

Pavilion Correspondence – October 2022

5th October 2022 – Full Council meeting Public Speaking Session – Questions raised

Please note this is recorded in the minutes of the meeting, available on the HPC website.

Barry Deller

Mr Deller addressed the Council in respect of concerns he has regarding the provision of a sports pavilion at the NE Hook site. These are three-fold in relation to multi-use provision, upcoming changes within the RFU in relation to the playing of rugby and particularly the effect on amateur, grassroots sport and lease models vs. direct management of the facility.

Mr Deller stated that a recent article in The Times sets out very clearly the challenges facing rugby and the changes that are rapidly to be implemented at a local level. These changes are due to a number of factors including the financial problems within all levels of the game, pending litigation on head injuries and the growing media and public awareness of the problems of head injuries within the game. Every school and every parent in the country will now be aware of the dangers of rugby and this will have an immediate impact on the game - hence the RFU approach towards having touch rugby being in place in all clubs.

The significance of all these rapid and wide-ranging changes must be taken into account in planning for the future provision of sporting facilities. As HPC is on the cusp of investing in new provision at NE Hook, it is crucial that future-proofing is built into this provision. This argues for flexibility and ensuring built provision and playing fields can cater for multi sports and specifically football as well as rugby. As football has fewer players than rugby, planning for rugby should not be a problem in terms of dressing rooms etc but the needs of other sports should be fully considered before finalising the design brief. Mr Deller suggested that it is impossible to predict with certainty the likely future demand for rugby playing and that it is no longer appropriate to focus this new facility on just a single sport.

As an additional contribution to this matter, Mr Deller seriously questions the proposal to grant a lease to the rugby club for these facilities. This club is in an embryonic form and whilst it might have aspirations for growth, any pre-existing rugby club business plan needs to be revisited both in terms of the changes being introduced by the RFU and the future demand for rugby. The Times article says 'The proposed changes come in response to a reduction in participation numbers that has threatened the existence of community rugby clubs nationwide'. There is no reason to think that Hook and Odiham are immune from these changes. Mr Deller's conclusion is that it would be both premature and risky to grant a lease to the rugby club at this point. His view is it would be prudent for the Parish Council to manage the new facility in the first instance (with fees charged to teams/users) and only consider a lease to the rugby club when it can evidence sufficient playing numbers and finance to justify taking on the lease liabilities and costs. To do otherwise is too risky and in the absence of proven figures from the rugby club, Mr Deller does not believe it would be prudent to lease to such a body.

The Chairman thanked Mr Deller for attending the meeting and suggested that he should attend and raise his points at a NE Hook Community Project Committee.

Email received

From: Barry and Janet Deller

Sent: 06 October 2022 10:08

To: Fergus Kirkham <fergus.kirkham@hook.gov.uk>

Cc: Rob Cowell <rob.cowell@hook.gov.uk>; Sarah Dignan <clerk@hook.gov.uk>; Jane Worlock <jane.worlock@hook.gov.uk>; John Orchard <john.orchard@hook.gov.uk>

Subject: Public Speaking Session 5 October 2022

Dear Fergus,

Following my contribution at last evening's HPC meeting you asked me to forward details of The Times article from Thursday September 2022 (pages 78 and 70-71). I believe Cllr Worlock offered to send a link to you - I am copying this email to her to check this. I am also copying this email to the Chairman and Clerk so that we 'are all on the same page' and that my comments can be incorporated into the Minutes of the meeting. I am also copying to Cllr Orchard as he was the only councillor absent from the meeting last evening and I would like him to be aware of my thinking.

The recent article in The Times sets out very clearly the challenges facing rugby and the changes that are rapidly to be implemented at local level. These changes are due to a number of factors including the financial problems within all levels of the game, pending litigation on head injuries and the growing media and public awareness of the problems of head injuries within the game. Last evening's BBC2 Programme 'Head On: Rugby, Dementia and Me' (available on BBC iPlayer) further explores the issue and its devastating effects. Every school and every parent in the country will now be aware of the dangers of rugby and this will have an immediate impact on the game - hence the RFU approach towards having touch rugby being in place in all clubs.

The significance of all these rapid and wide ranging changes must be taken into account in planning for the future provision of sporting facilities. As HPC is on the cusp of investing in new provision at NEH it is crucial that future proofing is built into this provision. This argues for flexibility and ensuring built provision and playing fields can cater for multi sports and specifically football as well as rugby. As football has fewer players than rugby, planning for rugby should not be a problem in terms of dressing rooms etc but the needs of other sports should be fully considered before finalising the design brief. I would suggest that it is impossible to predict with certainty the likely future demand for rugby playing and that it is no longer appropriate to focus this new facility on just a single sport.

My additional contribution to this matter is to seriously question the proposal to grant a lease to the rugby club for these facilities. This club is in an embryonic form and whilst it might have aspirations for growth any pre-existing rugby club business plan needs to be revisited both in terms of the changes being introduced by the RFU and the future demand for rugby. After all, as the Times says 'The proposed changes come in response to a reduction in participation numbers that has threatened the existence of community rugby clubs nationwide'. I see no reason to think that Hook and Odiham are immune from these changes. Therefore my conclusion is that it would be both premature and risky to grant a lease to the rugby club at this point. In my view it would be prudent for the Parish Council to manage the new facility in the first instance (with fees charged to teams/users) and only consider a lease to the rugby club when it can evidence sufficient playing numbers and finance to justify taking on the lease liabilities and costs. To do otherwise is too risky and in the absence of proven figures from the rugby club I do not believe it will be prudent to lease

to such a body. The Council's Duty of Care and Due Diligence requirements strongly suggest extreme caution in this matter.

Please accept these comments as a helpful contribution to the Council's decision making but for the avoidance of any doubt they are a formal communication to the Council alerting you to the issues as I see them looking forward.

Kind regards

Barry Deller

Hook Resident

24th October 2022 – NEHCP Committee meeting Public Speaking Session – Questions raised

Please note this is recorded in the minutes of the meeting, available on the HPC website.

Julia Abrahams

Ms Abrahams asked if the outcomes from the informal workshop meeting* held by Councillors 2 weeks prior would be discussed this evening.

The Chairman informed Ms Abrahams that the discussions held had been looking at ways to move forward within the now agreed restricted budget. No decisions had been made and all points would be covered by items on the agenda for this meeting.

**Councillors had held an informal workshop on 10th October, in place of a formal committee meeting. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss ways forward for the pavilion project in order to inform agenda items for debate at the following Committee meeting. A good number of the public turned up, despite a cancellation notice being published well in advance. They were advised of the purpose of the workshop and that no decisions would be made but there was some consternation amongst the members of the public regarding the workshop taking place.*

Rob Leeson

Mr Leeson introduced himself and informed those present that he had been a member of the Hook Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. Mr Leeson queried if the level of funding now being committed by the Council to providing the pavilion meant that there would be a move to alter the content of the HNP, specifically the "village centre masterplan" which addresses the regeneration of the centre of the village.

Cllr Orchard responded that there is a desire, communicated throughout the Neighbourhood Plan, to see the centre of the village regenerated, however that and the topic of the pavilion project are two separate issues.

Cllr Kinge commented that the Parish Council could not financially contribute to commercial enterprises in respect of redevelopment. Mr Leeson responded that there may be projects to

promote the village centre that require funding and that the Parish Council could contribute to these.

Cllr Orchard concluded that it wasn't solely a matter of funding – the policies within the Neighbourhood Plan remain and regeneration of the village centre is being considered, however this particular committee was not the correct forum for discussion of the matter.

Dan Brooks

Mr Brooks introduced himself and explained that a number of years ago he had joined Aldershot and Farnham hockey club when it was in its infancy. They had use of a multi-purpose building (also used by the cricket and rugby clubs) and grew to become one of the most successful clubs in the South East. Mr Brooks commented that it was very important that there is investment in these types of facilities for the youth in Hook to provide opportunities to play sport of all types.

Email received – responses provided at NEHCP meeting on 21st November

From: Mike Jeans

Sent: 26 October 2022 18:35

To: Sarah Dignan <clerk@hook.gov.uk>

Subject: NEHCPC

Hi Sarah,

I'm not sure I can make the next NEHCPC meeting, which I believe is scheduled for 7th November, but would like to ask the Committee a couple of questions relating to the budget for HPC's contribution towards the Community Building.

1. Could the Committee please confirm the agreed amount of contribution that will be made by HPC towards the construction and fit-out of the Community Building and whether this budgeted contribution includes fees, contingency and all other costs incurred to date

This is the extract from minutes from NEHCP meeting on 24th October detailing discussion of the budget which answers your question above and question number 4:

“Members discussed in some depth the funding to be allocated to the pavilion project as there was some confusion around the total budget sum available of £2.15m (£250K S106 funding plus a maximum of £1.9m from reserves) and the cost the architect is being asked to adhere to. The optimum solution is that the project can still be delivered for the overall cost of £1.9million which is the figure that was inserted in the PSC with ADL. The initial spend is to include the £250k of S106 funding to come from Hart. It will be made clear to the architect that £1.9million remains the overall figure to work to when preparing a construction cost estimate. The balance would allow the Council to retain £250k as a contingency to ensure the project can be delivered in the event of any unavoidable increase in cost when the project proceeds to construction.”

2. How much has been spent to date - £45,398
3. How much, if any, has been contractually committed to be spent but not yet taken from HPC funds - £15,000
4. Please confirm the budgeted project spend given to the architect and whether this amount will be inclusive of monies spent to date, contractually committed spend, inflation and contingency. i.e. if, as minuted in the NEHCPC meeting before last, the budget spend by HPC is £1.9m, is this amount “all-up” and representing the total amount of funds that HPC is willing to spend on the Community Building or is the total spending budget some other amount (if so, how much)
5. Is the Committee in agreement that HPC’s contribution to the cost of the Community Building will firstly be found from the S106 contribution negotiated with the developer amounting to £250,000 and the balance from SANG reserves.
 - a. If the balance is not from the SANG reserve, what is the source of the balance

The S106 funding will only be released from Hart once a planning application has been submitted and approved, therefore we cannot physically spend that money first as we are not in receipt of it. Clearly if the costs of the project come in under the budget, the saving will be made from what is borrowed from the Council’s reserves. The SANG reserve, as already discussed and documented at several meetings would provide the balance. If further sources of funds are obtained for the project ie. grant funding, clearly this would further reduce the borrowing from the SANG reserve.

I don’t believe there is anything above that could be commercially confidential and the amount that this committee recommends to be spent on the project on behalf of the residents of Hook Parish seems like a straightforward ask.

I’d be happy to have a written response to these questions as long as the questions and the responses are included as addenda to the next meeting minutes and on the new website being provided for Q&A.

Many thanks

Mike Jeans