

## Attendants – Worthing Parks

### Report by the Director (JM) for Communities

#### 1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report provides information on a review which has taken place into the present role that attendants undertake in the following Parks in Worthing - Church House Grounds, Marine Gardens and Beach House Park, and the financial cost of providing this service.
- 1.2 The report also recommends a change from the Council providing Attendants in these Parks to an alternative model where the bowling clubs based in each park take over the attendant's duties for bowls. At Marine Gardens where a putting green is also on offer, the report recommends that a licence be drawn up for the restaurant concessionaire to provide this Service.
- 1.3 This new approach, if adopted, for service delivery will achieve a cost saving to the Council, as well as providing a revenue stream for the bowling clubs and the restaurant concessionaire. This will ensure that the users of the Park continue to benefit from the duties that the Attendants presently carry out, still taking place.
- 1.4 The alternative approach recommended fits in with two themes from the Council's "Catching the Wave" vision of Cultivating Enterprising Communities and Becoming Adaptive Councils.

#### 2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Parks & Foreshore section currently provides, seasonally, Attendants at Church House Grounds, Marine Gardens and Beach House Park. Appendix 1 is a Job Description and Person Specification for the Attendant role.
- 2.2 The Attendants are employed to cover the bowling season, which this year runs from the 20<sup>th</sup> April 2014 until the 5<sup>th</sup> October 2014 from 10am until 6pm seven days a week.
- 2.3 Their primary role is to act as a cashier and provide information to the public for sports played within these three parks. These are presently bowls and tennis at Church House Grounds, bowls at Beach House Park, and bowls and putting at Marine Gardens.
- 2.4 The Attendants collect money for day ticket use and rink hire at their venue with season tickets being administered centrally for all Worthing Parks by the Parks & Foreshore Support Services team based at Commerce Way.

- 2.5 Their secondary role is to complete basic gardening duties when not serving customers. This secondary use of their time was introduced for the summer season 2014 to utilise productively quiet periods where the Attendant is not fully occupied as a Cashier.
- 2.6 The salaried budget allocated for providing Attendants for these three Parks for the 2014 summer season is inclusive of on costs £40,470.00, with the total collected in income for bowls, tennis and the putting green for 2013 (last full season figures available) £26,758.00, with the Attendants themselves collecting £14,397.00 of this total. Appendix 2 details a breakdown of the income/expenditure related to the Attendant role.
- 2.7 This is during a period where the Parks & Foreshore service revenue budget is decreasing each year and under increased financial pressure.
- 2.8 Officers from the Parks & Foreshore have held initial discussions with bowling club representatives over the cost of providing an Attendant at each Park and to gauge the club's interest in taking over the role in relation to the bowling club.
- 2.9 In return, it is recommended that the clubs will retain a % of the revenue collected for carrying out the duties contained within the Attendant's Job Description, with the exception of the gardening duties.
- 2.10 Representatives from Marine Gardens bowling club and the restaurant concessionaire, subject to financial terms being agreed which are satisfactory to both parties, are both in favour of taking over the Attendants role from 2015 onwards if the proposals are approved.
- 2.11 Further discussions are planned with representatives from Church House Grounds bowling club who are keen to work with Council's Officers to find an agreeable solution, recognising the need to look for club members to take a greater role in the day to day management of the green in the future to ensure that the provision of a green remains viable. It is intended to also discuss with the bowling club the potential of the club taking over the responsibility for tennis income collection too. If unsuccessful, alternative arrangements for the collection of tennis court income will be pursued.
- 2.12 There has been no interest received to date from the two bowling clubs based at Beach House Park. A further approach to both clubs is planned in the near future, subject to this report gaining approval.
- 2.13 It is not the intention of the Council to continue to run this loss making arrangement.

### **3.0 Proposal**

- 3.1 It is proposed that the bowling clubs keep 15% of all the revenue it collects per annum, with the clubs also taking over responsibility for all season ticket sales too. 15% off all revenue collected is the agreement already in place with Adur District Council's bowling clubs.
- 3.2 It is proposed through our Estates Section to agree with the Restaurant Concessionaire a suitable licence fee and licence term for transferring over the putting green facility to under their management.

3.3 It is proposed that the above two proposals take effect from the start of the bowling season 2015 which is 18<sup>th</sup> April 2015.

3.4 It is proposed that a review takes place at the end of the 2015 bowls season.

#### **4.0 Legal**

4.1 There is no legal obligation on the Council to provide this service; however, the role of attendant provides a welcome to the service users.

4.2 Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 provides that a local authority has the power to do anything which it considers likely to achieve the objective of promoting or improving the economic, social or environmental well-being of the area, and to this end it has a power to enter into arrangements or agreements with any person.

4.3 The employees concerned are on casual short-term contracts, but full consideration will be given to any contractual obligations or any TUPE implications.

#### **5.0 Financial implications**

5.1 If the recommendations contained within this report are accepted, there is a projected saving to the Parks and Foreshore Service of circa £36,456.30 per annum, based on the 2013 usage figures and paying the bowling clubs 15% of collected income

5.2 The project savings could reduce if the licence negotiations with the Marine Gardens restaurant concessionaire result in the concession retaining a greater share of the income raised than 15%.

5.3 This is not anticipated to reduce potential savings lower than £30,000.00

5.4 Worthing Borough Council will be acting as the principal in the supply of bowling to the public and so will be responsible for accounting for VAT on all income collected, with the bowling clubs acting as our agents.

5.5 The café putting green concession is treated as a right over land. Although this is normally a VAT exempt supply, Worthing Borough Council may decide to opt to tax the land and hence charge VAT on the lease, in order to manage our partial exemption position.

5.6 As part of the Council's enhanced budget monitoring arrangements, the Cabinet Member for Resources has been briefed on the proposals set out in this report.

#### **6.0 Recommendation**

**6.1 That the Cabinet Member for Environment approves the proposals as set out in paragraph 3 of the report.**

#### **Local Government Act 1972**

##### **Background Papers:**

Appendix 1 Attendant Job Description and Person Specification

Appendix 2 Attendant Income / Expenditure Breakdown 2013

**Contact Officer:**

Andy Edwards  
Parks and Foreshore Manager  
Commerce Way  
01273 263137  
andy.edwards@adur-worthing.gov.uk

## **Schedule of other matters**

### **1.0 Council Priority**

- 1.1 This proposal contributes to one of the councils priorities of:-  
Work more closely with and commission our communities, the voluntary sector, public organisations, business and commercial sectors to develop and deliver services.

### **2.0 Specific Action Plans**

- 2.1 Matter considered and no issues identified

### **3.0 Sustainability Issues**

- 3.1 Matter considered and no issues identified

### **4.0 Equality Issues**

- 4.1 Matter considered and no issues identified

### **5.0 Community Safety Issues (Section 17)**

- 5.1 Matter considered and no issues identified

### **6.0 Human Rights Issues**

- 6.1 Matter considered and no issues identified

### **7.0 Reputation**

- 7.1 Matter considered and no issues identified

### **8.0 Consultations**

- 8.1 Initial consultation with the three bowling clubs and the restaurant concessionaire has been carried out. Further consultation will take place subject to this report being approved before the planned implementation date of April 2015.

### **9.0 Risk Assessment**

- 9.1 Matter considered and no issues identified

### **10.0 Health & Safety Issues**

- 10.1 Matter considered and no issues identified

### **11.0 Procurement Strategy**

- 11.1 Matter considered and no issues identified

### **12.0 Partnership Working**

- 12.1 This proposal will contribute to the council's corporate priorities, in particular the vision of a mixed economy of partnership working.