

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL  
SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**22 MAY 2017**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Peat (in the Chair), Mrs Thompson, Miss Blissett, Chatterjee, Dr Child and Hallimond.

**Also in attendance:** Councillors Blissett and Wilkes; One member of the press.

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

The Chairman reminded members of the Committee that, as it was within the pre-election period ('purdah'), the town council must comply with restrictions outlined in Section 2 of the Local Government Act 1986.

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

None.

**2. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR FOR THE 2017/18 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

**Resolved** – That Councillor Mrs Thompson be elected as Vice Chair of Services Committee for the municipal year 2017/18.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In accordance with this Council's adopted Code of Conduct (Minute 12/May/17 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.

**4. SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING – 3 APRIL 2017 – MINUTES**

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

**5. ALLOTMENTS**

**(i) General update**

There were no vacant allotment gardens. Since the last meeting, seven gardens had been re-tenanted and five new applications had been received bringing the waiting list total to nine.

Reminder letters were sent at the beginning of May to those tenants who had not returned their annual rental payments and renewed their Allotment Tenancy. So far, all but twelve had responded to the reminders. Out of the twelve, two had agreed payment plans and two were new tenants who took the plots on after 1 April. In line with the Tenancy Agreement, failure to respond to the reminder letter by the set deadline would result in a 'Notice to Quit' being issued.

A press release from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs confirmed that from 15 May, the Avian Influenza Prevention Zone had been lifted across most of England. There was now a new Prevention Zone in place that applied only to certain areas of Lancashire, Cumbria and Merseyside. The situation would continue to be monitored.

## **(ii) Demesnes Bee Keeping**

An application had been received from a prospective tenant to keep bees on The Demesnes allotment site. A suitable location within the site had been identified and tenants had been informed of the request. Subject to the terms and conditions of the Bee Keeping Agreement (Minute 67(iii)/Feb/17 refers) being met and that no sustainable objection was received from any tenants, the bees would be in place by the beginning of June.

## **(iii) Waiting List Issue (confidential)**

## **(iv) Harmire Road – Water Issue (confidential)**

**Resolved** – (a) That the information be noted; and  
(b) That items 5(iii) and 5(iv) be considered in exempt session, at item 19, below.

## **6. PLAY AREAS**

### **(i) Repairs and Maintenance**

It was reported that Park Lane Playgrounds had carried out the annual inspection of the town council's five play areas on 24 April. Various issues were identified requiring action at all five sites. Two pieces of equipment had been removed for urgent repair and parts were ordered and awaiting delivery.

**Resolved** – (a) That the actions be noted; and  
(b) That it be delegated to The Clerk to prioritise recommended actions to repair/ replace equipment in town council play areas.

### **(ii) Dawson Road – Potential MUGA lighting**

Pursuant to Minute 68 (iii)/Feb/17, as a result of the extension of purdah until the date of the General Election on 8 June, the results of the consultation with residents regarding current use of the play area and MUGA and the potential for lighting of the MUGA, would be deferred until the next Services Committee. The Clerk had contacted Cockfield Parish Council for information regarding external lighting to their pavilion and had details of the contractor and specification used.

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

### **(iii) Green Lane Playground Improvements**

Discussions had been held with potential funders of the identified match funding requirement of £4,000 for these works. There was currently nothing substantive to report, pending consideration of the easement relating to Tens Field, requested of the Trustees of the National Playing Fields Association on behalf of Barratt Homes.

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

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

Final documents had been received from the council's solicitor, satisfying the conditions identified by Council at its March meeting. Prior to these being signed on behalf of the town council, work was still required to complete the repairs to the play area, following the tree damage of December 2015, by Durham County Council. Confirmation was received from DCC officers that an order for replacement boards was made on 15 May. The poor condition of the wetpour was also mentioned.

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

## **8. DELIVERING DIFFERENTLY**

Confirmation had been received from an officer representing Durham County Council Assets confirming that outstanding issues relating to Woodleigh Grounds were operation of the power supply and confirmation that all requirements of those bodies funding the 2013 refurbishment had been met. The Woodleigh Grounds lease served as a model for those to be applied to the Demesnes, Scar Top and other areas.

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

## **9. MINI GOLF – 2017 SEASON**

The 2017 season commenced on Saturday 8 April and the course was open 10.30am to 4.30pm for two weeks during the school Easter holidays and had been open every weekend and bank holiday.

Sales for the year to date totalled £3,168, including VAT. As Mini Golf was now a vatable service, there would be a quarterly VAT return to HMRC.

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

## **10. WEDNESDAY MARKET**

In the seven weeks from 29 March to 10 May, total rental receipts were £1,097, an average of £157 per week. There were now five traders on the waiting list.

Members were informed that Love Your Local Market fortnight was 17 to 31 May. Durham County Council (DCC) was promoting the nine markets which operated across the County, including Barnard Castle.

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

## **11. FLORAL AND OPEN SPACES**

### **(i) Floral Displays 2017/18**

Summer planting by Elm Ridge Gardens Ltd was planned to take place week commencing 12 June. Hanging baskets had been ordered for the hanging basket 'tree' outside the post office on Galgate.

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

## **12. DOG FOULING**

### **(i) Public Space Protection Order (PSPO)**

Pursuant to Minute 88/April/17, Durham County Council had assessed the fenced off play areas in the town to be included in the PSPO. From 1 June, Marwood Drive, Bouch Way, Green Lane and Scar Top play areas would be subject to PSPO Part 1 and 2.

**Part 1** would apply to all land, which was defined as any public place, within the local authority area to which the public or any section of the public had access, on payment or otherwise, as of a right or virtue of expressed or implied permission. This would mean that all land that met this criteria would be covered. The offences relating to these areas would be:

- failing to pick up dog foul;
- allowing a dog to stray; or
- failing to place a dog on a lead when directed by an Authorised Officer.

**Part 2** applied only to fenced-off play areas within the land that were listed and would mean that dogs would be 'banned' from designated areas that had been identified and were signed.

Signage would be in place on each play area gate over the period 30 and 31 May. Neighbourhood wardens and the Police would be authorised officers to issue fines.

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

#### **(ii) Dogs Trust Community Event – 16 May**

Pursuant to Minute 74(i)(b)/Feb/17, the town council supported Durham County Council's community event in conjunction with the Dogs Trust in Woodleigh on 16 May.

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

### **13. MARKET PLACE PUBLIC TOILETS**

Durham County Council informed the town council on 4 May that works were planned to paint the floors in both male and female facilities at 'Barnard Castle Underground Public Convenience' (sic) requiring a temporary closure.

The planned closure was from Saturday 20 May with a view to reopening the toilets in time for the use during the Wednesday Market (on 24 May).

DCC confirmed that appropriate signage would be provided. Site notices had been placed on the entrances to both toilets by 17 May.

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

### **14. PUBLIC SEATS**

There was nothing specific to report, however, a verbal overview of the service was provided for members of the committee.

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

### **15. FLOODLIGHTING**

There was nothing specific to report, however, a verbal overview of the service was provided for members of the committee.

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

### **16. WAR MEMORIALS**

There was nothing specific to report, however, a verbal overview of the service was provided for members of the committee.

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

### **17. INFLUENCE CHURCH 'NO STRINGS' – 17 JUNE**

The Town Council resolved to support the Influence Church's 'No Strings' volunteer project in June 2017 (Minute 32(b)/July/16 refers). It was reported that on Saturday 17 June, several volunteers would tidy areas surrounding Woodleigh Grounds and Scar Top.

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

## **18. DURHAM WILDLIFE TRUST**

It was reported that the town council had received correspondence from Anne Gladwin, Grants Officer at Durham Wildlife Trust, requesting support from the town council to identify potential sites for conservation work and improving areas for wildlife, as well as funding opportunities. Durham Wildlife Trust was considering setting up a Wildlife Group in Barnard Castle for members to meet locally to learn more about wildlife, support conservation and be proactive in the local area and wondered if the town council could support, get involved or offer any advice.

It was suggested that Startforth and Marwood Parish Councils should also be contacted. The East side of Percy Beck and the lower Demesnes were highlighted as possible areas of focus.

**Resolved** – That Durham Wildlife Trust be asked to give a presentation at next Partnership Committee on 10 July.

## **19. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC IN RESPECT OF ITEM 20 AND CONTINUATION OF ITEMS 5 (iii) AND 5 (iv).**

**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 at item 20 and continuation of items 5(iii) and 5(iv), below.

## **20. DOG AGILITY LICENCE**

Submitted – a copy of correspondence received from the dog agility club asking for a reduction in the annual licence fee to access the allotment water supply. Members were informed that pursuant to Minute 5(iv)(b)/Jun/16 the dog agility club had been granted an annual licence at a charge of £50 per annum from 2017/18. A compliant water standpipe had been installed by the club.

**Resolved** – That the licence fee be reduced to £25 per annum from 2017/18 for the dog agility club to access the allotment water supply.

## **5. (iii) WAITING LIST ISSUE**

Received – a report seeking the committee's discretion in the application of allotment rules for admission to the waiting list. The town council had received a request from a potential tenant, who lived outside the parish, but who ran an established business within the town.

**Resolved** – That, in this particular instance, approval be given for the potential tenant to be placed on the allotment waiting list.

## **5. (iv) HARMIRE ROAD – WATER ISSUE**

Received – a verbal report that there was a fault on the water supply, which was currently switched off.

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