

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
SERVICES COMMITTEE**

16 JULY 2018

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

Also in attendance: Cllrs Blissett and Raw; one member of the press; one member of the public.

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

18. ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE, OF APOLOGIES

None.

19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with this Council's adopted Code of Conduct (Minute 10/May/18 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.

20. SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING – 21 MAY 2018 – MINUTES

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

21. ALLOTMENTS

(i) General update

It was reported that there was one vacant allotment garden, which would be re-tenanted after 16 July 2018.

Three new applications had been received since the last meeting; the waiting list currently stood at fourteen.

Following the reminder letters that were sent out at the beginning of May to those tenants who had not returned their annual rental payments; all tenancies and rentals had now been received.

As a precautionary measure, the water supply was turned off at the Harmire Road site for a period at the end of May/beginning of June.

Two 'Notice to Quit' letters had been issued since the last meeting. Issues identified in relation to two tenants had been followed-up as the result of a formal allotment inspection at the beginning of June. The situation was being monitored.

A complaint had been received in relation to dogs being brought onto allotment sites by tenants. Advisory information would be circulated to all tenants reminding them of their responsibilities under the allotment agreement.

Following high winds which damaged a sycamore tree at Harmire Road, the affected branches had now been removed.

A number of maintenance jobs had been carried out across the sites by Cllr Peat and Cllr Harrison including the replacement of gate posts at the Town Head site.

(ii) Allotments Improvement Action Plan

Pursuant to Min 87(ii)/April/18 the necessary permissions had now been received from Durham County Council to carry out the agreed tree work on The Demesnes Allotment site. This work would be carried out in the Autumn.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

22. PLAY AREAS

(i) Repairs and Maintenance

Pursuant to Minute 17/May/18, when it was resolved to award repairs to play equipment at all six play areas to Park Lane Playgrounds, it was reported that work had commenced at Dawson Road Play Area on 10 July.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

(ii) Gate Licences

It was reported that annual gate licences would be issued shortly granting permission for direct access onto the playing areas/field managed by the town council for a time limited period of 12 months, from 1 August 2018 to 31 July 2019. Pursuant to Minute 68(ii)(b)/Feb/17, members were reminded that there was no longer a gate licence fee.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

23. DELIVERING DIFFERENTLY

It was noted that progress had been reported at Special Council on 16 July.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

24. MINI GOLF – 2018 SEASON

Expenditure to date totalled £2,538.75. Net ticket sales for the year to date totalled £4,222.

Pursuant to Minute 8(b)/May/18, when it was resolved that estimates be sought for a suitable outdoor wet/dry cleaner, online prices had been sourced for a Karcher WD4 Premium Tough Vac Wet and Dry Vacuum Cleaner; the cheapest price being £108.90. Urban Crazy (who re-felted the course in 2017) had been approached for advice on suitable equipment. A response was still awaited.

Resolved – (a) That the information be noted; and
(b) That, subject to advice from Urban Crazy, a Karcher WD4 Premium Tough Vac Wet and Dry Vacuum Cleaner, be purchased at a cost of no more than £110, from the Mini Golf budget.

25. WEDNESDAY MARKET

In the eight weeks from 16 May to 4 July inclusive, total rental receipts were £1,325, an average of £165 per week. There had been one new trader. One charity benefitted from the free charity pitch. The waiting list stood at eight.

Pursuant to Minute 9/May/18, a market stall had been purchased and was used for the first time to collect for the Poppy Appeal over the 1940s weekend.

It was reported that there was a need to improve signage to enforce the parking suspension order on the cobbles on Wednesdays between 7.30am and 6.00pm. Currently, the police would not remove vehicles, unless signage was made clearer.

The civil parking enforcement contractor did not ticket cars on market days. Members noted that the town council had no enforcement powers for parking infringements.

One option was to invest in a set of 'A' boards, which could be placed on the cobbles Tuesday evenings and removed Wednesday Mornings by the town council, reinforcing the existing prohibitions, which might then satisfy the conditions on the police taking action to remove cars blocking the set-up of the market.

Temporary aluminium signs and frame legs, compliant with ISO7010 could be purchased on-line at prices starting from £50 per unit.

Resolved – (a) That the information be noted; and
(b) That 'A' boards, reinforcing the existing parking prohibition, be purchased at a cost of no more than £400, from the Wednesday Market budget.

26. FLORAL AND OPEN SPACES

(i) Floral Displays 2018/19

Summer planting by Elm Ridge Gardens Ltd took place on 14 June. The hanging basket 'tree' was now in-situ outside the post office on Galgate, with ten of the twelve baskets sponsored by local people and businesses. The Workers had planted 375 geraniums in the Gateway Beds and, in partnership with Durham County Council, removed 31 bags of ragwort from Scar Top and Lower Demesnes. Lowfield Gardens had donated six trays of begonia plants, which had been planted around Woodleigh Grounds by The Workers.

(ii) Upper Demesnes Haymeadow

On Saturday 7 July, the town council supported National Meadows Day. Neil Diment and Cllr Peat gave a scything demonstration at The Witham. The Friends of the Upper Demesnes held their annual walk round the Hay Meadow led by Dr Margaret Bradshaw.

It was reported that the Hay Meadow would be cut and baled into hay on 17 July.

Dr Ruth Starr-Kedde, Conservation Officer at North Pennines AONB Partnership, surveyed the Haymeadow on 10 July as part of the 'Plugging the Gaps' project. As a result, approximately 400 plug plants, collected in Teesdale, would be planted on 23 October, plugging the gaps with missing hay meadow plants native to this valley.

Resolved – (a) That the information be noted;
(b) That all sponsors of hanging baskets for 2018 be thanked for their donations; and
(c) That thanks be given to The Workers involved in planting out Woodleigh and the Gateway Beds and removing ragwort.

27. DOG FOULING

Pursuant to Minute 11/May/18, a maximum of three bags had been given out per person on request, resulting in fewer requests for bags at the town council office overall.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

28. PUBLIC SEATS

The bench in Market Place, by Boots, had been taken away for substantial repairs and replaced by the Inner Wheel bench, previously opposite The Three Horseshoes on Galgate.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

29. WAR MEMORIALS

Pursuant to Minute 91/Apr/18, Glasper Tunstall commenced repair works to the Town War Memorial on 11 July. All work was done by hand. Additional works to support and remount the Second World War Memorial plaque had been carried out. Further repointing had also been identified and would be completed by end July.

The annual War Memorial inspections would be carried out by Councillor Blissett and Services Officer during August. An update would be presented to the meeting scheduled for 22 October 2018.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

30. INFLUENCE CHURCH 'NO STRINGS'

It was reported that on 16 June, several volunteers from the Influence Church carried out the following: weeded Remembrance Garden, Galgate Greens and cleaned posts and chains; weeded Market Place toilet bed; weeded Gateway beds outside Niche Living; weeded beds opposite Co-op garage; weeded and tidied the area around Woodleigh; weeded, tidied, strimmed back nettles and litter picked Roman Way Picnic Site; weeded, tidied and litter picked area around County Bridge; and cleared weeds around the Methodist Church. In addition, a member of the Influence Church had donated 500 litres of bark, which was used on the Remembrance Garden.

Resolved – (a) That this Committee's thanks be given to members of the Influence Church and for the kind donation of bark; and

(b) That the town council supports the Influence Church's 'No Strings' volunteer project in June 2019.

31. DURHAM WILDLIFE TRUST

Pursuant to Minute 15/May/18, a meeting was held on 11 July with Laura Tedstone, Living Landscapes Officer at Durham Wildlife Trust. With the active support of Raby Estates, a family fun day, including kick sampling, was to be held in Flatts Woods on 15 August. Habitat management would include coppicing and improving drainage.

On the Lower Demesnes, it was proposed to create a low maintenance path along by the river and open up a view point with seating downstream of the river by the former mill.

Resolved – That the information be noted.