

REIGATE AND BANSTEAD BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL: 15th December 2016

Questions by Members

Question by:	To be answered by:	Subject:
Cllr Stead	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services (Councillor Hack)	Charging for Open Spaces
Cllr Thomson	Executive Member for Economy and Jobs (Councillor Humphreys)	Rail Timetable and Services
Cllr Stevens	Executive Member for Enforcement (Councillor Durrant)	Uber Parking and Behaviour
Cllr King	Executive Member for Planning Policy and Finance (Councillor Schofield)	The Angel Pub and Local Landmarks

Council Meeting: 15 December 2016

Councillor B.A. Stead will ask the **Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services, Councillor Dr L. Hack** the following question:

Charging for Open Spaces

Thank you Mr Mayor. I wish to ask the Portfolio holder for Environment & Infrastructure a question regarding the recent decision to charge for the use of open spaces for non-commercial events.

For these Community Events, the Council generally provides no service whatever. The events are important to the community, raising community spirit in line with our policy on communities. Admission is generally free and money raised provides funding for the following year, improving local facilities or is given to well deserving local charities.

However these events are organised by volunteers, and when they see for the year's work they are to be charged by the Council and their fund raising in effect taxed, this will leave a bad taste in the mouth and could lead to these events not being run, and indeed replacement volunteers being deterred from putting their name forward. I am also concerned at the small attendance figures quoted that define the cost. I believe the numbers of residents attending these events is much higher than indicated.

The suggestion that has been by officers that the payment of these hire charges could be met from Councillors' Community Awards is not the solution as these Awards cannot be used for the same purpose each year.

These non-commercial events on our open spaces are well appreciated by our residents and undoubtedly contribute to the communities we are all try to encourage. I think the Council will suffer deep resentment if these charges mean the end of the Banstead Countryside Day, Music in the Park, Dog shows, Village Fetes, and Park Runs.

I would therefore ask, how much is this charge expected to raise and is this sufficient to risk the committees being deterred from organising them? If not, I would hope that the Council would reconsider these charges.

Observations

It is not correct to state that the Council provides no service whatever for community events.

All events do indeed come at a cost to the Council and we are seeking to secure a contribution towards this. It is clear from the charging schedule that for community events

we are charging a minimum fee that goes towards the cost of the event. This is not recovering the full cost it is merely reducing the cost to the Council.

To provide you with some details on the type of work that happens behind the scenes I listed some of the activities undertaken to support an event such as the Countryside Day;

1. Administration of the booking
2. Applying for license approval with Natural England
3. Organising and providing bin facilities for the event
4. Carrying out additional bin emptying staff
5. Carrying out additional litter collection before and after the event.
6. Additional mowing of the grassed area.
7. Reinstatement of damage done during the event.
8. Providing access and collect keys

Non-commercial and Community events in our open spaces are very important to us and so, as I have said, this is reflected in the fee structure. We are not trying to make money from this charges, we are simply reducing the costs to the Council.

I would also make it clear that the fee structure provides discretion to change the charge if appropriate – applications for this can be made to me as Portfolio Holder.

Event	fee	Services	Category
Banstead Countryside Fayre	£250.00(negotiable)	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	D
Music in the park	£250.00(negotiable)	1,3,4,5,6,7,	D
Dog Shows	£50.00	1,4,5,6,	B
Villages Fetes	£50.00	1,4,5,6,7	B
Park Run	Free	1	A

Supplementary Question

The introduction of these charges appear to have introduced an over bureaucratic form of application with the requirement for comprehensive Outdoor Event Application Form and Event Management Plans, a Risk Assessment and Site Plan on top of the earlier requirement for Public Liability Insurance. Would it be possible for these forms to be simplified?

Observations

All events have always been asked to provide the above information in the past - this is normal practice. There have been no changes to this, however I will ask officers to consider them further.

Council Meeting: 15 December 2016

Councillor B.J. Thomson will ask the **Executive Member for the Economy and Jobs, Councillor E. Humphreys** the following question:

Rail Timetable and Services

Please could the portfolio holder outline the main elements of the Council's response to the recent consultation on GTR's 2018 rail timetable, and also outline any other actions the Council is taking to support local residents who are dependent on rail services, at this difficult time?

Observations

The Council responded to the recent Govia Thameslink Railway's timetable consultation expressing concerns about various aspects of the proposals.

I can summarise these as follows:

- Firstly, the need for investment in the rail infrastructure in the borough. Specifically, at Reigate to create a new platform to accommodate longer Thameslink trains, and at Redhill to improve the track and points to help eliminate unnecessary delays at Redhill station.
- Secondly, a reliable peak time service to and from stations across the borough, including a fast peak time service between Redhill and London and direct peak time services between Reigate and London.
- Thirdly, more clarity in relation to the running of services between Horley, Salfords and Earlswood to London Victoria, as there is currently a question mark about what this service might look like in the future.
- And finally stressing the importance of direct links between Redhill and stations to the south coast.

In relation to wider problems on the rail network, I can confirm the Council has made a direct request to the Secretary of State for Transport, Chris Grayling, (who is of course also a local MP) that he take action to expedite a resolution to the current industrial action.

In my role as Executive member for the Economy and Jobs, I am continuing to highlight the concerns of local employers with partners – such as Gatwick Diamond Business – who are lobbying for an end to the current disruption and for improvements to local rail services to support the local economy.

And on a more practical level, the Council is helping to promote opportunities for commuters to access shared workspaces locally, to allow remote working and minimise the need to travel during times of industrial action.

Council Meeting: 15 December 2016

Councillor C. Stevens will ask the **Executive Member for Enforcement, Councillor J.E. Durrant** the following question:

Uber Parking and Behaviour

Many of my residents are concerned that the Council has provided parking spaces to Uber in Horley High Street car park. This appears to have led to Uber drivers monopolising the car park and in some cases chasing residents off what is a public facility. Additionally there are reports of drivers not using the portaloos Uber provide, leaving their engines running, sleeping in their cars and parking in spaces not marked for them. I understand this is against the terms of their contract with the Council.

Can the portfolio holder reassure me, my fellow ward members and my residents that this unacceptable situation is being dealt with.

Observations

The Council has agreed a licence with Uber for 60 spaces in the car park.

Previous surveys showed that this was significantly under occupied and there was sufficient parking in other car parks across Horley town centre.

The approach was agreed in response to concerns about drivers waiting near residential areas. Horley faces challenges like this due to its proximity to Gatwick Airport and we have sought to manage these through this agreement.

The car park remains a public car park, but the Uber bays are reserved for their drivers under the licence agreement.

We have received reports of unacceptable behaviour by some users of the car park and we are discussing these with Uber. Officers have also met with Horley Town Council, local traders and market stall operators to understand and resolve concerns.

Enforcement officers are regularly attending the car park to ensure that the facility is not abused and that the remaining parking spaces are available for pay and display use.

Uber are required to provide toilet facilities and a bin for the use of their drivers. As Uber drivers approach the car park there are sent a message alerting them to the conditions of use, which include no engines running and only parking in permitted bays.

Supplementary Question

Thank you Mr Mayor and Cllr Durrant. I do have a supplementary question.

Since Uber have started using the car parking in Horley Central, what measures of enforcement are in place to ensure that disabled badge holders continue to use the designated spaces that they can or should quite rightfully use?

The arrangements with Uber have not changed the parking provision for disabled badge holders. There are 11 disabled parking bays across the 4 car parks in Horley. These are reserved for blue badge holders only. Civil Enforcement Officers undertake regular patrols within the car parks and will issue a Penalty Charge Notice if a vehicle is parked in a disabled bay without displaying a valid blue badge.

Council Meeting: 15 December 2016

Councillor J.P. King will ask the **Executive Member for Planning Policy and Finance, Councillor T. Schofield** the following question:

The Angel Pub and Local Landmarks

Following concerns from many local residents about the dilapidated state of the listed Angel Pub building in Woodhatch, can the Portfolio holder confirm what powers the council has to ensure the protection of important listed heritage assets like the Angel and what steps are being taken to ensure that new owners preserve such valued local landmarks?

Observations

- The Council has powers to serve a Section 215 notice requiring land to be cleaned up or can issue a repairs notice in the case of listed buildings.
 - In the case of the Angel, Planning and Conservation Officers have contacted the owners to require the building to be secured and the windows fixed.
 - The owners have agreed to undertake these works and so there is currently no need to take formal action but the situation will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to determine whether formal action is necessary.
 - More generally, and specifically related to my own Portfolio, the Council has planning policies to protect the borough's historic environment.
 - As well as policies in the 2005 Borough Local Plan, our 2014 Core Strategy makes it clear that development must be designed to respect, conserve and enhance heritage features – such as listed buildings – and encourages proposals that provide for the sensitive restoration and reuse of such buildings.
 - And our DMP, once in place, will add further policy protection to these important, and irreplaceable, assets.
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