

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL  
SERVICES COMMITTEE****4 NOVEMBER 2013**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Peat (in the Chair); Councillors Deacon, Mrs Grady, Harrison and Yarker.

**Also in attendance:** Councillors Robinson (Minutes 32 to part 41) and Watson.

**Officers:** Mr King (Town Clerk) and Mrs Plant (Assistant Clerk).

**32. ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE, OF APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Hinchcliffe.

**Resolved** – That Councillor Hinchcliffe's apologies be accepted.

**33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In accordance with this Council's adopted Code of Conduct (Minute 72(a)/Sep/12 refers), Members were asked whether they had any personal or prejudicial interests in any matter on the agenda and, if so, to declare those interests at this point of the meeting. Members were reminded that a declaration could be given later in the meeting if a need arose during discussion. Councillor Harrison (Town Mayor) declared a pecuniary interest in respect of Minute 36 and took no part in the voting on that item. Councillor Deacon declared a personal non-pecuniary interest in respect of part of Minute 38(ii) and took no part in the voting on that item.

**34. SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING – 9 SEPTEMBER 2013 – MINUTES**

**Resolved** – That the Minutes be accepted as a correct record.

**35. ALLOTMENTS****(i) Improvements Action Plan**

It was confirmed that the further path improvements at Raby Avenue had been completed.

**Resolved** – That the information be noted.

**(ii) Crook Lane – Plot 6 Drainage Issue**

It was confirmed that volunteers from the Teesdale YMCA had completed their work on this project and that the plot had been subsequently re-tenanted. Discussion ensued and it was considered that there was still a drainage issue at the southern boundary of the site and that further solutions should be explored.

**Resolved** – (a) That further investigations be made into suitable drainage solutions for the site, taking into account the electricity sub-station building position.

(b) That the information be noted.

**36. ALLOTMENTS 2014/15 BUDGETARY BID**

Submitted – A report to consider an Allotments 2014/15 budgetary bid for inclusion in the overall Town Council's budget for 2014/15. It was confirmed that the allotment plot rental for 2014/15 had already been determined (£40) because 12 months' notice had to be given to tenants and that the Allotments' annual income for 2014/15 would be £3,630 (£3,480 rental from 87 plots plus £150 received from Northern Powergrid (Northeast) Limited for Crook Lane's sub-station rent). The allotment rental for 2015/16 was also considered.

**Resolved** – That the following be recommended to the Resources Committee meeting scheduled for 18 November 2013:

- (i) That the 2014/15 Allotments Expenditure be £3,630 (increase of £40) and Income be £3,630 (increase of £40).
- (ii) That the allotment rental for 2015/16 be £42.

### **37. DOG FOULING**

#### **(i) General Update**

Pursuant to Minute 23/Sep/13, it was confirmed that the 'Eyes' signs had been re-issued by the supplier in the correct A3 size and would be installed this week.

It was also confirmed that, as there were sufficient funds in the budget, two new bins had been ordered, one of which was to be installed at a suitable spot between Marwood Cottages and Orchard Brae, so another appropriate location was sought.

**Resolved** – That the additional dog waste bin be installed at an appropriate location near Green Lane CE Primary School.

#### **(ii) Dogs Trust Visit**

It was reported that The Dogs Trust, the UK's largest dog welfare charity, offered support to local councils through its 'Dogs in the Community' campaign to educate those in the local area about dog welfare, responsible dog ownership and offered free microchipping (set to become compulsory in 2016). It was suggested that this Council works with the Dogs Trust and arranged a 'Dogs in the Community' event in the town and considered paying towards some of the costs of the event from the Dog Fouling budget.

**Resolved** - That this Council works with the Dogs Trust and arranges a 'Dogs in the Community' event on Saturday 1 March 2014 and makes a contribution of £100 to the Dogs Trust towards the cost of the event.

#### **(iii) Dog Fouling 2014/15 Budgetary Bid**

Submitted – A report to consider a Dog Fouling 2014/15 budgetary bid for inclusion in the overall Town Council's budget for 2014/15, including details of an additional initiative to further tackle dog fouling in the town by providing a dedicated Neighbourhood Warden for the town, by either paying Durham County Council an hourly rate for a warden to patrol the town or by linking with neighbouring local councils to employ and share our own neighbourhood warden. However, the full cost of this initiative had yet to be established.

**Resolved** – That the Dog Fouling 2014/15 budgetary bid be deferred to the Services Committee meeting on 16 December 2013 so that the cost of the provision of a dedicated Neighbourhood Warden for the town can be established.

### **38. PLAY AREAS**

#### **(i) Dawson Road Play Area Improvement Project – Earmarked Funds Review**

Members' views were sought in respect of the future use of the remaining funds in the Dawson Road Play Area Improvement Project as part of the Council's overall Earmarked Reserves review.

It was confirmed that as part of Phase 2 of the improvement project (the installation of the Multi Use Games Area) it had been intended for floodlighting to be installed but was omitted from the final project specification due to insufficient funding. It was confirmed that, since the opening of the MUGA, there had been no great call by the community to have the site floodlit.

However, Dawson Play, the community group formed to help with the acquisition of grant funding, had asked if the remaining funds could be used towards the purchase of a piece of equipment suitable for children in wheelchairs instead of floodlighting. In addition, a local business had offered a donation to add to the remaining funds so that a piece of equipment, such as a wheelchair swing, could be purchased.

**Resolved** – That the following be recommended to Council, at its meeting on 2 December 2013:

- (i) That the decision at Minute 47(1)(c)/Jul/10 be rescinded.
- (ii) That the Dawson Road Improvement Project Earmarked Funds be used towards the purchase of a piece of play equipment suitable for children in wheelchairs.

## **(ii) Play Areas 2014/15 - Budgetary Bid**

Submitted – A report to consider a Play Areas 2014/15 budgetary bid for inclusion in the overall town council budget for 2014/15, including details of the standard expenditure items, i.e. annual general maintenance (grass-cutting and litter picking, etc.), the Annual Play Area Inspections, the Quarterly Play Area Inspections and an allowance for play area equipment repairs. The report also included project suggestions from Members, including the development of a community garden scheme at Kalafat and creating a community walk between Green Lane, Ten Fields and Kalafat. Drawbacks to some of the suggestions outlined.

In respect of the income, it was recommended that the Gate Licence fee be £14 again. However, as far as the rental of Ten Fields was concerned, it was confirmed that a meeting had been held with the Chairman of Barnard Castle Football Club to review the 'hold-over' lease situation and that it had subsequently been confirmed that the Club's Committee were agreeable to a new 35-year lease being drawn up with the rent to be initially set at £100 per annum but with a five year rent review being drawn into the lease.

**Resolved** – (a) That the following be recommended to Council, at its meeting on 2 December 2013:

- (i) That a public consultation exercise be carried out during 2014/15 to ascertain if Kalafat play area requires further development and to ascertain preferred options.
- (ii) That a community walk between Green Lane, Ten Fields and Kalafat be created.
- (iii) That a new 35 year lease be prepared between this Council, Barnard Castle Football Club and Fields in Trust for the rental of Ten Fields, with the yearly rental for the first five years to be £100 and every five years thereafter an incremental increase of (at least) 5%, subject to review, be applied, with the costs of the preparation of the lease being met from the 2014/15 Play Areas budget.

(b) That a Play Areas 2014/15 Expenditure budget of £8,000 (increase of £500) and Income budget of £114 (increase of £40) be recommended to the Resources Committee meeting scheduled for 18 November 2013.

## **39. MINI GOLF**

### **(i) Review of 2013 Season**

Submitted – A report providing members with a review of the 2013 mini golf season, including the fact that 2013 was the first operational year of the newly replaced mini golf course, 'A Journey through Teesdale', that the two existing posts and two newly created posts had been filled by new attendants and relevant income and expenditure figures were provided.

It was acknowledged that the course was dependent on the weather but out of the 74 operating days only 5 were cut short due to adverse weather conditions.

**Resolved** - That the information be noted.

#### **(ii) Mini Golf 2014/15 Budgetary Bid**

Submitted – A report to consider a Mini Golf 2014/15 budgetary bid and consideration of Fees and Charges for inclusion in the overall Town Council's budget for 2014/15, including the fact that 2013 was the first year of the newly replaced mini golf course, 'A Journey through Teesdale' and that subsequently, the administration of the service was under revised operating arrangements. It was noted that income figures were not guaranteed as the nature of the facility relied heavily on good weather and periods of inclement weather would have a negative effect on visitor numbers generally.

It was acknowledged that, pursuant to Council Minute 125(32)/Jan/13, the Mini Golf service was a self-funding service and that any underspends would be set aside for future repairs and future upkeep of the facility in a 'Mini Golf Holding Account'.

**Resolved** – That the following be recommended to the Resources Committee meeting scheduled for 18 November 2013:

- (i) that the Mini Golf 2014/15 Income and Expenditure budgets of £10,000 respectively.
- (ii) that the Mini Golf 2014/15 fees and charges be as follows:
  - £2.00 per round for all users (**no change**);
  - £0.50 lost ball (**no change**);
  - £5.00 damaged club (**no change**);
  - £6.00 group ticket (up to 4 players – saving £2.00) (**no change**); and
  - £10.00 loyalty ticket (7 rounds bought in advance – saving £4.00) (**no change**).

#### **40. FLORAL AND OPEN SPACES**

##### **(i) Floral Displays**

It was confirmed that the winter/spring planting had been carried out.

##### **(ii) Upper Demesnes Hay Meadow**

Pursuant to Minute 26(iii)/Sep/13, it was confirmed that investigations were still ongoing into the production of a hay meadow information board and associated leaflet.

##### **(iii) Castle Walls Bulb Planting Scheme**

It was confirmed that the Castle Walls Bulb Planting Scheme would start with Rotters planting out the steeper slopes during the week commencing 4 November and that two volunteer planting days were scheduled to take place on 9 and 13 November. Associated press releases had been published and Members were also invited to take part.

**Resolved** – That the information be noted.

#### **41. FLORAL AND OPEN SPACES 2014/15 BUDGETARY BID**

Submitted – A report to consider a Floral and Open Spaces 2014/15 budgetary bid for inclusion in the overall Town Council budget for 2014/15, including a breakdown of the floral displays potential costs for 2014/15 and Members suggestions in respect of future of floral and open spaces improvement projects such as floral display improvements, weed control and potential ways to progress the already agreed Galgate Greens Improvement Project. Drawbacks to some of the suggestions were outlined.

Discussion also ensued in respect of the fate of the stone which formed the, now demolished, perimeter walls at Scar Top and Woodleigh following the completion of the improvement works as it was considered the stone could be reused in the town to potentially create flower beds.

In addition, Members' views were sought as to how the unexpected underspend in respect of the 2013/14 budget should be spent.

**Resolved** – (a) That a Floral and Open Spaces 2014/15 budgetary bid of £6,000 be recommended to Resources Committee meeting scheduled for 18 November 2013.

(b) That the following be recommended to the Council meeting on 2 December 2013:

- (i) that the Floral and Open Spaces 2013/14 underspend be transferred to the Galgate Greens Improvement Project.
- (ii) that the remaining balance from the Garden of Remembrance Improvement Project be transferred to the Galgate Greens Improvement Project.

(c) That the Galgate Greens Improvement project be directly funded by this Council and progressed in yearly phases to spread the cost of the works.

(d) That floral displays improvements for 2014/15 consist of the inclusion of the whole of the Market Place public toilets bedding area and that Durham County Council, as owners of the bedding area, be advised accordingly.

(e) That Lowfield Gardens be requested to carry out the 2014/15 floral displays watering service.

(f) That investigations be made into the creation of permanent flower beds being installed in the lower Galgate area.

(g) That, in respect of the stone which previously formed the perimeter walls at Scar Top and Woodleigh, Durham County Council be requested to support the reuse of the stone by the town council.

(h) That Durham County Council be requested to necessitate a greater control of the weeds on Scar Top, specifically in respect of ragwort.

(i) That investigations be made as to whether a volunteer can be used to spray the town's pavements and kerbsides with weed killer, in addition to the bi-annual service carried out by Durham County Council.

#### **42. PUBLIC SEATS 2014/15 BUDGETARY BID**

Submitted – A report to consider a Public Seats 2014/15 budgetary bid for inclusion in the overall Town Council's budget for 2014/15, including Members suggestions in respect of the future of public seating in the town. Reference was made to the Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership's Paths for all People Flatts Wood and Tees Bank restoration project and the fact that public seats were being revamped or renewed as part of that project.

**Resolved** – (a) That it be recommended to Council, at its meeting on 2 December 2013, that the town council oversees the future maintenance of the public seats in Flatts Wood following the completion of the Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership's Paths for all People project.

(b) That a Public Seats 2014/15 budgetary bid of £1,000, to be used towards the discretionary revamping of public seats in the town, be recommended to the Resources Committee meeting scheduled for 18 November 2013.

### **43. CASTLE FLOODLIGHTS 2014/15 BUDGETARY BID**

Consideration was given to the Castle Floodlights 2014/15 budgetary bid for inclusion in the overall Town Council's budget for 2014/15. It was confirmed that this Council continued to be responsible for the electricity and maintenance costs of the floodlights and that Durham County Council recharged this Council for the electricity costs on an annual basis. However, it was reported that DCC had indicated that the electricity recharge costs for 2014/15 would increase. A reasonable sum for maintenance issues was also considered.

**Resolved** – That a Castle Floodlights 2014/15 budgetary bid of £400 be recommended to the Resources Committee meeting scheduled for 18 November 2013.

### **44. WAR MEMORIALS**

#### **(i) 3-yearly Maintenance Programme**

Pursuant to Committee Minute 30/Sep/13, it was confirmed that the professional cleaning of the three War Memorials under this Council's responsibility had been carried out.

**Resolved** – That the information be noted.

#### **(ii) War Memorials 2014/15 Budgetary Bid**

Consideration was given to a War Memorials 2014/15 budgetary bid for inclusion in the overall Town Council's budget for 2014/15. It was confirmed that, following the full Memorials restoration project carried out on all three Memorials during 2009, an annual maintenance plan and annual inspection of each Memorial and its immediate surrounds was carried out. Any issues identified at those inspections were dealt with using a small budgetary allocation to cover such unforeseen maintenance issues.

It was also confirmed that, during the 2013/14 budgetary process, a 3-yearly maintenance programme was put in place to enable a further professional clean to be carried out in 2016, requiring an amount to be put aside in each of three years to enable the work to be carried out in the third year. However, due to the competitive quotation received for the cleaning work during 2013 and the fact that no maintenance issues had been identified, a sum of £1,120 currently remained in the 2013/14 budget.

It was reported that to carry out the 3-yearly maintenance plan, it was anticipated that a sum of £3,250 would be required in 2016 and providing no further expenditure was incurred before 31 March 2014, the 2013/14 balance could be rolled-forward with an equalised sum of £710 being required in each of the years 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17.

**Resolved** – That a 2014/15 budgetary allocation of £710 be recommended to the Resources Committee meeting scheduled for 18 November 2013 with £710 also being made available in each of the years 2015/16 and 2016/17.