

# Full Council Meeting – 7 July 2020

## Report of Councillor Dr. Richard Lees – Sports, Parks and Leisure

*Good sports, parks and leisure facilities improve the health and wellbeing of our local communities.*

### Section 1 – Leisure Events

#### Events

Somerset West and Taunton had a vibrant event listing for 2020.

Sadly due to Coronavirus (COVID-19), all events have been cancelled except a few small events planned later in the year, August and September time.

#### **Vivary Park –**

Social Distancing Measures and Government Guidelines Followed

#### **Fitness Classes**

Small Yoga classes

1-2-1 Personal Training Sessions

Further advice on larger gatherings have not been announced for festive events planned later in the year.

#### **Carols around the Bandstand**

With potential social distancing measures in place.

#### **Castle Green**

#### **Taunton Independent Market**

A new independent market will appear on Castle Green which will take place on the second Sunday in the month starting again in August 2020

#### **Moorlands**

#### **Inflatable Theme Park**

The inflatable theme park returns to Taunton. (August – Pending Government Advice)

#### **Minehead**

#### **Minehead Esplanade**

Eat Festivals are looking to return with their outdoor market from August.

## **Section 2 – Everyone Active**

### **Community Sport and Health**

Due to Covid-19, all Leisure Sites closed and the majority of staff were furloughed. Tennis and golf have now reopened, in line with Government guidelines, and have been extremely popular.

SLM continue to maintain their facilities and prepare their facilities for reopening for when permitted.

## **Section 3 – Play and Recreation**

### **Play equipment repair and replacement grant**

Work continues on the maintenance and replacement of play equipment stock. Whenever possible the team work to ensure that equipment is not out of service for longer than necessary. Obviously, at the current time it is not possible to arrange for works to take place as all playgrounds remain closed. However, the annual check of all playgrounds has taken place and work has been identified as required at Wellington Recreation Ground, Chestnut Close Play Area and Blenheim Road Play Area. Site visits took place before lockdown with playground equipment providers in attendance and quotes have been obtained. Once the lockdown restrictions are lifted we will be in a position to proceed with these works.

### **Section 106 Funding**

The level of S106 funding contributions is negotiated with developers during the planning application process. Somerset West and Taunton Council normally receives the actual payment of these S106 monies either when the development work commences or at a previously agreed phase of the development.

We continually monitor all agreements for payment trigger points. Once these trigger points are met then an invoice to the developer is raised. Once the money from the development is received for the area then the relevant Parish/Town Council is informed. The Parish/Town Council and Community Engagement Leads inform the community of the available funding and seek suitable projects to come forward and apply.

### **S106 Funding awarded**

The awards are made to parish/town councils and community organisations where facilities that are provided are open to the general public with no membership restrictions, and have a wide public and community benefit. E.g. play areas, community village halls, sports & outdoor recreational facilities that contribute towards the provision and/or enhancement of the community. Assistance is continually being given to applicants with potential forthcoming projects.

The following projects have been advanced since the last report, with use of Section 106 funding:

## **Completed Projects**

- Beach Volleyball court at Victoria Park
- West Monkton Cricket Club project
- Under 8s play equipment at Wilton Lands
- Corfe PC Football goal purchase and installation
- Brittons Ash Community Hall project
- Corfe PC artificial turf purchase and installation
- Wellington Tennis club new courts project
- Minehead Town Council-community building phases 1 & 2
- Minehead Town Council-signage and notice boards
- Carhampton Parish Council-additional play equipment

## **Ongoing Projects**

- Wiveliscombe Community Centre project for lift and fire escape
- Creech St Michael Parish Council for recreation ground
- Baseball pitch at Victoria Park equipment
- Hamilton Road Allotments project
- Creech St Michael allotments project
- Bicknoller Village Hall-community shop project
- Watchet Bowling Club-hall and gym project

## **Over the last 3 months we have recently granted the following projects**

- Stogursey Parish Council for notice boards – £456
- Regal Theatre Minehead for redevelopment of basement for changing area – £19,750
- Minehead Town Council for outdoor gym equipment at recreation ground - £4,000
- Minehead Eye for a climbing wall - £15,750
- Watchet Town Council for new MUGA - £32,500
- North Curry - Outdoor Sport Recreation - £17,877
- Creech St Michael for disabled toilet facilities - £17,000

We are frequently assisting communities and organisations with their on-going projects.

## **Section 4 - Parks and Open Spaces**

The Open Spaces Team have been working hard to assist the Council with the Covid-19 works. This includes food, supermarket and food bank deliveries. The working practices have changed a lot recently taking in the Covid-19 procedures. To achieve this, staff start times have been staggered, limited one person per van and have also updated all Risk Assessments and Method Statements. This is a brief update on works we have been undertaking, this is in addition to the grass cutting and limited maintenance.

### **Vivary Park**

In Vivary Park, work has been ongoing on our new environmental area. This was an area which had a number of diseased trees which we removed over the winter period and an area where we had anti-social behavioural issues. There are future plans to develop this area with Somerset Wildlife Trust.

**Vivary Park New Environmental Area**, works will be on going to develop this area with Community Groups and Somerset Wildlife Trust.







## **The Grange**

Open Spaces have started our planned re-wilding of areas, starting in Taunton at The Grange. This is large area of housing land. A path has been cut in the large area of open space which is near to sheltered housing and a small sign will be erected to inform people of the Councils re-wilding plans. Positive feedback has already been received.

This is the re-wilding area, at The Grange Taunton.



## **Victoria Park**

The friends of Victoria Park Action Group will be undertaking a repair to the Toads, to aid this the Team are assisting by erecting temporary fence.

## **Minehead**

Areas in Minehead have been left to re-wild, and pathways have been cut to allow people to walk through them.

There have been mounds left by Tesco to grow. Next year these are will have wild flowers seed added. We are looking at more areas for next year across SWT.

Open Spaces have also taken on the maintenance of the newly planted Sea Front. This was a Project which was undertaken last year and has really improved the look of the Sea Front, it's also has two new areas of play.

## **Minehead Sea Front New Planting**



## **The Nursery**

The Nursery was just gearing up to receive this year's plug plants, when the Covid-19 shut down happened. The suppliers in the chain were unable to deliver so this was one week too early. We had just started production of the bedding plants, so around 73,000 plants for summer bedding has been produced compared to 300,000 plus that would normally be produced. The flower beds and the hanging baskets are now in place in Wellington, Minehead and Taunton.



Most of the orders were cancelled by our customers, but the contracts which did not cancel were fulfilled.

## The Nursery

This year's hanging baskets, for Wellington, Taunton and other Councils



In conclusion I just want to reiterate how proud I am of the staff for their hard work and extra duties they have and are still performing for the Council but especially the community. I am sure you will all agree with me that their dedication is something to be admired.

Cllr. Dr. Richard Lees,  
Portfolio Holder for Sports, Parks and Leisure  
Somerset West and Taunton Council

22<sup>nd</sup> June 2020.