

MINUTES OF THE PARKS AND EVENTS COMMITTEE HELD ON 25TH NOVEMBER, 2014

Present: Councillor Miss S Morrison (Chair) and Councillors Mrs M R Baird, E Bell, Mrs J A Bell, B Burn Snr, B Burn Jnr, S Cudlip, Mrs S Forster, R Meir, I Paul, C Snowball, R Whitehead, K Younger

Apologies: Councillors B Allen, Mrs B E Allen, R Arthur, Mrs H Cahill, B Taylor

Prior to commencement of the meeting the Chair advised members of this Committee and members of the public that in line with the amendment to 'the public bodies (admission to meetings) act 1960', which came into force in August, 2014, parts of this meeting may be recorded by photographic, video and audio means.

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 28TH OCTOBER, 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 Cricket Club Pavilion Tender

The Committee considered the checks and references that had been undertaken in respect of the lowest tenderers which provided assurances and evidence that the company had a good working history.

The Company who had submitted the lowest tender had confirmed its willingness to enter into both a secured bond and retention situation if the Council so wished. The service charge to be levied on the contract price to be clarified and if this was a nominal fee, Members considered that the Town Council's standing orders should be waived to allow the contract to be awarded to NFM Contracting Services of Newcastle upon Tyne. Various other contractual details would be clarified at a pre-contract meeting.

RECOMMENDED subject to confirmation of a nominal service charge being levied, the Council agree to waive standing orders for contracts and authority be granted to award the contract to NFM Contracting Services of Newcastle upon Tyne for an amount of £195,479.

3.2 New Campsite Proposal

The Committee was advised that the company that had previously submitted two planning applications to site a caravan park on the top of the cliffs near the car boot site had indicated recently that they would be willing to consider a less obtrusive location on the inland side of the main road. As a well-designed campsite may be beneficial to the leisure and amenity value of the town it was suggested that Mr Noble be invited to a future meeting to enable the Town Council to assess the proposal.

RECOMMENDED the Council approve the invitation to be sent to Mr Noble to attend the next meeting of the Planning and Environmental Committee to discuss his proposal for a caravan site within the town.

3.3 Hall Street Allotment Issues

Concerns had been raised with regards to anti-social activities which were allegedly being undertaken at Hall Street Allotments. The Deputy Town Clerk elaborated on the activities and the interest that had been shown by the Police. In discussion it was felt that as the Allotments had a management committee, they should be contacted to be made aware of their responsibilities in this situation.

RECOMMENDED the Chair and Vice-Chair of this Committee together with Officers of the Town Council be granted authority to meet with members of the Allotment management committee and take whatever decisions as may be appropriate to bring a resolution to this situation.

3.4 Red Star Football Lease Agreement Arrears

The Committee was advised that no response had been received to numerous requests for the Red Star Football Committee to pay the outstanding fees in respect of their lease agreement arrears.

RECOMMENDED the Chair and Vice-Chair of this Committee together with Officers of the Town Council be granted authority to meet with members of the Red Star Football Club and take whatever decisions as may be appropriate to bring a resolution to this situation.

3.5 Dawdon Park External Funding Opportunities

The Committee was advised that the Coalfields Regeneration Trust and the AAP were being contacted to investigate potential funding for improvements at Dawdon Park which would be led by the Town Council.

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

3.6 Clock Garden/ North Railway Street And Incline Improvement Work

The Committee was advised that partnership work had continued with Durham County Council's Regeneration Team on the above sites which would be completed in the near future.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported.

3.7 Sale Of Princess Road Housing Development Plot

The Town Clerk stated that subject to tree surveys being carried out, it was envisaged that the funds would become available early in the new year.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported.

3.8 Video Review Of Fireworks Event

Members had been asked to visit Seaham Town Council's YouTube Page to view the video of the 2014 fireworks event. A shortened version of the video was shown to Members.

RECOMMENDED the Council agree the event was value for money.

3.9 Update On Terrace Green Transfer Issues

Durham County Council's Conservation Department had advised that more work was required on the management plan before the transfer of the Terrace Green could take place. It was envisaged that the transfer would take place in the spring of 2015 when consideration could be given to how best to utilise the area to attract visitors. Other possibilities were put forward in relation to its use and it was agreed that consideration of any proposals should not take place until the Terrace Green transfer had taken place.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now provided and defer consideration of the various potential uses of the Terrace Green until the completion of the transfer.

3.10 Londonderry Statue

The Committee was advised that in respect of the Londonderry Statue the Managing Agent had quoted a fixed fee of £600 plus VAT for their involvement which was additional to the Solicitors fees of £500 + VAT + reasonable disbursements. Members were reminded that £1,400 of grant funding had been received from Durham County Council towards the work.

RECOMMENDED the Council approve the payment of fees as outlined.

3.11 Lord Byron Society Visit Review And Plans For The Future

The recent event was a success and the Society was very positive in respect of working with the Town Council in the future.

In respect of the Byron Wedding anniversary in January 2015 it was pointed out that there was no budgetary provision within the current year for such an event, and any expenditure incurred would need to be met from savings made elsewhere within the Parks Department.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported.

3.12 RED BULL SOAP BOX RACE

Members were advised of a proposal for such an event which would have three or four categories, one for stand-alone karts with no power, one for pedal-power and, if possible to work in partnership with the Marina, one for pedal-powered flight and pedal-power boating. Investigations would be carried out in respect of associated costs such as first aid, stewarding and life guard cover with a full proposal being brought back to the Committee at a later date.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported.

3.13 Flag Pole New Town Hall

RECOMMENDED the Council note that a flagpole had now been erected outside of the new Town Hall.

3.14 Positive Feedback - Parks Department Work

The Committee was advised that many communications had been received in relation to recent events and works undertaken within the town, including the fireworks display, Deneside Park and the Princess Road Cemetery. It was also commented that significant savings had been made since the introduction of the sustainable planting. A Member also commented on comments made by members of the public at the recent Remembrance Survey which had praised the sensitivity of the parks departments staff when handling wreaths and it was felt that such praise should be passed on to the relevant staff.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) The Council note the information now reported.
- (ii) The Parks Department staff be made aware of the positive comments received from members of the public.

3.15 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. REVISED BUDGET FOR 2014/15 AND PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2015/16

This was the second opportunity during this monthly cycle of meetings for Members to consider the above item. Any Member who wished to raise any issues on these documents, copies of which had been circulated, submit these for discussion at the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee to be held on Tuesday, 2nd December, 2014.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported.

5. OFFICIAL OPENING OF SEAHAM TOWN HALL

It was clarified that an Official Opening event in relation to the Seaham Town Hall was envisaged to take place in early 2015.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported.

6. PRESS OPPORTUNITIES

The Committee considered the items previously discussed and agreed that the moving ahead of the contract for the sports pavilion detailed in item number 3.1 should be notified to the press. In discussion a Member commented that there were a number of excellent press opportunities that could be published retrospectively and which could in the future be brought for approval of the Members. It was also stated that the Durham County News had a one line statement which advised of the date of the Seaham Christmas Lights Switch on event and it was felt that the Town Council should attempt to promote the town more actively in such publications.

RECOMMENDED item no. with regard to the sports pavilion be promoted in the press and published on social media.