

MINUTES OF THE PARKS AND EVENTS COMMITTEE HELD ON 4TH FEBRUARY, 2014

Present: Councillor B Burn Snr, (Chair) and
Councillors R Arthur, E Bell, Mrs J A Bell,
Mrs G Bleasdale, B Burn Jnr, S Cudlip,
Mrs S Forster, Miss S Morrison, N R Page,
I Paul, K Shaw, G A Shepherd,
C Snowball, R Whitehead, K Younger

Apologies: Councillors B Allen, Mrs B E Allen,
Mrs H Cahill

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 7TH JANUARY, 2014

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 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 Chair welcomed to the meeting Mr Joseph Scollen, the Chair of the Red Star Football Club, together with Mr Dave Copeland, Secretary. Mr Scollen had requested they be allowed to attend this meeting to address Members on specific issues in relation to the Club. Mr Scollen's letter to the Town Council detailing the issues in question, together with associated costs, had previously been circulated to all Members.

Mr Scollen began by thanking the Town Council for the invitation to attend this meeting and stated that in his allotted time he wished to raise the two most important issues to the Club which affected their position in the Northern League. He went on to say that this year would be the 125th anniversary of the Northern League and it is the second oldest football league in the world. He stated that the Red Star Football Club was now the only team in East Durham that played in the Northern League. They had recently undergone a ground inspection which had identified a failing in

respect of the away team's changing room floor which has a hole in it and in addition the ladies toilet which had been altered by the Town Council's staff by the removal of the cubicle partition to provide storage facilities for equipment. Both of these had failed the ground inspection and the Club now only had until the 31st March to have these failings resolved otherwise they would be ejected from the League.

In respect of the floor, he stated that it was very springy as well as having a hole in it, and in this respect there is the potential for someone to be injured. This had been brought to the Deputy Town Clerk's attention prior to Christmas, however, he is of the opinion that it is the responsibility of the Club to undertake structural repairs of this nature. On reviewing their tenancy agreement they dispute this.

Mr Scollen then reported that at the moment there is no heating within the facility and they have to use electric fan heaters to heat the changing rooms, the referee's room and the canteen, as part of Northern League requirements. When these are plugged in, however, they trip out the floodlights and trainer lights. Mr Vince Elwick has been tasked with splitting the latter two sets of lights to alleviate the problem. Mr Scollen emphasised that the Club cannot be in a situation whereby the floodlights fail during a home game. In addition there was the added issue of the switch for the floodlights now being located in the grounds of the house, which was sold by the Town Council, thereby necessitating someone climbing over the fence to switch it on in the owner's absence.

Following the departure of Mr Scollen and Mr Copeland, the Committee discussed the information provided and the following comments were made:

- (i) The Deputy Town Clerk stated that the Parks Department accept some responsibility for the dismantling of the ladies toilet facilities. An agreement had been reached with the previous Chair that because the Parks staff were in the park every day, they were permitted to use the toilets as a storage facility. He stated that these had now been converted back to individual cubicles.
- (ii) The Deputy Town Clerk stated that he had not been aware of the floodlight switch being located in the grounds of the house and this would be rectified.
- (iii) The Committee was advised of an agreement reached with the Club some time ago with regard to the floor however Members felt that because of the health and safety aspect this should be remedied as quickly as possible, whether through insurance claim or not.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) The Council authorise the repair to the changing room floor as a matter of urgency and take appropriate action with regard to insurance.
- (ii) The Council agree to consider the other issues raised at the next meeting.

3.2 Hall Street Allotment

Following Members approval at the previous meeting the Deputy Town Clerk has invited representatives of the Hall Street Allotment Association to the meeting. Mr Joseph Scollen, Secretary, Mr Alan Mileham, Chairman and Mr Laurence Taylor, Treasurer from the Association were present to discuss issues pertaining to the site.

Mr Scollen stated that back in June, 2013 the Town Council had granted permission for the Association to have toilet facilities included on the site. The Association had gone through the application for the Big Lottery Fund to find that to be eligible for funding you must either own the freehold of the land or building or a lease that cannot be brought to an end by five years. As the Town Council may be aware their lease now has only four years left to run. He therefore asked the Council if they could extend their lease to ten years or more so they could apply for this lottery funding.

The second issue was in relation to the state of the internal pathways, which in the winter appear to be dangerous and not fit for purpose in relation to the Association's disabled members. They asked, therefore if the Town Council could provide some form of road shavings or similar surfacing materials and the Association could provide the appropriate labour to lay these down.

Their third issue was in relation to a dispute between the Association and a plot holder last year which the Town Council had become involved in. He stated that plot holders sign to say they will abide by the Association's rules when they take on an allotment and these rules were not adhered to after the Council became involved with this particular individual. They requested that the internal rules of the Association be recognised by the Council and in the future if plot holders make a report to the Council about a dispute they have, that the Council contact the Association who can explain the reasons behind the dispute.

The Chair thanked the representatives of the Association for the information provided and advised that the Council would consider their requests following their departure. They then left the meeting.

RECOMMENDED this item is deferred for consideration to the next meeting.

3.3 Durham County Council's Draft Tree Management Policy

The Committee considered the draft tree policy and the salient points which had been identified by the Deputy Town Clerk, a copy of which had been previously circulated.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported.

3.4 Dawdon Football Pavilion Electric Supply

Following concerns raised by Members with regard to potential vandalism of solar panels a quotation had been requested from the Northern Power Grid to increase the supply at the Pavilion in order to provide hot showers and better lighting etc. On receipt of this information this would be brought to the next scheduled meeting of this Committee for further consideration.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported and await further information.

3.5 Princess Road Cemetery Development Land

Members were advised that the consecration had now been removed from land at Princess Road Cemetery. It was now the intention to apply for outline planning consent for the larger site and following acquisition of this a tendering exercise would take place.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported.

3.6 Proposed Cancellation of Parks and Events Meeting – 24th June

RECOMMENDED that on the date that England are to play Cost Rica in the World Cup, namely the 24th June, 2014, the Committee meetings scheduled to take place on that date be moved by one day.

3.7 Potential to Swap Ford Ranger with Transit Crew Cab, Tail Lift Tipper and Current Transit Crewcab Tipper with Transit Crew Cab, Tail Lift Tipper

The Committee was advised that instead of renewing the Ford Ranger, a proposal had been put forward for it to be replaced with a transit crew cab tail lift which has operational benefits. In addition the existing transit tipper is also due for replacement and as a result of this quotations had been sought to replace both vehicles at a price of £452.40 a month. In addition the proposed replacements should be white in colour to meet highway regulations with high vis markings and tow bar which would be additional to the costs stated.

RECOMMENDED the Council approve the appropriate expenditure as outlined, subject to the Officers confirming that there is a sufficient amount within the Parks Department's budget, to replace the current Ford Ranger with a Transit Crew Cab Tail Lift Tipper and the current Transit Crew Cab Tipper with a Transit Crew Cab Tail Lift Tipper.

3.8 Additional Funds for Multi Use Pavilion – Seaham Town Park

The Committee was advised that an additional £30,000 had been obtained from Durham County Council and therefore the Deputy Town Clerk proposed that phase one of the Multi Use Pavilion be progressed and the lowest tenderer be contacted to negotiate the best possible build for £200,000 with an early start date. A Member commented that there was no reference within the Deputy Town Clerk's report to the total sum of money available. It was recognised that £170,000 had been provided by insurance following the fire, and this, together with the £30,000 from Durham County Council, equated to £200,000. The lowest tender was £230,000 and it was commented that it would be helpful if Members had been provided with that information within the report so that consideration could be given to where savings could be made to come up with the additional £30,000 required. The Deputy Town Clerk stated he would come back with further information.

A discussion then ensued on whether a bar should be included within phase 1 of the scheme as it was initially to be provided for within phase 2.

RECOMMENDED this item is deferred for consideration to the next meeting.

3.9 Increasing Biodiversity and Nature Reserves in Seaham

The Committee was advised that the Deputy Town Clerk had met with the Senior Ecologist at Durham County Council and a number of options were to be considered to increase biodiversity and nature reserves in Seaham.

RECOMMENDED an invitation be extended to Mr Gary Shears, MSc., the Senior Ecologist at Durham County Council to attend a meeting of the Council later in the year.

3.10 New Sea Front Wardens

Prior to the consideration of this item, Councillors E Bell, Mrs J A Bell, Mrs S Forster and Miss S Morrison all declared an interest and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

The Committee considered the proposed recruitment of new Sea Front Wardens as detailed in the proposals submitted by the East Durham AAP, a

copy of which had been previously circulated. In discussion it was pointed out that the employment or otherwise of these apprentices would form part of the organisational review which had not as yet taken place.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported and that no action could be taken at this time.

3.11 Underpass

The Committee was advised that Network Rail had again been contacted with regard to the outstanding drainage issue at this location. A Member commented that there had also been problems recently with the generator resulting in intermittent problems with lighting and a number of complaints had been made by members of the public. In addition there had been large groups of youths present in the underpass which some members of the public could perceive as intimidating.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) The Town Clerk arrange for a letter to be sent to Network Rail to convey the Town Council's dissatisfaction with this situation and advise them that if no action is taken the HSE would be contacted.
- (ii) The Police and Durham County Council be contacted with regard to the large numbers of youths gathering at this location, particularly with intermittent lighting.

3.12 Armed Forces Day – 28th June, 2014

RECOMMENDED the Council note that preparations were being made for this event and further details would be brought to the next meeting of this Committee

3.13 Seaham Carnival 2014

The Committee was advised that Seaham School of Technology had confirmed their interest in being involved in the Carnival Weekend if it was to be held during School term time. Responses were still awaited from other schools. The Deputy Town Clerk proposed that the Carnival take place this year on the 4th, 5th and 6th of July and confirmation had been provided by the fairgrounds that this weekend would be better and would enable them to increase the number and quality of rides. A Member queried where these additional rides were to be sited as there did not appear to be any available space. The Deputy Town Clerk agreed to provide this information at a future meeting of this Committee. Three companies who supply Big Screens had been asked to quote for the provision of one big screen at the carnival weekend and only one could deliver at a cost of £5,900 + VAT.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) The Council approve the Seaham Carnival take place on the 4th, 5th and 6th July, 2014.
- (ii) The Deputy Town Clerk provide a draft layout to the Committee at a future meeting to indicate where the additional rides could be sited.
- (iii) The Council approve the expenditure of £5,900 plus VAT for the supply of one big screen on the 4th, 5th and 6th July, 2014, and the appropriate order be placed with the Big Screen Media Company.

3.14 Seaham's Brass Event 2014

The Committee was advised that the Deputy Town Clerk had contacted Durham County Council to ascertain whether they intended to hold a Brass Event in Seaham this year, however no response had yet been received. It was suggested that as the event was so successful last year, if the intention was not to attend, attempts should be made to hire a suitable band.

RECOMMENDED estimated costs for the provision of a brass band be obtained by the Deputy Town for consideration by Members at a future meeting of this Committee.

3.15 Seaham's Official Start of World War 1 Anniversary Picnic

The Committee was advised that a number of local groups such as the Royal British Legion, The Remember Them Fund and War Memorial Group were keen to work with the Council to provide a low cost event on the Terrace Green on the 4th August, 2014. This was the official start day of World War I and attempts were being made to seek external funding to support such an event. The Committee was asked to consider whether the Town Council would be agreeable to the provision of help in kind by 5 members of the Parks Department staff and the Deputy Town Clerk on the day. This assistance could take the form of provision of a stage and sound system or by provision of flags and banners. In discussion a Member queried whether a floral display could be produced to commemorate the event.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) The Council agree to provide assistance in kind to this event as outlined.
- (ii) Authority be granted for a floral display to be produced to commemorate the start of World War 1.

3.16 Seaham Schools Sports Day Event

The Committee was advised that two schools had expressed an interest in participating in and contributing to the costs of running the event. The Deputy Town Clerk stated, however, that any contributions from local schools were likely to be minimal and recommended that the event take place on the same format as last year, with no contributory requirement, as there is provision for this within the Council's budget. The proposed date for the event is 11th June, 2014.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) The Council approve that a Seaham Schools Sports Day take place on 11th June, 2014, subject to it being delivered within the agreed budgetary provision.
- (ii) The Council agree that local schools not be asked to make contributions to the event.

3.17 Classic Car Event

The Committee was advised that Lickety Split and the Round Table had proposed the 12th July, 2014 for this event to take place.

RECOMMENDED the Council approve the 12th July, 2014 as a suitable date for the Classic Car event to take place.

3.18 Promoting Seaham's Videos and Digital Map

The Committee was advised that this item should be deferred in view of the requirement to ascertain the legalities of the display of faces of members of the public on photographs or film, as detailed in the Arts and Information Committee

RECOMMENDED this item be re-submitted for consideration to this Committee at a later date after the position has been clarified in relation to the use of photographs or video which contains close ups of members of the public being displayed.

3.19 Marina Meeting

The Committee was advised that a meeting had taken place with Mr Tony Forster of Durham County Council and it was proposed to meet on a more regular basis to assist the Town Council with events.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported.

3.20 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. PRESS OPPORTUNITIES

The Committee considered the items previously discussed and agreed that the following items be notified to the press:

- (i) The current state of the underpass at Seaham Station, and the measures being taken by the Town Council, as detailed in item number 3.11.
- (ii) The revised dates for the 2014 Seaham Carnival

RECOMMENDED these issues, as detailed in (i) and (ii), be promoted in the press.