

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL  
SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**22 OCTOBER 2018**

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

**Also in attendance:** Cllr Blissett; one member of the press.

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

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

None.

**33. 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.

**34. SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING – 16 JULY 2018 – MINUTES**

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

**35. ALLOTMENTS**

**(i) General update**

It was reported that there were no vacant allotment gardens after the recent re-tenanting of two vacant plots.

In order to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations, a form was sent out to all those on the waiting list to be completed and returned. A number of applicants did not return the forms by 31 August 2018 and therefore there had been a reduction to the waiting list. Despite three new applications since the last meeting, the list currently stood at six.

One notice to quit letter had been issued since the last meeting and two tenants had given up their gardens due to health issues. Following garden inspections this month, three 1<sup>st</sup> warning letters had been issued and would be followed up.

**(ii) Allotments Improvement Action Plan**

The agreed tree works on The Demesnes allotment site (Minute 87(ii)/April/18 refers) commenced 20 and 21 October 2018. More work was needed before completion.

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

**36. PLAY AREAS**

**(i) Repairs and Maintenance**

Submitted – a report reviewing the current status and demands on the 2018/19 Play Areas budget, requesting authorisation for spend on additional repairs to play equipment at four sites and seeking a decision on future use of the Earmarked Reserve.

Following a routine quarterly inspection by Park Lane Playgrounds on 2 October, recent faults requiring repairs to equipment at four sites (Dawson Road, Green Lane, Scar Top and Bouch Way) had been identified. The total net cost of repairs was £1,400 and could form an extension to the award of work to Park Lane Playgrounds at Council on 18 June (Council Minute 40/Jun/18 refers).

Members decided that the tripping point in the gateway at Green Lane could be rectified using the town council's own supply of hard-core, instead of using soil and laying grass mats.

**Resolved** – (a) That Park lane Playgrounds carry out repairs to equipment at four play areas at a maximum net cost of £1,400 (out of relevant Earmarked Reserves); (b) That it be recommended to Resources Committee that any Play Area budgetary underspends continue to be transferred into the 'Play Areas Future Provision and Repairs Reserve Fund', with no minimum amount specified; and (c) That it be recommended to Resources Committee that the 2019/20 Play Areas budget be increased (proposed amount to be determined at Services Committee on 17 December 2018 as part of the play areas budgetary bid.

#### **(ii) Green Lane Playground Improvements (Goal Posts)**

In April, it was resolved that a revised estimate for five a side goals be considered at a future Committee (Minute 88(ii)(c)/April/18 refers). This was considered in exempt session, under item 45, below.

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

#### **37. DELIVERING DIFFERENTLY**

Following the decision of Council in June 2018, the issue of litter picking and collection from litter bins was still subject to discussion between solicitors acting for the councils.

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

#### **38. MINI GOLF – 2018 SEASON**

Expenditure to date totalled £5,987. Net ticket sales for the year to date totalled £9,890.

Pursuant to Minute 24(b)/July/18, Urban Crazy (who re-felted the course in 2017) had advised against purchasing a Wet and Dry Vacuum Cleaner for the mini-golf course. The course would continue to be cleaned by power washing.

The 2018 season ended on 28 October and a full review would be submitted to next Services Committee on 17 December.

It was reported that the mini-golf kiosk would need repainting prior to 2019 season.

**Resolved** – That the information be noted

#### **39. WEDNESDAY MARKET**

In the fourteen weeks from 11 July to 10 October inclusive, total rental receipts were £2,080, an average of £148 per week. There had been one new trader. Three charities had benefitted from the free charity pitch. The waiting list stood at nine.

Pursuant to Minute 25(b)/July/18, a set of four 'No Parking on Wednesday' signs and four 'No Parking' signs had been purchased to reinforce the existing parking prohibition. The

Police had confirmed that these satisfied their requirements for clear signage to be able to ticket vehicles causing an obstruction.

It was reported that the Clerk met with DCC Officers on 5 October to review the market. The existing agreement for Barnard Castle Market expired in January 2021. It was likely that the existing contract would be extended, where operators were content to continue. DCC was reviewing agreement terms with a view to simplifying the specifications to improve the operation of markets.

Several traders on the Wednesday Market were interested in attending a Market on Christmas Eve this year, which fell on a Monday, as the Wednesday Market would not be in operation on Boxing Day.

It was noted by DCC Officers, that Barnard Castle was one of only two communities in County Durham with an outright prohibition on street trading. Elsewhere, street trading licenses were obtained 'by consent'. The County Council was considering whether to remove inconsistencies in these arrangements and was interested in the views of the town council.

**Resolved** – (a) That the information be noted;  
(b) That more information be requested from DCC on the terms and operation of other 'by consent' arrangements for street trading in County Durham; and  
(c) That further enquiries be made from DCC regarding the potential to hold a market on Christmas Eve 2018.

#### **40. FLORAL AND OPEN SPACES**

##### **(i) Floral Displays 2018/19**

Winter planting by Elm Ridge Gardens Ltd was scheduled to take place at end of October 2018.

The Workers had weeded the Gateway Bed and Remembrance Garden, weeded and pruned around Woodleigh, the toilet bed in Market Place and Amen Corner.

Northern Dales Richard III Group would like to take responsibility for care of the Richard III Memorial Garden at Amen Corner. In February 2016, it was reported that the group could adopt the Amen Corner Richard III Garden for a trial year to help with weed control and general tidiness. It was felt that more dialogue was needed with the group.

The Chair of Services Committee and Deputy Clerk met with Peter North, Gardens Manager at HMYOI Deerbolt. The prison was developing and expanding its nursery business.

##### **(ii) Operation Spruce Up**

It was reported that the town had been chosen as the 22<sup>nd</sup> location for Operation Spruce Up, overseen by Durham County Council. This launched on 25 September. As well as removing weeds, chewing gum from pavements, cleaning and painting street furniture, the town council had asked for various specific tasks to be undertaken. Members felt that more bins were needed, in particular another bin in between pizza takeaway shops.

##### **(iii) Upper Demesnes Haymeadow**

The Haymeadow was mowed and hay baled in August. A total of 110 bales were sold at £3.00 per bale, resulting in total income of £330. Sheep had now finished grazing on the Meadow.

On 23 October, 800 plug plants, collected as seeds from Teesdale by North Pennines AONB Partnership, were being planted by volunteers at The Witham and on the Upper Demesnes.

#### **(iv) English Heritage Community Orchard and Wildflower Meadow**

Pursuant to Partnership Committee Minute 55/Feb/18, the planning application had been approved by Durham Planning Authority, to replace the existing garden in the Castle with an orchard and wildflower meadow. Hard landscaping was scheduled to commence week beginning 8 October, lasting approximately four weeks.

Bulb and tree planting was anticipated to start in November. A volunteer team would be developed to help with the project.

**Resolved** – (a) That the information be noted; and  
(b) That HMYOI Deerbolt be approached to provide pansies in the Spring and geraniums for Summer bedding at the town's Gateway beds.

#### **41. STREET LIGHTING**

As a result of a notification from a member of the public regarding faults with the street lighting on the footpath running from Kalafat to Bartlemere, it had been recognised that these lights did not appear on Durham County Council's asset map to enable reports on their condition to be made through the 'doitonline' portal.

These lights were purchased in 2013, using neighbourhood funding from the two county councillors, with capital support from the town council of £4,000 to cover half the cost of maintenance for a period of twenty-five years. The documents retained by the town council indicated that these lights, although on the town council's land, were specified and installed by Durham County Council and ought, consequently, to be recorded as county council assets.

Clarification would be asked of Durham County Council's Street Lighting section of the status of these lights to ensure that reports about them could be made on-line.

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

#### **42. PUBLIC SEATS**

A public seat had recently been refurbished in the Remembrance Garden following a donation and a Memorial Plaque installed.

The Chair of Services Committee and Deputy Clerk met with Peter North, Gardens Manager at HMYOI Deerbolt. The Prison was keen to develop closer links with the town and would initially oversee repairs and refurbishing of an 8 foot wooden bench.

**Resolved** – (a) That the information be noted; and  
(b) That thanks be given to HMYOI Deerbolt for providing labour to repair and refurbish a public seat.

#### **43. WAR MEMORIALS**

The annual War Memorial inspections were carried out by Councillor Blissett and Services Officer on 12 September. No issues were found. Securing wreaths to the memorials was still an issue.

Given the extremely well attended 'Fly the Red Ensign' for Merchant Navy Day on 3 September, it was proposed that a suitable permanent memorial and plaque within the Remembrance Garden, Galgate Greens be costed as a growth item for inclusion within 2019/20 War Memorials budget. Dunhouse Quarry was to be approached in the first instance.

**Resolved** – (a) That the information be noted; and  
(b) That consideration be given to a suitable permanent Merchant Navy memorial and plaque to be built into the War Memorials 2019/20 budgetary bid (to be determined at Services Committee on 17 December).

#### **44. DURHAM WILDLIFE TRUST**

Following a successful scything day in September, it was reported that Durham Wildlife Trust would like to purchase a beginners scything kit, at a net cost of £818, to include: an Austrian-style grass blade for grass and fleshy weeds; ditch blade for rough grass and tough weeds; and bush blade for targeted removal of woody plants.

Members recalled that there was a 2018/19 budget of £1,000 allocated to project work with DWT (Council Minute 101/Jan/18).

Further discussions needed to take place before permission was given from DCC and Ecology, to improve access to the path leading from the Lower Demesnes to the River Tees. There were a number of factors to consider in exempt session, under item 45, below.

**Resolved** – That the town council purchases a scything kit at a net cost of £818 out of Durham Wildlife Trust project budget, to be loaned to Durham Wildlife Trust on a long-term basis.

#### **45. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (IN RESPECT OF CONTINUATION OF ITEMS 36(II) & 44, BELOW)**

**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 continuation of items 36(ii) & 44, below.

#### **36(ii) GREEN LANE GOAL POSTS QUOTATIONS (CONFIDENTIAL)**

**Resolved** – That, subject to quotations being received, consideration of purchase and installation of five a side goals at Green Lane Play Area be referred to Council on 19 November, with a recommendation to be funded from Barnard Castle Playing Fields Charity.

#### **44 DURHAM WILDLIFE TRUST (CONFIDENTIAL)**

**Resolved** – That further discussions be held with Durham Wildlife Trust with regards to improving access to the path leading from the Lower Demesnes to the River Tees.