

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL PARKS AND EVENTS COMMITTEE HELD ON 28TH NOVEMBER, 2017

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

Apologies: Councillors Mrs B E Allen, E Bell,
Mrs S Pratt,

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. 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. ALLOTMENT SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES & MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING & RECOMMENDATIONS

The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members of the recommendations made by the Allotment Sub-Committee. He reported on an alleged puppy farm at Fishbone Allotments and requested that Members agree to placing CCTV at a cost of £5,000 at the allotment site to assist with the problem. It was noted that the allotment site has previously been used for breeding dogs. A Member stated that it is in the allotment agreements that allotment holders cannot keep livestock on the allotments and this needs to be enforced. The Police, RSPCA and Durham County Council have been informed of the situation and CCTV will assist to hopefully stop this activity taking place.

It was agreed that the Town Council should work with Allotment Committees as some of the allotment holders are breaking their tenancy agreements by having livestock, having brick buildings and running businesses from the sites which are all prohibited by their tenancy agreements. A Member noted that if allotment tenants are running businesses this could be detrimental to the Town Council. Members

agreed that a phased approach over a period of time should be adopted to give tenants time to return allotments for growing purposes only.

A Member stated that on a recent visit to Dawdon Hill Allotments a Member of the Town Council had stoked up trouble between Greenscape and allotment and grazing site holders. The Member concerned stated that he had not stoked up trouble but was responding to comments made by Greenscape which he felt were unnecessary. It was noted that there were raised voices which shouldn't have happened as it is not for the Town Council to comment on either side's views and that a Councillor had to intervene to restore order. It was noted that this was only a site visit and the future plans that the Allotment Sub-Committee have made recommendations on will be massively contentious but it was agreed that the agreements should be adhered to.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) That CCTV is installed at the allotment site.
- (ii) That the Deputy Town Clerk will work with the RSPCA and Police to stop the puppy farm.
- (iii) That the Allotment Sub-Committee Members should call a meeting with the Allotment Committees to inform them of what the Town Council are proposing.
- (iv) That the Allotment Sub-Committee should be given a list of all allotment tenants from the Allotment Committees.

4. LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR SEAHAM GOLF CLUB

RECOMMENDED that a letter of support is given to Seaham Golf Club for a golf simulator machine to be placed at the Golf Club to assist junior members and to introduce young people to golf.

5. NEW ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that he had received an email communication informing the Town Council that Dawdon Hill Allotments have formed an Allotment Association which covers the allotments and the grazing site.

RECOMMENDED that Members note the information.

6. 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.