

MINUTES OF THE PARKS AND EVENTS COMMITTEE HELD ON 1ST JUNE, 2021

Present: Councillor C J Thompson (Chair) and
R Arthur, Mrs J Bell, Mrs G Bleasdale,
Mrs H Cahill, Mrs R Charlton-Lainé,
Mrs S Forster, Mrs G M Fuller, D Harding,
Mrs S Lingard, R Lowery, J MacVeigh,
J Purvis, K Routledge, K Shaw,
Miss J Watson, S Wayman, R Whitehead.

Apologies: Mrs K Brace, Mrs L Kennedy,
Miss S Morrison

Officers: P Fletcher (Acting Town Clerk)
C Halliday (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.

PE49/21 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.

PE50/21 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR OF PARKS AND EVENTS COMMITTEE FOR THE ENSUING YEAR

There were two nominations received for Chair of the Parks and Events Committee, Councillors Mrs L Kennedy and R Arthur. This then went to a vote:

Councillor Mrs L Kennedy – 11 votes
Councillor R Arthur – 6 votes

RECOMMENDED that Councillor Mrs L Kennedy be elected as the Chair of Parks and Events Committee for the ensuing year.

PE51/21 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR OF PARKS AND EVENTS COMMITTEE FOR THE ENSUING YEAR

There were two nominations received for Vice-Chair of the Parks and Events Committee, Councillors C Thompson and R Arthur. This then went to a vote:

Councillor C Thompson – 10 votes
Councillor R Arthur – 6 votes

RECOMMENDED that Councillor C Thompson be elected as the Vice-Chair of Parks and Events Committee for the ensuing year.

(Councillor C Thompson in the Chair)

PE52/21 **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 2ND MARCH, 2021**

RECOMMENDED the Minutes of these meetings, copies of which had been previously printed and circulated to each Member, were approved at the Full Council meeting held on 23rd March, 2021 and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

PE53/21 **MEMORIAL – MR JOHN HAYS**

The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that he corresponded with Mrs Hays in relation to the memorial bench. The cost of the seat is £629 net plus delivery and £50 for the plaque which is to be mounted onto the seat.

Durham County Council turned down the proposed installation site on Church Street on the basis that the new bench is not innkeeping with the current style of seating already on site.

It was noted the applicant has agreed an alternative site on North Road. A Member suggested Durham County Council be reapproached to seek permission to install on the Church Street site.

It was recommended on the basis that the applicant has approved the alternative location to proceed with the North Road installation.

RECOMMENDED that Members approve the purchase of the bench and the North Road installation site.

PE54/21 **BENCH TO THANK NHS AND KEY WORKERS**

The Deputy Town Clerk stated it was intended to install this bench at the Clock Garden however Durham County Council opposed it on the basis of not being innkeeping with the existing style which is on site currently.

It is recommended that the bench at the bottom of Dene House Road be replaced with this dedicated bench as it is in a prime location and high visibility to a lot of passing footfall and vehicles.

RECOMMENDED that Members note the information provided.

PE55/21 **DENESIDE PARK**

The Deputy Town Clerk advised Members the recent improvement works being carried out at Deneside Park by the Council has received many positive comments from the public.

To continue the improvements permission was requested to purchase four benches at a value of £900 each. A Councillor requested a mixture of the provided designs be installed.

RECOMMENDED that Members approve the purchase of four stylised seats for Deneside Park.

PE56/21 **ELECTRIC MODEL CARS**

The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that following discussions the interested club. They would like to thank the Council for time however they have found an different site in another area.

RECOMMENDED that Members note the information provided.

PE57/21 **MINUTES OF THE SPORTS LEASE WORKING PARTY – 22ND MARCH, 2021**

A Member requested if it was possible for other sports sites to be looked at for long term leases. The Deputy Town Clerk advised once the current matters of the Working Party are finalised arrangements can be made to review other sites.

RECOMMENDED that the minutes of the Sports Lease Working Party meeting held on the 22nd March, 2021 be approved.

PE58/21 **SALE OF LAND AT SEAHAM STREET**

The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that the sale of the land at Seaham Street has now been completed and the dog bin has been relocated.

RECOMMENDED that Members note the information provided.

PE59/21 **LAND AT FIELD HOUSE FARM**

The Deputy Town Clerk advised Members following discussions at a previous meeting and the decision not to sell the land on this site.

After review of the Seaham Town Council title deeds it was confirmed £7,000 was paid to the Town Council as part of the transfer agreement on the basis this land be maintained as a Country Wildlife Site for the general public and the land to be used for this purpose for 80 years.

RECOMMENDED that Members note the information provided.

PE60/21

REDUCING THE USE OF GLYSOPHATE AND OTHER CHEMICALS & INCREASING WILDFLOWER MEADOWS ALONG WITH OTHER SUSTAINABLE INITIATIVES

The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that a review will be carried by April, 2022. Looking at alternatives to the materials and chemicals used by the Parks Department and its operations.

It was also noted the G99 solar power assessment for the Town Hall has confirmed it has the potential to feed into the mains supply. External funding will be sought for a sustainable energy scheme to be installed at the Town Hall.

A Councillor proposed the spraying of chemicals at the base of all trees be ceased if this occurs in Seaham.

It was noted there is also potential for environmental improvements within the events such as the current need for plastic glasses as a result of public safety concerns. It was felt it may be beneficial to set up a Working Party in the future to look at the environmental sustainability of the Town Council.

It was suggested to encourage Durham County Council to expand their current wildflower meadows into more areas within Seaham. In addition to the Town Council also increasing the wild flower coverage in the areas which we already maintain. A Councillor raised the St. John's Church wildflower meadow never coming to fruition and requested if Officers could approach Durham County Council to seek an update on when these works are planned to take place.

RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) The Deputy Town Clerk carries out a review of the current chemicals used by the Council with a view to provide alternative options by April, 2022.
- (ii) The Deputy Town Clerk to seek external funding for the provision of renewable energy at Seaham Town Hall.
- (iii) The Deputy Town Clerk approach Durham County Council to request they expand their wild flower coverage.
- (iv) The Deputy Town Clerk approach Durham County Council to request an update on the landscaping works at St. John's Church.
- (v) A Working Party be established to review the environmental sustainability of Seaham Town Council.

PE61/21

SEWAGE POLLUTION

Correspondence was received from a member of the public seeking a letter of support from the Town Council towards their call for regional public enquiry into the amount of sewage pollution.

In discussion Members noted they have backed local residents on this matter previously as this has been an ongoing issue since approximately 2008.

It was suggested the Council work with neighbouring authorities such as Hartlepool Borough Council and Sunderland City Council. It was noted the Council have previously worked with neighbouring authorities, with the matter eventually been taken to the European Court of Justice. It was requested if Officers could provide a report containing the ruling of the European Court of Justice to inform Members on what steps have already been taken previously.

RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) The Town Council provide a letter of support to the member of the public's request for a regional public enquiry.
- (ii) The Deputy Town Clerk to produce a report detailing the background of this matter and includes references to the ruling of the European Court of Justice.

PE62/21 **NEW DRIVE CAR PARK**

The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that parked vehicles from users of New Drive facilities are blocking access and causing issues to nearby residents.

It is proposed as a temporary solution for this summer for the existing car park. Improvements include adding knee high fencing to prevent vehicles gaining access to the pitches, filling holes and opening a gate to allow vehicles to park on the land behind the car park during match days.

A view to a long term fix will be carried out as part of the winter work programme once costings are compiled. As part of these works it is intended to extend parking up to the railway track with better surfacing.

A Councillor requested if one of the existing 9v9 pitches could be modified to become a 7v7 and 5v5 pitch instead. It was advised this would need to be reviewed as part of the October budget reviews.

RECOMMENDED that Members approve the outlined temporary solution with the view to installing a long term fix as part of the winter work programme once costings are sought.

PE63/21 **EVENTS AND TOWN HALL MEETINGS**

The Deputy Town Clerk stated with the likelihood of an update for Central Government happening within the coming weeks. It is advised that Members note the information and review the events once updated guidance is outlined by the Government.

RECOMMENDED that Members note the information.

PE64/21 **REMEMBRANCE EVENT AT TOWN HALL**

An enquiry was received for use of the Town Hall to stage an exhibition and possibly a play for schools in the lead up to Remembrance Sunday. As it is all to be funded through grants it was requested if the room hire fees could be waived for this event and also if the Council wish to support the project by means of funding.

RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) Free room hire be granted for this event.
- (ii) The member of the public be provided a grant form to apply for funding towards the staging of the exhibition front the Council.

PE65/21 **MEMORIAL TO SEAHAM AIR RAIDS**

The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members a Working Party of interested organisations were involved in this renovation. Members were advised the Working Party intend to meet at the Town Hall on 16th June at 10am. Discussions will take place surrounding the accuracy of the existing memorial at Princess Road Cemetery which is to be checked, along with exploring options for a historical interpretation piece for the Clock Garden.

RECOMMENDED that Members note the information.

PE66/21 **FENCING AND MATERIALS FOR DAWDON HILL ALLOTMENTS**

A request has been received from Dawdon Hill Allotments to provide fencing materials to the value of £500.

RECOMMENDED that the purchase of £500 in fencing materials for the Dawdon Hill Allotments be approved.

PE67/21 **LITTER PICKERS, HOOPS & BAGS FOR VOLUNTEERS**

The Deputy Town Clerk provided Members a suggestion of the Council providing free litter picking equipment for groups/individuals who volunteer to carry out litter picks around Seaham. It is recommended a maximum budget of 10 sets per month be issued.

It was requested the budgeted sets be distributed amongst different groups who apply rather than providing all resources to one group. It was noted usage will be reported back to this committee as it occurs.

A Councillor proposed a hashtag be created with the aim of promoting cleaning within Seaham.

RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) A maximum of 10 sets of litter picking equipment be issued per month and to be spread amongst applicants.

- (ii) Officers create a hashtag for the use on social media platforms with the aim of promoting cleaning in Seaham.

PE68/21 **WHITEHAVEN TO SEAHAM COAST TO COAST CYCLE ROUTE**

It was recommended in order to progress this item that a Zoom meeting be arranged with interested stakeholders.

RECOMMENDED that a meeting with interested stakeholders be organised to discuss this proposal.

PE69/21 **PUBLIC TOILETS**

In discussion Members felt there is a need for public toilets on the Seafront. It was noted a new facility at Sunderland is unmanned and only cleaned. Another example was provided of a facility at Windermere which uses contactless payment for an unmanned unit.

It was advised there is a range of local businesses with toilets along North Terrace as well as free toilets at Byron Place and Seaham Marina.

It was felt although the provision of toilets is within the Town Councils remit, partnership working with Durham County Council would be necessary to seek a potential location and funding applications.

It was suggested a representative from Durham County Council Regeneration Department be invited to the planning meeting in July.

RECOMMENDED that a representative from Durham County Council Regeneration Department be invited to the meeting of the Planning and Environmental Committee in July to discuss the provision.

PE70/21 **PARK SECURITY**

The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that weekend security patrols of the local parks has begun.

A Councillor asked, what is the age range of the people causing issues?
The Deputy Town Clerk advised the ages range from approximately 10 years old through to 25 years old. The bodycam footage from the patrols are shared with the Police the following morning to enable them to carry out investigations on any incidents as necessary.

The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that it is expected the slide at Seaham Town Park is to be repaired next week and it is hoped the recent installation of new CCTV throughout the park will deter future damage.

A Member asked, if Parks have CCTV installed?
The Deputy Town Clerk advised Members that currently parks with electric feeds such as Seaham Town Park and Dawdon have CCTV cameras installed.

RECOMMENDED that Members note the information.

PE71/21 **CREATIVE OPPORTUNITIES**

A Member queried if the Youth Council and Young Citizens Group were two different entities? The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members the Youth Council was set up a couple years ago however it was difficult to sustain engagement with a formal committee format which the Youth Council was trying to run under.

Based on experience better engagement has been seen through practical and fun activity days. The action days will take place within the local parks and at events in a similar vein to those that have been held in recent years.

It was requested the unused budget which was earmarked for the Creative Opportunities be rolled over to this year. The funding from Seaham Town Council will be utilised to seek match funding from external sources to expand on their offer of events and activities within the Town.

RECOMMENDED that the £2,500 contribution to Creative Opportunities be approved and a letter of support is provided.

PE72/21 **ARMY RECRUITING TERRACE GREEN**

A request was received to hold Army recruitment days on Terrace Green.

RECOMMENDED that the holding of the Army recruitment days on Terrace Green be approved.

PE73/21 **WATER SMART METERS**

The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members in order to combat expensive water leaks on Town Council property the proposed system will notify the company and the Council of a potential leak. This information will enable the Council to check and address leaks within hours rather than becoming aware of a potential issue possibly months after it occurred only after receiving a large water bill.

The cost for each meter to be installed is an annual fee of £330 per site and a one off charge to Northumbrian Water of £170.

RECOMMENDED that purchase of smart water meters be approved.

PE74/21 **RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

RECOMMENDED that Members note the information.

PE75/21 **PRESS OPPORTUNITIES**

RECOMMENDED that if the public events go ahead these be promoted.