

CASTLEREAGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Leisure Park Board meeting held, in committee, in the Boardroom, Dundonald International Ice Bowl, on Monday, 16 October 2006, at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT:- Councillor Ms J Bunting (in the chair)
Councillor M. Henderson
Councillor M Long
Councillor G Robinson
Councillor J Spratt (from 8.40 pm)
Councillor J White

IN ATTENDANCE:- Director of Finance & Leisure Services, Acting
General Manager of Leisure & Marketing,
Marketing & PR Manager, Business Manager,
Technical Manager and Assistant Members'
Services Officer

APOLOGIES:- Apologies were recorded on behalf of Aldermen
Mrs I Robinson, P Robinson and Mrs G Rice
Councillor B Hanvey

LPB/2006/366 : MINUTES OF THE LEISURE PARK BOARD MEETING HELD ON 18 SEPTEMBER 2006

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Leisure Park Board meeting held on 18 September 2006 be accepted as a true and accurate record.

MATTERS ARISING

LPB/2006/367 : PLANT ENGINEER TRAINING

It was noted that this matter had been referred to a special meeting of the Leisure Park Board that had been planned for 28th September 2006 but had not taken place. It was

RESOLVED: that Officers be asked to bring this report to a future meeting of the Board.

LPB/2006/368 : DISCLAIMER SIGNAGE AT DIIB

The Acting General Manager reported that disclaimer signage had been erected.

Noted.

**REPORT FROM THE ACTING GENERAL MANAGER
(copy previously circulated)**

LPB/2006/369 : SHOP RENTAL

The Acting General Manager reported that, as instructed by the Board, she had obtained an opinion from BTW Shiells as to the likely rental value of the shop unit in the ice rink and that was assessed as £5,500 exclusive of services charges, rates and insurance. She stated that the current tenant was charged an annual rent of £4,750 that had been agreed last year for a period of three years. She advised that the tenant was charged for electricity.

She indicated that she had raised a query with regard to rate exemption as she considered that the unit was a commercial enterprise and should be eligible for rates. She stated that there was no clarification of this issue in the paperwork that had been exchanged historically and that she would continue with her enquiries and bring the matter back to a future meeting.

Noted.

LPB/2006/370 : REQUEST FOR FREE USE OF THE RINK

The Acting General Manager reminded Members that a request had been received from Mrs. Drake in respect of Nicola Drake, her daughter, and Edward Alton, for use of the ice rink free of charge. The Acting General Manager reported that the couple train six times a week at DIIB and hoped to qualify for the Olympic squad for the 2010 Winter Olympics. As holders of the Silver Olympic Passport award, the couple was allowed to use ice rink facilities free of charge in other parts of the UK. The Manager reported that, following the Board's August meeting, she had made further enquiries about the calibre of the Olympic Passport and had discovered that this was a very prestigious award and that they were one of three couples nationally who hold it and that, in total, only 23 people in the UK hold the award.

After discussion, it was

RESOLVED: that the Acting General Manager advise the couple that they can have free use of the rink subject to them acknowledging the support provided by the Council in any media coverage they obtain and promote DIIB wherever possible. It was also resolved that the couple should participate in displays whenever possible at DIIB.

LPB/2006/371: PRESENTATION TO THE BOARD BY SHOOT SOCCER LTD

The Chairman welcomed representatives of Shoot Soccer to the meeting, including the company's principles, David McCallan and Andrew Rendell, and

its architect, Martin McKernan. Details of the proposal, together with architectural drawings and specifications, were tabled. The project included eight indoor soccer pitches, each measuring 30 x 24 metres. Additional facilities included gym/warm-up and cool-down rooms, changing rooms with toilets and showers, referees' rooms, rooms for children's parties, conference rooms that could be used for training/team tactics.

Andrew reported that the synthetic pitch selected by the company had been extensively researched and was FA approved. David reported that the project would cost in the region of £4.2 million with fit-out costs of £550,000. He stated that Castleway Developers would be partners in the project. It was envisaged that breakeven would be 25% and that turnover in the first year would be £720,000. In the first year it was planned to employ 12 staff, rising in Years 2 and 3 to 18-20 staff.

Target markets would be junior soccer clubs, senior soccer clubs, team training, ladies soccer clubs and children's parties. David stated that the project would integrate well with other businesses on the site.

In response to Members' questions, it was stated that the site required for the project was 3.75 acres, to include car parking, and that it was envisaged that build time to include planning application and approval would be 12-16 months. With regard to queries about other similar or competing ventures, David reported that they were aware of Hanwood Trust's plans to develop outdoor pitches and also of the possibility of development by JJB. They felt, however, that their project had unique features and also that the potential customer base was large enough for more than one centre.

LPB/2006/372 : PRESENTATION TO THE BOARD BY POWER LEAGUE

The Chairman welcomed representatives of Power League to the meeting, including the Chief Executive, Sean Tracey, and company director, Jeff Hobb.

Sean outlined details of the proposal to provide outdoor pitches for five-a-side football, with other income being generated by vending, children's parties and hiring out bar facilities for weekend functions. Sponsors included Xbox and Nike, who supply all their footballs. He indicated that the company worked with councils and schools in Britain and were keen to move into Northern Ireland.

In response to Members' questions, Sean indicated that the site requirement was 2-3 acres and that the usual arrangement was that the company take a long lease on the site rather than outright purchase. He stated that the costs of the project would be in the region of £1.5 million to include clubhouse and a ten-pitch site. With regard to rental level, he indicated that the average UK rental paid was £25,000 per annum. He stated that car parking requirements were ten spaces per pitch.

Jeff indicated that the company did not require a front-of-site or high-profile location, as they tended to generate their own market by creating a league structure in which local players and clubs were keen to participate.

He indicated that the project would create 25 posts, with an Area Manager based in Scotland and other staff recruited locally.

In response to Members' questions, Sean indicated that the pitch hire per hour was £40.00, meaning that the cost per player per hour was £4.00. He advised that the synthetic pitch was the best available on the market. He indicated that, if Members were available, he would be happy to show them the company's projects in England or Scotland.

The Chairman thanked the representatives of Power League for their presentation.

After all the representatives had left, Members discussed the merits of the two proposals. The Chairman indicated that they were two very different proposals, one for indoor pitches, one for outdoor pitches, one proposal land purchase and one proposing a leasing arrangement.

Douglas Wheeler, BTW Shiells, stated that the Power League group was very experienced throughout the UK and would provide a very professional service. He expressed some reservations about the financial projections of the Shoot Soccer group and indicated that he would like to see a more detailed business plan.

The Marketing & PR Manager advised that Power League had now overtaken JJB as the biggest provider of outdoor synthetic pitches in the UK and that, as with JJB, theirs was a tried and tested model.

Mr Wheeler then left the meeting.

The Chairman indicated that she felt that the Shoot Soccer team had carried out considerably more research than Power League and had been much more proactive in progressing the development with the Council, whereas the Power League group had been pursued by BTW Shiells for some months before coming forward with a proposal.

The Marketing & Pr Manager referred to the issue of floodlighting of outdoor pitches, which might be a big issue for local residents and could lead to problems with planning permission. She indicated, however, that the fact that Power League were a known brand name would be in their favour and that the Council would need to consider the strong brand names already on site and the need to protect and enhance that branding.

Members expressed concerns about the low rental figure proposed by Power League. They felt that £75,000 was the minimum starting-off point for rental of the site and that a target figure of £125,000 would be reasonable.

After discussion, it was

RESOLVED: that Members review the issue at the Board's forthcoming Strategy Day and that, in the interim, Officers indicate to Power League that the Board considered that rental for the site would have to be a minimum of £75,000 per annum.

LPB/2006/373 : REINSTATEMENT OF TRAFFIC BOLLARDS

The Acting General Manager reported that Health & Safety consultants carrying out work on behalf of Mr. Hobson had identified as a tripping hazard the Harris fencing panels, which had been designed to prevent access from the car park at Pirates Adventure Golf to the front of the Ice Bowl. She advised that the Council's Health & Safety Officer had previously considered the suitability of the panels and, while he had indicated that a purposefully placed barrier or bollard would be a more effective control, he did not agree that the Harris fencing was inadequate. The Assistant General Manager stated that historically there had been a number of collapsible bollards in the roadway for controlling access. She advised the Board that the cost of refurbishment and/or replacement of these bollards would be approximately £1,200.

During discussion, queries were raised as to why the Harris fencing panels had been erected. The Chairman stated that they had been placed there as a result of complaints about children walking across the road. She said that the area had never been used as a throughway. The Acting General Manager stated that the Health & Safety Officer had advised that, when not interfered with, the panels did not present a hazard. She stated that traffic management and access around the site would be issues to be considered at the Board's Strategy Day.

The Acting General Manager reported that a further matter identified in the audit was the issue of lighting in the car park. Although the main car park was lit, the car park used by customers of Pirates Adventure Golf was not. She stated that some DIIB customers park there when Pirates Adventure Golf was closed. She reported that the leaseholder's insurers had identified the absence of lighting in the car park as a potential hazard and that the Council's Health & Safety Officer had agreed that the area should be lit. She advised that the existing lighting columns could not be upgraded to handle an additional light to over shine this area. She provided the Board with a quotation for provision of lighting in the sum of £7,721.00 plus VAT.

RESOLVED: that the Acting General Manager ask the Council's solicitor to review the original agreement and advise

- (a) on the extent of the Council's responsibility in respect of the traffic bollards and car park lighting at Pirate Adventure Gold, and
- (b) whether the leaseholder had responsibility to carry out all or part of these improvements under the terms of his lease.

LPB/2006/374 : WATER METER

The Acting General Manager reported that an independent water meter had now been installed and that it would be read on a weekly basis and records kept to independently monitor other usages.

She advised that the Technical Manager had also contacted the Water Service with regard to the meter that had been initially installed. The Water Service would be conducting an independent audit of all facilities in the next couple of months and had advised that the situation would be reviewed then. The Acting General Manager stated that she would advise the Board if a further meter was installed and, in the meantime, she would pursue Mr. Hobson to uphold the terms of the contract insofar as the installation of a meter was required. She stated that, once installed, a three-month period would be used to estimate the likely usage over the past year.

Noted.

LPB/2006/375 : LIGHTING TO THE CAR PARK AT PIRATE ADVENTURE GOLF

It was noted that the matter had previously been discussed in LPB/2006/345.

LPB/2006/376 : PROFESSIONAL ICE CHARGES

The Acting General Manager reported that, during her discussions on ice time charges and other arrangements, the professionals had asked for the Council, when considering tariff levels, to take account of time spent away attending professional days and other events. At her request, they had now quantified this time and it came to 97 days each equating to approximately 25% of the year.

During discussions it was noted that, although the original intention had been to review the tariff on an annual basis, this had not been done and the charges had not been increased for five years. It was also noted that, although an agreement between the Council and the professionals had been drawn up, its many terms and conditions had created unease on both sides and it had not been signed. Councillor Henderson stated that the professionals were originally contracted to do a specified number of events for the Council and this had not happened.

After discussion it was

RESOLVED: That the Board was of the view that a more reasonable tariff and a revised agreement was needed and that it would review the original agreement document.

LPB/2006/377 : UPDATE ON LAND USE AT VIONVILLE

Referring to land to the rear of DIIB and adjacent to Vionville, which was being used by people on scramblers and other motorised vehicles, she circulated for Members' information correspondence from BTW Shiells detailing possible issues surrounding the continuation of these activities on this land. The Acting General Manager reported that disclaimer signage had been erected at the site in question and that a gate was being manufactured at an estimated cost of £800.

Noted.

LPB/2006/378 : CARAVAN PARK OPENING TIMES

The Acting General Manager reported that, during the winter months, caravan park business tended to be very sporadic. She stated that, while historically there had not been agreed periods in the year when the park was open or closed, closure of the park after the Halloween holidays would reduce staff costs and allow winter maintenance to take place. The proposed reopening time would be in March for St Patrick's weekend, and the park would then remain open for the remainder of the season.

The Acting General Manager also reported that she had been approached by a person from Enniskillen who travelled up at weekends and wished to park his caravan during the winter months and use it on a Friday night only. They would not require water but would require an electricity link up. Members expressed concern on a number of issues, namely that the caravan could be vandalised; that, once payment had been accepted by the Council, a liability ensued; and that this arrangement could set a precedent for other caravan users.

After discussion on both these matters, it was

RESOLVED: that:

- (a) the caravan park should be closed from 31st October until St Patrick's weekend and that this should be implemented forthwith.
- (b) the request that a caravan be allowed to park on the site over winter to be used on a Friday night be refused.

LPB/2006/379 : BRITISH GRADED HOLIDAY PARKS SCHEME

The Acting General Manager reported that the park had been awarded four stars for the 2007 season.

Noted.

LPB/2006/380 : CHRISTMAS OPENING HOURS

The Acting General Manager asked the Board to consider opening times at the Centre over the Christmas period so that promotional literature could be prepared. After discussion, it was

RESOLVED: that the Centre should operate as follows:

Christmas Eve	Closed to public at 18.00 hours
Christmas Day	Closed
Boxing Day	Opening at 12.00 noon with normal closing time
New Years Day	Closing at 20.00 hours

LPB/2006/381 : REINSTATEMENT OF THE ATM

The Acting General Manager reminded the Board that the Council had received confirmation from First Trust that the ATM machine was to be reinstated and she reported that it would again be placed at its previous location in the building.

Noted.

LPB/2006/382 : BATTLEFIELD SPORTS

The Acting General Manager reported that, following the presentation from Battlefield Sports to the Board at its last meeting, she had met with the proprietor and had now drafted the initial terms of the agreement. These were circulated for Members' information. She confirmed that the Board would be kept apprised of the situation as the proposal progressed.

Noted.

LPB/2006/383 : SERVICE CONTRACT FOR CHP UNIT

The Acting General Manager reported that, further to the Technical Manager's report to the Board, she had now received revised quotations as follows:

COMPANY NAME	TENDER PRICE	PREVIOUS PRICE
Low Carbon Solutions	£8,206.76 + VAT	£9,479.76 + VAT
A C Automation	£8,598.48 + VAT	£9,051.03 + VAT
Edina	£9,527.40 + VAT	£14,291.00 + VAT
CHP Services	£11,750.46 + VAT	£12,068.00 + VAT

The Acting General Manager advised that the Technical Manager had retired, and she was now dealing with technical matters. She stated that the Council was now into its first year out of service contract.

On the recommendation of the Acting General Manager, it was proposed by Councillor White, seconded by Councillor Henderson and

RESOLVED: that the Board approve Low Carbon Solutions for the service contract for three years at a cost of £8,206.76 plus VAT.

LPB/2006/384 : ICE COOLING LIQUID

The Acting General Manager reported that three quotations had been obtained for the supply of 4000 litres of Calcium Chloride mixture to recharge the brine circulating liquid, as follows

Albion Chemicals	£1,060.80 plus VAT
Nichem	£2,600.00 plus VAT
W.J. McNab & Co	£1,860.00 plus VAT

On the recommendation of the Acting General Manager, it was

RESOLVED: that the Board approve the purchase of ice cooling liquid from Albion Chemicals at a cost of £1,060.80 plus VAT.

LPB/2006/385 : BALL RETURN COVERS

The Acting General Manager reported that she had received a quote from a local company, CCP Gransden Ltd, for replacement of the ball return covers at a price of £412.00 plus VAT per cover. The company indicated that it would have to impose a minimum order quantity of ten covers. In response to Members' queries, she stated that two covers currently required replacement. After discussion, it was

RESOLVED: that the Council order replacement covers as and when they are needed from the original supplier, AMF.

LPB/2006/386 : GRANDSTAND SEATING

The Acting General Manager circulated a document detailing the criteria for the operation of grandstand seating and pointed out that staff currently performing this function were not contracted to do so. She stated that the proposal had been drafted in a way that established a structured process for pricing jobs and ensured that the Council benefited from the process and that there were competent staff to perform the function.

The Chairman indicated that she had concerns about the proposal to share profits on a 50:50 basis on the grounds that the Council had covered the costs of purchasing the seats, upgrading the seats and training staff in their installation. She also considered that allowing staff to share profits was giving them an unfair advantage over other staff.

The Director of Finance & Leisure Services stated that the aim in putting forward this proposal was to recoup some of the investment the Council had made in the seating.

After discussion it was resolved that the matter would be referred to the strategy day.

**REPORT FROM THE PR & MARKETING MANAGER
(copy previously circulated)**

LPB/2006/387 : HALLOWEEN EXPENDITURE

The PR & Marketing Manager circulated a summary of proposed expenditure for the fireworks display and advised that this would be coded to 02 11 103 35.

The PR & Marketing Manager reported that the summary included £500 for the insertion of advertisements in the Community Telegraph and the Ards Chronicle. She indicated that she would like to insert additional advertisements in the Belfast Telegraph and the Newsletter.

Councillor Robinson enquired whether it would be possible to issue invitations to the event to community groups. Officers indicated that budget constraints and car parking restrictions would create difficulties in extending the guest list.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Council approve additional expenditure of £500 from the advertising budget to allow advertisements to be inserted in the Belfast Telegraph and the Newsletter
- (b) that the Council write to community groups, notifying them of the date and time of the fireworks display.

LPB/2006/388 : BELFAST GIANT SPONSORSHIP

The PR & Marketing Manager reported that the Belfast Giants were seeking a reduction in the hourly rate from £150 to £120 and had proposed a partnership package for the Board's consideration, details of which were circulated.

After discussion, it was

RESOLVED: Officers continue negotiations with the Belfast Giants and request either the provision of two dasher boards or a 20% reduction in the Giants' advertising rates in return for the Council reducing its hourly rate from £150 to £120.

LPB/2006/389 : SALE OF ADVERTISING

PR & Marketing Manager reported that she had received quotes from outdoor advertising companies as follows:

J.D	£7,500
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Viacom £2,300

She advised that all of the sites were potentially on land that could be sold. She had discussed the issue with the Managing Director of Viacom who had included a clause within the agreement that any purchaser of the land would have to enter into agreement with the advertising company for the remainder of the term. She advised that neither advertising company would be willing to sign up to an agreement for a term less than five years.

RESOLVED: that the Board seek a legal opinion on the agreement and consider the matter again at a further meeting.

LPD/2006/390 : MARKETING EVENT PLANNER OCTOBER 2006 – JANUARY 2007

The PR & Marketing Manager circulated for Members' information details of events taking place from October 2006 to January 2007.

Noted.

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & LEISURE SERVICES
(Copy previously circulated)**

LPD/2006/391 : TRADING ACCOUNTS

The Director of Finance & Leisure Services tabled for Members' consideration the Ice Bowl Trading Accounts for the period 1 April 2006 to 30 September 2006, together with a summary of last year's figures for comparison.

Noted.

LPD/2006/392 : WEEKLY INCOME ANALYSIS

The Director of Finance & Leisure Services tabled for Members' consideration the weekly income analysis sheets up to week ending 8 October 2006.

During consideration of the sheets, the following matters arose:

- (a) Vandalising of the lockers had been captured on CCTV and the perpetrators had been identified and barred from the Ice Bowl.
- (b) Because lockers could be left open when not in use, some customers were storing their property in the open lockers without paying for a token. Officers were investigating the option of ensuring lockers were closed when not in use.
- (c) Officers confirmed that Cool FM would be taking the wall in the Bowling Alley from the start of November.

- (d) Members noted that Coca Cola were launching a new drink in Britain and asked Officers to contact them to enquire whether the Northern Ireland launch could be accommodated in the Ice Bowl.
- (e) Councillor Robinson noted that income from birthday parties at the Bowling Rink had decreased since last year. The Business Manager explained that no figures were detailed during weeks 1-8 (2006/07) and she would investigate and update accordingly.
- (f) The Chairman enquired whether the renovation work at Indianaland had been completed. The PR & Marketing Manager advised that it had occurred two weeks ago and that the centre had been closed for one day for the refit.
- (g) Members noticed a substantial income increase in the Polar Bear Club in the first week of October, and Officers explained that this was due to the registration of 120 children.

Noted.

LPD/2006/393 : MAN HOURS

The Director of Finance & Leisure Services circulated a summary of the man hours and costs up to week 27, i.e. week ending 1 October 2006.

Noted.

LPB/2006/394 : BUDGETARY CONTROL ANALYSIS

The Director of Finance & Leisure Services tabled for Members' consideration a Budgetary Control Analysis.

Members referred to problems with the CHP, and Officers stated that it had been down for 21 days last month. They advised that the onus was on the Council to monitor the system, and the delay had occurred because it had taken staff 21 days to note that the system was down. It was noted that the system was still under contract.

RESOLVED:

- (a) The Budgetary Control Analysis be noted.
- (b) That Officers bring forward a more detailed report on the CHP to the Board.

LPB/2006/395 : LEISURE PARK STRATEGY DAY

The Director of Finance & Leisure Services tabled an outline paper for the Leisure Park Strategy Day scheduled for 3 November 2006. Members were advised that the Director would not be available to attend the Strategy Day. After discussion, it was

RESOLVED: that the Strategy Day be rescheduled for Friday, 12 January 2007.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

LPB/2006/396 : DUNDONALD & ULSTER ICE SKATING CLUB

The PR & Marketing Manager advised that a request had been received from Dundonald & Ulster Ice Skating Club for the use of the Sunday tea time skate session for a family show. In addition, the Club proposed to use their own ice time on Monday 18 December 2006 to host an additional show if ticket sales exceeded 500. Officers felt that they could come to an arrangement with the Club that would cover the Council's costs and usual income for the session and allow for a 50:50 split in takings once a threshold had been reached.

RESOLVED: to accede to the Club's request for use of facilities to host an ice show during the public session time on Sunday 17 December from 5.30 pm to 7.00 pm. The Club to be responsible for reimbursing the Council for lost public ice time and marketing costs and operate a business arrangement of a 50:50 split once those costs had been covered. An additional administration cost to be levied for the sale of tickets through the DIIB till for the show on 18 December 2006.

LPB/2006/397 : LEISURE PARK BUDGET ACCOUNTS

The Director of Finance & Leisure Services advised that he had received a copy of the Leisure Park Budget Accounts and drew Members' attention to the current status.

Noted.

The meeting ended at 10.05 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

CHIEF EXECUTIVE