



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 29 June 2010 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor John (Chair), Councillor Butt (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Beswick, Brown, Lorber, J Moher, Thomas and Long

1. **Declarations of personal and prejudicial interests**

None declared.

2. **Minutes of the previous meetings - 23 February 2010 and 26 May 2010**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meetings held on 23 February and 26 May 2010 be approved as accurate records of the meetings.

3. **Matters arising (if any)**

None.

4. **Deputations**

Gaynor Lloyd, a member of the Northwick Park Golf Course working party since it was formed by the Council in 1996, addressed the committee by reading from a prepared script.

She stated that two footpaths had been illegally blocked since 2005 and she was very concerned to see them re-open. This point was made because the report before the committee gave an option for the Council to take no further action in respect of the footpath but it was submitted that the Council had to take action to unblock the paths, or else it would be in breach of its statutory duty as highway authority to keep public footpaths open. She submitted that the old route had to be considered as it was originally without the driving range, its fences and other obstructions and that the lease granted by the Council in March 2009 made, if the Order to divert was not confirmed, the golf course operator contractually obliged to carry out Council approved works on the existing route of the footpath to ensure the safety of walkers and if such works could not be achieved, the driving range was to be closed. Ms Lloyd expressed surprise not to see this obligation mentioned in the report. She referred to the Planning Inspector's findings in 2008 and how the footpath crossed the longest fairway out of sight of golfers and presented danger to walkers from mis-hit balls. Reference was made to the report stating that signs and warning notices could readily overcome the dangers but the Inspector had indicated

they could not. It was submitted that such signs did not help the visually impaired walker or the elderly or infirm or people with pushchairs or anyone trying to hurry across a course with limited visibility especially given the mixed ability of the golfers striking up the fairway. Those walking the route had experienced golfers ignoring signs and swearing at walkers to get off that part of the path crossing the fairway. Finally, Ms Gaynor stated that the proposed route was not as wide, was harder to follow, substantially longer and harder to get to its original termination point because of having to travel a further 125 metres along the ill-kept and narrow footpath number 36. She concluded that the route should be re-opened and if it was not and the Order was made, it would be strongly opposed, resulting in a Public Inquiry and yet more expense and use of resources for an already cash and resource strapped Council.

5. **2009/2010 Statement of Accounts**

The committee received a report on the 2009/10 accounts which set out the legal and accounting requirements in relation to their approval and publication, including the requirement that they be approved by the committee by 30 June 2010. For this reason, the Chair confirmed the committee's agreement to consider the Statement of Accounts which had only just been completed and circulated under cover of a supplementary report.

Revised pages for 'Group Accounts' were tabled, replacing those included in the circulated report.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Resources introduced the report and explained the process for approving the accounts and passing them on to the Audit Commission. He pointed out that assumptions had been made for balances at 31 March 2010 to be £8.908M but final figures showed a slight improvement with balances at £8.963M. He also drew attention to the significantly higher level of balances held by schools compared to the Council. The Director referred to Table 3 in the report which showed the worth of the Council had decreased. Finally he drew attention to the pension fund accounts and the fact that the Pension Fund Sub-Committee was also meeting that evening to consider the Pension Fund accounts for 2009/10.

Members asked officers present for clarification on a number of matters of detail. The Chair, in putting forward the recommendations for approval, expressed appreciation for the hard work put in by the staff of the finance department to produce the accounts in a timely manner.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the 2009/10 Statement of Accounts be approved and forwarded to the Audit Commission for audit;
- (ii) that the chair be requested to sign the Statement of Accounts.

6. Barham Park Estate Public Path Diversion Order (No 1) 2010

The committee considered a report on the diversion of a Public Right of Way in order to allow the construction of a new development on the Barham Park Estate, to which no objections had been received.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that it be noted that no objections have been received to the draft order to divert the footpath through the Barham Park Estate;
- (ii) that the diversion of Public Right of Way 67 under section 247 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as shown on the map attached to the report submitted be agreed;
- (iii) that the necessary changes be made to the Definitive Map and Statement.

7. Northwick Park - Diversion of Public Rights of Way

The committee considered a report on the representations received by the Council following the publication of the Public Path Diversion Order under the Highways Act 1980 concerning public rights of way in Northwick Park.

A supplementary report concerning representations made by the Open Spaces Society was tabled.

Earlier in the meeting the committee had heard a deputation from Gaynor Lloyd, a member of the Northwick Park Golf Course Working Party (see minute 4 above)

It was explained that the route of the existing footpath traversed the golfing range making it dangerous for people to use. As such there were currently gates at either end of the path where it entered and exited the golfing range. If the existing route was retained the Council would be in the very difficult position of then having to develop a scheme that made the footpath safe to use. Moving the golfing range was not a practicable solution. The committee was informed that the golf course operator was under an obligation to maintain the footpath and would be expected to maintain the re-routed path.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the views of the deputation made at the beginning of the meeting and the Open Spaces Society be noted;
- (ii) that the published order be withdrawn;
- (iii) that a new order be made under the Highways Act 1980 to extinguish part of Public Rights of Ways (PROWs) 34 and 37, as shown on the plan attached to the report before the committee;

- (iv) that immediate representations be made to the operator of the golfing facility asking that it takes steps to ensure the route of the proposed new path, as well as the existing path no. 36, is kept in good order so that people are able to walk along it unimpeded.

(Councillor Brown wished his objection to the above decision to make a new order recorded)

8. **Appointments to Sub-Committees / Outside Bodies (if any)**

None.

9. **Any Other Urgent Business**

None.

10. **Date of Next Meeting**

Noted that the next scheduled meeting of the committee is on 25 January 2011 but that additional meetings will be convened if business requires this.

The meeting closed at 8.05 pm

A JOHN
Chair