

LIMAVADY BOROUGH COUNCIL
COMHAIRLE BHUIRG LÉIM AN MHADAIDH

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
10 AUGUST 2005

Minutes of a meeting of the above Committee held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, 7 Connell Street, Limavady at 7.30 pm on the above date.

PRESENT:

Aldermen G Mullan, J Rankin and G Robinson. Councillors A Brolly, P Butcher, L Cubitt, M Carten, B Chivers, M Coyle, B Douglas, M Donaghy, C Ó hOisín, J F McElhinney and E Stevenson.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Committee Clerk, Acting Economic Development Officer, Leisure Services Officer and Countryside Recreation Officer.

APOLOGIES:

Councillor Robinson, Director of Support Services and Director of Development.

CONDOLENCES:

It was agreed that a letter of condolence be forwarded to the Director of Support Services on the sudden death of his brother in law.

CONGRATULATIONS:

Members offered their congratulations to Councillor Donaghy on her recent engagement.

MINUTES:

The minutes of Development Committee meeting held 8 June 2005 were approved and signed on the proposal of Councillor Coyle, seconded by Councillor Cubitt.

MATTERS ARISING:

Funding - Roe Valley Rural Development: The Acting Economic Development Officer explained that members of Roe Valley Rural Development had decided to set aside the query regarding disparity in funding as procedures for selection and distribution of funding for projects were open and transparent.

Benone Beach – Ice Cream Franchise: Councillor Butcher referred to the varying cost of ice creams from vendors on Benone Beach. He highlighted that whilst Mr Turtle may have loss of earnings for the year, his ice creams were more expensive than that of illegal traders and suggested Council should rescind the decision to grant Mr Turtle this year trading free in lieu of trade lost by other illegal traders.

In response to queries raised by Councillor Cubitt and Councillor Butcher, the Countryside Recreation Officer said that legal proceedings against the 2 illegal vendors on the beach in 2004 would take place on 31 August 2005 and that legal opinion received in September 2004 on Council's ownership of the beach below the high water mark would be taken into consideration when the case was held.

After discussion it was agreed not to rescind the decision to let Mr Turtle trade free on the beach in 2005 until the outcome of the court case was known. The Leisure Services Officer said that a Crown lease in relation to the foreshore to be sealed later in the meeting would leave Limavady Borough Council in a similar situation with Coleraine and would enable talks to commence regarding best usage and control of the beach. Agreed.

Beach Management: In response to Councillor Stevenson's query on qualifications of the beach wardens, the Countryside Recreation Officer explained that the wardens were not lifeguards and their duty was to undertake education and enforcement roles, which left the lifeguards able to concentrate fully on their lifesaving duties.

Funding – St Canice's Accordion Band: The Leisure Service Officer agreed to investigate funding that had been applied for by St Canice's Accordion Band and to refresh members on the decision taken at that time.

DEVELOPMENT SERVICE REPORT JULY/AUGUST 2005:

The Leisure Services Officer presented the Development Services Report and enlarged thereon. The report was adopted on the proposal of Councillor Coyle, seconded by Councillor Cubitt subject to the following:

Recreation:

Lands at Ardgarvan: The Leisure Services officer reported that the owner of land in which Council has two playing pitches at Ardgarvan was prepared to let the property for a further three year period, subject to erection of a stile on the hedge at the northern end of the pitch. Members noted the agreed price of £1,800 per year for a 3 year period. It was further agreed to adhere to the owners request for the erection of stiles to prevent damage to hedges.

Ulster Clay Pigeon Home International and British Open Championships: The Leisure Services Officer explained that Ballykelly Clay Target Club had been selected to host the Down the Line Home International and British Open Clay Pigeon Shooting Tournaments in 2006. Members welcomed increased revenue the championship would bring to the Borough and it was agreed that Council would support the international event by hosting a civic reception for competitors and officials.

Roe Valley Leisure Centre – Fitness Suite: Councillor Coyle voiced his reservations at the recommendation to provide concessionary charges to permanent Leisure Centre staff for usage of Leisure Centre Fitness Suite and said he would prefer that fees would be reduced for all staff in Council employment. It was agreed that the Director of Development would discuss this with Competition Line and report back at a future meeting.

Deacon's School – Sporting Tour: The Leisure Services Officer highlighted that Deacon's School, Peterborough would be visiting the Roe Valley from 25 – 29 October for their first ever sporting tour. Members noted that the school would be playing a number of hockey and rugby fixtures and would visit a number of tourist attractions in the Borough. It was agreed that Council would host a civic reception for this group as part of their visit.

North West Orienteering Club: Members noted that the Northwest Orienteering Club were hosting the Northern Ireland Championships at Magilligan on Saturday 1 October 2005 and that this event would attract both local and international competitors. Councillor Butcher voiced his concerns regarding parking on private property and the Leisure Service Officer agreed to take his comments back to the Club.

As the international event would attract visitors to the Borough, it was agreed that Council would grant £150 towards prizes from the tourism marketing budget subject to confirmation that parking arrangements were in place.

Tourist/Entertainment:

Benone Beach: The Leisure Services Officer referred to the two tragic incidents on Coleraine Borough Council managed beaches, which both resulted in loss of life. The Leisure Service Officer said that she and the Director of Development had met with Mr Patton Taylor, RLSS and acted on his advice of providing additional equipment at the beach. Coleraine Borough Council had contacted Council regarding taking part in a working group to implement a comprehensive beach safety review for the whole of the North Coast. She added that the group would include neighbouring Councils, all the 'Blue Light' emergency services, the RNLI, RoSPA and Health & Safety Executive, with the aim to having a working document in place in advance of the next summer season.

In welcoming the overdue initiative, Alderman Rankin said he had spent the previous weekend at the beach and that parents needed to be aware of the risk to children who used inflatables. He also said the dilapidated condition of toilets at the beach entrance did nothing to enhance the area and suggested these be upgraded. It was agreed that this work should take place as soon as possible after the end of the main tourist season in time for reopening in the spring of 2006.

Be a Tourist at Home: The Leisure Service Officer informed members that as part of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board initiative "Be a Tourist at Home", Council in partnership with Environment Heritage Service would provide an event at Roe Valley Country Park on 24 September 2005, which would promote Northern Irish heritage through food, music and crafts.

Members voiced their disappointment that yet again NITB had put forward an initiative without actually providing any financial reward or help with the event. It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Coyle, seconded by Alderman Rankin that Council would invite a member of NITB to a future Development Committee meeting to explain what input NITB gave to tourism in this area.

Lough Foyle Ferry Millionth Passenger: The Leisure Services Officer reported that a member of the Dysart family from Coleraine had been the millionth passenger to travel on the Lough Foyle Ferry on 27 July 2005 and that the successful occasion was marked with a celebration of barbeque, fancy dress, musical entertainment and face-painting. She said the event had secured maximum publicity by the media for both Lough Foyle Ferry and for the Borough area.

Alderman Rankin said that whilst the organisers of the event were to be congratulated, he was disappointed with signage in Northern Ireland on how to get to the ferry port in comparison to directional signs in County Donegal. The Leisure Service Officers explained that Road Service did not have a policy for providing such signs. Councillor Butcher requested that a sign at the port indicating '15 minutes to Limavady' be reviewed as this was misleading to passengers. The Leisure Services Officer agreed to take this request to the Town Centre Forum/Chamber of Trade.

Councillor Cubitt queried security costs and loan charges for the ferry and the Leisure Services Officer agreed to obtain accurate figures from the Finance Officer.

Community Services/Arts:

Ulster Youth Choir: The Leisure Services Officer informed members that Limavady once again was represented in the Ulster Youth Choir and recommended that Council support this community outreach project by donating £500. Agreed.

Community Arts/Crafts Classes: The Leisure Services Officer outlined the proposed community arts and craft classes to be held in both Roe Valley Leisure Centre and Aghanloo Community Centre during the Autumn season. Councillor Brolly suggested that the Community Relations Officer investigate running classes in Dungiven that would be of interest to local residents.

Academy of the Arts: The Leisure Services Officer explained that due to lack of information as to what other councils were doing, no decision had been taken at the June Development Services meeting on whether to support the Academy of the Arts programme. Members noted that Omagh, Strabane, Derry and Fermanagh had not yet agreed to the requested £7,000 and it was agreed that Limavady Borough Council would not commit to funding until such time as information was received in writing as to what other neighbouring Councils were contribution, then the matter would be reconsidered.

Greysteel Community Festival: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor McElhinney, seconded by Councillor Butcher that £400 be contributed to Greysteel Community Festival.

Community Services Policy: Members agreed to the recommended 75% grant aid of £2,000 in relation to recurrent expenditure based on accounts for end of year accounts for Magilligan Community Association, Dungiven Community Resource Centre and Dungiven Community Hall and £1,985.21 being the 75% eligible expenditure for Aghanloo Community Association.

Limavady Volunteer Bureau: Members noted that in previous years Council had provided financial support to Limavady Volunteer Bureau and it was agreed that £3,500 be provided as ongoing support for 2005/2006.

Economic Development:

Town Hall Update: The Acting Economic Development Officer reported that despite completing an update appraisal for the Town Hall project, he believed that ILEX/DSD had 'moved the goalposts' by requiring a new full options appraisal, which council had agreed to some weeks previously. He said that having met with the DTZ consultants, the time frame agreed was six weeks for completion of the draft report and once finalized, the process will move to ILEX/DSD, where it could take six month for final decision.

Councillor Cubitt voiced his frustration at the increasing costs and delays in getting the project underway. He also voiced reservations at the delay in obtaining grant aid and said Council would no longer exist by the time the hall was completed. Alderman Robinson and Councillor Brolly agreed that questions needed to be answered by the consultants. The Acting Economic Development Officer responded that Council was working on the basis that the £750k grant aid could become available and at no stage had ILEX said the project would not be funded.

In the debate that followed, Alderman Mullan proposed that although Council's Consultants had put a lot of work into the Town Hall, they should provide an explanation to the setbacks raised as this would allay members' fears. This was seconded by Councillor Cubitt who suggested the Director of Environmental Services organise a Special Meeting of Council with Consarc. Agreed.

Councillor Stevenson left the meeting at 9.55 pm.

Councillor Brolly requested that a list of up to date town hall expenditure be provided to members.

Update on Town Centre Management: The Acting Economic Development Officer reported that progress for projects initiated within the Town Centre Forum would in future be included within the Development Services Report. He explained the expenditure to date on salaries and projects and it was noted that the funding was often used as leverage or matching funding for other projects.

Update on Business Development Programme: The Acting Economic Development Officer explained that Roe Valley Enterprises Ltd had been recruiting clients for the Business Development Programme since October 2003 and at present 22 clients had Business Improvement Plans written for their businesses and to date £28,894.44 had been allocated to help clients implement improvements.

The Acting Economic Development Officer referred to an interview given by Mr Leslie Morrison, Invest Northern Ireland in which he publicly stated that due to EU funding being no longer available, Councils within Northern Ireland would no longer support local business start up programmes. Councillor Butcher expressed his displeasure and requested that the Acting Economic Development Officer write to Invest Northern Ireland stating that this was a disappointment to Councils. This was seconded by Councillor Cubitt.

Request for Funding: The Acting Economic Development Officer reported that the Craft Development Officer from Limavady College Further & Higher Education had requested funding to do smaller scale local crafts Masterclasses, which would follow a product development theme. The funding of £1,500 for six craft skills classes was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Douglas, seconded by Councillor Cubitt.

NOTICE OF MOTION:

It was proposed by Councillor Chivers:

“That this Council notes the lack of progress and feedback on the play equipment supplied by Glenshane Community Group to Councils’ Recreation Department over two years ago, resulting in no play area in Dungiven. This Council instructs the Director of the Department to make this project his top priority and requests reports at every meeting on this issue.”

The Leisure Services Officer gave an overview provided by Technical Service Department on events since the initial Planning Application for play area had been submitted in October 2003. She said that the proposed site at Dungiven Sports Pavilion had been objected to by the Doctors in the nearby Health Centre on health & safety grounds and subsequently, it was decided to locate the play area in the Curragh Road playing fields. A series of objections to the location of Changing Unit and additional ground work had set the completion date back further and in addition the project had been delayed by enactment of legislation on prevention of legionella, discrimination against disabled people and management of asbestos – all relating to Council buildings and considered higher priority.

The Leisure Services Officer outlined that Planning Service had insisted Council provide a 2.0m wide footpath along the complete frontage of the Curragh Road site, which would entail substantial Council expenditure, especially if Roads Service required street lighting on the footpath. She said that the Technical Service Department hoped to prepare estimated costs in the next couple of days for approval by Council prior to commencement of work.

Councillor Chivers’ motion was seconded by Councillor Butcher who said this was the same old story of one department blaming the other for lack of progress. Alderman Robinson objected to this comment and said that in his opinion the Officer was excellent in serving the Council.

Councillor Douglas indicated that in the past Council had failed the people of the Borough by not putting money aside for play areas and that an opportunity had been lost for a play area when open space had become available in Shanreagh Park.

Councillor Ó hOisín and Councillor Brolly put forward support for the motion and Councillor Coyle said whilst he supported the motion, he would have difficulty in agreeing to a updated report being provided at every meeting.

The motion being put to the meeting was declared carried with 5 voting for, 4 against and 2 abstentions.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Danny Boy Festival: The Mayor - Councillor Coyle referred to the Danny Boy Festival and said this inaugural event had been a fantastic success, with outstanding performances by Country and Western artists, the Keltic Fiddle Orchestra and contestants in the grand final of the fiddling competition. He congratulated the Danny Boy Festival Committee and Council staff for their support and input to the event and said such was the success of the event that Northern Ireland Events Company had agreed to fund the festival for next year.

The Mayor's comments were endorsed by Councillors Brolly, Cubitt and Carten. Alderman Mullan suggested a letter of thanks be forwarded to former Councillor Brian Brown for his input into ensuring the festival was such a success.

Play Park at Vale Centre: Councillor McElhinney requested an update on his request for provision of a play park at land inside Vale Centre gates. It was agreed that Director of Development would provide this at the next Development Committee meeting.

Limavady Food Market: In response to Councillor Cubitt, the Acting Economic Development Officer said that Limavady Food Market would take place in the Autumn, Christmas 2005 and at Easter 2006.

Halloween Fireworks Event: The expenditure of £2,500 for the Halloween Fireworks Event was approved on the proposal of Alderman Robinson, seconded by Councillor Donaghy.

Seal Legal Documents: The following legal documents were signed and sealed:

1. Limavady Borough Council – Competition Line (Partnership agreement for the operation of fitness facility at Roe Valley Leisure Centre)
2. Limavady Borough Council – Crown Estates (Lease of foreshore at Benone Strand)
3. Limavady Borough Council – Mr Turtle (Lease of beach in Councils' ownership for trading).

Roads Service – Bilingual Signage: Councillor Ó hOisín pointed out that he had queried if Roads Service had a policy on provision of bilingual directional signs at the June Development Committee meeting. The Leisure Services Officer agreed to check with the Director of Development on his approach to the Roads Service and that response had been received in relation to such a policy.

NEXT MEETING:

14 September 2005.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS
(The meeting ended at 10.55 pm)