

CABINET – 31 JULY 2017

AGENDA ITEM 3 – PUBLIC QUESTION TIME – ORDER IN WHICH THE CHAIRMAN WILL INVITE QUESTIONS BELOW RECEIVED IN WRITING IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING

1. From Mr O'Neill to the Leader of the Council – Cllr Mrs Brown
2. From Mr Chester to the Leader of the Council – Cllr Mrs Brown
3. From Mr Chester to the Leader of the Council – Cllr Mrs Brown
4. From Mr Surridge to the Leader of the Council – Cllr Mrs Brown
5. From Mrs Richards to the Leader of the Council – Cllr Mrs Brown
6. From Mrs Surridge to the Leader of the Council – Cllr Mrs Brown
7. From Mrs Tester to the Leader of the Council – Cllr Mrs Brown
8. From Mr Ellis to the Leader of the Council – Cllr Mrs Brown

QUESTION 1 - From Mr O'Neill to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Mrs Brown – Agenda Item 11 – Disposal of Council Land at Cornfield Close, Littlehampton

Despite the history of health provision in Littlehampton and Wick and this Council's continued support over the past 10 years, we are now further away from a solution than ever. The CCG's failure or inability to fulfil its promises over the proposed new medical facility at the Enterprise Hub has left the town in a healthcare dilemma. They, the CCG, are now suggesting they are all ready to go except they have no site a reversal of the last impression I had that they had a site but were not ready to go. It would be laughable if it were not so serious. However, there may be a light at the end of this long, long tunnel. It seems obvious to me that the CCG need some help and maybe a shove to get on with the job they have promised to do.

Therefore, I would ask that in your discussion of Agenda item 11 you consider making a suitable site or piece of land available for the construction of a new medical centre. Whether it is along with any future purchasers of the land or a separate deal or whatever you think is appropriate then I believe we can at last achieve the promises the CCG have made to the people of the town.

Response

Thank you for your question and thank you for your recognition of the efforts the Council has undertaken to work towards a long term solution for health provision in Littlehampton.

We have made a number of suggestions to the CCG regarding both short and long-term solutions. Before any of these can be actioned they need to be clear about the requirements. Once this is known we will be ready to continue our facilitating role to deliver the required solutions. Officers are in regular contact with the CCG encouraging the speedy resolution of these issues. The public deserve to know how health care will be delivered in the future.

QUESTION 2 - From Mr Chester to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Mrs Brown

On what date was Arun District Council informed that Morrison's were no longer prepared to lease out part of the empty enterprise hub in Littlehampton for use as a medical practice?

Response from the Leader

Thank you for your question.

My understanding is that we have had no official communication from Morrison's. However, we are aware that Morrison's have been in discussions with third parties regarding the use of building as an enterprise centre, which is the original intended use when permission was granted for the Supermarket. Officers at Arun continue to work with the CCG and others to try and establish a solution to the long term health care needs of Littlehampton.

QUESTION 3 - From Mr Chester to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Mrs Brown– Agenda Item 11 – Disposal of Council Land at Cornfield Close, Littlehampton

The report tabled for consideration this evening on the Daisyfields campsite, Littlehampton in exempt business is titled 'Disposal of freehold land at Cornfield Close, Littlehampton'. Would the Leader give me an assurance that during the debate (which I shall not be able to hear) the importance of the campsite to the economy of the area is considered. With budget Hotel rooms in the area now regularly at £100 plus during the summer months the campsite provides the opportunity for a holiday to many who cannot afford these prices' as well as those attending local events as visitors or participants.

Response from the Leader

Thank you for your question.

The campsite at Daisyfields is in poor condition and in order for the campsite to remain viable it will require some very substantial investment. Research indicates that the area is reasonably well served by camping and caravanning sites, for example a mile away there is Littlehampton caravan Club site operated by the Caravan Club with 108 caravan pitches. There are also a mixture of caravans, tents and motorhome pitches totalling 234 in number within a reasonable distance of Littlehampton. The Council acknowledges that tourism is an important aspect of the area's economy. In considering the future of this site, the Cabinet will carefully evaluate the pros and cons of disposing of this land, including how any receipts might be used to support the local economy.

QUESTION 4 - From Mr Surridge to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Mrs Brown– Agenda Item 11 – Disposal of Council Land at Cornfield Close, Littlehampton

How Many People go Camping? It's estimated that about 1.2 million people in the UK go camping on a regular basis. That might not seem like many, but it's actually a sizable chunk of the possible population. We have no other camping facilities nearby, have you ever asked your own ADC staff how many of them go camping each year for their main or in-between holidays, go camping in the UK, using a

Caravan, a Motor Home or just in a tented way, this will give you an idea how widespread camping still is?

Response from the Leader

I have to admit that I have not asked the staff about camping.

In addition to the responses on this subject I have previously offered, I would add that I acknowledge that many people enjoy camping. As a Council we have to balance many competing priorities and determine what best for the residents of Arun as a whole.

QUESTION 5 - From Mrs Richards to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Mrs Brown- Agenda Item 11 – Disposal of Council Land at Cornfield Close, Littlehampton

Have the council considered that the camping Littlehampton Caravan Club Site, In Mill Lane, Lyminster is often full from May through to October each year and is open for ten months from March to January? Has the Council considered asking the people who run the Mill Road Caravan Site to run this one, but to have a greater amount of use of the site for Motor Homes or Touring caravans, but to also keep an element of pure tented Camping on the site, which could be a valuable asset to the local tourist industry?

Response from the Leader

In addition to the responses on this subject that I have previously offered, I would add in response to your question that the point you raise is an interesting one which we will consider in our debate.

QUESTION 6 - From Mrs Surridge to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Mrs Brown- Agenda Item 11 – Disposal of Council Land at Cornfield Close, Littlehampton

Do the Council know how successful Camping is in the UK? As anyone who's waited too long to book a spot on a campsite in summer, only to find there's no room, knows camping is a very popular pastime. Given the economic downturn, it's likely that more and more people will turn to camping as a cheaper holiday alternative, making it even busier. That's understandable. When times are tight, people still want to get away, and camping does represent the best value for money around. Just a few hours in the car and you can be in a different world, enjoying a holiday close to nature, but with access to all kinds of attractions. Why does the Council wish to deprive Littlehampton of this site that could be turned into something great for all the people?

Response from the Leader

In addition to the responses on this subject that I have previously offered, I would add that the existing lease on the site has come to an end and, as a result, the Council must now decide what it wishes to do with the land that it owns. The Council are facing continued reduction in funding from central government and as a result we must ensure that the assets that we hold and manage perform well financially and that as a Council we realise opportunities, where they exist, to increase revenue generated if the Council is to provide the services that residents want and to support the local economy as a whole.

QUESTION 7 - From Mrs Tester to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Mrs Brown– Agenda Item 11 – Disposal of Council Land at Cornfield Close, Littlehampton

Have the Council understood that for many years the Rutherford's, who have run the site for many years, have never been able to establish and build the site to modern exacting standards, due to only every being offered short term leases by ADC for various reasons. Now the Council have this opportunity, they appear to be overlooking all that the Rutherford's have done and not turning to them and offering a longer lease, with help to establish the site. Many people use the site every year and have been glad that we still have one in Littlehampton. Strategically placed this Camping site has easy accessibility to Littlehampton, Arundel, the South Downs National Park, Chichester, Bognor Regis, Amberley Museum, Chichester and Chichester Harbour, Bignor Roman Villa complex. Why is the Council acting this way?

Response from the Leader

In addition to the responses on this subject that I have previously offered, I would add that the Daisyfields site was subject to review by the Council's Property & Estates Team. This review included identifying existing camping and caravan sites within the district as well as the retention of the Daisyfields campsite, potentially providing a new longer lease. The review also identified potential alternative use for the site and it will now be up to Cabinet to consider, determine and recommend its preferred course of action for the Council's land today.

QUESTION 8 - From Mr Ellis to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Mrs Brown– Agenda Item 11 – Disposal of Council Land at Cornfield Close, Littlehampton (This question had been submitted prior to the meeting but was not asked as Mr Ellis stated that the previous responses had addressed the issues raised. However, it is included in this schedule for completeness.)

I recently asked an ADC Full Council meeting why is the Regeneration of Littlehampton and Bognor Regis taking so long? Now we find that the Council, in a closed secret session, is trying to deprive the area of the last camping site in this area, this is regeneration in reverse. The advisors to the Council might have said that there is no need for camping facilities in Littlehampton, they are wrong. Staycation for the Brits, the ease of accessibility for Continental European Campers, for whom camping is a way of life and could be vital to our future economy.

Camping is never going to go away. It is well established and continually growing in popularity, and likely to continue that way. The vast crowds that flock to festivals each summer often get a taste for camping that remains with them, bringing more people into the pastime. It's an ideal way to enjoy the spring and summer. Daisyfields is within an easy walk of Wick Village, so you can always stroll in and enjoy a cooked breakfast, do shopping, visit the pub or pick up the paper. Does the Council know how successful camping is in the UK? As anyone who's waited too long to book a spot on a campsite in summer, only to find there's no room, knows camping is a very popular pastime. Sometimes it can seem as if it's too popular, as sites become more and more crowded.

Given the economic downturn, it's likely that more and more people will turn to camping as a cheaper holiday alternative, making it even busier. That's understandable. When times are tight, people still want to get away, and camping does represent the best value for money around. Just a few hours in the care and you can be in a different world, enjoying a holiday close to nature, but with access to all kinds of attractions. Why does the Council wish to deprive Littlehampton of this site, that could be turned into something great for all the people?

Mr Ellis stated that the previous responses from the Leader of the Council encompassed the points he had raised.

Supplementary Question asked by Mr Ellis to the Leader of the Council

How many tented camping site pitches in Littlehampton will there be if we lose Daisy fields? There was concern that there would not be any campsites in Littlehampton, particularly with toilet and washing facilities on site.

Response from the Leader

“Presently across the Arun District we have approximately 336 potential tent pitches, including 40 potential tent pitches at Daisyfields in Littlehampton. Daisyfields is the only campsite in Littlehampton offering tent pitches, with the next nearest being located in Climping. The breakdown of pitches and sites is:-

Climping Brook Pit Lane – 75 potential tent plots
Daisyfields, Littlehampton - 40 potential tent plots
Ecclesden Farm, Angmering – 15 potential tent plots
Rowan Park, Bognor Regis – 6 potential tent plots
Ship & Anchor, Ford – 160 potential tent plots
Slindon, Nr Arundel – 40 potential tent plots

Total potential present pitches = 336, although I am led to believe that Ecclesden Farm is not open, which reduces plots to 321 and if Daisyfields is disposed of this would further reduce to 281.

With regard to washing / WC facilities, we do not hold this level of information so I am unable to respond on this point.”