



BONIFACE FIELDS: ST CATHERINE'S

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

REPORT 75/18

13 AUGUST 2018

The purpose of this paper is to recommend the Town Council to support formally a proposal from St Catherine's School's Trustees to lease an area of Boniface Fields around the current astroturf games area.

No. DETAILS

1) BACKGROUND

- a) The Town Council's recent partnership working with St Catherine's School dates back to the attendance of its Head of Business and Charity Rachel Thompson at the Town Council's Breakfast meeting for partners in January 2012 to discuss the latest deprivation figures for the town as recorded in the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010.
- b) As the Town Council were discussing the potential of the fields opposite the then Free School Building as a regeneration site – including the possible purchase of the Portacabins - as the Free School's move to upper Ventnor approached, a letter from the Chair of Trustees of St Catherine's School Dr Paddie Collyer of 16 June 2017 informed the Town Council of the School's interest in the Free School building.
- c) The letter included an Expression of Interest to buy the old St Boniface School that was the basis of their discussions with both the Isle of Wight Council and the site owner, the Diocesan Board of Education.
- d) The School confirmed in a phone conversation that the Expression of Interest related only to the actual building and that it had no interest in the fields opposite it.
- e) This development was confirmed in Report 48/17 to the Town Council meeting of 10 July 2017: *The Town Council has been informed by St Catherine's School of its interest in acquiring the St Boniface School site from the Diocese of Portsmouth and have confirmed their interest does not extend to the fields.*
- f) Minute 70/17 (iv) of that meeting provided the authority for a letter of support for the School's proposed purchase of the site: *a letter of support be supplied to St Catherine's School for their expression of interest in the St Boniface School site.*
- g) The Town Clerk's 19 July support letter to Chair of Trustees Dr Paddie Collyer included the paragraph: *The Town Council hopes to take over the management of the adjacent fields from the Isle of Wight Council following the Free School's restoration of them next month. There may well be an opportunity for a practical expression of our partnership working in planning for their future development and use.*

2) NEW DIRECTION

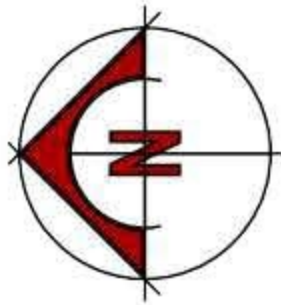
- a) An email of 6 July from Rachel Thompson indicated a change of direction with a request for an informal meeting with her and a School Trustee, Tony Flower, *to discuss matters in relation to our potential acquisition of the former Island Free School site on St Boniface Road and associated issues in relation to the neighbouring playing fields.*
- b) At that meeting, on 12 July, Tony Flower said that the School's planning had developed and that their interest now included a section of the Fields around the astro turf area for their exclusive use during School hours.
- c) The area is shown in rough outline on the attached site plan and the exclusive use would be for 38 weeks of the year from 8am to 4pm Monday to Friday inclusive.
- d) We agreed that the next stage would be a follow up meeting that included the Isle of Wight Council; that has now been arranged for 15 August with the Isle of Wight Council's Senior Estate Surveyor Des Widger.

3) RESPONSE

- a) The School's proposal was reported to the Town Council's Assets & Services Working Group at its meeting of 24 July; the Notes of the meeting record the conclusion of the discussion as: *We agreed that this could prove a very positive development based on collaboration with the School and its resolution of the Section 77 issue.*
- b) The opportunity to extend the basis of the Town Council's partnership working with St Catherine's School would clearly be a positive development for both partners.
- c) Members will recall that the previous designation of the area as school playing fields would require an application under Section 77 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 for its release for other uses and that involves a lengthy process through the Education Funding Agency.

4) RECOMMENDATION

The Town Council is recommended to support the application by St Catherine's School for a lease from the Isle of Wight Council of an area of Boniface Fields around the astro turf area for its exclusive use for 38 weeks of the year from 8am-4pm inclusive.



51ITE LAYOUT

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