

Leisure & Development Committee Tuesday 8th March 2016

Table of Key Recommendations

No	Item	Recommendation
2.	Declarations of Interest	<i>Councillor McLean Item 7 Councillor Douglas Item 5 Councillor Knight-McQuillan Item 6 Alderman Hickey Item 5 and Item 6 Councillor MA McKillop Item 5 and Item 6 Councillor Stevenson Item 5</i>
3.	Minutes of Previous Meeting held Tuesday 9 th February 2015	<i>Adopt</i>
4.	Presentation – Education Authority	<i>For Information</i>
5.	Community Development Grants	<i>Approve the grant awards for Community Development Support Grant and Social Inclusion Grant as detailed in Annex B and C, as indicative allocations, subject to securing Letter of Offer from DSD and final confirmed budgets.</i>
6.	Community Festival Grants	<i>Approve the grant awards for Community Festivals Fund as detailed in Annex E, as indicative allocations, subject to securing Letter of Offer from DCAL and final confirmed budgets.</i>
7.	Ballymoney Community Facilities (i) Edward Street Social Centre (ii) Music Centre	<i>Defer until all relevant information is available to Council and that a Condition Report relevant to safety on the building be undertaken. Approve as per recommendations from 12th January 2016 report, to proceed in relation to the Music Centre in order to develop the concept, economic appraisal, business case and investigate</i>

		<i>grant funding availability for consideration in due course.</i>
8.	DCAL Letter of Intent Funding	<i>That Council avail of the DCAL Letter of Intent for £350k funding to Council for officers to develop a project providing a multi-sport synthetic pitch on Council land at the Joey Dunlop Centre in Ballymoney.</i>
9.	NW200 Land Transfer	<i>Approve the proposed temporary transfer of Council Lands to Coleraine and District Motor club</i>
10.	Biodiversity Projects Update	<i>For Information</i>
11.	The Dark Hedges	<i>For Information</i>
12.	Cultural Grants Programme	<i>For Information</i>
13.	Waterworld, Portrush	<i>Defer a decision on Waterworld to allow officers to explore all possible viable options for this site including development of the site.</i> <i>Approve the business case for reinstating the Waterslides in Coleraine Leisure Centre as the most effective way of utilising Council resources and meeting the need for a wet play option in the local area which can be used by residents and visitors to the area throughout the year. Slides to be operational from July 2016.</i>
14.	Correspondence	<i>None</i>
15.	Consultations	<i>None</i>
16.	Any Other Relevant Business	<i>Hold a Workshop following a short Leisure and Development Committee Meeting on Tuesday 12th April 2016 to discuss the 12 month Business Plan for 2016/2017.</i>

Leisure & Development Committee

Minutes of the Meeting of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Leisure & Development Committee, held in Council Chamber, Civic Headquarters, Coleraine on Tuesday 8th March 2016 at 7.00 pm.

In the Chair: Councillor M A McKillop

Members present: Aldermen Hillis, Hickey and Mullan
Councillors Clarke, Douglas, Holmes, Knight-McQuillan, McCandless, McCorkell, McGlinchey, McLean, Mulholland, Nicholl, Stevenson, Wilson

In attendance: R Baker, Director of Leisure and Development
J Gray, Strategic Programme & Projects Manager
J Welsh, Head of Community and Culture
L Scullion, Community Services Manager
W McCullough, Head of Leisure, Well-Being and Sport
P Thompson, Head of Tourism and Recreation
DJ Hunter, Council Solicitor
D Bader, Committee and Member Services Officer

Also in attendance: B Ward, Principal, Cross & Passion College Ballycastle
I Williamson, Principal, Ballycastle High School
I Mullan, Manager Waterworld

Councillor Duddy

Press (2 No)

Public (4 No)

1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor McLean - Item 7 Ballymoney Community Facilities – Edward Street Social Centre, Trustee of the Independent Orange Hall.

Councillor Douglas - Item 5 Community Development Grants - member of the Burnfoot Community Association.

Councillor Knight McQuillan – Item 6 Community Festival Grants.

Alderman Hickey - Item 5 Community Development Grants and Item 6 Community Festival Grants.

Councillor MA McKillop - Item 5 Community Development Grants and Item 6 Community Festival Grants, Secretary of Cairns Residents Group.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 9th February 2015

It was AGREED: **that the minutes of the Leisure and Development Committee Meeting held Tuesday 9th February 2015, be confirmed as a correct record.**

4. Presentation by the Education Authority

The Chair welcomed Mrs Barbara Ward from Cross & Passion College, Ballycastle and Mr Ian Williamson, Principal, Ballycastle of High School to the meeting. Members received a presentation on shared education in Ballycastle – Cross and Passion College and Ballycastle High School.

Information provided included location and proximity of the schools, collaborative curricular activities, extra-curricular and workshop activities, pastoral and student voice, and impacts and benefits resulting from the shared education, rationale for shared a shared campus, leisure and sports facilities to be provided under the project and the future envisaged for both schools.

It was emphasised that both schools would retain their own ethos, identity and governance arrangements.

The Chair thanked Mr Williamson and Mrs Ward for the presentation which was followed by Members' questions and comments.

In response to a Members' query it was confirmed that the facilities as detailed in the presentation would be available to organisations within the local community after 3pm each day, evenings, weekends and holidays.

5. Community Development Grants

Councillor MA McKillop Declared an Interest in Item 5 Community Development Grants and Item 6 Community Festival Grants and withdrew from the Chair. The Vice-Chair Councillor McLean assumed the Chair.

Councillor Stevenson entered the meeting at 7:25 pm, apologised for his late arrival and subsequently Declared an Interest in Item 5 – Community Development Grants, stating he was a Board Member of Ullans Speakers Association.

The Head of Community & Culture and the Community Services Manager presented the report previously circulated and summarised as undernoted;

The purpose of this report is to recommend grant awards to be made through the following Community Development Grant Programmes for 2016-17:

- 1. Community Development Support Grant (CDSG)***
- 2. Social Inclusion Grant (SIG)***

At the time of preparation of the report, the level of grant allocated from DSD is unknown, however a Letter of Offer is expected prior to 31st March 2016.

These allocations are subject to confirmation of funding from Department for Social Development.

Council Grant programmes were launched on 7th December with a closing date of 29th January, providing a period of 8 weeks for completion and submission of applications. Four Information Roadshows were held in December and early January in locations across the Borough in order to provide potential applicants with detailed information and guidance on the process. The Roadshows were well attended with over 130 attendees.

The Grant assessment panel, involving relevant staff, assessed the grant applications against the criteria as stated in the Guidance Notes for each programme.

Applicants were required to attain a score of at least 65% in order to be recommended for funding, in line with Council's Grant Funding Policy.

Community Development Support Grant

Purpose of Programme:

To contribute to the running costs/overhead costs incurred by core community development organisations.

Levels of Grant:

<i>Community Development groups with premises</i>	<i>75% of costs up to a maximum grant of £2,000</i>
<i>Community Development groups without premises</i>	<i>75% of costs up to a maximum grant of £1,000</i>

Details of eligibility and assessment criteria are attached at Annex A (previously circulated).

Applications Received:

No. of applications received	58
No of applications eligible for funding	52
No of unsuccessful applications	6
Total maximum eligible amount of CDSG funding requested	£84,016
Allocation of funding to Garvagh Development Trust for the GADDA Building (approved at Council meeting on 23 rd February) to come from CDSG budget	£9,000
Total eligible levels of funding requested	£93,016

A summary of the applications received, scores and recommended grant levels is included within Annex B (previously circulated). In some cases the grant amount has been reduced to reflect the 75% of eligible running costs that can be applied for. Of the 6 applications that were deemed ineligible for funding, 3 of these were referred to be considered through the Social Inclusion Grant Programme. The remaining 3 unsuccessful applicants were deemed to be within the remit of other service areas within Council and will be referred to relevant named officers for support.

Social Inclusion Grant

Purpose of Programme:

To provide small grants to local community and voluntary organisations that are involved in activities that encourage people within their community, particularly those that are socially isolated, to participate in social and recreational activities.

Levels of Grant:

Standard grant award level	85% of costs up to a maximum grant of £500
Specific conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amount requested towards refreshment costs cannot exceed 20% of total grant• No more than 50% of total grant can be allocated towards transport costs.

Applications Received:

No. of applications received	45
No. of applications referred from CDSG	3
No. of applications withdrawn	1
Total no. of applications assessed	47
No of applications eligible for funding	39
No of unsuccessful applications	8
Total eligible levels of funding requested	£18,889

A summary of the applications received, scores and recommended grant levels is included within Annex C (previously circulated). Of the 8 applications that were deemed ineligible for funding, some of these were deemed to be within the remit of other service areas within Council or Council funding programmes and will be referred as appropriate to Good Relations, Cultural Services or Sports Development. The reasons for the remaining applications being deemed ineligible were that the organisation was not constituted; the costs were ineligible; or did not score past 65% scoring threshold.

It was recommended: that Council approve the grant awards for Community Development Support Grant and Social Inclusion Grant as detailed in Annex B and C, as indicative allocations, subject to securing Letter of Offer from DSD and final confirmed budgets.

In response to a Members' query the Community Services Manager confirmed that one application received for a Social Inclusion Grant 2016-17 was ineligible for a grant as the group was not constituted.

Councillor Mullan proposed seconded by Councillor Douglas and **AGREED: to recommend that Council approve the grant awards for Community Development Support Grant and Social Inclusion Grant as detailed in Annex B and C, as indicative allocations, subject to securing Letter of Offer from DSD and final confirmed budgets.**

6. Community Festival Grants

The Head of Community and Culture presented the report previously circulated and summarised as undernoted;

The purpose of this report is to recommend maximum eligible grant awards to be made through the Community Festivals Fund (CFF) for 2016-17 subject to confirmation of funding from Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL).

At the time of preparation of the report, the level of grant allocated from DCAL is unknown, however a Letter of Offer is expected prior to 31st March 2016.

The Community Festivals Fund was launched with the other grant programmes on 7th December with a closing date of 29th January, providing a period of 8 weeks for completion and submission of applications. 4 Information Roadshows were held in December and early January in locations across the Borough in order to provide potential applicants with detailed information and guidance about the new online application process, and also about the detail of the individual grant programmes.

The Grant assessment panel of relevant Officers assessed the grant applications against the criteria as stated in the guidance notes for each programme. Applicants were required to attain a score of at least 65% in order to be recommended for funding, in line with Council's Grant Funding Policy.

Community Festivals Fund

Purpose of Programme:

To support, promote and develop the capacity of communities to host community festival events across the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area. A community festival is a festival which has developed from within a community and should celebrate and positively promote what the community represents.

Levels of Grant:

One day community fun day events programmed to be of at least 5 hours duration and anticipated to attract less than 5,000 participants.	75% of costs up to a maximum of £500
Festival events lasting 2 consecutive days or more and anticipated to attract less than 5,000 participants . If incorporating fun-day type events these must be programmed to be of at least 5 hours duration.	75% of costs up to a maximum of £1,500
Festivals lasting 3 consecutive days or more and anticipated to attract at least 5,000 participants . If incorporating fun-day type events these must be programmed to be of at least 5 hours duration.	75% of costs up to a maximum of £5,000

Details of eligibility and assessment criteria are attached at Annex D (previously circulated).

Applications Received:

No. of applications received	62
No. of applications withdrawn	2
No. of unsuccessful applications	3
No. of applications eligible for funding	57
Total maximum eligible amount of CFF funding requested	£70,049

A summary of the applications received, the assessment scores and maximum eligible funding amount is attached at Annex E (previously circulated). Two applications that were deemed ineligible for funding were deemed to be competitions and thus ineligible according to the criteria as defined in the guidance notes. The other application was deemed ineligible due to the group not keeping annual accounts. This group can be offered support with governance and record keeping. 2 applications were withdrawn; one of which secured funding through Tourism Grants Programme.

It was recommended: that Council approve the grant awards for Community Festivals Fund as detailed in Annex E, as indicative allocations, subject to securing Letter of Offer from DCAL and final confirmed budgets.

The Head of Community and Culture confirmed that a post project evaluation would be carried out on randomly selected events.

In answer to a Members' query the Community Services Manager clarified that the application procedure was a two stage process and that all documents were required to be provided in Stage 1 and that Officers would make initial contact with applicants where there were anomalies in their application, where it was clearly evident that documents had not been received.

The Head of Community and Culture reiterated that Workshops had taken place at which samples and clear guidance notes had been provided, which included the Appeals process. It was confirmed that Council received 3 appeals in 2015/16 which resulted in one being overturned.

Councillor Knight-McQuillan proposed that Members should sit on the selection panels in the future. The Director of Leisure and Development replied that a report would be brought to the meeting in April proposing sub groups be formed where authority could be delegated.

Councillor Mullan proposed seconded by Alderman Hillis and **AGREED: to recommend that Council approve the grant awards for Community Festivals Fund as detailed in Annex E, as indicative allocations, subject to securing Letter of Offer from DCAL and final confirmed budgets.**

Councillor MA McKillop returned to the position of Chair.

7. Ballymoney Community Facilities

The Head of Community and Culture presented the report, previously circulated and summarised as undernoted;

The purpose of the report is to reconsider the recommendations presented at the Leisure & Development Committee on 12th January in relation to the Audit of Need and Options Appraisal for Community Facilities in Ballymoney Town. The report also provides an updated legal position in relation to title deeds for Edward Street Social Centre.

An Audit of Need and Options Appraisal was carried out in relation to Community Facilities in Ballymoney town in order to inform decision making around future investment on community facilities in Ballymoney. The Options considered as part of the Report are attached at Annex F (previously circulated).

The report recommended that officers:

- ***Proceed with the relocation of the Edward Street Social Centre users to suitable alternative locations.***
- ***Present alternative options to Council for the Edward Street Social Centre site.***
- ***Relevant to wider community group access to existing facilities, review all fees and charges at community facilities to increase occupancy rates.***
- ***Relevant to the Ballymoney Music Centre proposal, engage with key stakeholders (including the Education Authority) to develop the concept, economic appraisal, business case and investigate grant funding availability, for Council's future consideration.***

Following deferment on the matter, a review of all paperwork relating to title of Edward Street Social Centre was carried out and extensive searches were carried out through Land Registry. The legal opinion provided by Council's solicitor is provided in full within Annex G (previously circulated). The advice includes the following key points for consideration:

The owners of the property, at Edward Street, Ballymoney, are the Northern Ireland Council of Social Service (Incorporated). They acquired the property in 1963, by way of a conveyance. A trust deed was then enacted between the NI Council of Social Service and Ballymoney Evergreen Club, also in 1963. Under the trust deed the club, with the consent of the NI Council of Social Service are permitted to sell the premises and invest the money in the provision of new premises.

Searches were carried out in the Registry of Deeds and the Land Registry to establish if any deeds relating to ownership were registered after 1963, with no results.

Furthermore, the legal opinion indicates Council are not in the position to establish a possessory title for the reasons stated within the report attached.

The report acknowledges the poor state of repair of the building and subsequent risk this poses to Council continuing to utilise the facility on an ongoing basis and the need to inform the owners of the property of such.

It was recommended:

1. In light of the legal opinion in relation to Edward Street Social Centre, Council should consider the following options in the immediate term, as contained within Annex G.

a. Purchase the premises from the club or NI Council of Social Care and refurbish or demolish, finding suitable alternative accommodation for users.

Or

b. Give notice to the owners of the property and the users that Council will no longer be maintaining the property and warn the users against further use of the property until it is brought up to standard.

2. Council approves, as per recommendations from 12th January report, to proceed in relation to the Music Centre in order to develop suitable proposals to the site for consideration in due course.

The Council Solicitor provided Members with an update on the current situation. He informed Members that searches had been carried out in the Registry of Deeds and the Land Registry to establish if any deeds relating to ownership were registered after 1963 and confirmed that no legal document exists between the Council and Ballymoney Evergreen Club, and NI Council of Social Services detailing any land transfers taking place after 1963.

Members raised concerns and were reluctant to make an informed decision on the recommendation until all the outstanding information on ownership had been obtained and all parties concerned had been contacted to see how this could be progressed forward.

In relation to a Members' query the Council Solicitor clarified that although Council had been running and maintaining the Edward Street property for 30 to 40 years, Council could not claim 'adverse possession' as they did not have sole and undisputed use. It was also confirmed that Council had been responsible for the rates and insurance during this period.

The Head of Development and Leisure confirmed that a Condition Survey relevant to safety would be undertaken to ensure that the current building was fit for purpose.

In conclusion the Director of Leisure and Development clarified points to be addressed:

- 1) Ownership of 12 Edward Street, Ballymoney.
- 2) Current condition of the building.
- 3) Consultation with users to establish their needs.
- 4) Availability and Capacity on facilities currently within Ballymoney.

Councillor McCandless proposed seconded by Councillor Wilson and AGREED: **to recommend to Council, in relation to Edward Street Social Centre, that this be deferred until all the relevant information is available to Council and that a Condition Report relevant to safety on the building be undertaken.**

Councillor McLean proposed seconded by Councillor Stevenson and AGREED: **to recommend that Council approves, as per recommendations from 12th January 2016 report, to proceed in relation to the Music Centre in order to develop the concept, economic appraisal, business case and investigate grant funding availability for consideration in due course.**

8. DCAL Letter of Intent Funding

The Head of Leisure Well-Being and Sport presented the report, previously circulated and summarised as undernoted;

The purpose of this report is to present Members with deliverable options to avail of the DCAL Letter of Intent for £350k funding to Council.

On 18th January 2016, DCAL issued a Letter of Intent to provide an additional £350k of funding to Council to help bridge the affordability gap between the DCAL £2.5m Letter of Offer and the £2.83m tender price of the Dungiven Sports Facility. The Letter of Intent is appended to this report (Annex A, previously circulated) and to avail of the funding, the following conditions apply;

- ***The £350k must be utilised in financial year 2016 / 17.***
- ***The funding is for a sports facility and it must be multi-sport.***
- ***The need must be identified in Council's Facility Strategy.***
- ***Council must provide some degree of partnership funding.***

The risk of being unable to deliver a project as required within the Financial Year 2016 / 17 is very high unless the project is on Council land, as time is too short to complete purchase or lease of 3rd party land and then complete the construction within the year as required. Therefore, it is considered that a project on land already owned by Council is the most deliverable.

Indoor facilities (sports hall, gym and changing) at any location would cost in excess of £1m so are therefore considered cost prohibitive within the current budget. However, depending on location, a synthetic pitch could be delivered for £400k - £500k and this would be affordable with the DCAL grant aid while also allowing for the required partnership funding from Council. Additionally, a synthetic pitch can meet the DCAL multi-sport criteria (soccer, rugby, GAA).

Within Council's Sports Facility Strategy, the Borough has a widespread deficit of pitches other than in the Limavady, Ballykelly and Greysteel vicinity. The synthetic pitches recently provided at Rugby Avenue are already at full capacity and many of the grass pitches in the Borough are poorly drained and become unplayable in wet weather. Synthetic pitches are more expensive to construct than grass, but are a cost effective solution to pitch requirements as they provide up to 8 times more playing hours per week than natural turf, and a fully utilised synthetic pitch can generate over £30k net income per year.

Overall, it is considered that the most deliverable option is for Council to use the DCAL funding to providing a multi-sport synthetic pitch on Council land in an area of need.

3G Pitch Capital Programme

Provision of a 3G pitch at the Riada Playing Fields, Ballymoney is on Council's 2016 / 2017 Capital Programme but the Business Case for the project has not yet been completed. Provision of a synthetic pitch in Portrush and upgrade of Council's Armoy Rugby Club facilities are being considered for the 2017 / 2018 Programme but these projects could be accelerated.

Synthetic pitch provision is already being addressed in the Dungiven / Limavady area but provision in Ballycastle and the Glens needs to be addressed. Suitable sites in the Glens are not in Council ownership and provision may be better addressed through a community partnership model. Initial investigation shows that Council's Quay Road site in Ballycastle is susceptible to flooding, and pitch provision in Ballycastle may be able to be addressed through partnership working with the education sector. CCMS will be presenting to Council on the ongoing work in this regard at Ballycastle High School and Cross and Passion College.

Therefore, further information is presented below in relation to Riada, Portrush and Armoy but Members may wish to instruct officers to work up other specific options. Detailed cost estimates have not been completed but the following orders of cost can be given;

- **Riada Playing Fields**

A synthetic pitch at Riada Playing Fields would cost circa £450k. Although synthetic pitches require less changing facilities, there is already a shortage of changing facilities at Riada. This would require additional changing at circa £250k but could be considered as a possible second phase development.

- **Portrush**

A synthetic pitch at Portrush would cost circa £450k. Synthetic pitches require less changing facilities than natural turf pitches and it would not be proposed to provide changing facilities. There are a number of potential sites and some are in Council ownership, but none are without issues and further site selection work would be required.

- **Armoy**

A synthetic pitch at Armoy would cost circa £400k. A further £150k may be required for car park and access upgrades. Changing upgrade would be £250k - £350k depending on specification but that could be considered as a possible second phase development.

It was recommend that Council:

- Note the recommendation that the most deliverable option to avail of the DCAL Letter of Intent for £350k funding to Council is for officers to develop a project providing a multi-sport synthetic pitch on Council land in an area of need.
- Consider the options presented and any other specific option Members wish to put forward, and to direct officers as to which project to progress urgently in respect of the DCAL funding offer.

The Strategic Programme and Projects Manager provided a short presentation outlining the existing provision of pitches currently located in each of the Legacy Councils, a comparison between synthetic and real turf pitches and where the greatest need for a synthetic pitch existed.

Councillor Clarke expressed his disappointment that the Coleraine area had not been considered even though there deemed to be a demand. The Director of Leisure and Development confirmed that work was currently on-going in relation to this and that a report would be brought back once completed.

In response to a Members' query the Director of Leisure and Development confirmed that there was currently one 3G pitch and one 2G (astro-turf) pitches in Coleraine but no 3G pitch currently existed in Ballymoney.

Members felt that there should be an even spread of 3G pitches throughout the Causeway Coast and Glens area.

Alderman Hickey proposed an amendment that Council should explore further possible facilities throughout the Causeway Coast and Glens area before any decision be made and felt that she was being rushed. There was no seconder.

The Director of Leisure and Development reiterated to Members that this project did not require planning permission but Council was required to submit a business case to DCAL to in order to secure funding. This could all be done within the reporting cycle and that any delay could jeopardise the availability of funding for this project.

Councillor Wilson proposed seconded by Councillor McLean and AGREED: to recommend that Council avail of the DCAL Letter of Intent for £350k funding to Council for officers to develop a project providing a multi-sport synthetic pitch on Council land at the Joey Dunlop Centre in Ballymoney.

9. NW200 land Transfer

The Head of Tourism and Recreation presented the report, previously circulated as undernoted;

The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Members for the temporary transfer of land to the Coleraine and District Motor Club for the NW200.

To facilitate the successful delivery of the 'Vauxhall International North West 200' event, Causeway Coast and Glens and the legacy council prior to 2015 has traditionally supported the event through a financial funding package and support "in kind".

One of the key elements of this "in kind" support has been the completion of a licence agreement between the Council and Coleraine and District Motor Club Limited to temporarily transfer Council Land to the Motor club for the duration of the event.

Council is currently in receipt of an application from the Coleraine and District Motor Club to enter into a similar relationship for the 2016 event, with areas of Council owned lands being temporarily transferred to facilitate trading activities, bike and car parking, the erection of scaffolding and grandstands, and other racing team and temporary building infrastructure necessary for the successful delivery of the event.

The schedule Annex A (previously circulated), provides a breakdown of the location of the lands, the duration of the transfer, the authorised purpose of the lands and the permitted trading dates and times for the authorised purpose. It is intended that this will form the substantive schedule to any agreement between Council and the Coleraine and District Motor Club.

It was recommended that Council agree to the proposed temporary transfer of Council lands to the Coleraine and District Motor Club for the 2016 North West 200' event.

Members expressed a wish to have some level of engagement with the NW200 going forward.

The Head of Tourism and Recreation clarified that trading pitches at this event were designated by the NW200.

Councillor Mulholland proposed seconded by Alderman Hillis and AGREED: to recommend that Council agree to the proposed temporary transfer of Council lands to the Coleraine and District Motor Club for the 2016 North West 200' event.

10. Biodiversity Projects Update

The Head of Tourism and Recreation presented the report, previously circulated and summarised as undernoted;

The purpose of this report is to provide information on the Cregagh Wood viewing hide and the Beelicious projects.

Cregagh Wood Viewing Hide

The GRSG first developed a small feeding and observation site at Cregagh Wood in 2009, which is now regularly frequented by red squirrels. Also drawn by a constant supply of feed provided by the squirrels "digging" into the feeders, it is now a popular spot for a wide variety of song birds. The wood itself is an excellent example of an old mixed woodland and provides a varied habitat that lends itself well to nature trails.

The wood was designated as a local nature reserve by Moyle District Council in 2015, and the Council entered into a management agreement with the land owner to open up the public access and manage the site for access and biodiversity. As part of the management agreement put in place, there was an aspiration to create a low impact education focused viewing hide and develop a multi-species feeding station to help engage the wider community and interest groups with the diverse biodiversity rich site, targeting local schools, youth groups, BSBI, Butterfly Conservation etc.

The Biodiversity Officer, Countryside & Coast Officer (Moyle) in partnership with the Glens Red Squirrel Group successfully submitted an application to the NGO Challenge fund and secured £8k to develop a red squirrel viewing hide (see Annex A, previously circulated), interpretation and to carry out some access improvement works. This work is now almost complete and it is hoped the hide will be open within the next month. This project was fully funded and zero cost to the Council.

Beelicious Project

An application has been submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) by a partnership of 8 Biodiversity Officers, which if successful will provide £5,617 to deliver the project within the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area.

This project will focus on the natural heritage of Northern Ireland using pollinator species and the ecosystem services value of pollination to reconnect people to their natural heritage. It will involve a wide range of people and local groups, and will emphasise how plants rely on insects to pollinate them. Without these insects we would not have many of the foods we take for granted, such as apples, raspberries, tomatoes and blackcurrant. The funding will be used to deliver 6 training / education events and undertake habitat restoration on four sites within the Borough.

HLF will inform the partnership in March 2016 on the outcome of the application. If successful this will be a fully funded project at zero cost to the Council.

Councillor Mulholland thanked the Glens Red Squirrel Group for their continued work on this project.

Members noted the above item for information.

11. The Dark Hedges

The Head of Tourism and Recreation presented the report, previously circulated as undernoted;

The purpose of this information item is to update Members on the ongoing issues and possible interventions relating to the management at the Dark Hedges.

The Dark Hedges near Stranocum, Co Antrim has become an increasingly popular visitor attraction over the past few years.

Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council has received a number of concerns about degradation of the verges and traffic management issues.

On early examination, officers have also noted that there are a number of potential safety related issues with this site. In response to the highlighted concerns, officers have convened a number of meetings with key stakeholders to discuss the issues presented and explore possible management solutions.

After meeting with representatives from Transport NI, Tourism NI, the local hoteliers, the Hedges Preservation Trust and Mervyn Storey MLA, an agreed outline approach to the issues has been drafted.

To date the Council has acted as the lead in pursuing a plan for improved and safer access, through engagement with statutory partners and with the cooperation from the landowners and the wider community.

Recommended actions that are being investigated

- 1. Seek and agree informally a consensus for a proposal with Landowners, other statutory stakeholders and Council.***
- 2. Informally consult with the wider community.***
- 3. Formally issue a request to Transport NI to initiate extinction of Bregagh Road (investigate implications of a permanent road closure).***
- 4. Provide alternative access to the Bregagh Road via a footpath leading through a field, behind the road boundary. A landowner has been approached and planning implications are being investigated.***

Wider strategic issues

- 1. The implementation of the Planning Order for a road closure could be a lengthy process. Realistically it could take 18 months. This includes a mandatory 6 week consultation.***
- 2. An overall integrated site management plan is required which will include parking capacity, pedestrian access, day to day site management, regular maintenance plan for road, verges and pathway, nominated key holders etc. There will also be a cost to purchase the 4 metre strip for pedestrian access and lay a suitable DDA compliant path. (currently with District Valuer for assessment).***
- 3. Site sensitivities need to be respected. From a natural habitat and biodiversity point of view, the rural, unspoilt landscape needs to be enhanced and the experience preserved and proactively shaped to meet visitor's perceived expectations, once they have visited the site.***

Conclusion

Council Officers will continue to investigate the best options for the future of the Dark Hedges site and will report back to Council with recommendations for a management approach that protects and improves on the integrity of the experience and delivers a quality experience for the thousands of inbound visitors that travel to the wider Causeway Coast and Glen's area.

Members noted the above for information.

12. Cultural Grants Programme

The Head of Community and Culture presented the report, previously circulated and summarised as undernoted;

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update in relation to the progress of a Culture, Arts & Heritage Small Grant Programme for the 2016-17 period.

In November 2015, Council approved a grant funding policy and funding programmes for 2016-17 which included a Culture, Arts & Heritage Grant programme. Through this programme, it is proposed that funding would be available to formally constituted “not for profit groups” for events, projects and activities which support the cultural strategy objectives and which develop arts and heritage locally and make them more accessible.

Within the Cultural Services budget, an indicative budget of £20,000 has been allocated to this new grants programme. However, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI) has also approached Council with a proposal which provides the opportunity to make additional funding available for arts activities in the Borough.

ACNI has had a longstanding relationship with the local councils for many years supporting the development of capital projects, providing support to artists and arts organisations in the area, and funding programmes which have been aimed at delivering benefits to local communities. To strengthen the partnership with the councils following the Review of Public Administration, ACNI will establish a Local Government Challenge Fund for each council area whereby it is proposing to delegate part of ACNI’s lottery funds to local councils to distribute to local arts organisations/activities. There is a proviso that it is matched and is additional to the current levels of funding provided by each council.

Council is therefore currently waiting on information from ACNI detailing the specific terms and conditions of the offer and these are required to inform council’s proposed culture, arts & heritage grants programme. It has however indicated flexibility regarding how the fund is deployed recognising that need and local circumstance vary across each council area.

Subject to council approval and to terms and conditions being agreed with ACNI, additional funds may therefore be available for the Culture, Arts & Heritage Grant Programme. Should confirmation regarding terms and conditions be available within the forthcoming weeks, staff would be in the position to launch the programme in early April, including information/animation workshops for potential applicant groups. It is anticipated that assessment of applications would take place in May, followed by a report to Leisure & Development in June. These timescales are, however, subject to match funding being confirmed.

Members noted the above for information.

13. Waterworld, Portrush (Recommended for Confidential Consideration)

Councillor Clarke queried the need for Item 13 to be heard 'In Committee' stating that he could see no legal issues in relation to this matter and therefore it should be heard in public session.

The Director of Leisure and Development stated that the report contained commercially sensitive information and confirmed that it would make it difficult for Members to reach a decision without this information.

Further discussion was held with some Elected Members commenting on the matter.

Councillor Clarke proposed seconded by Councillor McCandless: **that Item 13 Waterworld, Portrush be held 'Out of Committee'**

The Chair put the motion to the vote, 5 Members voted for, 8 Members voted against. The Chair declared the motion lost.

Councillor Hickey proposed seconded by Alderman Mullan and AGREED: **that the meeting be continued 'In Committee'**.

The Head of Sport and Well-being welcomed Irene Mullan, Manager of Waterworld to the meeting and presented an introduction to the report followed by additional information in the form of a short presentation.

The Head of Sport and Well-being delivered the report for information, previously circulated and summarised as undernoted.

The purpose of this report is to present to members a recommendation to:

- a) Close the Waterworld facility in Portrush, effective from June 2016***
- b) Reinstate the Waterslide features in Coleraine Leisure Centre***

Members are asked to consider the report not only in the context of leisure facility provision, but also in relation to an opportunity to prepare for the regeneration of Portrush in advance of the 2019 Open Golf event.

It was recommended that Council:

- a) Recognise expenditure of circa £43,000 in Waterworld for a limited 11 week period to be ineffective use of council resource and direct officers to initiate a closure plan for the building, and disposal of any remaining assets.
- b) Approve the business case for reinstating the Waterslides in Coleraine Leisure Centre as the most effective way of utilising Council resources and meeting the need for a wet play option in the local area which can be used by residents and visitors to the area throughout the year. Slides to be operational from July 2016.

Next Steps

Subject to Council's agreement, officers would bring a further report to Council's Corporate Policy & Resources Committee outlining the Capital Asset Realisation process for the Waterworld site.

Significant discussion took place where Members voiced their opinions and concerns, Officers responded to Members' queries and further information was requested.

Councillor Clarke proposed seconded by Councillor Stevenson and AGREED: **to recommend that Council:**

- a) **Defer a decision on Waterworld to allow officers to explore all possible viable options for this site including development of the site.**
- b) **Approve the business case for reinstating the Waterslides in Coleraine Leisure Centre as the most effective way of utilising Council resources and meeting the need for a wet play option in the local area which can be used by residents and visitors to the area throughout the year. Slides to be operational from July 2016.**

Councillor Clarke proposed seconded by Councillor Stevenson and AGREED; **that the meeting be continued 'Out of Committee'.**

14. Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

15. Consultations

There were no consultations.

16. Any Other Relevant Business (notified in accordance with Standing Order 12 (o))

16.1 Leisure and Development Workshop

It was agreed to hold a Workshop following a short Leisure and Development Committee Meeting on Tuesday 12th April 2016 to be held in the Large Committee Room, to discuss the 12 month Business Plan for 2016/2017.

This being all the business the meeting closed at 11:57 pm.