

## **MINUTES OF THE PARKS AND EVENTS COMMITTEE HELD ON 22<sup>ND</sup> MAY, 2018**

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

Apologies: Councillors R Arthur, E Bell,  
Mrs J A Bell, Mrs G Bleasdale,  
Mrs K Brace, D Cummings,  
Mrs V Cummings, Ms R M Gratton.

### **1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR OF PARKS AND EVENTS COMMITTEE FOR THE ENSUING YEAR**

RECOMMENDED Councillor K Shaw be appointed Chair of this Committee for the ensuing year.

(Councillor K Shaw in the Chair)

*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.*

### **2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR OF PARKS AND EVENTS COMMITTEE FOR THE ENSUING YEAR**

RECOMMENDED Councillor L Kennedy be appointed Vice-Chair of this Committee for the ensuing year.

### **3. 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.

### **4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 24<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2018**

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.

### **5. PARKS AND EVENTS SERVICES**

The Committee considered the Deputy Town Clerk's report which provided an update on the following items:

**5.1 Farm Business Tenancy Agreement**

The Acting Town Clerk informed Members that the tenancy agreement with Mr Snowden for the use of the field next to the new cemetery was due for renewal and suggested that a 10% increase be incurred for the next 3 years.

RECOMMENDED that the 10% increase be approved.

**5.2 Yoga Event Dawdon Park 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2018**

The Acting Town Clerk stated that a Yoga Teacher who has a studio at Spectrum Park has requested the use of Dawdon Park for a charitable event on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> June. As Yoga promotes health and wellbeing the Acting Town Clerk suggested that there should be no charge for the use of the Park.

RECOMMENDED that the use of Dawdon Park be approved free of charge for the Yoga event on the 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2018.

**5.3 Party in the Park**

A company who are organising events country wide have requested use of Seaham Town Park for one of their events. The Acting Town Clerk suggested a fee of £25 be charged for this event.

RECOMMENDED that a fee of £25 be charged for the use of the Park.

**5.4 Reach for the Beach 2018**

RECOMMENDED that the Town Council will promote the events on their website and Facebook page.

**5.5 Allotments Sub-Committee**

The Acting Town Clerk requested that the minutes and recommendations from the Allotments Sub-Committee meetings be approved.

Members of Hall Street Allotments attended the meeting and requested that the issue of the eviction of tenants at Hall Street be discussed. The Chair agreed to this discussion taking place.

At this point Councillor G N Hepworth declared an interest and took no further part in the voting thereon.

Mr Scollen stated that he had sent numerous letters to the Chair of the Allotment Sub-Committee and this Committee and that Hall Street Association stand by everything that was contained in the letters. He stated that Hall Street Allotments had been self-managed for 23 years and in August 2016 the Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary of the Association signed a new lease for 10 years. There have been no problems in the past until recently and the association felt that their integrity was being questioned.

Mr Scollen read out Sub-Section 4 from the Tenancy Agreement which states 'It has now been agreed between the parties hereto that the said allotment plots shall be controlled and managed by the Association including the rights to let and determine the tenants as agents for the Council on the terms and conditions hereinafter mentioned and the Trustees shall possess the same powers in relation to the site as though they were owners thereof'.

Mr Scollen stated that this means the full control of the site stays with the Hall Street Association.

Mr Scollen gave Members a rundown of the dates letters were delivered to the tenants and stated that initial 28 day notice issued to the tenants was posted through their door by himself personally. Another member of the association had also hand delivered a letter to the tenants in front of witnesses. There had been no communication from the tenants to Hall Street Allotments until they received an email from the Acting Town Clerk.

Mr Scollen stated that a Member had alleged that Hall Street Association were charging new tenants for plots which was untrue. They do not sell allotments any money which is exchanged is for the purchase of the fixtures and fittings on a plot which are sold via mutual agreement.

Mr Scollen referred to the photographs he had taken of the plot which the tenants had been evicted from and noted that the tenants stated that they had worked the plot regularly but looking at the photographs this was clearly not the case. It would probably take two skips to clear the allotment.

A Member stated that the tenant informed her that they had thought they had bought the plot and invited the member to look at the plot. The tenants stated that they had contacted the Chair of the association to inform him of the injuries that her father had sustained and that he would not be able to work the plot for some time. Mr Scollen stated that the Chair refutes this and stated he has never spoken to the tenants about this situation.

A Member stated that she also has pictures of the plot and they do not resemble Mr Scollen's photographs. The tenants only found out they were being evicted when a neighbouring tenant informed them of this.

Mr Scollen stated that the tenants have been on a notice of warning for two years due to the state of the plot.

A Member stated that she got involved because she was asked to by the tenants and Members have a right to look after their constituents. A Member stated that the association have the rights to let plots that they manage and the Council are not here to act as referees. If the tenants have a problem they need to appeal to the Allotment Association.

A Member stated that Councillors need to remind themselves of the legal obligations. Associations and tenants have a right to self-manage which has been the Council's policy for 25 years. It has been agreed by both parties that allotments should be controlled and ruled by the Association. The Trustees shall possess the same powers as if they were the owners of the

land. The Council has no rights to interfere. The Association have re-considered the plea by the Member and have still gone ahead with their decision to evict the tenants. The Member also noted that the Council are not entitled to receive the information that the association sent to the tenants. The Council needs to reassure the association that the Council will not interfere with their decision making.

A vote was held that the Council would not get involved with allotment association decisions:

8 For  
1 Against  
2 Abstained

RECOMMENDED that the Council will not get involved with any allotment association decision to deal with complaints etc. and the Allotment Sub-Committee minutes and recommendations are ratified by this Committee.

**5.6 Summer Half Term and Summer Holiday Family Activities 10am-2pm Town Park and Deneside Park**

RECOMMENDED that the Family Fun Events are approved in the Town Park and Deneside Park over the school holidays.

**5.7 Proposed Floor Safe to go under a paving slab next to Tommy**

It was noted that the Acting Town Clerk had spoken to the Royal British Legion who stated that they would wish the proceeds of any funds raised to be donated to the Poppy Appeal Fund.

A Member suggested that any money donated to the RBL's Poppy Appeal is sent to the national office and felt that any monies raised should be kept in Seaham for Seaham charities. It was suggested that the Acting Town Clerk contacts the RBL to see if the money could be kept in Seaham rather than go to the national office.

RECOMMENDED that the Acting Town Clerk contacts the RBL for clarification on whether any monies raised can be kept and used in Seaham only and to provide Members with an update at the next meeting.

**5.8 Proposed Poppy Project**

An email was received from Mr Gary Richardson which was informing Members of the public consultation which is being held at Dawdon Community Centre on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> May, 2018 at 7.15pm. It was agreed that the poster and event would be shared on Seaham Have Your Say from the Town Council.

The Chair informed Members that a meeting is taking place this week with Durham County Council with regard to the poppys being placed on the fences around Terrace Green.

**5.9 Risk Management Issues**

RECOMMENDED Members note the information being provided.

**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.