

CASTLEREAGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the proceedings of the Leisure Park Board held, in committee, in the Board Room at Dundonald International Ice Bowl on Monday 21 January 2008 at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT: J Bunting (in the Chair)

COUNCILLORS: M Chambers
J Beattie (from 6.10 p.m.)
B Harvey
M Long
G Robinson
J Spratt (from 6.05 p.m.)

IN ATTENDANCE: Director of Leisure, General Manager Leisure & Marketing, PR & Marketing Manager, Business Manager, and Assistant Members' Services Officer.

APOLOGIES: Apologies were received from Councillors Henderson and from Councillors Beattie and Spratt who would be late on arrival to the meeting.

LPB/2008/01: MINUTES OF LEISURE PARK BOARD MEETING

Councillor Long referred to minute no LPB/2007/267, he indicated that he felt that the content of the minute did not reflect his objection to the fact that the Council's Standing Orders had not been followed in relation to voting procedures, he added that he had requested that a legal opinion be sought in respect to how this decision had been taken.

Councillor Bunting responded that, due to the importance of the matter and the need to expedite its progress, she had felt that, as Chairperson, it was imperative that each Elected Member on the Board had the opportunity to express their views. She therefore went on to state that in this instance, whilst she recognised it was not usual Council procedure to hold a telephone vote, she had no alternative, as this provided the only forum that would ensure that each Member of the Board could participate in the overall resolution, in light of the expediency of the matter.

At this stage in proceedings Councillor Spratt entered the meeting.

At this point Councillor Long asked that it be recorded in the minutes that he objected to the way in which the decision was taken, and whilst he understood that there was a need to progress quickly in respect of this matter he felt that Members should have been afforded more time to consider the proposal,

rather than being pressurised into taking an immediate decision. He again requested that the Director seek the opinion of the Chief Executive in relation to the decision making process and the decision itself.

The Chairman reiterated that circumstances had dictated that an urgent decision was required; therefore, she had dealt with it in the most democratic way that she saw fit at the time.

Councillor Mrs Chambers requested that her disappointment be recorded that she had missed the successful Ice Skating Gala. She reported that there had been a mix up in the issuing of invitations to the event, and unfortunately she had been unaware of exactly when it was taking place.

The PR & Marketing Manager apologised unreservedly for the mix up that had occurred. She advised that invitations had been forwarded, via e-mail, to all Members of the Board, however, the Board Membership had not been updated on the e-mail contact list. She confirmed that the IT Section had now addressed this matter.

RESOLVED: - The Director of Leisure to seek the Chief Executive's opinion in relation to how the decision was taken to proceed with hosting the Soccer Sixes Event and also in respect of the decision itself and report back to the next meeting of the Board with her findings.

At this stage in proceedings Councillor Beattie entered the meeting.

LPB/2008/02: TRADING ACCOUNTS

At the Leisure Park Board meeting, held on 18 February 2008, Members asked that the table of figures be deleted from the minute.

The Business Manager took members through the detail of the Trading Accounts to the end of period 9. She reported an operating surplus for the month of £9,000. This was considerably lower than that for the same period the previous year. This was largely due to an increase in costs.

The Business Manager again reiterated that these figures had absorbed a large amount of one off unavoidable expenditure, which she clearly detailed to Members, she advised that these were clearly detailed in her report.

The Business Manager also highlighted that income for Indianaland had decreased. The General Manager confirmed that there was a lot of additional competition within this area, with several new soft play facilities having recently opened locally. The number of birthday parties held had also declined; this could also be attributed to increased competition in this market place.

Councillor Spratt advised that these changes in the market place would need to be taken into account by the consultants when considering their findings for the economic appraisal.

The Director confirmed that most of the aforementioned overspends had been approved by the Leisure Park Board throughout the year, however, she felt it was pertinent to provide Members with a detailed breakdown of the year's expenditure to date.

Noted.

LPB/2008/03: SECURITY

Councillor Hanvey reported that this matter had been discussed at a recent meeting of the Golf Club Board. He advised that discussion had ensued at the meeting regarding taking a centralised approach to security provision throughout the Council, in order to maximise economies of scale.

The Director advised that a tender for security services throughout the Council was currently being drawn up. Members had requested at the Golf Club Board meeting that this would include security provision for all the Council facilities, including the Council Offices and DIIB.

Noted.

LPB/2008/04: TUMBLE TOTS

The Business Manager advised that the year to date income achieved from Tumble Tots was also coming in under budget, she reminded Members that Tumble Tots weekly fee had been reduced from £150.00 to £80.00 per session.

Following a query, the Director confirmed that Tumble Tots had actually moved their business, earlier in the year, to a local Community centre to avail of cheaper rates but had returned to DIIB when the rates had been reduced.

RESOLVED: - Officers to ascertain the Community Centre Tumble Tots had used in the interim and what fee they had been charged and report back to a future meeting of the Board.

REPORT FROM THE PR & MARKETING MANAGER

LPB/2008/05: UPDATE ON SOCCER SIXES – MONDAY 28 JANUARY 2008

The PR & Marketing Manager provided Members with a detailed update on the forthcoming Soccer Sixes Event. She reported that ticket sales had been positive with 580 tickets having been sold to date, tickets would remain on sale from DIIB and if space was available they could be purchased at the door, on the night.

The Officer continued that a meeting was scheduled with the Soccer Sixes Management Team for tomorrow morning (Tuesday 22 January), where a full ticket sales update would be provided. Following this meeting a full staffing and operation plan, including detailed costing would be prepared.

The PR & Marketing Manager advised that a press launch had been held on Wednesday 16 January 2008, where the Soccer Sixes draw had taken place with the Mayor and Dr Malcolm Brodie officiating. She advised that the Daily Mirror had ran three promotions, to date, and added that the event was to be published throughout the forthcoming week by all the local press, including the television stations.

The PR & Marketing Manager advised Members that this event had provided an excellent forum for staff to secure sales of the advertising panels around the ice rink. She then took Members through a detailed breakdown of the confirmed sales, and advised that it was anticipated that the sale of these panels was expected to achieve a profit of approximately £3000.00, once all costs had been taken into account. The Officer advised that Podium 4 Sport had been sold a number of the panels as part of their overall sponsorship package for the event, but confirmed that they had paid for the production costs of the advertising panels.

The Officer advised that a number of panels were still to be confirmed, including some spaces on the fire doors. Councillor Robinson suggested that the Community Safety Partnership and Northern Ireland Fire Brigade be contacted, as he felt they might be interested in advertising.

Members welcomed the sale of these panels, stating that they felt they would greatly enhance the appearance of the ice rink and thanked staff for their hard work in securing the sales.

Members then discussed the parking arrangements for the event and suggested that the Management of David Lloyd and the Hanwood Centre be contacted to ascertain if they would be willing to provide overflow car parking on the night of the event.

RESOLVED: -

- (a) Officers to contact the Community Safety Partnership and Northern Ireland Fire Brigade to establish if they would be interested in purchasing advertising panels within the ice rink;
- (b) Officers to contact the Management of David Lloyd and the Hanwood Centre to ascertain if they would be willing to provide overflow car parking on the night of the Soccer Sixes Event.

LPB/2008/06: UPDATE ON BRITISH OPEN ICE SKATING CHAMPIONSHIPS

The PR & Marketing Manager advised that the British Open Ice Skating Championships had taken place in Nottingham from 8 to 11 January 2008.

She reported that Jenna McCorkhill had won the gold, taking the Senior British Ladies title for a record breaking fifth time. As a result she would now be competing in the European Championships in February 2008.

Carla Quinn had also won a gold and now holds the title of British Junior Ladies Champion. Carla was now the first ever skater to hold the Novice, Primary and Junior titles.

Edward Alton and Tameron Drake took silver in British Junior Pairs, achieving their highest personal scores to date.

RESOLVED: - Members noted the achievements at the British Open Ice Skating Championships and requested that a letters of congratulations be forwarded from the Leisure Park Board to the skaters involved.

LPB/2008/07: CARAVAN PARK – OPENING HOURS & PRICES

The PR & Marketing Manager reported that the caravan park would open for the 2008 season on Monday 17 March 2008. The proposed 2008 prices for caravans and tents were £17.00 and £10.00 respectively.

Members suggested that the caravan park should actually open earlier in March, given that St Patrick's Day would fall just before Easter.

RESOLVED: - Members of the Board approved the caravan park reopening for the 2008 season, on Thursday 13 March 2008. With caravans being charged a rate of £17.00 per day and tents £10.00 per day.

LPB/2008/08: HALF TERM / EASTER OPENING HOURS & PRICES

The PR & Marketing Manager advised Members that the proposed half term and Easter opening hours were from Friday 14 March to Sunday 30 March inclusive.

RESOLVED: - Members of the Board approved the half term and Easter opening hours from Friday 14 March to Sunday 30 March inclusive.

REPORT FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

LPB/2008/09: TRAVELLING COMMUNITY

The General Manager advised that members of the Travelling Community had set up camp outside the gates to the Caravan Park on Sun 23 Dec 07. They did not enter the site itself and were monitored on a daily basis by DIIB staff and the PSNI. They left of their own free will on Sun 30 Dec 2007.

The General Manager reported that there had been several complaints from residents adjacent to the encampment, particularly regarding the disposal of waste from the chemical toilets. These complaints were referred to Council's Environmental Health Section, however, the community moved on before the need for further action. The General Manager advised that he was concerned that the caravan park was an easy target and stressed that he foresees problems ahead when the site re-opened at Easter. He advised that he was currently seeking quotations to enable the power and water facilities to be isolated at each hook up point.

RESOLVED: - The General Manager to investigate what measures could be taken to better secure the caravan park and report back to a future meeting of the Board with his findings.

LPB/2008/10: DIIB NEON SIGNS

The General Manager reported that the neon Dundonald International Ice Bowl signage on the front of the building had been repaired, at a cost of £350.00 + VAT.

Noted.

LPB/2008/11: TECHNICAL MANAGER

The General Manager reported that a new Technical Manager had been appointed, and was scheduled to take up position on 1 February 2008.

Noted.

LPB/2008/12: CHARITY SALE REQUEST

The General Manager reported that a member of staff had requested permission to hold a charity 'indoor car boot sale' on Sat 22 Mar 08 between 9am and 1pm. All proceeds would go to a cancer charity.

RESOLVED: - Members of the Board granted permission to hold a charity indoor car boot sale, on Sat 22 Mar 08 from 9.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. in the function suite at no cost, with all proceeds being donated to a cancer charity.

LPB/2008/13: VENDING - CHIP MACHINE

The General Manager reported that a McCain's Chip Machine had been purchased in July 2003, over a three year period at a cost of £8,893.87. Income until June 2007 was £26,200.00, which after stock purchases (£6659.00) and original cost deducted left a Net Profit of £10,647.13. He advised that this was not a normal vending machine but an industrial baking oven. The machine now required maintenance and an overhaul to the value of approx £1000.00 + VAT. The Officer continued that it was anticipated that more faults would develop due to the age of the machine. In addition to this the model had now been superseded, making it almost obsolete, the Vending Manager had found no interest in selling the machine for spare parts.

The General Manager continued that whilst the machine secured a good profit it was competing with the café, and there was a better profit margin in chips purchased from the café. It was therefore recommended that a replacement machine should not be purchased at this stage.

Following a query, the Director confirmed that an inventory was now kept of all machines and equipment that was written off.

RESOLVED: - Members of the Board authorised that the McCain Chip Machine be written off rather than incur the expense of repair, and that a new machine would not be purchased at this stage.

LPB/2008/14: CHILDREN'S BOWLING BALL RAMPS

The General Manager advised Members of a recent incident which arose in the Bowling Centre, involving the children's bowling ball ramp. The General Manager advised that five ramps had been withdrawn from use and requested permission to replace these with six new ramps at a cost of approx £800.00.

Members were asked to note that this would cause an overspend in the Bowling Centre budget.

RESOLVED: - Members of the Board recommended that five children's bowling ball ramps are written off and replaced with six new DDA compliant ramps, at a cost of approx £800.00. Members noted that this would cause an overspend in the Bowling Centre budget.

REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR

LPB/2008/15: REQUEST FROM NIISA

The Director of Leisure Services reported that a request had been received from representatives of the NIISA for support in the forthcoming NI Open, scheduled for May 2008. She advised that in recent years the organisation had been able to secure funding from the Big Lottery, however, this year's application had been declined. The NI Open recommenced in May 2006 after a notable absence and the event organisers were keen to ensure that the event did not, again, fall off the national events calendar.

The Director advised that a brief meeting had been held in early January to determine the level of support that the organisers required for the event. She added that at this stage the matter was being brought before the Board for consideration.

The Director advised that the NI Open was an important event, as it gave NI a place on the national event calendar and also gave the Ice Skating fraternity a competitive focal point in the year. In the absence of such there was no other opportunity to enter a similar event. However, she added that hosting this event would not be profitable for DIIB and was most likely to incur costs

Members were unanimous in that they were keen that the event would not be cancelled, however, highlighted that there were still outstanding debts from the previous years event.

The Director confirmed that there was an outstanding amount, which had not yet been settled. She advised that the whole bill was not outstanding, however, NIISA had queried certain elements of the bill.

Discussion ensued, following which Members requested that Officers enter into discussion with NIISA to quantify the issues regarding their outstanding account.

RESOLVED: - Members of the Board

- (a) Requested that Officers enter into discussion with NIISA, to quantify the issues regarding their outstanding account and if possible reach an amicable resolution for both parties.
- (b) Agreed, in principle, to host the Northern Ireland Open, subject to an amicable resolution being agreed regarding NIISA's outstanding account and the Director tabling a report at the February meeting of the Board detailing the exact level of support being requested. At this meeting the requested would be further considered by Members.

LPB/2007/16: ECONOMIC APPRAISAL OF DIIB

The Director advised that the work connected to the economic appraisal was ongoing. As previously recorded, a delay had been incurred in reporting back to the Board with an overall recommendation regarding the outcome of the appraisal. Subsequent to this, there had been a delay in the ability to complete the stakeholders consultation, the consultants, despite ongoing attempts were experiencing difficulty in securing an opportunity to meet with some of the significant consultees. In addition to this, the work associated with the concluding of the various options for the appraisal had proven to be somewhat more extensive than initially anticipated. The Director continued that a meeting had been held with the full economic appraisal team on 11th January 2008, where lengthy discussion ensued regarding what was necessary for the Board to make a full decision regarding the future of DIIB.

The Director stated that Members could be presented the information to date, however, she advised that in order to ensure that the 'Wednesbury Principles' were adhered to, in that Members were fully apprised of all the facts to make an informed decision, she recommended that Members authorised an extension to the existing timetable.

The Director then drew Members' attention to correspondence tabled at the January Board. She advised the consultants, whilst indicating they had encountered some additional and unforeseen work associated with the project, would not be adjusting any prices submitted.

The Director advised that when the appraisal had been finalised, Members would need to consider convening a special meeting of the Board to consider the findings.

RESOLVED: - Members of the Board granted the economic appraisal consultants the necessary additional time to complete the ongoing economic appraisal, in respect of DIIB and agreed to convene a special meeting of the Board to consider the findings of the appraisal, when these became available.

LPB/2008/17: MARCH MEETING OF THE LPB – PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

The Director advised that the next meeting of the Board was scheduled to be held on Monday 17 March 2008, which would be St Patrick's Day the following week would be the Easter holidays.

RESOLVED: - Members of the Board agreed to reschedule the March meeting of the Board to Monday 31 March 2008.

LPB/2008/18: CHP REPORT NOVEMBER 2007

The Director drew Members' attention to the monthly CHP report for DIIB. She advised that the report detailed the monthly utilisation of the plant and total savings.

The Officer advised Members that it was her intention to bring this information to the Board on a regular basis.

Members agreed that the information was helpful, however, suggested that it could be presented in a more condensed form.

RESOLVED: - Members authorised that the Director of Leisure Services to present a more condensed form of the CHP at future meetings of the Board.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

LPB/2008/19: REQUEST FOR USE OF BOARD ROOM

The Director advised that a request had been received from Ms Pat Herron, who was seeking use of the boardroom for a religious gathering.

RESOLVED: - Members of the Board granted Ms Pat Herron use of the boardroom for a religious gathering.

LPB/2008/20: SUMMER SKATING SCHOOL

The Director of Leisure Services reported that she had recently been approached by one of the local ice skating clubs, regarding the possibility of establishing a summer skating school.

The Director advised that she felt there was merit in such a proposal and undertook to report further at a future meeting of the Board on the proposal.

Noted.

LPB/2008/21: DISABLED ACCESS AT DIIB

The Chairman advised that an MLA had raised disabled access within DIIB at a recent meeting of the Northern Ireland Assembly. The MLA had specifically advised that there was no disabled access to the café from bowling.

Members noted that this was not correct and asked that the Director write to the MLA in question advising that disabled access was in place.

Councillor Spratt also undertook to raise this matter personally with the MLA and request that he retract his statement formally in the Assembly.

RESOLVED: - Members requested that the Director of Leisure Services write to the MLA advising that disabled access was in place between the bowling centre and the café.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 8.00 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

CHIEF EXECUTIVE