

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL  
SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**6 JUNE 2016**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Peat (in the Chair), Mrs Grady (from Minute 5(iv), Harrison, Hinchcliffe, Mrs Thompson and Yarker.

**Also in attendance:** Councillors Sutherland and Rowell; One member of the press.

**Officers:** Mr King (Town Clerk).

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

None

**2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR**

**Resolved** – That Cllr Mrs Thompson be elected Vice Chair of Services Committee for the Municipal Year 2016/17.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In accordance with this Council's adopted Code of Conduct (Minute 17(b)/May/16 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.

**4. SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING – 11 APRIL 2016 – MINUTES**

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

**5. ALLOTMENTS**

**(i) General update**

It was reported that the allotment waiting list stood at 22; including one new application received during May. There were currently six vacant gardens. Once vacant gardens had been tenanted, the waiting list was expected to reduce to sixteen.

For operational reasons, the Harmire Road water supply had been temporarily suspended.

An incident of suspected criminal damage at Harmire Road was reported to the police. This was being investigated and a full report would be made to a future meeting, once the investigation was complete. Two unrelated incidents reported at Crook Lane were also under investigation.

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

**(ii) Insurance Claim**

During April, damage was sustained to the Raby Avenue allotment site as a result of an accident involving a vehicle, which mounted the pavement and damaged the boundary hedge and an allotment shed. A claim was submitted to the relevant insurance company which had confirmed that rectification work could commence, based on the cheaper of two quotations submitted. It was anticipated that this work would be completed by the end of July. There were no financial consequences to the town council.

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

**(iii) Dementia Friendly Garden**

Veg Out in Barney had been awarded a grant to develop a site at The Hub for those people living with dementia to revisit their gardening skills. Volunteers from the community were being sought to help during the summer months to prepare the raised beds and garden areas. This information had been cascaded to the Council's allotment tenants.

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

**(iv) Allotments Improvement Action Plan update**

**a. Water Regulation Compliance**

Work had been completed and the appropriate sign-off received from Northumbrian Water.

As part of these works, it had become apparent that the standpipe serving the dog agility area, was connected to the metered supply for the Demesnes allotment. Initial discussions with the dog agility club had indicated that the club was willing to replace the tap with a standard-compliant standpipe and that a formal agreement covering use by the club should be established, with payment to commence from 2017/18.

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

(b) That the dog agility be granted an annual licence from 2016/17 to access the allotment water supply, at a charge of £50 per annum from 2017/18.

**(v) Ecological Survey Request - Demesnes**

A request had been received from Mr Simon Fawcett, self-employed for the North Pennines AONB Partnership, to conduct a couple of Great Crested Newt Ecological Surveys on the Demesnes. He was seeking permission to bottle trap the pond area at the far end of the Demesnes and also two ponds on the allotments (plots 4 and 10/11). Both allotment tenants were happy for the survey to take place. Mr Fawcett held a Level 1 licence to survey Great Crested Newts for research and education purposes. If permission was granted, the survey would be shared with the Town Council.

**Resolved** – That approval be given to carry out an ecological survey on the Demesnes.

**6. PLAY AREAS**

**(i) Repairs and Maintenance**

Monthly inspections had been carried out at all five play areas. Two ground fixings on the climbing nest at Dawson Road play area had failed and had subsequently been replaced.

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

**(ii) Green Lane**

**a. Goal posts**

A request had been received from a local parent asking if the Town Council would consider providing football goal posts for Green Lane, which was regularly used by children to play football. It was noted that Glaxo Rangers were to permanently erect goal posts on Ten Fields.

**Resolved** – That consideration be given to funding the provision of goal posts as part of TAP application (considered at Item 17, below).

## **b. Personal Injury claim**

A claim had been received from Irwin Mitchell Solicitors pursuant to an alleged injury on 1 May 2015 at Green Lane Play Area. The Town Council had received no prior notification of any incident and the annual inspection of the play area on 6 May 2015 found no high or medium risks and no urgent repairs. The claim was being dealt with by the Town Council's insurers.

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

## **7. SCAR TOP PLAY AREA/ MINI GOLF FREEHOLD ASSET TRANSFER**

DCC Legal Services had indicated to the town council's solicitor that the county council wished to amend terms related to the funding conditions to be novated to the town council. An amended draft had not yet been received by the town council's solicitor.

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

## **8. MINI GOLF – 2016 SEASON**

It was reported that the mini golf course continued to be well used and was now operating under the high season arrangements i.e. open 10:30am until 6:30pm (weather permitting). As in previous years the main summer holiday was to be extended from 6 to 8 weeks, with the course open every day from Saturday 9 July until Sunday 4 September.

It was noted that a local Rainbows group had booked out the course for private use at the concessionary rate of £15 per hour on 11 July 2016.

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

## **9. WAR MEMORIALS**

Pursuant to Services Minute 72/Apr/16 the repair work to the Town Memorial was still on course to be carried out by the end of June. Following completion of this work the annual War Memorial inspections would be carried out by the Town Mayor and Services Officer.

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

## **10. PUBLIC SEATS**

Work had been carried out to one of the benches situated on the Market Place Toilets. Maintenance work would be undertaken on benches within the Remembrance Garden and on Scar Top.

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

## **11. DELIVERING DIFFERENTLY**

DCC Legal Services had contacted the town council's solicitor to indicate that draft leases had been prepared. No draft had yet been received by the town council's solicitor. It was reported that receipt of these would influence the progress of item 14, below.

Confirmation had been given to DCC of the Town Council's decision not to proceed with the freehold transfer of the Market Place and Off-Galgate public toilets. That position had been acknowledged.

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

## **12. WEDNESDAY MARKET**

The Wednesday market continued to trade effectively, subject only to inclement weather. Total rental receipts in the period from 1 March to 1 June stood at £2,086. Expenditure to date on activities related to the market had been £450. Following the decision of the committee at its April meeting, the position of Market Operative had been advertised through the Teesdale Mercury, with a closing date of 11 May. Matthew Rymer had been appointed to that post.

It was reported that DCC's Regeneration and Economic Development team was preparing a bid to secure funding for an update to the structural survey of the Market Cross. The committee was requested to consider whether to allocate £500 from the current operational surplus of £1,636 to that project, in recognition of the significance of the Market Cross to the wider market.

**Resolved** – (a) That the information be noted; and  
(b) That an onward recommendation be made to Resources Committee on 13 June to allocate up to £500 from the Wednesday Market budget as potential match funding to a bid for an update to the current survey on the Market Cross.

## **13. FLORAL AND OPEN SPACES**

### **(i) Floral Displays 2016/17**

Summer planting by Elm Ridge Gardens Ltd commenced on 6 June. Hanging baskets had been ordered for the hanging basket 'tree' outside the post office on Galgate.

The Chair reported that opportunities to sponsor a hanging basket for £25 would be promoted through the Teesdale Mercury.

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

### **(ii) Interpretation Board – Roman Ford Picnic Site**

Pursuant to Minute 37(iv)/Oct/15, Minute 61(ii)/Feb/16 and 75(ii)/Apr/16, a first draft of text for the panel, with suggested illustrations, was circulated for Members' comments at the meeting. Members felt that there was insufficient evidence to support the assertion that the photograph supplied showed the remains of the roman ford. It was suggested that further enquiries were made with Caroline Hardie. Members also were concerned about undue prominence to 'dead sheep' in the supplied text. A request would be made to find additional illustration, including a bore on the Tees from the Mercury archive.

**Resolved** – That Members' comments be noted.

### **(iii) Upper Demesnes Haymeadow – 'Wonder Wander'**

A guided walk around the Haymeadow, which had been renamed 'A Meander round the Meadow', was organised for Saturday 9 July, to be followed by a demonstration of scything and the opportunity to 'have a go.'

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

## **14. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT**

As outlined at item 11, above, until receipt of draft lease terms relating to the areas of open space to be transferred to the town council from DCC, an advert for the specification agreed by this committee at its meeting in April ought not to be placed.

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

## 15. TOWN WEEDING PROJECT

The Town Council resolved to support the Influence Church's 'No Strings' volunteer project in June 2016 (Minute 23/July/15 refers). It was reported that on Saturday 11 June, several volunteers would tidy areas surrounding Woodleigh Grounds and Scar Top, work on the Galgate Green benches and their environs.

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

## 16. DOG FOULING

The Durham County Council Neighbourhood Protection Team update for Teesdale and Weardale revealed that, during March 2016, there were four investigations of dog fouling, with one Fixed Penalty Notice issued for dog fouling on the Demesnes.

Members requested that information should be gathered on good practice from elsewhere, including on the potential to centre a campaign on health concerns and the potential to transmit diseases such as *Cryptosporidium* and *Toxocara canis*.

**Resolved** – (a) That the information be noted; and  
(b) That a report on best practice approaches adopted by other town and parish councils be brought to a future meeting.

## 17. TEESDALE ACTION PARTNERSHIP (TAP) – PROJECT FUNDING

It was reported that TAP was calling for projects that addressed the following priorities:

1. Older people (including health and wellbeing)
2. Transport and Environment
3. Jobs, Enterprise and Training
4. Welfare Reform

The minimum grant available was £5,000. The deadline for applications was Monday 20 June. Projects could not start before the end of November 2016.

Members of Services Committee considered submitting an application to:

1. Help to keep the town clean and tidy
2. Help people to access and enjoy the natural environment
3. Conserve and enhance the wildlife, landscapes and historic features of the town.

Members considered two potential projects: increasing the security of the Demesnes to reduce opportunities for misuse of the open space by drivers; and a footpath/cycle-path around Green Lane play area linked to new sporting equipment, including the goal posts mentioned in item 6(ii)a, above and adult, outdoor gym equipment.

Discussion of the issues identified with the Demesnes demonstrated a need to call interested parties to a public meeting to examine this in more detail.

Members consider the scope of the Green Lane project and considered that this should form the substance of an application to this funding round.

**Resolved** – (a) That an application for TAP project funding, be submitted to provide a perimeter track, goal posts and associated equipment for the Green Lane play area; and  
(b) That a public meeting be arranged with interested parties bordering the Demesnes to explore residents' views on use of the area.