

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
SERVICES COMMITTEE**

11 APRIL 2016

PRESENT: Councillors Peat (in the Chair); Harrison, Hinchcliffe, Yarker, Mrs Grady and Mrs Thompson.

Also in attendance: One member of the press.

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

65. ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE, OF APOLOGIES

None

66. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with this Council's adopted Code of Conduct (Minute 72(a)/Sep/12 refers), Members will be asked whether they have 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 are reminded that a declaration can be given later in the meeting if a need arises during discussion. Councillor Harrison declared an interest in respect of Item 68.

67. SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING – 22 FEBRUARY 2016 – MINUTES

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

68. ALLOTMENTS

(i) General update

The allotment waiting list stood at 22; including one new application received during March.

There were 4 vacant gardens: one on the Demesnes; one on Harmire Road; one on Raby Avenue; and one on Town Head. It was anticipated that these vacancies would be filled by the time of the next meeting.

The revised 2016-17 Allotment Tenancy Agreement and Allotment Rules had been sent out to all tenants and it was expected that all rentals/agreements would have been collected in by the end of June 2016.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

(ii) Allotments Improvement Action Plan update

(a) Water Regulation Compliance

Pursuant to Minute 55(v)/Feb/16 quotations were sought from three WRAS compliant contractors. D Young Plumbing & Heating Services of Crook was the successful contractor and would commence rectification work shortly. This was a little later than hoped and an extension from Northumbrian Water had been obtained for the inspection to be deferred. The water supply would be turned on following completion of the work.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

69. PLAY AREAS

(i) Tree Work – Ten Fields

Due to the urgency of the work, pursuant to Resources Committee (Minute 73(ii)/March/16), two storm damaged trees in Ten Fields, behind Kalafat, had damaged branches removed and pruning works undertaken by the Council's grounds maintenance contractor. The trees were not in a conservation area or protected.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

(ii) Ten Fields Lease update

Pursuant to Resources Committee (Minute 73(i)/Mar/16), when it was reported that Barnard Castle Football Club (BCFC) had submitted formal notice of its intention to quit the lease on Ten Fields at the end of the season (May), an official expression of interest in the lease of Ten Fields had been received from Castle Rangers Football Club (CRFC). Following agreement of the Club, it was proposed that a five-year lease be agreed with CRFC using the terms hitherto operating between the town council and BCFC. The league games finished 22 May and surrender of the existing lease was expected by BCFC shortly after this date. CRFC had indicated willingness to commence a new lease from the date of surrender. Any structures on site were not surrendered to the council and must either be removed by the outgoing tenant or exchanged by agreement between the outgoing and incoming tenants. If this arrangement proceeded, it would be at no cost to the town council.

If there was a hiatus between leases, it would be necessary to ensure that the grass was cut. A representative of the Meet had approached the town council to enquire about the availability of the Ten Fields over the Spring Bank holiday. The Meet would be willing to cover the cost of a match-day cut (£65) in the event that the field was being maintained by the town council to recreational standards.

Resolved – (a) That approval be given to the granting of a lease to Castle Rangers Football Club, to be duly signed by two members; and
(b) That, in the event that the field was vacant, the town council maintains Ten Fields as recreational grass.

70. SCAR TOP PLAY AREA/MINI GOLF FREEHOLD ASSET TRANSFER

The council had received assurance that there were no outstanding issues associated with the Rural Development Programme for England (LEADER) grant terms to be novated to the town council. Similar assurance had been received from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This information had been provided to the council's solicitor and progress on the final terms of the freehold transfer was awaited. Additional repairs were being undertaken by Durham County Council to the play area; due for completion end April.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

71. MINI GOLF – 2016 SEASON

The mini golf season commenced on Saturday 19 March with the operating arrangements as reported to Committee on 22 February (58(ii)/Feb/16 refers). Visitor numbers had been good over the Easter holidays with notably increased visitors on days when the weather was favourable.

A Press Release appeared in the Teesdale Mercury on Wednesday 23 March to publicise the mini golf opening together with the free use by local schools during term time and groups and organisations outside normal operating hours.

Resolved – (a) That the information be noted; and
(b) That an updated report be given at the next meeting on 6 June 2016.

72. WAR MEMORIALS

Pursuant to Committee Minute 45/Dec/15 it was reported that, due to time restraints and unfavourable weather conditions, it had not been possible for Coverdale Masonry to carry out the repair work to the main Town Memorial. It had been confirmed that the cracks were not of a structural nature and the work would be carried out before the end of June.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

73. DELIVERING DIFFERENTLY

Heads of Terms covering Scar Top, the 'Sculpture Garden' and the Bridgegate Greens had been prepared by Durham County Council and were circulated. Members noted that the plan for Scar Top should be revised to account for the changes to the adopted highway. The Scar Top plan also included Woodleigh grounds, however, there would be a separate lease for this area. Approval was sought for these terms to allow leases to be prepared.

Resolved – That the heads of terms be approved.

74. WEDNESDAY MARKET

The town council had operated the market since 2 March. During the first month, rental income from the market totalled £605, consistent with the budgeted income of £5,000 per annum. There had been no expenditure since taking over the market.

Informal discussions with established market traders had revealed a number of areas which might enable improvements to the way the market operates. A structured view was needed about a range of issues including: the charges and the means of charging for pitches; how to encourage and reward regular attendance; the mechanism for supervising setting up and dismantling of the market; and encouraging new and diverse traders in future.

Arrangements for the setting out and removal of barriers were discussed under Item 78, below.

Resolved – (a) That the information be noted; and
(b) That approval be given to a formal survey of market traders regarding the operating procedures for the market inherited from Durham County Council and to examine opportunities for improvements to its future operation.

75. FLORAL AND OPEN SPACES

(i) Floral Displays 2016/17

The floral displays contract was determined under Item 78, below.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

(ii) Interpretation Board – Sculpture Garden

Pursuant to Minute 61(ii)/Feb/16 the following names were suggested by the public in The Teesdale Mercury to rename the 'Sculpture Garden':

The Teesdale Amphitheatre; The Tees Water Garden; The Crossings Water Garden; Roman Ford Picnic Site; and Hunting Park Picnic Site. The determination of the name was resolved by committee members.

Resolved – That the 'Sculpture Garden' be renamed 'Roman Ford Picnic Site'.

(iii) Woodland Trust Tree Packs

Pursuant to Minute 49(v)/Dec/15 and Minute 61(iii)/Feb/16, 105 wetland tree saplings were planted by volunteers on 15 March in the Kalafat area. Allan Rayner, local tree expert, provided expertise and guidance.

Resolved – (a) That the information be noted; and
(b) That thanks be given to all volunteers.

(iv) Information boards – Flatts Woods

Pursuant to Resources Committee (Minute 75/Mar/16), it was resolved that the Town Council agreed, in principle, to take on liability for the Flatts Woods information boards, on the same basis as the benches in the woods, subject to clarification on terms and conditions. Further clarification was received from Emma Ashton-Wickett, Paths for People Officer at Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership. The boards were designed to have a life-span of at least 10 years (minimum) so should need little maintenance, apart from the odd clean, during this time. When the time came for them to be removed, then the Town Council should take this forward with Durham County Council (DCC). If the boards were vandalised, it depended on the extent of the damage and whether the boards could be salvaged. The frames were metal so should withstand being burnt, etc. and the boards were to be made from a heavy-duty plastic laminate so should be hardy enough and the frames would help protect them. If damage occurred, then the Town Council should contact Annalisa Ward, Project Manager at DCC, who could advise accordingly.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

76. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT SPECIFICATION

A specification for the maintenance of grassed areas including those to be transferred from Durham Country Council had been prepared and was circulated for members' deliberations.

Resolved - That the approved specification be used to advertise a contract for grounds maintenance.

77. BIG SPRING CLEAN

Barnard Castle Town Council took part in LitterFree Durham's Big Spring Clean on 19 March. Twenty-one volunteers filled over 30 bags of rubbish from around the town. A further seven dumpy bags of sticks and leaves were collected from around Scar Top. This year, the Town Council joined forces with members of Barnard Castle Ramblers. The Chair of LitterFree Durham, Councillor Gerald Lee, also supported the event.

Resolved – (a) That the information be noted and;
(b) That thanks be given to all volunteers.

78. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC IN RESPECT OF CONTINUATION ITEMS 74 AND 75(i)

Resolved – That, under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 §1(2), the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the matters referred to in the continuation of items 74 and 75 (i) below, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted: in that it would put into the public domain information, which, if disclosed, might prevent the council from acting in the best interests of council tax payers.

74. WEDNESDAY MARKET (CONTINUATION)

To ensure the market operated within health and safety parameters, an employment contract for setting out and clearing barriers (stored in Woodleigh) was needed.

Resolved – That a contract be advertised for a Market Operative to be appointed to set out and clear barriers at a rate of £40 on-target earnings per session.

75(i) FLORAL DISPLAYS 2016/17 (CONTINUATION)

Received – a report considering the floral display planting quotations and seeking to determine which company should be appointed to supply the 2016/17 planting so that the town was provided with an 'all year round' floral display. Members noted that the budget was £9,500 and that it was previously resolved to support the 1940s weekend 24 to 26 June 2016 with 1940s themed floral displays. Only one quotation had been submitted from Elm Ridge Gardens Ltd.

Resolved – (a) That the floral display contract be awarded to Elm Ridge Gardens at the sum of £2,781.80 and;

(b) That the town council maintain the two Gateway beds using volunteers and community groups.