

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL  
SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**23 FEBRUARY 2015**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Peat (in the Chair); Councillors Harrison, Mrs Grady (to minute 56), Marshall and Yarker.

**Also in attendance:** Councillor Robinson (from minute 55); Mr N. Diment (minute 55) and two members of the press.

**Officers:** Mr King (Clerk) and Mrs Woodward (Deputy Clerk).

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

Apologies were received from Councillor Hinchcliffe.

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

**51. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In accordance with this Council's adopted Code of Conduct (Minute 72(a)/Sep/12), Members were asked whether they had any personal or prejudicial interests in any matter on the agenda. Councillor Harrison declared an interest in respect of Minute 53.

**52. SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING – 15 DECEMBER 2014 – MINUTES**

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

**53. ALLOTMENTS**

**(i) General**

It was reported that no allotment gardens had been relinquished since 15 December 2014.

A routine site inspection was carried out during February. It was noted that the recent bout of high winds had caused damage to a number of greenhouses, sheds and some internal fences across the sites. Two chairs had been fly tipped on the Harmire Road allotments site. Arrangements had been made to have them removed.

There was one new application for the waiting list; the total stood at 25.

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

**(ii) Annual Review of Tenancy Agreement & Allotment Rules**

Received – a report on suggested revisions for the 2015/16 season. Three revisions were put forward:

- Rule 8 had been reworded in line with Council Minute 85(1)(a)/Nov/14.
- Rule 9 had been reworded to comply with the resolution of the Services Committee Meeting on 28 July 2014.
- Rule 3 was a suggested revision to reflect best practice.

**Resolved** – That the Tenancy Agreement and Allotment Rules, as amended, be approved for the 2015/16 season.

**(iii) Units of Measurement – Gardening Allotments**

It was reported that a letter had been received from the 'British Weights and Measures Association', a campaigning group, that notified local councils of an individual making requests under the Freedom of Information Act, for a change from rod and pole

measurements to metric. Members were reminded that, whilst allotments were exempt from metric regulations, the Town Council's allotments were not measured; they were let as plots, with a rental of £42 per year for 2015/16.

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

## **54. PLAY AREAS**

### **(i) Future Play Area Provision**

#### **(a) Green Lane, Ten Fields and Kalafat Play Area Consultation**

Received – a report, pursuant to Committee Minute 40(b)/Dec/14, which set out findings of consultation exercises carried out in 2014 and presented proposals for play area improvements. Members were asked to consider preferences for children's play equipment, adult outdoor gym equipment and perimeter track for scooters/cycles.

**Resolved** – (a) That the report be received; and

(b) That a 'vision for play' be developed into a potential scheme, together with Fields in Trust, reported to Services Committee on 13 April 2015.

(c) That potential funding be explored, such as Section 106 money available via Green Lane housing development and Sport England grants.

(d) That a possible partnership be developed with Barnard Castle Tennis Club to turn the MUGA at Dawson Road play area into a temporary tennis court for 8 weeks around Wimbledon season.

#### **(b) Dawson Road – Disabled Swing**

There was no update reported at this time.

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

### **(ii) Repairs & Maintenance**

It was reported that a complaint had been received from a resident of Kalafat regarding a sycamore tree located in Tenfields playing field (leased to Barnard Castle Football Club). The council's contractor had confirmed that the tree was considered to be a nuisance and DCC officers confirmed that it was not in a conservation area and it was acceptable to remove it.

**Resolved** – That the sycamore tree be removed at a cost of £120.

## **55. FLORAL AND OPEN SPACES**

### **(i) Public Seats**

Pursuant to Committee minute 41 (i)/Dec/14, two further public donations had been received, with work either completed or ongoing in partnership with Teesdale YMCA and The Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership (HoT).

Two memorial benches had been installed - one on the footpath alongside the cricket field and one on the Tees Bank top footpath towards the old viaduct.

Teesdale YMCA had carried out work on benches located by the cricket club and the additional work needed to complete the benches (replacement of wooden slats) was continuing. It was further noted that the benches located on Harmire Road had not yet been started.

The town council had agreed to contribute £325 towards the weed control project around six public seats (five located in Flatts Woods and one at Raby Avenue) to be carried out by HoT.

To date, over 40 public seats had now been renovated/replaced since the start of the project in 2013, not including the 12 new benches installed through the Scar Top Improvement Project.

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

**(ii) Floral Displays**

**(a) Durham County Council's "It's Your Neighbourhood Campaign"**

It was noted that pursuant to Minute 41 (ii)/Dec/14, an application had been made to redevelop the island beds on Galgate. Due to the number and high standards of applications received, the Town Council's application was not successful. However, details of the project had been passed onto DCC Altogether Greener partners and AAP representatives to ascertain support. The Town Council was encouraged to apply again next year.

**Resolved** – (a) That the information be noted and;

(b) That DCC be approached to redevelop the island beds on Galgate, replicating the floral displays in the market place toilet bed, using any underspend from 2014/15 Floral and Open Spaces budget.

**(b) Replacement Wooden Tubs**

It was reported that, pursuant to Minute 28 (iv)(a)/Oct/14 and 49 (a-c)/Dec/14, twelve natural oak barrels and two half-size barrels had been ordered from Elm Ridge Gardens, to be in-situ for 2015/16 summer floral displays.

**Resolved** – (a) That the information be noted and;

(b) That volunteers be engaged to change over the barrels.

**(c) Hanging Basket Scheme and additional floral schemes for 2015/16**

Received – a proposal by Councillor Mrs Grady for a Hanging Basket scheme, in partnership with the Guild. Participating shops and businesses were to receive a hanging basket and bracket for a £15 contribution, with the shortfall made up by the Town Council. It was suggested that businesses be responsible for their own watering. Lowfield Gardens could provide the planted baskets in May. It was thought that approximately 30 shops and businesses would participate in 2015/16.

The option of installing a freestanding floral display planter on Scar Top was also discussed, albeit with concerns regarding vandalism and weather resistance.

Councillor Mrs Grady also proposed that the Town Council lead on a window box display around the Market Cross, in conjunction with the Guild. It was noted that consultation was needed due to conservation, highways and health and safety issues. It was further acknowledged that informed consent would be needed from Durham County Council and permission from the Secretary of State, if anything was to be fixed to the building.

**Resolved** – (a) That the Hanging Basket Scheme be approved and;

(b) That a cap of £120 to support the take-up of hanging baskets out of 2015/16 Floral and Open Spaces Budget.

(c) That costings for a freestanding floral planter be explored.

(d) That a site meeting be arranged, together with conservation and highways representation, to explore the feasibility of floral 'window boxes' inside arches of the Market Cross.

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

#### **(a) Leaflet**

It was noted that a Hay Meadow leaflet was to be made available to pick up from an outdoor leaflet dispenser located within the Hay Meadow from the beginning of May 2015. A photo of a potential outdoor, secure and weather proof leaflet dispenser was circulated.

**Resolved** – That costings for a leaflet dispenser be sought and submitted for consideration at next Services Committee meeting on 13 April 2015.

#### **(b) Scything Training**

Received – a proposal and presentation by Mr Neil Diment, that the Town Council run a scything course (to manage vegetation including grass, weeds, bramble etc. in areas where machinery is not possible or unsuitable), to train up to six people on the Upper Demesnes Hay Meadow on Friday 3 July 2015. The course was to be subsidised by HoT. The town council was asked to contribute £180 for the cost of the trainer deposit and to hire a marquee, financed from the Floral and Open Spaces budget. Attendees would be required to volunteer to maintain the Hay Meadow.

**Resolved** – (a) That the Town Council contribute £180 towards the training.

(b) That Councillors Robinson and Harrison attend the course.

#### **(iv) Red Well**

Members were informed that The Red Well drain was currently blocked and needed unblocking, together with pressure hosing to clean the area. It was further noted that HoT had been approached to potentially finance the work, along with an interpretation board as part of its Historic Landscapes Programme. Members noted that from 2015/16 there was a nil budget allocation for maintenance of Red Well, following absorption into Floral and Open Spaces budget (Minute 28(iv)(i)/Oct/14 refers and Resources Minute 31(a)(11)/Nov/14).

**Resolved** – (a) That the information be noted and;

(b) That Red Well drainage works be subject to HoT funding as part of Historic Landscapes Programme.

### **56. MINI GOLF**

#### **(i) Pre-season cleaning**

Pursuant to Minute 42/Dec/14 an update on the pre-season cleaning of the mini golf course was submitted.

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

#### **(ii) Operating Arrangement**

Received – information about the 2015 mini-golf season, Saturday 28 March to Sunday 1 November. It was noted that the course was open every weekend, bank holidays and full weeks in line with school holidays (weather permitting). It was further proposed to extend the summer opening (7 days per week) from 6 weeks to 8 weeks, same as 2014 season, subject to availability of attendants. Opening times were confirmed as: 10.30am to 4.30pm (low season – 28 March to 22 May and 7 September to 1 November); 10.30am to 6.30pm (high season – 23 May to 6 September).

It was confirmed that free use of the course was available to local schools during term time for practical lessons. Private hire by groups and organisations was also available outside normal operating hours.

Four attendants were to operate the course. Three attendants were returning for a second year. The vacant post was advertised and interviews held on 19 and 20 February. The vacancy was successfully filled.

Members were reminded that the Mini Golf was a 'self-funding service', with a Mini Golf Holding Account (transfer of underspends) for repairs and upkeep. Members acknowledged that it was imperative that the facility was 'future proofed'. It was noted that at the 2013/14 year end, £4,284 was transferred into the holding account. A further underspend of £4,800 was anticipated to be transferred into the holding account at 31 March 2015.

The mini golf kiosk was to continue as an official leaflet distributor for Visit Durham.

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

## **57. WAR MEMORIALS**

### **(i) Aviation Day Memorial**

Durham County Council's Head of Planning and Assets confirmed by email that the relocation of the memorial does not require planning permission. This information was subsequently shared with HCA and its contractors. The Town Council was waiting for a schedule of works from HCA.

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

## **58. DOG FOULING**

Members noted that the Town Council had one box of Poop Scoop bags left (1,000 per box in packs of 20) and were asked to consider purchasing more.

Pursuant to Minute 31 (i)/Oct/14, the Committee was asked to consider a revised proposal to roll over the £354.48 underspend from the 2014/15 budget for improved and positive marketing and publicity of dog bins, locations providing poop scoop bags and new signage at play areas in 2015.

It was noted that distribution of the 'Shop-a-Plopper' leaflets was almost complete. It was reported that there were new dog fouling hot spots along Cemetery Lane, Smiths Foundry Lane and Harmire Road. However, it was acknowledged that dog fouling has improved in areas of publicity. The leaflets and posters had acted as deterrents.

**Resolved** – (a) That the information be noted.

(b) That Councillor Harrison move the anti-dog fouling 'eye' posters into the new hotspots and that thank you notices replace the moved posters.

(c) That 12 boxes of Poop Scoop bags be purchased for 2015/16 and;

(d) That an inter-school competition be arranged after Easter to design a sign for anti-dog fouling.

## **59. BIG SPRING CLEAN**

It was noted that Litterfree Durham's Big Spring Clean campaign was 28 February to 18 April 2015. Members agreed a date and time for a litter pick on Scar Top. It was also confirmed that volunteers go to identified litter hot spots on Smiths Lane, Morrison's Carpark near the recycling centre and the back of the leisure centre.

Received – a proposal submitted by Councillor Deacon for Committee consideration to tackle litter issues in the town, working in conjunction with Durham County Council Civic Pride Team, which included actions as follows:

- That 'Keep Britain Tidy' be contacted for posters, stickers and leaflets. That these be distributed to all schools, YMCA, TCR Hub, shops, factories and workplaces, as well as the Witham and Library.
- That community litter picks be supported.
- That two Town Council led litterpicks be organised: one during the Big Spring Clean and a second 'youth-led' litterpick early July involving the TCR Hub and Teesdale School.
- That primary schools be contacted to encourage a visit from Tidy Ted.
- That Teesdale School be encouraged to host an Environmental Crime session.

**Resolved** – (a) That a litter pick be arranged on Scar Top Saturday 21 March 10.30am to 12.30pm;

(b) That the litter pick be advertised in press for volunteer support and;

(c) That the resolution by Councillor Deacon, in its entirety, be approved and actioned.

#### **60. ORCHARD WINDFALLS FUND**

Received – information about the Tree Council's Orchard Windfall fund, for projects involving children under 16 years in the design, planning or planting of fruit trees on publicly accessible land. The deadline for applications was noted as 31 March.

**Resolved** – (a) That an application be submitted and;

(b) – That the TCR Hub and YMCA be contacted for involvement.

#### **61. MARKET CROSS LIGHTING**

It was reported that further to Minute 47(b)/Dec/14, an application for £6,000 was made to the Teesdale Area Action Partnership's Transport (TAP), Traffic Management and Environment Task and Finish Group. The proposal was recommended for approval and would be considered at TAP Board for approval on the 11 March 2015. If approved, this sum, together with money donated to the town council, would enable completion of phase I of the scheme.

**Resolved** – (a) That the information be noted and;

(b) That in anticipation of funding approval, quotations for lighting equipment be sought by the clerk.

#### **62. PARISH PATHS PARTNERSHIP GRANT**

It was reported that the deadline for Durham County Council's 2015 Parish Paths Partnership Grant, to improve and promote local field footpaths and bridleways, was 31 March. Committee members discussed possible works to improve paths at Teesbank Woods (Marwood Parish), Flatts Woods, by viaduct from Woodside to Golf Course, Green Lane and top of lower Demesnes (linking to Parsons Lonnen)

**Resolved** – That an application be submitted in consultation with HoT.

#### **63. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (In Respect of Item 64 Below)**

**Resolved** – That, the matter referred to at item 64 below, be discussed in the open meeting, due to the need for further investigation before considering quotes.

#### **64. FLORAL DISPLAYS GALGATE GREEN STUMP GRINDING**

Submitted – a report to determine a contractor to remove the tree stump on Upper Galgate as part of the Galgate Greens Improvement project. Two quotations were received, one of which included reinstatement of kerbs to the area. It was noted that Durham County Council was responsible for maintaining kerbs.

**Resolved** - (a) That quotes be resubmitted for the removal of both tree stumps on Galgate Greens and;  
(b) That Durham County Council be approached to reinstate kerbs.