

## **MINUTES OF THE PARKS AND EVENTS COMMITTEE HELD ON 29TH AUGUST, 2017**

Present: Councillor K Shaw (Chair) and  
Councillors Mrs B E Allen, R Arthur, Mrs G  
Bleasdale, S P Colburn, S Cudlip, Mrs S  
Forster, Mrs R M Gratton, G N Hepworth,  
Mrs L Kennedy, D McKenna, T Shepherd,  
B Taylor, R Whitehead, Miss L Willis

Apologies: Councillors D Cummings, Mrs V  
Cummings,

*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.

Councillors Leanne Kennedy and Kevin Shaw both declared an interest with regards to Dawdon Community Centre Partnership Work on Landscape Improvements.

### **2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 20<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2017**

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 Free Family Summer Activities**

The Deputy Town Clerk provided information on the activities and proposed similar activities for next year with application for funds being submitted by the Council.

RECOMMENDED that a provisional budget sum is put into the budget rounds and the Deputy Town Clerk works with Michelle Harland in applying for funding for next years activities.

### **3.2 Northumbria in Bloom**

The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that he was hoping for a Silver Gilt or Gold at the Awards Ceremony to be held on the 13<sup>th</sup> September.

RECOMMENDED Members to note the information being provided.

### **3.3 Deneside Park Police Initiative**

The Deputy Town Clerk stated that there had been more anti-social behaviour and the proposed CCTV would help to stop it.

A Member suggested that the embankment next to Strangford Road roundabout that there is a lot trees there could some of the trees be removed so that a Police car would have a clear view of the park. The Deputy Town Clerk stated that this could be a possibility. Another Member stated that securing the park so its only open during certain hours would improve things but it was highlighted that at least half of the parks boundaries had no fencing and opened up onto farmers fields.

A Member questioned whether Police surveillance could be carried out at the park as there is allegedly a local drug dealer who is dealing to young people in the park. The Deputy Town Clerk stated that he would report this back to the Police.

It was also suggested that the youth causing the trouble should be targeted, whether it was always the same ones and if they could be given something else to do but if was confirmed that there was already things to do at the weekend for the youth at the community centres but they choose to go to the parks with drink and many are being dropped off by their parents with drink in carrier bags along with many coming from outside of the area. Curfews and exclusion zones were suggested but it was highlighted that the problem would just move somewhere else. It was also asked whether it was the same people that had burnt a seat at a play park but this was unknown.

Members discussed how nice the park used to be and that the days when park keepers could scare off kids that would vandalise things are now gone as staff don't want to be put in those situations for fear of having claims made against them.

A Member proposed that a provisional sum of £2000 should be earmarked in next years budget.

RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) The Deputy Town Clerk to look into the possibility of reducing the amount of trees next to the embankment into the park near to the Strangford Road roundabout.
- (ii) The Deputy Town Clerk to report back to the Police with regard to the suspected drug dealing at the park.

- (iii) The Deputy Town Clerk to look into Exclusion Zones and Public Space Protection Orders.

### **3.4 Green Flag Award**

The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that the Town Park had won the award for the second year running.

RECOMMENDED Members note the information being provided.

### **3.5 Seaham Carnival**

The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that there were many new free activities for families at this year's carnival and that a letter had been received stating that it was the best Carnival in 25 years along with many more positive comments. It was also detailed that more needed to be done to reduce the negative impact of the fairground rides on local residents.

RECOMMENDED that Members note the positive comments and the Deputy Town Clerk to look into reducing the negative impact of the fairground rides on the local residents.

### **3.6 World War One Seats for Terrace Green**

The Deputy Town Clerk explained that he will try and get external funding for the seats and have them in place ready for the anniversary of the end of World War One but that it may be prudent to put the costs in the budget for next year as there may not be any external funding available.

RECOMMENDED that the Deputy Town Clerk investigates external funding for the seats but the council looks at putting in an appropriate sum for next years budgets just in case there is not any external funding available.

### **3.7 Greenscape Project**

The Deputy Town Clerk explained that a letter of objection had been received by the council from the allotment holders but it was important for Members to weigh up the benefits to the whole of Seaham of such a project.

RECOMMENDED that Members approve Greenscape attending the next available meeting to provide members with details of the project.

### **3.8 Splash Area**

The Deputy Town Clerk explained that a proposal for a splash area on Terrace Green had been received but due to its valuable conservation features Terrace Green was not the appropriate site. It was agreed that the Deputy Town Clerk would inform the proposer of this and see whether he would still be willing to work with Seaham Town Council on such a project

but in a more suitable location and if he was he would be invited back to a meeting in the near future.

RECOMMENDED that the Deputy Town Clerk to inform the proposer that the Terrace Green is the wrong site for such a project but if the proposer was interested he could work with Seaham Town Council on another appropriate site and be invited to a future meeting to discuss further.

### **3.9 Miners Memorial**

A Member had suggested a new miners memorial and to have ponies accompany the march at the Durham Miners Gala. It was agreed that the ponies would be too much of a health and safety concern and that Church Street Traders were already looking into a mining sculpture and they might be interested in incorporating a pit pony.

RECOMMENDED The Council does not proceed with the proposal to have pit ponies at the Durham Miners Gala but does suggest to Church Street Traders that they could incorporate a pit pony into their sculpture.

### **3.10 Church Street Improvements**

The Deputy Town Clerk provided details of a consultation meeting at Spectrum Park on the 18<sup>th</sup> September 2017 between 10am and 3pm and encouraged all to attend and members approved the loan of the wooden model of Seaham.

RECOMMENDED that Members attend the consultation meeting at Spectrum Park on the 18<sup>th</sup> September 2017 between 10am and 3pm and approve the loan of the wooden model.

### **3.11 Parkside Improvements**

Members were informed that the Deputy Town Clerk had met with staff from Parkside Community Centre to investigate ways of improving their landscape and will bring back to this meeting any proposals in the near future.

RECOMMENDED that the Deputy Town Clerk investigate ways of improving Parkside's landscape and will bring back to this meeting any proposals in the near future.

### **3.12 Dawdon Community Centre Partnership work on Landscape Improvements**

Members were informed that the Deputy Town Clerk was trying to meet with staff from Dawdon Community Centre to investigate ways of improving their landscape and will bring back to this meeting any proposals in the near future.

RECOMMENDED that the Deputy Town Clerk investigate ways of improving Dawdon Community Centres landscape and will bring back to this meeting any proposals in the near future.

### **3.13 Events for 2017**

The Deputy Town Clerk included the dates for the remaining events which are due to take place in 2017. The Mayor said that she enjoyed the Pirates Festival. The Deputy Town Clerk said it could be run on an annual basis and be included in next years budget. One Councillor said that it cost £6 for hair to be braided.

A Councillor mentioned Beating the Retreat on the 15<sup>th</sup> September starting at 7pm and encouraged all councillors to attend and an new addition this year is Murton Brass Band.

A Councillor mentioned about a piece of art relating to Tommy and Remembrance Sunday. It was questioned whether the Royal British Legion were involved and it was made clear that the British Legion organise the Remembrance Sunday and other ex soldiers were involved in the art work.

RECOMMENDED that the Council note the information and include the Pirates event costs provisionally in the forthcoming budget rounds.

### **3.14 Improvements to Market and Proposals for Campsite**

A Councillor stated that the only way he would support receiving a guest speaker about a proposed campsite would be if it was clearly stated to them is under the strict understanding that the council is under no obligation to indicate that they would support such a proposal and it is without prejudice to the councils rights to make a decision on policy grounds in relation to anything they come forward with. Another Councillor seconded that view point as he described anti-social behaviour on campsites in Northumberland.

Another Councillor suggested she would like to see a caravan park. The Deputy Town Clerk explained that the police could be involved from the beginning and that the council had not supported the caravan site on the top of the cliffs but it may be proposed to be somewhere else this time.

Councillors all agreed that the market was not adding any value but was seen as a negative and needed to be improved as it has poor merchandise and stalls often competing for the same business as the shops they are set up in front of. The Car Boot also did not benefit Seaham but caused traffic problems and there are more than ever on both sides of the road and also the traveller event on the car boot site was a problem for the town. It was asked who owned the land where the car boot takes place and it was confirmed a local farmer named Snowdon. Concern was given to the flammable nature of the short cut grass that the events are held on.

A County Councillor gave a brief update on the encampment just off the new road and said that it takes approximately 2 weeks to move them on.

RECOMMENDED that the Council invite the organisers to a parks meeting in the near future stating that the council is under no obligation to indicate that they would support such a proposal and it is without prejudice to the councils rights to make a decision on policy grounds in relation to anything they come forward with.

**3.15 Seaham First World War Book**

The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members of the good work local resident William Metcalfe was carrying out on a book about Seaham and World War One and suggested that he attended a future to discuss the project with Members. A Councillor suggested that the Deputy Town Clerk double checked the number of speakers attending the meeting in the forthcoming months as it appeared there were quite a few and to prioritise their attendance and ensure they have no more than 15 minutes to put forward their proposals and to also involve Bill and Linda Baker – local historians.

RECOMMENDED Members to note the information now being provided and approve the invitation to William Metcalfe to a future meeting but to confirm a time limit of 15 minutes to put forward the proposals and to also invite Linda and Bill Baker – local historians.

**3.16 Victorian Lights Terrace Green**

The Deputy Town Clerk explained about the additional Victorian lights required for the front of Terrace Green to complete the project at an approximate cost of £8,000 and proposed that the provisional is included in the forthcoming budget rounds.

RECOMMENDED Members discuss the project and include it as a provisional item during the forthcoming budget rounds.

**3.17 Risk Management Issues**

RECOMMENDED Members note the information being provided.

**3.18 Resolution to exclude the press and public**

RECOMMENDED in view of the confidential nature of the item to be discussed, 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.

**3.19 Dawdon Park Working Party Next Meeting and Procurement**

The Deputy Town Clerk explained that NEPO had come back to him and stated they were not in a position to help the council with this project. A Councillor confirmed that the procurement process could be decided at the next working party meeting to be held on the 14<sup>th</sup> September – 3pm at the

Town Hall. A Councillor reminded everyone that one of the parties still had to nominate another member to be appointed to the working party and that they needed to do this as soon as possible in order for them to be given the authority to attend.

RECOMMENDED Members to note the information being provided and the party that hasn't yet nominated their final member to the working party to do this as soon as possible.

### **3.20 Dawdon Park Bungalow**

The Deputy Town Clerk explained that he had met with the Agent and Solicitor and it was their suggestion that he should get authority from the council to have an off the record meeting with Mr and Mrs Birkett to confirm they have the resources to purchase it at a discounted price bearing in mind the condition of the property and the fact they are the occupants and that the council needs to get best value for money. A Councillor insisted that a representative from the Councils law firm is in attendance at any meetings and even if a price is agreed and that the agent confirms that is the best price obtainable on the open market and is independently verified and that Mr and Mrs Birkett should pay the council fees which will include obtaining a release from the charity commission to sell the land to the Birketts as if you are buying something you usually pay the sellers fees.

RECOMMENDED The Deputy Town Clerk is instructed to meet with Mr and Mrs Birkett and the solicitor to move the issue forward and Mr and Mrs Birkett pays the Councils fees along with the council getting it independently verified that the council is getting value for money.

## **4. PRESS OPPORTUNITIES**

RECOMMENDED the Council note that the Deputy Town Clerk will where possible encourage the press and media to promote the positive projects discussed at this meeting.