

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
SERVICES COMMITTEE**

13 APRIL 2015

PRESENT: Councillor Peat (in the Chair); Councillors Harrison, Hinchcliffe (to Minute 70(iv)), Mrs Grady, Marshall and Yarker.

Also in attendance: Two members of the press.

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

65. ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE, OF APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

66. 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 68 and 70(vii).

67. SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING – 23 FEBRUARY 2015 – MINUTES

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

68. ALLOTMENTS

It was reported that six allotment gardens had been relinquished since the last update. One had already been re-tenanted; the other five vacant gardens on Crook Lane, The Demesnes, Raby Avenue and Town Head were in the process of being re-tenanted.

There had been no new applications for the waiting list; the total stood at 24. 2015/16 Allotment Tenancy Agreements and rental request letters had been sent out to all existing tenants. The water supply had also been turned back on. To improve communication with tenants and to save on postage costs, noticeboards had been installed at each site.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

69. PLAY AREAS

(i) Future Play Area Provision

There had been no further progress. It was reported that plans for a potential improvement scheme would be reported to next Services Committee. Councillor Marshall proposed provision for a cycle route throughout the town, seconded by Councillor Yarker.

It was reported that the town council had been approached by the Barnard Castle Lawn Tennis Club (Bowes Museum) regarding provision of tennis facilities in the town and to explore common ground in providing better and more accessible tennis facilities. It was noted that Teesdale School had four tennis courts that used to be open to the public. The TCR Hub had a MUGA open to the public. Members felt that the facilities the town already had needed to be used before creating new ones.

Resolved – (a) That a 'vision for play' be developed into a potential scheme and reported to next Services Committee.

(b) That a meeting be held with Barnard Castle Tennis Club to discuss improving tennis facilities for the town.

(ii) Repairs & Maintenance - inspections

It was reported that the third and final inspection for 2014/15 was carried out by Durham County Council on 10 March. There were no major issues to report. It was confirmed that an independent annual inspection of all five play areas was booked for May 2015.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

70. FLORAL AND OPEN SPACES

(i) Public Seats

Pursuant to Committee Minute 41 (i)/Dec/14, it was reported that Teesdale YMCA had completed work to benches located on Harmire Road. The town council's contribution towards the weed control project around six public seats (five located in Flatts Woods and one at Raby Avenue) had now been made and this work was being carried out by Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership. The metal seats on the Bandstand area had been removed to make more child friendly. The bench outside Boots and the benches inside the Market Cross were the next public seats to be refurbished.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

(ii) Floral Displays – The Bowes Museum YSL Exhibition 11 July to 25 October

It was proposed by the 2015 Events Task & Finish Group that summer planting be French themed to support The Bowes Museum's Yves Saint Laurent 'Style is Eternal' Exhibition. Members noted that summer planting was planned for week commencing 1 June. Companies had been asked to tender for supply and planting of the town centre's floral displays, including ideas and suggestions to create colourful and tasteful French themed summer displays. Committee members discussed floral planting letters 'Y S L' in toilet bed (opposite King's Head) and/or recreating the famous Mondrian dress in vivid blocks of floral planting.

Recommendation – (a) That the information be noted and;
(b) That further discussions be held with the appointed contractor for supply and planting of the town's floral displays to support The Bowes Museum exhibition.

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

Received – a report that outlined further issues in consideration of further improvement schemes to complement the town's floral displays in 2015/16 and recommendations for allocation of the 2014/15 underspend.

It was noted that the agreed Floral and Open Spaces 2015/16 budget was £6,000 and covered the following:

- Standard watering service (2 to 3 times per week for 20 weeks - £2,500 already committed).
- Summer and Winter planting of tubs and Market Place bed.
- Hay Meadow leaflet and dispenser.
- Flatts Wood permissive footpath and Red Well maintenance (£460 already allocated).

It was reported that the total 2014/15 underspend was £1,202 (made up of £591 underspend on planned expenditure and £611 income from hay cropped from the Haymeadow and reimbursement for work to Demesnes).

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. These had yet be received, due to issues with supply, but delivery was expected by May. Members were asked to consider earmarking £665 from the 2014/15 budget to avoid overspending on 2015/16 budget. Due to the long term closure of King Street, members discussed whether it was worth including an additional two wooden barrels in the 2015/16 floral displays.

Pursuant to Minute 55 (ii) (a)/Feb/15, the remaining underspend from 2014/15 had been allocated to redeveloping the gateway/island beds on Galgate. Members discussed that as these beds were the responsibility of the County Council, this underspend ought to be earmarked for other floral planting schemes.

Pursuant to Minute 55 (ii) (c)/Feb/15, the Hanging Baskets scheme was discussed with the Guild. Concerns had been raised by several businesses over regular watering of the hanging baskets, with businesses unwilling to commit unless a watering contract was in place. It was noted that extending the current ground-level watering scheme, even on a rechargeable basis, would require an absolute commitment from a defined set of businesses and would be difficult to estimate given that hanging baskets would require more frequent watering and that access from the street would be complex to guarantee.

A site meeting was also held with Durham County Council Conservation officer on 31 March to look at floral boxes inside the Market Cross. Although a Grade 1 listed building, there were no conservation issues, except seepage from watering. Members were reminded of the architectural merit of the Market Cross, and that for this reason, the Business Guild was not in favour of this scheme. It was thought that there could also be operational concerns from the county's neighbourhood services team, who were responsible for the structure. Members discussed the wasted asset of the Market Cross and that, in the light of potential Heart of Teesdale funding to spruce up the building, Members felt that it should be visually improved with floral displays. Councillor Mrs Grady offered to get further costings for wooden planters, compost and flowers. It was discussed as a potential project for YMCA to design and make seven 50 inch x 18 inch x 12 inch planters. Councillor Mrs Grady and Marshall volunteered to water the planters.

A freestanding structure on Scar Top with 12 hanging baskets could be sourced for £420, including the frame, 12 hanging baskets, compost and plants. Councillor Peat volunteered to water the baskets. It was felt that when in situ, individual businesses could be further encouraged to put up their own hanging baskets.

Given the limited budget for 2015/16, members were asked to consider the various floral schemes proposed above, together with earmarking the 2014/15 underspend.

Resolved – (a) That the report be received.

(b) That the Summer floral displays be replanted in the week commencing 1 June 2015.

(c) That more work be carried out to explore costings of floral window boxes inside arches of Market Cross, led by Councillor Mrs Grady.

(d) That £665 be earmarked from 2014/15 underspend for purchase of 12 wooden barrels and compost.

(e) That the remaining underspend from 2014/15 budget, earmarked for redeveloping the island beds on Galgate be rescinded and instead rolled over and earmarked for 2015/16 floral displays.

(f) That the freestanding floral planter, with 12 hanging baskets, compost and plants on Scar Top, be approved at a cost of £420 from 2015/16 budget.

(g) That individual businesses be encouraged to put up their own hanging baskets to support the Bowes Museum exhibition and the town's French themed floral displays.

(iv) Upper Demesnes Hay Meadow

(a) Leaflet dispenser

Pursuant to Minute 55 (iii) (a)/Feb/15, costs for an outdoor, secure and weather proof leaflet dispenser had been sourced to fit 1/3 A4 Haymeadow leaflet. A wooden (oak) dispenser could be sourced for £45. It was noted that the purchase of items with a value below £50 are covered by the operational delegation to the office.

Resolved – That Teesdale YMCA be approached to make a wooden leaflet dispenser.

(b) Scything Training 3 July

It was noted that, although six people had shown an interest in enrolling on the course, no payments had been received. All participants were expected to give a day volunteering to maintain the Haymeadow. It was reported that on the day, there would be old hay making equipment and tractors on display as well as the option of viewing the town council's allotment site.

(c) Management

It was confirmed that, as in previous years, hay cutting was to take place mid-July and sheep grazing in October.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

(v) Metal Detecting on the Demesnes

It was reported that the town council had been informed by a member of the public about metal detecting on the Demesnes. The committee was requested to consider appropriate action to take. Councillor Marshall also updated the Committee on night hawking within English Heritage properties (castle and abbey) and that metal detecting was a particular problem for the town.

Resolved – (a) That Durham County Council assets team be notified (ownership of Demesnes) and;

(b) That no metal detecting be advertised in the press.

(vi) Red Well

It was reported that a grant of up to £500 to restore the flow of the Red Well spring had been offered to the town council by the Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership, to be completed by end May. It was reported that work was imminent and that a quote could not be given until work started, as the scale of work needed was unclear.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

(vii) Rotary Club – Gifted Fruit Tree Potential Location

It was reported that the town council had been approached by the Rotary Club, which had been gifted a self-pollinating apple tree to commemorate 75 years of the organisation. The committee was requested to help identify a suitable planting location, in a prominent location, with plaque, and for the Mayor to attend the commemoration ceremony on 1 May. Woodleigh grounds was suggested as a possible location.

Resolved – That the town council work with the Rotary Club to identify a suitable planting location and support the commemoration ceremony.

(viii) Flatts Wood Photographic Walk

Received – a proposal from Councillor Marshall requesting town council support for a photographic walk, utilising the existing yellow arrows on circular walk along Flatts Woods

to Cotherstone. It was proposed to use QR-code technology (bar codes) linked to website with content and images, for users with mobile devices to explore more information. It was confirmed that there would be no cost to the town council. Councillor Harrison reminded committee members that permissions would need to be sought from Raby Estates and Marwood Parish Council for sections of the walk.

- Resolved** – (a) That the town council support the proposal in principle.
(b) That Councillor Marshall liaise with Heart of Teesdale regarding application of technology and appropriate interpretation.
(c) That appropriate permissions be sought.

71. MINI GOLF – 2015 SEASON

It was reported that the mini golf season commenced on Saturday 28 March. Visitor numbers had been good with increased visitors over the Easter Weekend due to good weather and Easter events. A press release appeared in the Teesdale Mercury on 25 March to publicise the opening and season. It was further reported that there had been one successful private hire. Committee members were informed that some carpet maintenance would be needed in the future.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

72. WAR MEMORIALS

(i) Aviation Day Memorial

It was noted that preparatory works commenced on 8 April, with completion of relocation estimated by 17 April. Letters had been circulated to neighbouring properties, informing them of works. Councillor Yarker gave thanks to the Clerk and informed the committee that 63 Squadron would want to visit once installation was complete.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

73. DOG FOULING

Received – a proposal from Councillor Harrison requesting that the town council consider a 'no dogs' policy in all council play areas. A discussion ensued surrounding the need for dogs to be kept on leads at all times in play area vicinity. Councillor Marshall also requested town council support to erect A4 laminated 'Barney the dog asks...' anti-dog fouling signs on lampposts in seven key locations around the town, such as Teesdale School and Scar Top areas. Councillor Peat informed members that the area from Teesdale School to Stainton Grove was particularly bad (Marwood Parish).

- Resolved** – (a) That the proposal by Councillor Harrison be approved and actioned in conjunction with Minute 74.
(b) That Councillor Marshall liaise with Civic Pride team at Durham County Council regarding permissions for fixing posters to lampposts.
(c) That Councillor Peat propose installation of a dog bin at next Marwood Parish meeting.

74. SMOKE FREE PLAY AREAS

It was noted that Durham County Council had officially launched the smoke-free play areas initiative on 12 March. The town council had been encouraged to sign up to the code. Pursuant to Council Minute 66(1) (a)/Sept/14, it was resolved that the town council did not sign up to the voluntary code, on the basis that the code was unenforceable and the cost of signs excessive and a waste of resources. However, members discussed the fact that town councils now had the option to produce their own signs and could use an

amended version of the artwork (shown at the meeting) provided free by the County Council.

Resolved – (a) That the town council sign up to the voluntary code.

(b) That 'smoke and dog free' play area signage be produced, using amended artwork and in conjunction with previous resolution for an inter-school competition to design a sign (Minute 58 (d)/Feb/15 refers).

75. BIG SPRING CLEAN 2015

(i) Litter pick

It was reported that a town council organised litter pick was held 21 March as part of the Big Spring Clean 2015. On the day, there were 20 volunteers who collected 25 bags of rubbish in and around Scar Top, Flatts Woods and TCR Hub areas.

Resolved – That the information be noted and that thanks be extended to all volunteers involved.

(ii) Town Weeding Project

Pursuant to Council Minute 66(1)(b)/Sept/14, a town weeding project was discussed to take place beginning June, in line with summer planting of the town's floral displays. Councillor Peat suggested volunteers could also help change wooden barrels over, replanting bulbs around Woodleigh grounds and in Remembrance garden.

Resolved – That once barrels were delivered, a date and time for weeding and bulb replanting in early June be organised and publicised.

76. MARKET CROSS LIGHTING

As reported to Council on 23 March, the town council's application for funding to support this project was approved by the Teesdale Action Partnership Board on 11 March. It was noted that final approval of the project would likely not happen until the end of May. The funds were conditional on quarterly returns based on the project performance objectives.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

77. PARISH PATHS PARTNERSHIP GRANT

Pursuant to Minute 62/Feb/15, it was reported that an application was in progress to Durham County Council's 2015 Parish Paths Partnership Grant, to drain, scrape and repair surfaces to two 50 metre stretches of paths in Tees bank and Flatts Woods.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

78. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (In Respect of Item 79 to 81 Below)

Resolved – That, the matters referred to at items 79 to 81 below, be discussed in the open meeting, due to press having already left the meeting.

79. FLORAL AND OPEN SPACES GALGATE GREEN STUMP GRINDING

Submitted – a report to determine a contractor to remove the two tree stumps on Upper Galgate as part of the Galgate Greens Improvement project. Three quotations were received from Fairbairns Ltd, Olivers Tree Services (Witton Gilbert) and William Holstein (Cleasby).

Resolved – That Olivers Tree Services be appointed to remove the two tree stumps to a depth of 150mm below ground level, backfill the holes and remove excess debris, at a cost of £255.

80. FLORAL DISPLAYS CONTRACT 2015/16

Submitted – a report to determine a company to supply and plant 2015/16 floral displays for the town. Only one quotation was received from Elm Ridge Gardens Ltd, including French Mediterranean themed plants in the Summer planting to support the Bowes Museum's YSL exhibition.

Resolved – That Elm Ridge Gardens Ltd be awarded the 2015/16 floral display contract at the sum of £2,753.

81. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT 2015/16

Submitted – a report to determine the town council's grounds maintenance contractor for 2015/16. It was reported that the current contractor, Robson Horticulture Ltd, had continued to provide an excellent local support service and that the contractor's rates continued to represent good value for money.

Resolved – That Robson Horticulture Ltd. be appointed to provide the Council's grounds maintenance work for 2015/16.