

FLEMING PARK CONSULTATIVE GROUP

Tuesday, 12 October 2010 (7:00 pm – 8:22 pm)

PRESENT:

Councillor Broadhurst (Chairman); Councillors Noyce and G Smith

Co-opted Members: C Abraham, R Cutler, P Kirkpatrick and E Szary

Representing DC Leisure: P Leamore and J Parker

Representing Eastleigh Borough Council: J Birt

Apologies for absence were received from C Cleeter and L Massey

1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 April 2010 were agreed as a correct record.

2. GENERAL MANAGEMENT REPORT

The Sport and Active Lifestyles Manager introduced a report providing an update on major projects, attendances, customer comments and good practice at Fleming Park between March and August 2010.

A number of major projects had been completed or progressed during this period, including repairs to the fire escapes and poolside seating, following the condition survey and the provision of four additional tennis courts, plus accommodation, with an official launch on 4 September. Work was also being undertaken on the Fleming Park Development Plan and it was expected that the draft would be brought to the next Consultative Group meeting. Attendees were invited to contact the Sport and Active Lifestyles Manager or the Centre's General Manager with any thoughts concerning the Plan.

Attendances had fallen compared with the same six month period last year, and it was thought that the summer weather had had a significant effect, as an encouraging upward trend had been seen in August. Gym figures, which formed a large part of the total attendances, had not been quantifiable due to issues with the recording of attendances. Squash attendances had been erratic and would need to be monitored to assess whether there had been an underlying downward trend. Football attendances had increased over this period, following a small decline in the previous period.

Although the government had withdrawn funding for free swimming for those over 60 and under 17 with effect from 1 August 2010, the Council and DC Leisure had decided to continue with free swimming for the under

17s for the month of August due to the school summer holidays. This had been well received by customers and DC Leisure were also to provide free swimming for those under 8 from 1 September until the end of December 2010.

The Passport to Leisure Scheme operated by the Council and DC Leisure had also seen unprecedented demand from the over 60s. This offered concessionary leisure to certain groups and included half price swimming during any general use session.

A number of areas had been discussed and actioned at client meetings, including:

- Limited car parking at special events – it was reported that a review of car parking and disabled spaces would probably be undertaken
- Problems with the sauna and steam room
- Air temperature in the gym and spinning studio.

A number of compliments had also been received, mainly for gym instructors and swimming academy staff.

Regarding good practice, DC Leisure had recently been awarded provisional status for the Inclusive Fitness Initiative Mark and the Centre had achieved 90% or above in DC Leisure's internal audits of Fitness, Food and Beverage, Technical and Environmental. The Centre also had an energy rating of A and energy consumption continued to fall due to effective onsite management measures.

It was AGREED that the report be noted.

3. PROPOSED SCALE OF CHARGES FROM JANUARY 2011

Consideration was given to a report of the Sport and Active Lifestyles Manager, an appendix to which contained charges for facilities at Fleming Park proposed jointly by Borough Council officers and DC Leisure managers.

The overall target yield for increases was set by the Council and the figure for 2010 was a minimum of 6% excluding the 2.5% rise in VAT. However, some charges would be below and some above this figure, depending on a number of factors.

The proposed charges took into account Cabinet's agreed budget guidelines, together with a number of other factors such as trends, the VAT rise of 2.5% from 4 January 2011, operational costs, recent investment, competitors' pricing policies and the customer's ability to pay. It was acknowledged that the current economic conditions had affected customers' disposable income, but equally DC Leisure continued to incur the rising costs of energy, staff and maintenance.

The Group noted that:

- Friday Night Football relied on external funding, which was likely to be under threat. These costs therefore needed to be kept to a minimum
- The outdoor tennis/netball facilities had recently been improved and extended and it was proposed that the prices rise above the 6% threshold. To encourage membership, special rates would be given to members which were outside of these core prices
- Ambassador membership had fallen due to both the economic climate and competitors' policies of offering memberships at cheap rates or even free for a selected number of months. It was therefore proposed that these memberships, together with sunbeds and the gym/health suite should be effectively frozen.
- Some of the proposals might seem high in percentage terms, but were not a large amount in actual money. Also, some charges had been "rounded up" to ease problems with change for customers and staff.

A review of the Passport to Leisure was to be carried out by DC Leisure and Council officers, which could be completed by the next Consultative meeting.

It was agreed that a full analysis of charges for grass pitches would be carried out.

Group members had a number of queries, particularly with regard to the free swimming initiative, but no comments regarding charges to be reported to the Council's Cabinet.

It was AGREED that the report be noted.

4. UPDATE FROM CLUBS

5.0 Club: Cath Abraham reported that:

- One member and their partner had won the European Senior Badminton Championship for the over 65s in Dublin
- A team was to take part in the REACT Games at Wellington; and
- The Full of Life Day held on 1 October had been quite successful, although attendances had been low due to the bad weather. The New Age indoor curling had been popular, and it was hoped that two sets could be purchased in the future. A tea dance had been held in the afternoon and Mrs Abraham thanked DC Leisure and Council staff for helping to organise the event.

Tennis: Richard Cutler reported that:

- An open day had been held on 4 September, which had received good publicity;
- The schools programme was progressing well;
- A gate had been provided to the new courts; and
- Thanks were extended to DC Leisure for resolving issues extremely quickly.

EDSAD: Paul Kirkpatrick reported that:

- Swimming was continuing well;
- The Aiming High event had been well received, and would be held again in February/March 2011; and
- The Active Buddy scheme continued to be a great success.

Kinetika: Eddie Szary reported that:

- Members considered that the gym and fitness classes were good value for money and that the instructors were very good;
- Studio 1 looked tired – the floor and walls needed attention;
- Cleaning continued to be a problem on and off;
- Refurbishment of the changing area was to start the following week and the timing of this was queried. The General Manager reported that the work had been budgeted to take place during the summer months, but that various issues, including replacing the flooring, had resulted in the work now being carried out in October; and
- One customer had requested a response to a comment in writing but was disappointed to receive an answerphone message.

Squash: On behalf of Chris Cleeter, the Democratic Services Officer reported that:

- Membership continued to be steady; and
- The Club would like to thank DC Leisure for the prompt repair to the lighting recently.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Nuisance Dogs: The Chairman advised that several instances of dog fouling and dangerous nuisance behaviour at Fleming Park open space had been brought to his attention. He asked the Group that any such behaviour be reported in future to staff at Fleming Park or the Borough Council.