

## **MINUTES OF THE PARKS AND EVENTS COMMITTEE HELD ON 7TH JANUARY, 2014**

Present: Councillor B Burn Snr (Chair) and  
Councillors B Allen, Mrs B E Allen,  
R Arthur, Mrs M R Baird,  
Mrs G Bleasdale, B Burn Jnr, S Cudlip,  
R Meir, Miss S Morrison, K Shaw,  
G A Shepherd, C Snowball, R Whitehead

Apologies: Mrs H Cahill, I Paul, K Younger

### **1. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Members were reminded prior to the start of the meeting of the need to disclose any interests, prejudicial or personal, in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

### **2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 20TH NOVEMBER, 2013**

RECOMMENDED the Minutes of this meeting, a copy of which had been previously printed and circulated to each Member, be approved and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

### **3. PARKS AND EVENTS SERVICES**

The Committee considered the Deputy Town Clerk's report which provided an update on the following items.

#### **3.1 Edan's Art Block**

The Committee was advised that the East Durham Artists Network had expressed an interest in assisting with the distribution of tourist information from the Art Block in Church Street once the Council's offices on Adelaide Row closed. In return for such assistance they had requested help from the Town Council to improve their frontage with planting and the development of an art piece in the circular bed. It had been suggested that the Art Block could use the Council's redundant computers and screens to have a small digital display which would detail the Council's work and events with the tourism information being made available below. In discussion it was felt that the in-kind support suggested would not be appropriate.

RECOMMENDED the Council approve the display of tourist information leaflets in relation to Seaham within the EDAN art block on Church Street.

#### **3.2 Allotment Issues**

The Committee was advised that in relation to Hill Crescent, the Allotment Association and tenant had been informed of the Council's decision to take back a section of land and the Deputy Town Clerk reported that the site was currently being cleared of rubbish. At Parkside one plot holder had been

evicted and improvements were in the process of being made to the site in question. Two letters had been received from the Hall Street Allotment Association, one in relation to their lease and another about resurfacing works they believed were required at that location. They had requested to attend the next meeting of the Parks and Events Committee to discuss both these issues. In discussion it was suggested that in any such future circumstances when organisations requested attendance at meetings, the Officers should liaise with the Chair of the appropriate Committee to gain permission for attendance at the earliest opportunity, rather than waiting until the next meeting to seek permission.

RECOMMENDED representatives of the Hall Street Allotment Association be invited to attend the next meeting of this Committee to discuss their concerns with Councillors, subject to the specific items for discussion being provided to the Town Council in advance of the meeting.

### **3.3 Red Star Football**

Prior to the consideration of this item, Councillor G A Shepherd declared an interest and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

The Committee considered a letter from the new Chair of the Seaham Red Star Football Club who had requested to attend the next meeting to discuss the proposed improvements to the sports facilities at Seaham Town Park. The Deputy Town Clerk elaborated on the discussions that had taken place between himself and the Club and Members suggested that the Club be asked to detail in advance of the meeting the specific issues they wished to discuss.

RECOMMENDED representatives of the Red Star Football Club be invited to attend the next meeting of this Committee to discuss their concerns with Councillors, subject to the specific items for discussion being provided to the Town Council in advance of the meeting.

### **3.4 Maureen Terrace/Springfield Crescent**

The Committee was advised of concerns raised in relation to the amount of illegal off road motorbikes in Deneside Park. Their route usually starts on land owned by Durham County Council and in this respect the Durham Rights of Way Officer had been asked to investigate whether preventative measures could be taken. A request had also been submitted for the County Council to fund provision of better fencing and gates which the Town Council could put in place in an effort to resolve this issue. The response from the Rights of Way Officer had provided advice and a contribution of £300 towards the proposals. Members were advised that unspent funds within the Parks plants budget could allow £1,700 to be utilised for this project's material costs.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) The Council note the information provided and acknowledge the support from Durham County Council.
- (ii) A sum of £1,700 be moved from the Parks Department's plants budget to be utilised along with Durham County Council's contribution to enable appropriate measures to be put in place to resolve the problem.

### **3.5 Seaham Hall Fencing**

The Committee was advised of various issues that exist with regard to the recently installed fencing and gates around Seaham Hall. The Deputy Town Clerk suggested that negotiations take place with Seaham Hall to install over a period of time a more attractive style of fencing and gates such as the ornate heritage style fencing similar to that installed at Seaham Town Park to enhance the visual appearance of this location.

RECOMMENDED the Council endorse the proposed negotiations to be undertaken by the Deputy Town Clerk with Seaham Hall.

### **3.6 Seaham Town Park – Gym Equipment Resurfacing**

The Committee was advised that, with the aim of providing improved health and safety around the popular gym equipment located in Seaham Town Park, resurfacing works were taking place.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported.

### **3.7 Potential to Swap Ford Ranger with Transit Tail Lift and Current Transit Tipper with Transit Tail Lift Tipper**

This item was initially considered at the last meeting when more information was requested. The Deputy Town Clerk stated that as the Ford Ranger was due for renewal the Parks staff had suggested it be replaced with a transit tail lift. The existing transit tipper was also due to be replaced in the near future and quotations were being sought for this. Members were advised that all available options would be re-submitted to this Committee for consideration when these quotations had been received.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported and await a full report at the next meeting of this Committee.

### **3.8 Solar Panels for Dawdon Football Pavilion**

The Committee was reminded that initial discussion on this item had taken place at the last meeting when Members had requested a comprehensive report be brought back for consideration. The Deputy Town Clerk advised that three quotations had now been requested in respect of the provision of solar panels and an immersion system for the Dawdon Football Pavilion and

an update would be provided at the next meeting. An initial quotation of £12k had already been received. In discussion it was suggested that solar panels may be prone to vandalism in that area and appropriate insurance should also be considered. A Member voiced concern that budgetary provision had not been made for such improvements and in view of the current austerity measures, these proposals may need to be reviewed and other cheaper measures explored.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported and await a full report at the next meeting of this Committee.

### **3.9 Increasing Biodiversity and Nature Reserves in Seaham**

The Committee was reminded that initial discussion on this item had taken place at the last meeting when it was queried whether it would be possible to designate certain areas of the town as local nature reserves. The Deputy Town Clerk elaborated on the proposed partnership working and stated that the denes within the town may be able to be categorised as such and the possibility of funding would be explored.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported.

### **3.10 Environmental Improvement Survey**

The Committee was reminded that this item had been discussed at the last meeting when Members approved the draft questions proposed for inclusion in a survey in respect of environmental improvements and suggested ways in which such a survey could be undertaken. The Deputy Town Clerk advised that this survey would be published on-line next week in addition to it being advertised within the Seaham Reporter and Civic Office staff being present within Byron Place to survey residents on a one to one basis. The results of the survey would be brought back to the March meeting of this Committee.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported and await the results of the survey at the March meeting of this Committee.

### **3.11 Floral Display Costs**

At the last meeting of this Committee a Member requested that details of the costs involved in the provision of floral displays be reported back to this meeting. Members were reminded that sustainable planting was introduced to progressively replace the seasonal planting which would save a large proportion of time and resources. The information provided to Members prior to this meeting was in relation to the two carpet bedding sites and the troughs and hanging baskets across the town and on the sea front. A letter of thanks from the Royal Air Forces Association for the floral display produced by the Town Council to commemorate their 60th year had been previously circulated. In discussion Members felt that the carpet bedding was an integral part of the town which had been undertaken over a considerable number of years and should be continued.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) The Council approve the continuation of carpet bedding displays within the town.
- (ii) The letter from the Royal Air Forces Association in respect of the floral display, be noted.

### **3.12 Underpass from Seaham Station**

The Committee was advised that Network Rail had confirmed that they would be addressing the drainage issue in the near future.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported.

### **3.13 Development Land at Princess Road Cemetery**

The Committee was advised that the Durham Diocesan Registry had approved the removal of the consecration of a section of land at Princess Road Cemetery at a cost of £500. In discussion it was suggested that after de-consecration, outline planning consent be sought for the much larger site prior to it being put for sale by tender.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) The Council grant authority for the payment of £500 to the Durham Diocesan Registry in respect of the legal fees to remove the consecration at the specified section of land in Princess Road Cemetery.
- (ii) Following the removal of the consecration of the land in question, outline planning consent be sought for the now larger site prior to it being advertised for sale.

### **3.14 Commonwealth Signage**

The Committee was advised that since the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Great War the CWGC was hoping to raise awareness by the use of signage at appropriate locations. Details of the signage proposed had been previously circulated to Members. The signage would be erected on the gate or wall of the Princess Road Cemetery where there were 69 casualties recorded, details of which could be viewed on the CWGC website.

RECOMMENDED the Council approve the erection of the appropriate signage at the Princess Road Cemetery.

### **3.15 Seaham Carnival 2014**

The Committee had been previously advised of the links to access the videos of last year's Seaham Carnival and were asked to consider a suitable

date for the 2014 event from a list of three options. A discussion ensued on the advantages and disadvantages of each date and a third alternative of the beginning of July, prior to the break-up date of the schools, was suggested.

RECOMMENDED the Deputy Town Clerk explore all possibilities and also include these options within the survey detailed at item 3.10 above with a full report being brought back to Members

### **3.16 Resolution to Exclude the Press and Public**

RECOMMENDED in view of the confidential nature of the following item, the formal resolution be hereby passed to exclude the press and public from the meeting pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act, 1961

### **3.17 Burial Fees Proposed Increases**

The Committee was reminded that this item had been initially discussed at the last meeting when the Deputy Town Clerk had been asked to propose possible increases to burial fees to bring the Town Council in line with neighbouring authorities. Details of possible increases had been previously circulated to Members.

RECOMMENDED the Council agree not to increase the burial fees over and above the small percentage national inflation figure.

### **3.18 Risk Management Issues**

RECOMMENDED the Council accept the Deputy Town Clerk's report of risk assessment carried out in relation to the various issues reported.

## **4. RISK ASSESSMENTS**

The Council was reminded of the requirement as part of the corporate governance processes for risk assessments to be undertaken in relation to various activities. At regular intervals Members had been provided with reports on progress made in this area and the Committee was advised of the process involved in carrying out initial assessments made of risks in a range of events activities. The Committee noted the process followed in assessing the risks.

RECOMMENDED the Council formally agree to accept the risk assessments covering the various items now reported.

## **5. PRESS OPPORTUNITIES**

The Committee considered the items previously discussed and agreed that the measures proposed in item number 3.4 should be notified to the press.

RECOMMENDED the measures to be taken by the Town Council, as outlined in item no. 3.4, to alleviate the problem of off-road cycling, be promoted in the press.