

RECREATION & WORKS COMMITTEE

REPORT OF MEETING HELD ON 26TH APRIL 2006

- PRESENT** Councillor Mrs Cruse – in the Chair
- Councillors Mrs Bickley, J S Clark, Gething, Johnston, Mrs Mason, Miers, J McMurray, Pasley, Rigby, Walters
- Mrs P Rendle – Clerk of the Council
- APOLOGIES** There were no apologies for absence

RW674 SLADE ROAD PLAY AREA SITE VISIT

The Committee met at Slade Road Play Area. Councillor Mrs Cruse reminded members that whilst the site had once housed a number of items of equipment these had been removed in recent years due to vandalism and only the slide remained. Whilst the slide was in a relatively good condition the Town Council's inspector had highlighted a few minor items that required attention. There were also concerns that the site did not have the benefit of "informal supervision" as recommended by RoSPA and the National Playing Fields Association.

Members walked the site and discussed its future, various aspects of site maintenance and the feasibility of keeping the slide before reconvening the meeting at the Folk Hall.

RW675 HIGH STREET CCTV SYSTEM

Further to Minute No. RW664, Councillor Mrs Cruse welcomed Mr Chris Harrison, NSC CCTV Manager to the meeting and invited him to update members on the High Street CCTV System. Sergeant Terry Scoble also joined the meeting.

Mr Harrison gave a brief overview of the High Street CCTV System and demonstrated how the cameras worked and the type of pictures viewed by the operators in the control room at Weston-super-Mare. Mr Harrison confirmed that he wished to encourage members of the public to contact the CCTV control room whenever they saw an incident or were suspicious that something was about to happen and which could be viewed by the cameras. Information cards giving the telephone number of the control room and details of when the CCTV operators could and could not help were circulated. *(Clerk's note – The cards are available in the Town Council office and a supply has been given to the Chamber of Trade).*

Mr Harrison stressed that people needed to be aware that CCTV was not the "panacea to all evil" but it was a very effective tool when used in conjunction with other measures. Sergeant Scoble confirmed that the Police welcomed the use of CCTV and that they worked very closely with the Weston control room. Sergeant Scoble also stressed that members of the public should be encouraged to contact the CCTV control room whenever they saw a suspicious incident.

In answering questions from the Committee Mr Harrison and Sergeant Scoble confirmed that –

- The cameras worked together and were positioned to see each other thereby eliminating “black-spots” in the High Street area.
- The control room operators used the police radio network and were therefore able to alert the police as soon as an incident was spotted.
- At busy times of the week (Friday and Saturday nights and Saturday day-time) usually 3, but always a minimum of 2, operators were on duty in the control room. At other times usually 2 operators were on duty but there were odd occasions when there was only 1 operator. More operators will eventually be required as the North Somerset system expands.
- The control room staff also provide the emergency out-of-hours telephone service for North Somerset Council.
- For the majority of the time the cameras operated on pre-set positions with a maximum 30 second dwell time. This meant that a full cycle could take up to 6 minutes. Operators were also able to move the cameras manually when necessary.
- Whether members of the public should contact the police or CCTV room first would depend on the type of incident. Serious incidents should always be reported to the police first.
- There was no evidence that the High Street CCTV System had caused displacement of incidents to other areas of the town.
- Mr Harrison would welcome an invitation to attend a meeting of the Local Action Team.

In bringing the discussion to a close the Chairman thanked Mr Harrison and Sergeant Scoble for attending the meeting and for the interesting presentation.

RW676 SLADE ROAD PLAY AREA

The Committee continued their discussion about the Slade Road Play Area.

Members generally agreed that a decision about the future of the site should be deferred until North Somerset Council considered the future of the adjoining former school playing field.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that

1. The Slade Road Play Area be left as it is for the time being.
2. The future of the site be considered in conjunction with North Somerset Council and their proposals for the adjoining former school playing field.
3. The Council’s grounds maintenance contractor be asked to trim back path edges, over-hanging branches and brambles.
4. The Council’s play area inspector be asked to carry out a monthly inspection.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.25pm