

STRATFORD PARK DEVELOPMENT

6d. 1936

INCREASED COST OF £2,933

£28,980 SCHEME

REPORT APPROVED

At a special meeting of the Stroud Urban District Council, held on Friday evening, details of the increased cost of the Stratford Park Scheme in order to meet the requirements of the Ministry of Health and the provision of a plan and incidental works for heating the water in the swimming pools were considered by the Council.

The report of the Committee shewed that the increase would be £2,933, on the £26,047 on which tenders had been provisionally accepted, and it was explained that in the interim between the holding of the public inquiry and the present, prices had been against the Council, and as a result the increase in costs had to be faced.

After some discussion the report was adopted with four dissentients.

Mr. T. Langham (chairman) presided at the meeting, and other members present were Mr. P. E. Hayward (vice-chairman), Sir Harry Waters, Messrs. E. C. Peckham, A. C. Smith, J. W. Cooper, N. Dudbridge, T. Howell, W. J. Evans, F. H. Viner, F. Dell, F. L. Daniels, H. Clutterbuck, O. J. Pearce, C. W. Smith, W. M. Revell, H. T. Brinkworth, together with Messrs. F. S. Cutler (surveyor), W. H. Hudson (sanitary inspector), E. H. Larner (collector) and H. S. Gibbons (clerk).

The report of the Stratford Park Committee, which had been circulated to members of the Council, was as follows:

Lay-out of Stratford Park.

In accordance with instructions from the Committee appointed to consider the lay-out of Stratford Park, I have pleasure in submitting the following details of the increased cost of the scheme in order to meet the requirements of the Ministry of Health and the provision of a plan and incidental works for heating the water in the swimming pools.

It may be remembered that, having acquired the property known as Stratford Park, the Council appointed a Committee to consider a scheme for the lay-out thereof, the Council having outlined certain main features.

This Committee reported progress from time to time, and on the 6th November, 1935, submitted preliminary plans and estimates for a complete scheme. This scheme was approved by the Council and instructions given (a) to submit the scheme for approval by the Ministry and sanction to the necessary loans, and (b) to advertise for tenders for the proposed works, other than the works to be carried out by direct labour.

The following are brief details of the scheme based on provisionally accepted tenders:—

1. Open Air Swimming Pools, Tennis and Bowling Pavilions, Drainage Sewerage	10520
2. Tennis Courts and Bowling Green (including £867 for works by direct labour)	3049
3. Putting Green, Children's Corner	

costs, which was the reason for the difference in the estimate previously submitted and the one now before them.

Mr. Dell, chairman of the Stratford Park Committee, said they would see from the figures in the report that in the first instance the cost of the scheme for baths, pavilions, drainage and sewerage was £19,529. After the inquiry last June the Ministry recommended various alterations, and there had been some delay, which was not due to the Council or to the engineers in getting out new particulars. A great deal had had to be done. New tenders had had to be advertised for and the costs had had to be re-considered. That delay, unfortunately, had involved them in about £500 extra costs owing to the advance in prices of materials and labour. As they knew, they were scrapping the original idea of the septic tank and were carrying the sewerage from the swimming pool direct to the sewer. That would necessitate the construction of between 300 and 400 yards of sewers to join with the nearest point of the existing sewer. That sewer would cost £1,200. The new figure for the baths and pavilions, including internal drainage, was £21,562, representing an increase of £2,033 on the original figure. If they added to that sum the cost of constructing the sewer it gave them an increase of £3,233, which was additional cost.

Heated Water For Swimming Pool.

He would like to point out that for this additional sum they were getting a very much better scheme. They were heating the water in the pools, for one thing. This was a point which the Ministry drew attention to and asked the Council to consider. They pointed out, quite rightly, that heating the water would considerably lengthen the bathing season and would consequently be a source of extra revenue, so that they could hardly grudge the cost. The extra cost of heating and the filtration plant amounted to £1,592. The drainage was actually costing them £945 more because the whole of the £1,200 he had mentioned for the sewer would not be additional. The advance in the cost of materials and labour was £495, and with £205 extra for contingencies they had a total extra cost of £3,233. The Committee felt rather disappointed at this extra cost, but he was afraid the Council was now committed to the scheme to such an extent that they could hardly turn it down without incurring still more extra cost. He therefore moved the adoption of the Committee's report.

Mr. Daniels said he seconded the motion as a member of the committee, although not of the original Park Committee, on the grounds that it was a much better scheme by the expenditure of a little more capital. Two things struck him. In the original scheme there was a suggestion of a motor-driven sewerage pump, which would have meant heavy maintenance. That was cut out. They wanted to keep down their standing charges and once the sewer was laid there would be practically no maintenance costs. The other point was that now the scheme practically amounted to the proposals of the Ministry.

Mr. Dudbridge's Comments.

Mr. Dudbridge said they all knew his opinion of the whole scheme—what he had called an extravagant scheme—and he did not propose to rake that up again, but there were one or two points he wished to call attention to. He quite agreed that the question of the sewer was a matter rather out of the Council's hands. He might be looked upon as a member of the Opposition, but he wanted to be perfectly fair and he was leaving

Mr. Dudbridge said he brought the point forward mainly as a matter of interest, and Mr. Pearce forgot that although the extra revenue might produce £21 per annum that sum would be swallowed up in three weeks owing to the cost of the fuel. He knew of six or seven swimming pools which had been constructed in recent years, and all had the water heated.

The Chairman said they had to surmise their figures and were still doing so as regards revenue.

Comment From Added Areas.

Mr. C. W. Smith said that the rate-payers in the added areas felt it was rather hard on them to have to help pay for this scheme when they had had no voice in it at all. It was all arranged before the added areas came into Stroud. If they had to pay they thought they should be able to say "yes" or "no."

Mr. Evans asked whether they were paying the extra 6d. rate in their present rates.

The Clerk replied that provision was made in the current rate for a certain amount of expenses in connection with the scheme.

The Chairman, replying to Mr. Smith, said that everyone realised when there was a change people had to accept the privileges or responsibilities of that change as the case might be. In fairness to the old Council the question was considered whether the scheme should be shelved on to the shoulders of the new Council, but it was felt that as the old Council had accepted the responsibility so far it was only right that they should carry the scheme as far as they could and not push the responsibility on to new shoulders.

Mr. Revell said in the report the cost of the swimming pools, tennis and bowling pavilions and internal drainage was all grouped together as being £21,562. Could it not be separated so that the public might know the actual cost of the swimming pools? At present many people thought they were costing £21,000.

The Chairman said he believed the figures were given separately in the Press, each item being placed on its own. They made no secret about it.

The Clerk said it was very difficult to separate the various items. The contract included so many cubic feet of reinforced concrete, for instance, and it was practically impossible to say whether that referred to the pavilions, the baths or the dressing boxes. The engineers had been into this question and they could take it that the two swimming pools, the dressing boxes and the filtration plant cost somewhere in the region of £11,000. To that they had to add the cost of the heating plant, but these figures were very rough ones.

Mr. Revell thought the public would be glad of these figures and know that £11,000 covered the cost of the swimming pools, filtration plant and surrounds.

Mr. Clutterbuck asked what was the actual cost of the property and land, and was it correct that the scheme would place an additional 6d. in the £ on the rates for between 20 and 30 years?

The Chairman said the original estimate was that the scheme would cost an additional rate of 6d. The added rate levied was 5d. The purchase price of the whole of the estate was £5,300.

Mr. Dell, referring to Mr. Revell's question, said one of the reasons why it was difficult to separate the cost of the baths from the other items was that the pavilions were partly used for tennis and bowls. As regards the 6d. rate, at present it was all out-going in connection with Stratford Park and they were getting no revenue. When the bowling and tennis greens were in use and the swimming pools in full swing they hoped to get a fairly considerable revenue, and that this would materially decrease the amount of the rate.

The Clerk said this was not quite ac-

The following are brief details of the scheme based on provisionally accepted tenders:—

1. Open Air Swimming Pools, Tennis and Bowling Pavilions, Drainage Sewerage	£ 19520
2. Tennis Courts and Bowling Green (including £867 for works by direct labour)	3049
3. Putting Green, Children's Corner and Ornamental Gardens	780
4. Roads, Car Park Fencing and 4in. Water Main	2099
5. Contingencies and Conveyancing Mortgage Costs	590
Total	£26047

In the meantime, however, the Minister had held an inquiry into the Council's application and while approving the scheme in principle requested that:

- (i) The cost of the repairs to the Conservatory should be met out of revenue.
- (ii) The Septic Tank should be deleted from the scheme and the sewage and bath waste from the filters carried direct to a sewer.

while in a subsequent letter, the Ministry "hinted" that some form of heating the water in the pools might be considered having in mind that such heating tends to lengthen the bathing period, and thus induce additional revenue.

In view of the above, instructions were given by the Council (a) to delete the repairs to the Conservatory, (b) to make provision for heating the water in the pools, (c) to prepare a scheme giving effect to (ii) above and, (d) to obtain an amended tender covering these alterations.

The following are the details thereof:

Open Air Swimming Pools, Tennis and Bowling Pavilions and internal Drainage	£ 21562
Construction of Sewer from Open Air Pools to Stratford Road	1200
Items 2, 3, 4 and 5 remaining unaltered at	£6518
Less Repairs to the Conservatory	300
Total	£28980

From the foregoing it will be observed that the alterations required by the Ministry necessitate increased capital expenditure amounting to:—

On Open Air Swimming Pools and Appurtenant Works	£ 3233
Less—Repairs to Conservatory	300
Total	£2933

The increase in the cost of the proposed swimming pools may be summarised as follows:—

(i) Heating and Filtration Plants	£ 1592
(ii) Amended Drainage	943
(iii) Advances in Cost of Labour and Materials	495
(iv) Extra for Contingencies and Engineers' Fees (calculated on a percentage basis)	203
Total	£3233

H. S. GIBBONS,
Clerk of the Council.

NO DELAY.

The Chairman said that as promised to the Council on many occasions, the committee had made up its mind that there should be no delay directly any information could be submitted to them on which it was possible for them to proceed with the development of the Park. Therefore, although the monthly meeting of the Council was next week, it was decided to call that special meeting in view of the information to hand. There was no need for him to call attention to any point in the report which had been sent to each member, but he wished to remind them that the delay which had occurred was owing to the result of the inquiry held by the Ministry, and the consequent alterations which had been suggested. Unfortunately, in the meantime, prices had been against them and they were now faced with an increase in

opinion of the whole scheme—what he had called an extravagant scheme—and he did not propose to rake that up again, but there were one or two points he wished to call attention to. He quite agreed that the question of the sewer was a matter rather out of the Council's hands. He might be looked upon as a member of the Opposition, but he wanted to be perfectly fair and he was leaving that matter out of his observations. Regarding the heating and filtration plant he had heard the Chairman mention on more than one occasion that the old Council did not enter into the scheme in a blindfolded manner. They probably did not, but he could not understand why they had left out the question of heating the water. Heating water for an open-air bath was a matter of the utmost importance and should have received consideration in the first instance. Had that been part of the original scheme it would have cost £1,592, according to the Committee's report, and with the addition of £943 for drainage there would have been a total of £2,535. Now they had an advance of £495 for the cost of labour and materials. That meant that 63 per cent. of that £495 was applicable to the heating and filtration plant. If this had been included in the original scheme they would have saved the ratepayers £312, which boiled down to a rate of 3d. in the £. It was an obvious thing which should have been included and they would have saved £312.

The Chairman said originally the question of heating was thoroughly considered by the old Council, but it was a question of the expense. When they had the suggestion from the Ministry they thought it worth while. At first they had to bear in mind how far the Ministry was likely to allow them to go regarding estimated costs. Apart from that there would still have been the delay and the extra cost in connection with the advance in labour and materials.

Mr. Pearce said in the first instance they thought the cost of the whole scheme would mean a 6d. rate. That was 12 months ago, but now the product of a 1d. rate had increased to £380. If they based their figures on a twenty years' loan period—he did not know exactly whether the time for redemption would average 20 years—it would work out at £2,254 per annum, and a 6d. rate would bring in £2,280. Therefore, although the cost had gone up a matter of £3,000, so had the product of a 1d. rate, and the 6d. rate spoken of twelve months ago would still cover the total cost. Some of the loan periods would be shorter than twenty years and some longer, but he thought he was safe in averaging the period at twenty years.

The Chairman said when a 6d. rate was mentioned, as far as they gathered inside and outside the Council the general expression of opinion was that if the scheme could be covered for such a rate there would be no objections from the ratepayers, as they realised they would be getting good value for their money.

Mr. Hayward said Mr. Dudbridge had reckoned that the increase for labour and materials was 63 per cent. of the additional cost, but it was additional to the whole scheme, and not just the extra heating and sewerage expenses, and therefore could not be 63 per cent.

Mr. Dudbridge said his contention was that £312 could have been saved if heating had been included in the original scheme.

Mr. Pearce said with all due respect to Mr. Dudbridge it was easy to be wise after the event, but they did not foresee in the early days that they would need to have heating apparatus. The Ministry had wished them to instal this as it would prolong the bathing season, and the additional revenue should help to meet that extra £300 expenditure. At any rate it would meet the interest and sinking fund on that amount which would be about £21 per annum.

and bowls. As regards the 6d. rate, at present it was all out-going in connection with Stratford Park and they were getting no revenue. When the bowling and tennis greens were in use and the swimming pools in full swing they hoped to get a fairly considerable revenue, and that this would materially decrease the amount of the rate.

The Clerk said this was not quite accurate, as the figures he had given were the net cost of the scheme. The difference between income and expenditure was estimated to be a 5d. rate. These estimates, however, were based on the first year or so. Some of the loan periods would be only for five years and therefore at the end of that time the loans would be repaid and the charges correspondingly reduced. Of course, this was all purely estimate and much depended on so many things.

The Chairman said they would have to wait and see what the actual results were.

The Resolution.

Mr. Dell's motion to accept the committee's recommendations was put in the form of a resolution, that the scheme was approved and that the amended tender of Messrs. Nicholls should be accepted, and the Clerk instructed to submit same to the Ministry with an application for sanction for the necessary loans.

This was carried, four members voting against.

British Legion Rally.

The Council accepted the invitation of the British Legion to officially attend the County Rally to be held in Stroud on October 11th, and it was agreed that they should attend the service in the Parish Church.

Some Points for Advertisers

The "Stroud News" sale circulation within the Urban and Rural Districts of Stroud is larger than that of all other weekly newspapers combined.



Its value to Advertisers is enhanced by the fact that it reaches the Buying Classes of the whole district.



It is the only Newspaper printed within the Stroud Urban and Rural Districts.