

## **MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 18<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2019**

Present: The Mayor, Councillor Miss L Willis (Presiding) and Councillors Mrs B E Allen, R Arthur, Mrs G Bleasdale, Mrs K Brace, S P Colborn, S Cudlip, Mrs S Forster, G N Hepworth, Mrs S Pratt, K Shaw, T Shepherd, R Whitehead.

Apologies: Councillors E Bell, Mrs J A Bell, D Cummings, Mrs V Cummings, Ms R M Gratton, Mrs L Kennedy, D McKenna, B Taylor.

Officers: Mrs D Rickaby (Town Clerk), Ms A Rountree (Minute Taker)

*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.*

### **FC36/19 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. Such interests must be submitted to the Town Clerk prior to the meeting.

### **FC37/19 OPEN SESSION**

In accordance with established policy the Council provided the opportunity at the beginning of the meeting for a 15 minute session.

A representative of the Allotment Association addressed the Committee. He stated that as a result of the last Parks & Events Committee meeting he had a few issues which he wished to address. He stated that he felt a line had been crossed regarding statements/accusations made against himself. He noted that he had been working with the local Police and had given them information that they had requested and that he had brought an email from the Police which he was willing to share with Members.

He stated that an insinuation had been made that he was slaughtering animals on site and from this he had received a visit from Durham County Council regarding animal health. He noted that this was actually a beneficial visit as he now has a report to state that what he is doing is legitimate and there would be no further action required. He then noted that he felt a line had been crossed and felt that if this was not addressed, he would take this forward via social media. A Member questioned who was making the accusations. The representative of the allotment association stated that it

was a Council Officer who had wrote the accusations in a document to all Members and felt that the issue was now becoming personal. Members noted that they had not seen any such document which contained accusations of slaughtering animals on site.

The representative from the allotment association stated that he was disgusted that this has been ongoing for two years and they have no problem in discussing any issues and felt that no-one acknowledges what they have to say. They have been told to come to Council meetings and have been dictated to. At the first meeting a set of rules was put in front of the associations and they were told that animals would be removed from the sites. A Member stated that they have been discussing the allotments since 2017 and no association was ordered to come, they were invited to attend and Members stated at the meeting how they would like things going forward and how they would like to proceed. A Member noted that it had been ongoing for two years and it was time that this was finished. The allotment representative requested that they be allowed to sign the original lease and that animals can stay on the sites.

A representative from another association mentioned rumours that had been circulating regarding the Fire Service visiting the allotments and not having access to water. He stated these are false rumours. The water is switched off at certain times at the allotment site due to leaks, but all of the plot holders are aware of when the water is switched on and off and if they are going to burn rubbish they are only allowed to do so when the water is switched on and they also have to inform the Fire Service of their intentions to have a fire so that they are aware of it. A Member stated that the Fire Service would get their water from the hydrant over the road not from the allotment site.

A member of the public from the Westlea area complained about the parking of cars in the estate and how this was a danger to others. He also complained about unkempt gardens and houses. This item had previously been raised at Full Council and it was noted that the Police and Durham County Council had both been made aware of this issue. A County Councillor who is on the Board for Housing stated that Durham County Council are bringing out a license scheme and both Believe Housing and tenants have a responsibility to maintain gardens. He also noted that there will be a consultation held in the new year regarding private tenants. At present no action can be taken against private owners. A Member questioned whether Durham County Council still send out Officers to check on properties. The County Councillor stated that there are Neighbourhood Officers and he will raise these concerns at the next meeting.

FC38/19

**TO CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SEAHAM TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON 16<sup>th</sup> JULY, 2019**

RESOLVED the Minutes of this meeting, a copy of which had been previously printed and circulated to each Member, be approved, and they be signed as a correct record by the Mayor.

**FC39/19      REPORTS OF SERVICE COMMITTEES**

RESOLVED that the reports of the following Committees, copies of which had been previously printed and circulated to each Member, be approved:

- a) Report of the Arts and Information Committee held on 3<sup>rd</sup> September, 2019.
- e) Report of the Parks and Events Committee held on 3<sup>rd</sup> September, 2019. Subject to page 9910 item 17.0 an amendment to the minutes to state the reason why the sale of the land had been rejected which was because the land was part of an allotment which is let to the allotment association.

Page 9906 item 1.0. The Town Clerk furnished Members with correspondence from the Town Councils Solicitor which she had received today and wished to give Members an update. A Member stated that this meeting was only to accept and approve minutes and as Members had not had time to read the correspondence it was agreed to hold a Special Parks & Events meeting to discuss this correspondence further. It was also noted that Fishbone and Parkside Allotment Associations had still not met separately with the Police to discuss the Police concerns.

- f) Report of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 10<sup>th</sup> September, 2019. Subject to item page 9914 item F68/19. The Town Clerk informed Members that she had received a reduced quote for the Young Heroes trophies.
- g) Report of the Planning and Environmental Committee held on 10<sup>th</sup> September, 2019. Subject to page 9917 a Member questioned whether the Town Council should place an objection for the Fruiterers being converted into a public house. A County Councillor noted that this was a matter for Durham County Council's Licensing Department and Members agreed not to object.

Councillor Kevin Shaw declared an interest on the above item.

Also subject to page 9918 item PL58/18 a Member queried whether Durham County Council had been invited to look at the kerbs at Vane Terrace. It was noted that the Deputy Town Clerk was dealing with this matter.

- h) Report of the Clerks Advisory Sub-Committee held on 10<sup>th</sup> September, 2019.

**FC40/19      PROPOSED SPEND OF SECTION 106 AGREEMENT MONIES IN THE SEAHAM TOWN COUNCIL AREA**

RESOLVED that Members supported the application from Seaham Youth Centre to apply to Durham County Council for Section 106 monies to purchase sporting equipment.