed to the Clerk (*and two Members, to include Cllr Humphries*) in order that all preparations including the Purchasing of a Wreath/Risk Assessment etc may be addressed. **Unanimous.**

15. CHRISTMAS LIGHT SWITCH-ON

The Clerk advised that a Purchase Order had been issued to the Lighting Contractor and that the Assistant Clerk was currently sourcing a Christmas Tree ahead of issuing a Purchase Order. **Noted**

Chairman

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Cllr Worrall queried if the Town Crier had been booked for the event?

The Clerk gave an undertaking to make enquiries of the Assistant Clerk and to place a Purchase Order for his services if not already secured. **Action- Clerk.**

Cllr Wallis proposed that delegated powers (*LGA 1972 – s101*) be bestowed to the Clerk (*and two Members, namely Cllrs Lambert and Baxter*) in order that all preparations including the may be addressed. **Unanimous.**

16. THE MARKETING OF RECREATIONAL & SPORTS FACILITIES

Cllr Cypher spoke of his disappointment that once again this agenda items was being considered so late on in the evening and stated that he had hoped the Clerk would have re-circulated his original paper (Appendix B). The Clerk explained that the agenda had been issued prior to the Workshop in order to comply with legal timeframes; she apologised for not re-circulating the paper, believing instead that it was the proposals coming out of the Workshop that were to be debated that evening.

Cllr Baxter spoke on her belief that each venue required its own marketing strategy and that there was not a 'single fit' for all venues; that a marketing pamphlet should be produced for each venue focusing on what each particular venue had to offer.

Cllr Worrall commended Cllr Cypher on his paper which primarily focused on Rowney Green and Hopwood Community Centre. Cllr Worrall stated that he felt Hopwood CC stood alone; that the facility offered the most scope; that a number of hirer rates should be considered as well as user differential rates.

A discussion on the varying rates and how to determine such ensued.

Cllr Baxter felt it important to allow the Booking Clerk to have a degree of flexibility, to work within margins but to apply hirer charges as appropriate.

The Clerk explained that it was very difficult when relying on 'office staff' to get the right balance between 'selling' the facility; showing perspective customers around the facilities, cleaning those facilities and caretaking (opening/closing the facility) believing that the role could follow to one person. That possibly utilising an on-line booking system also would increase bookings.

Cllr Baxter explained that Wythall currently has a web based booking system that worked well, she agreed with the Clerk in respect to there needing to be a designated booking/facility administrator/caretaker if the venue was to be marketed with any form of success.

Cllr Lewis gave an undertaking to act as Booking Clerk and show perspective customers the venue in the short-term.

Mrs Parkinson also spoke of the difference in 'skill set' required between a bookings clerk/caretaker and odd job person and how unlikely it was that one person would suffice. The Clerk suggested the necessity to advertise for a Bookings Clerk/Caretaker and also a Handyman, that if someone came forward able to fill both positions, all good and well, but that council may need to consider employing two part-time employees.

Chairman **Date**

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Given the option to employ a Caretaker/Handyman had already been considered by Council/HR Committee and deferred pending easing of Covid Restrictions, Members suggested the Clerk spoke with the HR Chair and then went ahead and advertised the positions with a view to interviewing in September. **Action- Clerk.**

After a further short discussion it was proposed that Cllr Chyher continue to develop a Sports & Recreation Strategy and prepare a hirer charge schedule that may be considered by Members and, with the Clerk's assistance, look to produce marketing pamphlets/literature for each of the sporting/recreational venues, including the allotments. **Action- Cllr Cypher/Clerk.**

17. COUNCILLOR REPORTS

None

18. MEETING DATES

As per the schedule.

Meeting closed at 10.25pm

Chairman *Date*