

**Extraordinary Town Council Meeting
12 October 2021**

Present: Councillors Dodson, J Eccles, Folletti, Hardacre, Hird, Hirst, Kenyon, Middleton, Mitchell, A Westmorland, G Westmorland, Wilson and the town clerk.

Over fifty members of the public were in attendance.

240 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs G Eccles and Pringle.

Resolved that the respective reasons for absence be approved.

241 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations other than those already stated in members' respective register of interests.

242 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Unless otherwise stated, the responses were provided by the chairman.

Q: Have any plans been drawn up for the proposed sports complex at the Kirkby Road site? How much will it cost? Where will the money come from?

A: Cuniff Design drafted a design for the site. Progress has not been made due to the contractual issue with SCL. Funding would come from grants from the National Lottery, Sport England etc.

Q: Will more than one quote be obtained for the sports complex?

A: Yes, it would go out to tender.

Q: Will the funding cover the day to day costs of the sports complex?

A: *(from the town clerk)* No, the grant funding would cover capital expenditure and the revenue expenditure would be borne by the council and income from the sports complex.

Q: What about air pollution? Will traffic to/from the sports complex create extra air pollution?

A: No, as most users will be from the parish.

Q: Has an air quality assessment been conducted for the sports complex?

A: No but it will be conducted in due course.

Q: How will the sports complex make money if it is only used by people from the parish?

A: There are lots of football teams in the parish which need extra capacity.

Q: The intended grant money from WMDC should be for things other than football.

A: Other sports will also be included such as a BMX track.

Q: When will there be a consultation about the sports complex?

A: After the court case with SCL has concluded.

Q: There is already a BMX track in Fitzwilliam.

A: This will be a better track.

Q: Are people aware of how long the process has taken over many years regarding the contract for the sports complex?

A: Both the ICO and a tribunal judge forced the previous council to release the contract into the public domain.

Q: What about the Frenkel report?

A: The council decided to appoint John Frenkel in May/June 2019 to provide assurance in signing off the previous year's accounts. The then new council queried expenditure with contractors such as Chubb and Oracle and these contracts were either discontinued or re-negotiated.

Q: I have a leaflet that you distributed which said that the Labour councillors were corrupt.

A: If you provide the leaflet I will comment on it.

Q: The farmer's field on Wakefield Road can no longer be used as planned as a car park for the music festival so what other parking will be available?

A: Cemetery Road playing field, the former Farmers site, BL Travel and Premier Foods.

Q: What about the disruption to the residents of Cemetery Road?

A: They will be informed but they already have similar disruption each Saturday and not everyone will travel by car.

Q: How many tickets have been sold, not including those who have requested refunds?

A: *(from Cllr Middleton)* 220.

Q: Is there a business case for the festival?

A: Yes, around 2,000 tickets need to be sold to break even.

Q: What is the projected cost of the festival?

A: *(from the town clerk)* £80,000.

Q: Who is the event for?

A: It is a spectacular for everyone in the community.

Q: Who decided to have the Vengaboys as an act?

A: It was a council decision.

Q: Will there be a public consultation on the festival?

A: No, as meetings have already been held and the decision made and a license has been obtained from Wakefield Council.

Q: How can you spend £80,000 without a public consultation? Do you know what people want?

A: There will be a variety of acts, not just the Vengaboys.

Q: If Cemetery Road playing fields are to be used for parking, won't that damage the football pitches, especially in wet weather.

A: We'll cross the bridge when we come to it but hopefully it should be dry at that time of year.

Q: How much would it cost to cancel the Vengaboys?

A: *(from the town clerk)* The council would lose deposits respectively of £5,500 and £2,500.

Q: How long before the Vengaboys can be cancelled?

A: The festival is on the agenda for the council meeting later this week.

Q: Why doesn't the council cut its losses and use local acts?

A: Local acts are already on the bill and there will be catering concessions to bring in revenue.

Q: Will the council consider all options regarding the festival?

A: The festival is on the agenda for the council meeting later this week.

Q: Will you keep the public informed?

A: Yes – via newsletters and the website.

Q: *(from Cllr Folletti)* The council should wait for a certain amount of time for tickets sales and review whether it is feasible to continue.

A: That's a fair point.

Q: *(from Cllr J Eccles)* I support the festival and Vengaboys as it provides entertainment for people in their 20s, 30s and 40s. We already have other events for other age groups.

Q: Other councils' events such as the Normanton Gala are free so why should precept payers have to pay again?

A: Acts like the Vengaboys don't come cheap so the council will need to sell 2,500 tickets to break even.

Q: Are you checking what other events are being held at the same time?

A: Yes, that's why 3 June was selected.

Q: The spectacular put on by the previous council cost £20,000.

A: Yes, and that was several years ago.

Q: It's a bank holiday weekend so people might be away.

A: People might also stay local.

Q: What happens if the festival doesn't break even?

A: The council will take a small hit. We are trying to do something different for the community.

Q: If SCL wins the court case against the council, what will happen?

A: SCL should have paid up in 2012 but didn't. On three occasions SCL has been asked to pay and has not done so. The QC's advice was to rescind the contract. If SCL wins, the contract will be completed.

Q: If the council wins the court case with Saul, what will happen?

A: I can't comment on that at the moment but can confirm that the community centre and Sandygate football facility are owned by the council.

Q: Where is Cllr Womersley tonight?

A: He has resigned as a town councillor for personal/family reasons.

Q: Can the council disclose its chances of success with the SCL court case?

A: *(from the town clerk)* Yes, the legal advice is that the council has a reasonable chance of success and as such more chance of winning than losing.

Q: Is the council the owner of the water park?

A: Yes.

Q: Why are there so many cash payments from the cashbook?

A: *(from the town clerk)* All transactions are recorded in the cashbook and they are not necessarily cash payments. For example, direct debits, BACS payments, cheques are all recorded in the cashbook. The only cash payments are petty cash payments.

Q: *(from Cllr J Eccles)* We have monthly Finance sub-Committee meetings at which the payments are scrutinized. Several suppliers request cash on delivery such as meat pie supplies and window cleaners.

Q: Why are there so many petty cash payments?

A: There are several petty cash floats – the café bar, grounds maintenance, community centre.

Q: Why not use a card or BACS?

A: *(from the town clerk)* There is only one card which is only used by managers for security purposes. BACS payments are conducted in one run each month. I do not have the authority to do individual BACS payments and Barclays charge for each BACS run.

Q: Is the payments process the same as the previous council?

A: *(from the town clerk)* Yes.

Q: My allotment at Grove Lane has been vandalized.

A: Quite a few have been broken into so fencing is on the agenda at the council meeting later this week.

Q: *(from Cllr Hardacre)* I did a lot of work at the Lakeside with the plants, bedding, flowers etc. I used the garden scheme purely to have my hedges cut.
A: *(from Cllr Eccles)* Cllr Hardacre is entitled to use the garden scheme like any other parishioner.

Q: Who owns the Fitzwilliam Centre?
A: It is held in trust by the council. Most councillors are trustees.

Q: Are there any professional trustees?
A: The town clerk is an officer of the trust.

Q: Why doesn't the council hold its meetings via Zoom so people can more easily take part?
A: It is on the agenda of the council meeting later this week.

Q: Can a precis of the history of the Fitzwilliam Centre be put on the website?
A: Yes, and in the newsletter.

Q: Why the different age ranges for the youth clubs in Hemsworth and Fitzwilliam?
A: *(from the town clerk)* The age ranges aren't set in stone. They are a result of the outreach work done by the youth charity which runs the youth club on behalf of the council. Children outside the age range are welcome.

Q: Not everyone is online so can posters be placed in the library?
A: Yes, and there's the newsletter several times per year.

Q: Is there anything on the website about Cllr Womersley's resignation?
A: *(from the town clerk)* No.

The chairman closed the meeting and confirmed that written queries will receive responses.

The meeting closed at 20:50.