

Swanley Town Council

Civic Centre, St Marys Road, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7BU

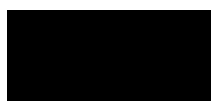
Tel: 01322 665855

www.swanleytowncouncil.gov.uk

ESTATES AND FACILITIES

Date 9th July 2020

A meeting of the above committee will be held at the Council Chamber, Civic Centre on **Wednesday 15th July 2020 from 7:30pm** or at the conclusion of the public participation session.



Mr S Nash
CEO / Town Clerk

Committee Members: (Chair) Cllr S Andrews, (Deputy Chair) Cllr L Ball,
Cllr C Barnes, Cllr J Domigan, Cllr M Foster, Cllr J Griffiths,
Cllr T Searles, Cllr J Tuckfield

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

If required, the meeting will be preceded by a public participation period of up to 15 minutes in total at 7:30pm. Members of the public are also entitled to speak, during the meeting, on agenda items only and with express permission from the Chairman / Mayor. Those wishing to speak on an Agenda item must indicate this during Public Participation.

This will be a virtual meeting using ZOOM app, members of the public that wish to speak at or observe the meeting please register with bplayfoot@swanleytowncouncil.gov.uk or call 01322 665855 by 13.00 on Wednesday 15th July 2020

To connect to the Zoom meeting use the following details:-

Topic: STC Council Meetings

Time: Jul 15, 2020 07:30 PM London

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81267814451?pwd=VndkQmxoZWtXN25MY2dSNnUyK3RwZz09>

Meeting ID: 812 6781 4451

Password: 016050

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Password: 016050
Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/k9iuOvj6p>

RECORDING (AUDIO AND / OR VIDEO OF COUNCIL MEETINGS AND USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

During this meeting the public are allowed to record the Committee and Officers from the front of the public seating area only, providing it does not disrupt the meeting. Any items in the exempt Part of an agenda cannot be recorded as no recording device is to be left behind. If another member of the public objects to being recorded, the person(s) recording must stop doing so until that member of the public has finished speaking. The use of social media is permitted, but all members of the public are requested to switch their mobile phone devices to silent for the duration of the meeting.

MOBILE PHONES

Member of the public are reminded that the use of mobile phones (other than on silent) is prohibited at Town Council and Committee meetings.

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

To approve as correct the Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 22nd January 2020.

4. PARKS DIRECTOR REPORT

To comment on the report and ask questions of the Director

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 21st October 2020

If you would like further information on any of the agenda items, please contact Mr Steve Nash, on 01322 665855 or snash@swanleytowncouncil.gov.uk

To: Estates & Facilities Committee

From: Ryan Hayman Parks & Open Spaces Director

Date: 15 July 2020

Subject: Estates & Facilities update

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To inform the committee of any new projects, bookings or changes to operations.

2. Recommendations

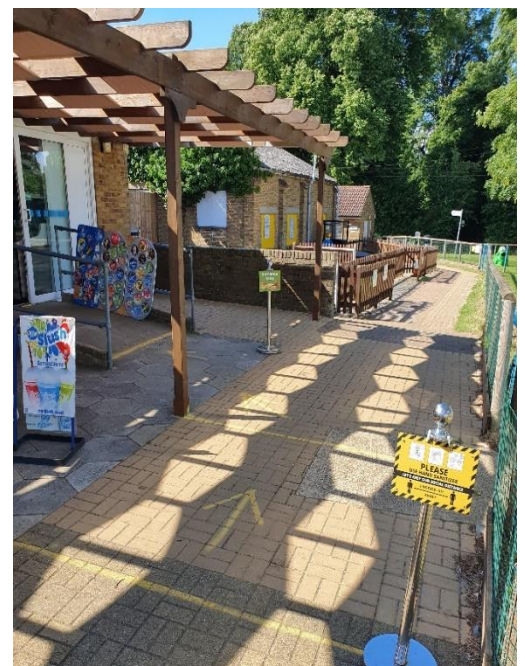
2.1 To accept the update report and note any new bookings/changes to operations.

3. Background and information

3 Update

3.1 Covid-19 – On March 23rd 2020 the government announced lockdown measures which meant all our activities and facilities closed. Our car parks were also closed. This was to control the number of people entering the park. However, in line with government advice our green spaces remained open to walk-ins. In May, the Café opened for takeaways only. In June, the boating lake and splash pool opened with strict rules in place. For instance, only one household per boat was allowed and only private household bookings of up to six people were allowed in the pool. The pool has since closed once again.

The Parks & Open Spaces Director has been working hard behind the scenes to make the site a safe space for visitors. 6 hand sanitiser dispensers, 20 Covid-19 safety signs, 2 metre queuing systems and plastic screens have been installed. A disinfectant spraying machine has been used to clean equipment used by the public and regular cleaning has been undertaken on all facilities. In addition, staff training on the risks and preventive measures of Covid-19 has taken place. Furthermore, reusable face masks have been provided to all staff as well as personal hand sanitiser bottles. Other PPE items available include; gloves and disposable face masks. Lastly, Covid-19 paperwork including; a safe to open checklist, risk assessments and method statements were put in place prior to opening. These have also been independently checked and were commented on as being 'very thorough'.





3.2 Appointments – After the resignation of previous management. The former Park & Open Spaces Director and Park Manager have returned to Swanley Town Council after a 3 to 4 month hiatus. They have had to hit the ground running due to several projects being behind schedule and additional projects being started.

3.3 Pool Progress – The pool was open to individual households until updated government guidelines meant we needed to re-evaluate this. We do hope for a complete opening when the restrictions put in place because of Covid-19 are relaxed sufficiently. The building works were delayed due to the lockdown. The electrical and water upgrades are yet to be installed and we are on the waiting list. Below is a timeline of building progress.

Old Pool & Plant Room



December 2019



January 2020



February 2020



March 2020



April 2020



May 2020

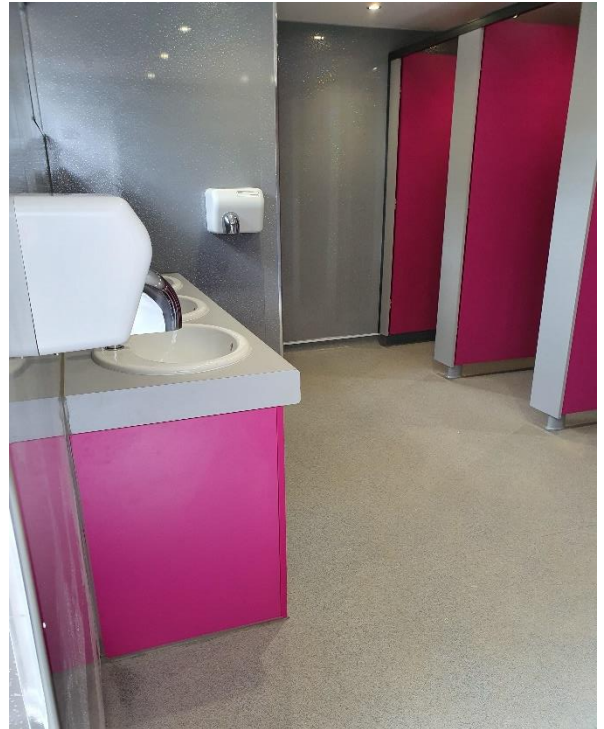


3.4 Toilets Progress – In June we opened our new female toilet block and disabled user friendly toilet. This successful project was managed by the Park Manager and has addressed a few issues customers have highlighted in the past.

The first being the distinct lack of capacity of toilets. The new toilet block has increased capacity by 55.5%. The new disabled toilet has addressed the number of complaints we use to have about the condition and standards of our previous facility. We have also allowed room for the future addition of an hoist and changing table equipment. This would open up our toilet facilities for all types of disabilities, however, we are in need of grant monies to be able to pursue this element.

In the winter we are planning to renovate the other toilet rooms. These will be refurbished to the same standards and finish.

A timeline of the project can be seen in the Parks & Open Spaces Directors project plan report.





3.5 Soft Play Progress – Work has been completed on emptying the barn for the preparation of blocking up the current entrances and doorways. The estimated time of delivery for this project is December 2020, provided that work commences in July. The Park Manager will project manage this development with the Parks & Open Spaces Director overseeing this. A timeline for the project has been put together by the Parks & Open Spaces Director in a new project plan report and will be updated in a similar fashion to previous development reports.

3.6 ANPR Car Parking System – On 20th of May 2020, our car parks re-opened, after advice from central government allowed for visitors to travel further to visit sites such as Swanley Park. The day prior to this, our ANPR cameras were fitted, these are powered through renewable energy in the form of solar panels.

The cameras will charge 24/7 – 365 days a year. We will save an estimated £21,000 on staffing and an additional £2500 on car park ticket receipts. In addition, the risk of cash mismanagement has been diminished. Furthermore, the safety and security of staff holding money on their persons is no longer an issue. As a direct consequence of these savings, we are able to offer a reduced parking charge of just £1 for up to 2 hours. This reduced rate is further supplemented through the consistent charging period. The traditional price of £3 for over 2 hours and free parking for registered residents still applies. There is sufficient signage in each car park to help visitors through the payment process. We also have capacity to take cash payments at the boating kiosk and café, if visitors prefer this method of payment.



3.7 New Kayaks – Our old kayaks were beyond repair and disposed of last year. Therefore, we have been without this revenue stream for 2020. In June, the Park & Open Spaces Director purchased 9 canoes. Furthermore, these kayaks will be used for evening and weekend instructor classes.

3.8 CCTV – Due to increased incidents in the park we have revisited the plan to install a reliable and expanded CCTV system. We currently are negotiating further between quotes and hope to have the system fitted very soon.

3.9 Events – The pandemic has led to all events being cancelled or postponed including 1812 and Folk Fest. Key attendees such as the Orchestra and Choir were unable to confirm attendance this year. Predominantly, this was because of their inability to rehearse, because of lockdown. If it had proceeded, then it would have likely needed to be a limited capacity event and be both ticketed and restricted on numbers accordingly. If the UK was to follow the Republic of Ireland, then we would have expected numbers of 500 maximum being allowed.

With such numbers the event would have resulted in a higher than normal loss for Swanley Town Council. In addition, the authorities were likely to insist upon extra control measures of; set marked zones for households, queuing systems, hand sanitizer, tickets, temperature checking and extra marshals; which would have increased expenditure making the event further unviable.

On 27th of April, as a thank you to our NHS, the Parks & Open Spaces Director arranged for a tribute event in partnership with Centre Stage Solutions. The lightshow and musical spectacular reached in excess of 40,000 video views on Facebook alone. It also reached KMTV and other media outlets.



With the event schedule significantly reduced, the Parks & Open Spaces Director considered innovative ways of bringing new events to Swanley Park. Two new events have been booked in for July, these comply with the relevant restrictions currently in place. There are currently no restrictions in place for the amount of cars that can be placed in a car park. Therefore, we have invited Football4Fans to host drive-in football screenings which are to be held on 1st – 4th July. This booking equals an income of £2000 for the park. This is a real coup as we beat off competition from major London sites to be the 'London' host venue for the firm, who are also doing shows in Manchester and Birmingham. In addition, Kent Drive-in Cinema have booked us for 4 nights. Between 16th – 19th July. Showing an array of films with 3 screenings a day. This booking will result in 20% of ticket revenue coming to Swanley Park.



Events later on in the year which are still scheduled to proceed are;

2nd September – Luna Cinema

3rd September – Luna Cinema

10th October – Whiteoak Cross Country

3.10 Awards – The Green Flag award this season will be judged later than normal due to the delays caused by the pandemic. All reports were submitted in the winter with the inclusion of Elephant Park this year. Three reports have been submitted by the Park & Open Spaces Director this month for South & South East in Bloom (S&SEiB). These include, Swanley Park, Swanley Recreation Ground and Swanley Nature Reserve. This year the judges from S&SEiB will mark each site solely on the reports submitted. The Assistant Town Clerk has been working hard on the overall Town award report, which will be marked in the same way.



3.11 Incidents – Unfortunately, the park has always been a site which has suffered with anti-social behaviour. The Park & Open Spaces Director had noticed an increasing trend of incidents in 2019. Therefore, this year an improved record keeping process has been put into place. The Park & Open Spaces Director will send this to the Chief Executive Officer each month with a list of the incidents reported. The following number of incidents have been reported in the past few months;

April – 13 Incidents

May – 11 Incidents

June – 16 Incidents

Three regular trends have been noted.

Arson Reports x 4

Dangerous Driving x 9

Covid-19 Offence x 10

Minor offences which employees manage without the need to escalate are not included. Examples would include; fishing and youths in playgrounds closed due to Covid-19.

3.12 Swanley New Barn Railway (SNBR) –

With the Covid-19 situation we have obviously had a very reduced attendance to site. We have progressed with the repair work on coaches, and we have continued with the overhaul of one of our Steam Engines.

Following the guidance from government we have remained closed during the lockdown, however we have been planning for a phased re-opening. With the changes due on 4th July 2020, we have decided to monitor the situation and learn from other organisations, with the aim for a trial opening in July after reviewing the lessons learnt from other organisations. We have been preparing for opening Risk Assessments as well as operating procedures. The protection of our volunteers and public remain our top priority.

(Written by Peter Jackson, SNBR)

3.13 Café –

The Café renovations were concluded in February 2020. A grand opening was held with the Mayor Cllr Lesley Dyball cutting the ribbon. Despite lockdown the changes have proven popular to visitors and the upgrades have given opportunity for increased capacity, meaning customers will be dealt with quickly when restrictions are lifted. The facility was closed for two months but re-opened in May for a takeaway only service. To date this remains the same. Working in partnership with the Park & Open Spaces Director the site was prepared to open in a safe manner, for the enjoyment of visitors. Sevenoaks District Council signed off that the site was compliant in May.



3.14 Maintenance – The lockdown has enabled our staff to concentrate on essential maintenance projects. In total 109 jobs have been completed since April. The Alexandra Suite has been brought back to life through a vast redecorating project.

New lights, window sills, pillar trims and a complete paint refurbishment has complemented the new carpet installed last winter.

All our recently purchased properties have been brought up to a suitable standard, prior to them being rented out. Works undertaken include; new carpets, kitchens, electrical improvements and general redecorating.



Various maintenance was required to ensure our parks and venues were Covid-19 secure. In total 20 hand sanitiser units have been installed. Perspex screens have been fitted where required and new signage put up to ensure social distancing takes place.

The Olympics changing room facility has been completely refurbished and will be ready for use when restrictions on changing rooms are lifted.

Fences and around 40 benches around the park have been painted for protection and decorative purposes. Furthermore, additional benches have been fitted in locations such as Archer Way.



Bus stops are also being painted along Azalea Drive which has helped cover the graffiti marks.



Finally, the Café container has been decorated and moved into a new location within the Yard.



3.15 Grounds

Grass cutting has taken up the majority of the teams working capacity since April. Especially, because they have been on reduced hours and assisting with the Town Council's Covid-19 response. Below is a picture of the Church Yard.



We have had a number of complaints about grass cutting but these are frequently about Sevenoaks District Council areas of responsibility. Aside from the traditional cutting areas, Hawthorn Park has now been added to the areas to manage for our staff.

Our seasonal flowers have now been installed across Swanley and this has added a splash of colour across the town.



Bin stickers have been installed to help deter park users from overfilling bins before they are emptied. This appears to be a national issue with highly effected areas including parks and beaches. This innovative idea has only just been implemented at both Swanley Park and Swanley Recreation Ground, early results seem promising.



A new sign has been fitted to the main entrance way of Swanley Recreation Ground. This was a suggestion made by Green Flag and South & South East In Bloom. Thus, it is hoped we will be favourably marked during the next judgement. In addition, tarmac repairs to pathways and car parks at Civic Centre, Swanley Recreation Ground and The Olympic have been made.



Repairs to the Bowls Green at The Olympic have been undertaken to both the pitch and buildings. Furthermore, widened access for disabled bowls users has been created by removing a broken bench and cutting back hedgerows.

Unfortunately, two Estates Technicians have left the Council. However, we have hired a seasonal Estates Technician on a zero hour contract. This employee is splitting their workload across departments by working alongside the Maintenance Officer on specific tasks.

3.16 Swanley Sports Forum – Sports Forum meetings are now being conducted on Zoom. The next meeting is scheduled for October with the last meeting being held on the 2nd of July 2020. Members, stated how they are struggling with regards to the impact of Covid-19, particularly with finances. The Park & Open Spaces Director helped highlight Covid-19 related grant opportunities to all members. Specific clubs have already received funds related to this. Some members expressed disappointment at the planned Whiteoak development, however, equally other members commented that they are happy the project was finally progressing. In addition, excitement is still surrounding the proposed Sevenoaks Suns project.

3.17 Addressing Minutes Held on 22nd January 2020 –

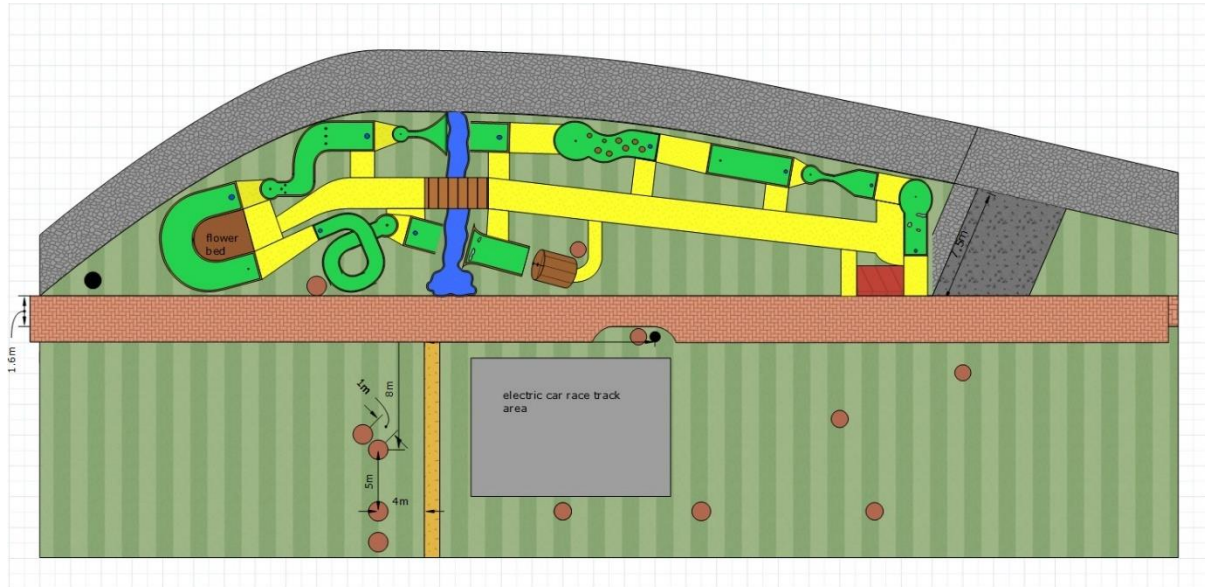
Doggie Day Care – Our employee who was earmarked to run this activity, has since left the Council. However, a private individual has come forward declaring an interest in opening a doggie day care activity on site.

The Great Outdoors – This activity area has been totally redecorated and has new toys to replace some of the older worn equipment. The Tree Trek located next to the area has been painted and repaired as well.



Introduce Battery Cars – This activity was actually introduced by the Parks & Open Spaces Director in 2018.

The Old Mini Golf – Work has been planned to build a completely new mini golf course in 2021. £20,000 would cover the costs of this project, which would be open all year around.



4. Reasons for recommendations

4.1 This report does not contain any decisions to be made; it just provides information to be noted.

5. Conclusions

5.1 As highlighted in this report, we continue to aim to maximise the use of our facilities, whilst also generating additional income for the Council.

Ryan Hayman

Parks & Open Spaces Director