

MINUTES OF THE PARKS AND EVENTS COMMITTEE HELD ON 2nd SEPTEMBER, 2014

Present: Miss S Morrison (Chair) and Councillors
Mrs M R Baird, E Bell, Mrs J Bell,
Mrs G Bleasdale, B Burn (Snr),
Mrs H J Cahill, S Cudlip, Mrs S Forster,
I Paul, K Shaw, R Whitehead and
K Younger

Apologies: Mrs B E Allen and B Allen

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 25TH JUNE, 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 BIODIVERSITY IN SEAHAM

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Mr Tony Devos from Limestone Landscapes. Mr Tony Devos explained to members about current proposals for Dawdon Dene, Hazel dene and Seaham Dene looking at grants for management plans and resultant works.

Mr Devos asked the council for permission to register the sites in order to gain the funding available. He also talked about ash dieback and invasive weeds such as hog weed and Japanese knot weed. He also explained that forestry commission funding was also available.

Mr Devos talked about a catchment data explorer and a wear catchment partnership formed between the environment agency and others including Niall Benson from Durham Heritage Coast. Tony recommended that a member of the council could also sit on the Sub-Committee and suggested the council makes a suitable request to do so.

Members were also informed that new Drive along to Seaham Hall would also be renovated very soon.

Members applauded the partnership work being outlined and endorsed the proposals.

RECOMMENDED the Council approve the registering of sites Dawdon Dene, Hazel Dene and Seaham Dene.

3.2 Dawdon Bowls Club

The Committee was advised that the Gents and Ladies Clubs at Dawdon had merged but the merger with Seaham Town Park Bowls Club did not go through. A Member stated that the Bowls Club at Dawdon should be kept and another suggested it was for the club themselves to ensure it continues by recruiting new members. It was recommended rather than at this stage committing to building a new pavilion that the current porta cabin on site should be for the next few years until it was clear whether there would be enough interest from the public to keep the club going in the long term.

A member asked whether there was any information on how keen Dawdon were to merge with the Town Park and the response was that there were mixed views but it was likely that over the next decade one would have to close due to reducing public participation in the sport and increasing costs and at this time it appeared the Dawdon Club looked to be struggling the most with numbers of members and the situation surrounding reinvestment in the facility required over the next decade.

A Member stated that from a local community point of view Dawdon Bowls Club should stay where they are and that it was in actual fact Seaham Town park Bowls Club that approached Dawdon Bowls Club about a merger but that Dawdon Bowls Club wanted to stay where they are.

RECOMMENDED the Council approve the porta cabin to be used for the next season and review membership numbers and bring back for discussion prior to the 2016 Season.

3.3 Cycle to Work Scheme

Members discussed the information detailing the cycle to work scheme and considered whether Seaham Town Council was a large enough organisation to be able to provide this type of incentive and agreed to discuss it at another meeting.

RECOMMENDED Members to discuss the issue at another meeting.

3.4 Princess Road Development

The Committee was advised that a meeting had been arranged with Durham County Councils landscape section in order to resolve an issue relating to the planning application submitted and also that two memorial required replacing at a cost of £1150 each.

RECOMMENDED the Council approve the replacing of memorials at a cost of £1150 each and await to hear back regarding the planning application meeting at the next Parks and Events Committee Meeting.

3.5 Art Workshops Terrace Green and Other locations

Members discussed the proposals and agreed to further investigations into this area and that a working party could be set up in the future.

RECOMMENDED the Council agree that the initiative deserves further investigations and is to be discussed at further meetings

3.6 Attendance at APF 2014

The committee looked into the workshops provided at the event and agreed it would be of benefit to those trained or in training for arboriculture. These members of staff were Lyndon Stewart, Dan Cahill, Paul Batey and Paul Fletcher.

RECOMMENDED the Council approve the 4 staff to attend the event.

3.7 Christmas Lights 2014

Members were informed that investigations into electric points at two roundabouts and Terrace Green were being investigated.

RECOMMENDED The Council note the information now reported.

3.8 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. Newstead Abbey Byron Society and the Irish Byron Society Visit to Seaham Saturday 25th October 2014

Members were informed that a joint visit to Seaham on Saturday 25th October this year, of the Newstead Abbey Byron Society and the Irish Byron Society has been organized with two internationally renowned Byron Scholars, Professor Michael O'Neill (University of Durham) current chairman of the Association of International Byron Societies advisory board and Bernard Beatty Universities of Liverpool and research fellow at St Andrews) the former editor of the Byron Journal (a scholarly journal published twice annually by Liverpool University press) providing lectures. Anyone wishing to join these lectures will be very welcome and there will be no charge for attending. A buffet lunch has been arranged and again anyone wishing to stay for lunch (subject to payment) will be welcome to do so. The same will apply for the evening meal.

Following a buffet lunch John McDonough will talk on Spey Whisky and then the afternoon is clear at present in the anticipation that the Town Council will provide a guided tour of Seaham looking at Byron's Walk, the New Town Hall, The Sea Front and the Marina.

In discussion Members agreed to fully support this event where possible and to be informed again nearer the date.

RECOMMENDED Members agreed to fully support this event where possible and to be informed again nearer the date.

5. Tommy Sculpture

The Deputy Town Clerk informed the committee of various communications of support and praise for the Council and the wider public of Seaham for the installation of the Tommy Sculpture.

RECOMMENDED The Council note the information now reported.

6. Voluntary Groups

A Member informed the committee that recently there had been an increase in voluntary groups wanting to assist with council work and it was thought that the process of involvement could be made easier by producing an open policy rather than a closed policy. A Member suggested that a proforma is produced so that the council would have in writing items such as what, where, when and who they were working with such as children. It was agreed to take it to another meeting.

RECOMMENDED This item be taken to another meeting for discussion.

7. PRESS OPPORTUNITIES

RECOMMENDED the Council note that no press opportunities existed from this meeting.