

Brighton & Hove City Council

Council

Agenda Item 38

Subject: Petitions

Date of meeting: 14 December 2023

Report of: Executive Director, Governance, People & Resources

Contact Officer: Name: Anthony Soyinka
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Ward(s) affected: All

For general release

Action Required of City Environment, South Downs & The Sea Committee:

- 1) To consider the Petition referred from the Council meeting held on 14 December 2023

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**COUNCIL****4.30pm 14 DECEMBER 2023****COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL****MINUTES**

Present: Councillors O'Quinn (Chair), Atkinson, Davis, Evans, Fishleigh, Fowler, Grimshaw, Meadows, McNair, Robins, Sankey, Shanks, C Theobald, West, Wilkinson, Alexander, Allen, Asaduzzaman, Baghoth, Burden, Cattell, Daniel, Earthey, Goddard, Goldsmith, Helliwell, Hewitt, Hill, Hogan, Loughran, Lyons, McGregor, McLeay, Miller, Muten, Nann, Oliveira, Pickett, Pumm, Robinson, Rowkins, Sheard, Simon, Stevens, Taylor, Thomson and Winder

PART ONE**60 NEGLECT OF PUBLIC FACILITIES AT WISH PARK IS IMPACTING THE COMMUNITY'S HEALTH**

- 60.1 The Mayor stated that where a petition secured 1,250 or more signatures it could be debated at the council meeting. She had been made aware of three such petitions and invited Mr O'Dell to join the meeting and to present the petition concerning Neglect of Public Facilities at Wish Park is Impacting the Community's Health.
- 60.2 Mr O'Dell thanked the Mayor and stated that the petition which had been signed by 1770 people.
- 60.3 Councillor Rowkins thanked Mr O'Dell for presenting the petition and stated that "First, I'd like to apologise for the deterioration we have seen at Wish Park and the impact it has had on the community. We have been monitoring the situation for some time and working to resolve it. Firstly, the current state of one of the football pitches is primarily due to damage caused by an event earlier in the year rather than a lack of maintenance. Clearly that is not ideal, and we are taking steps to avoid any similar incidents in the future. Unfortunately, when the circus was on the site, it was particularly wet and that left the pitch in a poor state. This has now been soiled and seeded, but unfortunately it was not done to the standard we would hope. We are very sorry for the disruption caused to football clubs wanting to use the site, and certainly it is my view that crucial, regular community activities such as sports should be a priority and not disrupted. We have put in place a new framework for events, to ensure that groundworks can be enabled more quickly where possible, and there are no events are planned for the Park in Summer 2024. We are also working on a series of updated, park-specific event packs that will provide better guidance for events to ensure minimal negative impact. We will be communicating with the football clubs to keep them informed. A final plan for the use of the available 3 pitches is now being finalised between the FA and the parks team. We

hope to share this proposal with the teams before Christmas and will then share this more widely with the community. We are currently developing an action plan to ensure that the cricket pitch will be usable from April. The Council agree with the Association of Sussex Cricket Grounds that spring reseedling is now the best possible approach to ensure the best possible results in a timely manner, and agree that any deeper work would require heavy machinery that would cause significant further damage. Weather allowing this should see the surface more than useable from April. We hear the concerns from Friends about needing a new solution for protecting the cricket green. We are currently exploring other viable options on this, but currently the mesh and pins solution is the best to ensure the cricket square is preserved without creating a significant safety hazard to park users. Things are moving forward regarding the replacement of the outdoor gym, which was removed in 2021 because it was rotten and unsafe. The Friends of Wish Park are preparing a bid to secure the funds and the location of the gym has been agreed between City Parks and the Friends of Wish Park. Nearly all the city's shrub beds have been in decline over the last 20 years, from an aesthetic point of view. This is due to the combined effect of a reduction in staff and replanting budgets due to local authority cuts. I'd like to thank the Friends Group for the work they are doing to weed beds in Wish. The management of parks and green spaces across the city is currently under review, and we aim to test new working practices to maximise the use and spread of our teams in the new year. We will communicate this with Friends of the parks, clubs and local residents once this is approved. However, I am pleased to say that plans for Wish Park are now moving with more pace, and a dedicated officer is liaising with stakeholders to address the issues raised by the petition. This included a meeting with the ward councillors last week, which has produced an action plan to address concerns raised. I'd like to thank the petitioners for bringing these issues to our attention and to the Friends of Wish Park for their commitment to providing a park where residents can enjoy recreational activities in the heart of their community."

60.4 Councillor Pickett moved an amendment on behalf of the Green Group which was formally seconded by Councillor West.

60.5 Councillor Hogan spoke on the petition.

60.6 Councillor Rowkins confirmed that he would not accept the Green amendment.

60.7 The Mayor then put the Green Group amendment to the vote which was lost.

60.8 The Mayor thanked Mr O'Dell for presenting the petition and put the recommendations to the vote.

RESOLVED:

60.9 That the petition is noted and referred to the City Environment, South Downs & The Sea Committee for consideration.

