

WEST MERSEA TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE SPORTS & RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD ON THURSDAY 7 MAY 2020 AT 7PM

PRESENT

Councillor Chris Wood (Chairman)
Councillor John Akker
Councillor Dave Bragg
Councillor Robert Jenkins
Councillor Carl Powling
Councillor Sophie Weaver
Richard Bond (MIFC)
Bernard Hart (WMCC)
Graham Lewis
Graham Marfleet (MIRFC)
David Taylor (WMCC)
Matthew Townend (MIFC)
Lawrence Weber (Oyster FC, MISA Chairman)
Doug Williams (MISA Treasurer)

IN ATTENDANCE

Petra Palfreyman, Town Clerk
Councillor Julie Baker
Nick Reay (West Mersea Tennis Club)

THIS MEETING WAS HELD VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE CALL (CORONAVIRUS ACT Part 2020 1 Section 78 Regulations 2 – 17)

20/007 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Tony Williams (Oyster FC).

20/008 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest received.

20/009 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 JANUARY 2020 AND MATTERS ARISING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2020 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a true record. Proposed: Councillor Jenkins, Seconded: Councillor Akker. ALL IN FAVOUR.

Matters arising: No matters arising.

20/010 TO RECEIVE FORMAL FEEDBACK FROM MISA REGARDING THE PROPOSALS FOR A 25 YEAR LEASE

Lawrence Weber worked through the proposal document as provided 19/02/20. MISA's objections to the proposals are primarily around the proposed cost and elaborated on the constituent clubs within MISA's current financial position.

Councillor Wood provided feedback that under the legislation governing the provision of extended leases (LGA 1972 s123 & s127) in order to demonstrate 'best value' there was a need to increase the charges to achieve a 'commercial value,' and that West Mersea Town Council was already 'subsidising' the costs of services and property maintenance very significantly – that repairs to the roof of the Pavilion had just been approved and that these were £900 + VAT, which put into perspective West Mersea Town Council's revenue vs. expenditure.

It was agreed that West Mersea Town Council would provide a schedule of its' costs in relation to MISA-exclusive services provided.

Lawrence Weber advised that in addition to the issue of proposed charges, in MISA's view, points 5). Charging for containers; point 6). External repairs to the Pavilion structure and point 14) Pitch lining; were unacceptable to MISA.

Additionally, in respect of point 9). MISA advised that Oyster Football Club would be unwilling to disclose accounts. Graham Marfleet, for MIRFC, confirmed that, subject to its committee approval it would provide its accounts.

West Mersea Town Council committed to review and respond to these points and the financial terms of the lease within a new proposal not later than 15 May.

20/011 TO DISCUSS AND AGREE ALTERNATIVE CHARGING MODELS IN RESPECT OF PITCHES, FACILITIES AND THE DURATION OF THE LEASE

West Mersea Town Council advised that it is keen to consider potential alternative charging models to MISA for the provision of land and services at the Glebe. These included a charge per game structure, along the model adopted by Colchester Borough Council. MISA confirmed that they did not wish to pursue this approach to charging.

Bernard Hart suggested that consideration to Asset Transfer should be considered in respect of the Glebe, but West Mersea Town Council countered that this was not an option given covenants linked to the Glebe following its initial gift to the people of West Mersea, and did not resolve its costs or liabilities in respect to services to MISA. West Mersea Town Council also tabled the option for another 7-year lease term, which would not be subject to the financial tests of a 25-year term. This could be linked to collaborative working towards grants for improvements to the Glebe – see 20/012. MISA agreed that proposals should be included alongside those for a 25-year term.

20/012 TO DISCUSS OPTIONS FOR COLLABORATIVE WORKING ON GRANT APPLICATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO PITCHES AND FACILITIES AT THE GLEBE AND AGREE A WAY FORWARD

West Mersea Town Council confirmed that it believes that a 25-year lease term might not be the only, or the best way to access grants for improvements to the Glebe. It confirmed that dialogue had already been undertaken with Sport England and the Football Association, and that both parties had verbally confirmed that grants might be available to West Mersea Town Council, so long as it could be demonstrated that the clubs and West Mersea Town Council were working collaboratively and that West Mersea Town Council would be providing security of tender to the clubs for a 20 or 25 year term – dependent on the terms of the grant.

West Mersea Town Council agreed to provide further detail of these discussions and progress once confirmation had been received. This would then provide a basis for a continuation of a 7-year-lease.

20/013 TO CONSIDER THE LIKELY IMPACT OF COVID-19 REGULATIONS ON THE 2020 SPORTS SEASONS AND AGREE CURRENT PAYMENTS FOR THE REST OF THE SEASON

MISA advised that there was still great uncertainty around the prospect of any sport being played at the Glebe this year. West Mersea Town Council confirmed that the initial 3-month waiver of fees to MISA, in response to the Covid lock-down would be extended for a second 3 month period, and that West Mersea Town Council would take a view on the remainder of 2020 at the conclusion of that period.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.28pm.

Minutes prepared by Councillor Wood.