

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL  
SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**17 DECEMBER 2018**

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

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

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

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

Apologies were received from Councillor Mrs Thompson.

**Resolved** – That the apologies be accepted.

**46. 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.

**47. SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING – 22 OCTOBER 2018 – MINUTES**

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

**48. ALLOTMENTS**

**(i) General update**

It was reported that there were two vacant allotment gardens. There had been one new application since the last meeting. The waiting list currently stood at seven.

**(ii) Allotments Improvement Action Plan**

Pursuant to Minute 87(ii)/April/18, the agreed tree works on The Demesnes allotment site had been delayed due to windy conditions. Subsequently, allotment tenants had reported that the removed branches had not been cleared and were obstructing allotment land. The contractor had confirmed that clearance would take place on 19 December.

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

**49. PLAY AREAS**

**(i) Repairs and Maintenance**

Pursuant to Minute 36(i)(a)/Oct/18, Park Lane Playgrounds carried out remedial repairs at four play areas (Dawson Road, Green Lane, Scar Top and Bouch Way) at end October. A couple of further non-urgent issues had been identified at Scar Top Play Area.

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

At Council on 19 November, it was resolved that Wicksteed Playgrounds be awarded the work to supply and install a single five-a-side goal post (3.77m x 1.25m) at Green Lane Play Area at a net cost of £1,034.90.

Members were informed that, as an alternative, a smaller mini goal (3.5m x 1.095m) could be supplied and installed at a net cost of £1,871.

This consisted of a metal goal frame with fenced sides and backing. Due to the complex nature of the goal, it was more expensive compared to the five a side goal. Members deliberated the alternative goal.

**Resolved** – That the town council purchases a copy of British Standards for goalposts, with a view to exploring the feasibility of manufacturing and installing its own bespoke goalpost.

## **50. MINI GOLF – REVIEW OF 2018**

Received – a report providing members with a review of the 2018 mini golf season.

A total number of 4,787 rounds were played over a period of 32 weeks from 30 March to 28 October inclusive; averaging 43 visitors per day. The net income was £10,284. Expenditure to date was £7,224, however, it was noted that there would be final expenditure in respect of grounds maintenance, repairs/ modifications following the winter period, costs associated with equipment replenishment and recruitment, if required, prior to the start of the 2019 season.

Members were reminded that Mini Golf was run as a 'self-funding service' with a 'Mini Golf Holding Account' set up to enable underspends to be set aside for future repairs and upkeep.

Members reviewed the wages paid to attendants. From 1 April 2019, the National Living Wage would be £8.21 per hour for workers aged 25 and over. The National Minimum Wage, at variable rates, pertained to those aged 24 and under, with workers paid £7.70 per hour, if current arrangements, using the aged 21 figure as the benchmark, were applied to the 2019 season.

It was recommended that improvements be made prior to the 2019 season, to enable the public to pay for tickets by credit/ debit card.

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

(b) That, in principle, a credit/debit card payment facility be introduced to the Mini Golf Service for the 2019 season, subject to a cost-benefit comparison of different providers;

(c) That existing attendants (aged 24 and under) returning for 2019 Mini Golf season, be paid £7.70 per hour; and

(d) That new attendants (aged 16 to 17) be paid £5.50 per hour, increasing to £7.70 upon reaching their 18<sup>th</sup> Birthday.

## **51. WEDNESDAY MARKET**

In the eight weeks from 17 October to 5 December inclusive, total rental receipts were £975, an average of £122 per week. There had been one new trader. Three charities benefitted from the free charity pitch. The waiting list stood at fourteen.

Pursuant to Minute 39(b)/Oct/18, more information was requested from DCC on the terms and operation of other 'by consent' arrangements for street trading in County Durham.

DCC Licensing had forwarded a copy of the Street Trading Policy, which controlled such applications elsewhere in the county. The process was comprehensive and consent was not trivial. In particular, there was a general presumption that:

- Street trading of take-away food would not be close to schools; and
- Street trading in market towns on non-market days would not be granted unless as part of an organised event.

Barnard Castle was one of only two communities in County Durham with an outright prohibition on street trading. The process to obtain licence 'by consent' was comprehensive and controlled street trading through the licencing process, which was defined and managed by the county council. Moving from the current 'prohibited streets' to 'consent streets' in Barnard Castle would still regulate street trading but would provide the town council and others with the opportunity to support community events with food and non-food trading outside established market days, under specific controls.

Enquiries with traders about the potential to operate a market on 24 December instead of the market which would otherwise take place on 26 December, if that had not been a Bank Holiday, revealed that there was insufficient interest from traders to make this a realistic proposal.

**Resolved** – (a) That the information be noted; and  
 (b) That a request be made to Durham County Council to consider moving street trading in Barnard Castle from 'Prohibited Streets' to 'Consent Streets'.

## **52. FLORAL AND OPEN SPACES**

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

Winter planting was carried out by Elm Ridge Gardens Ltd on 1 November.

Just before the Christmas Lights Switch-on event, fourteen members of The Workers helped with the annual rake up of leaves around Woodleigh, Scar Top Play Area and Mini Golf course. Ten workers tidied various flower beds around the town on 12 December.

Next year, the aim was to replant the two gateway beds in spring and geraniums in June.

### **(ii) Upper Demesnes Haymeadow**

As part of the Queen's Commonwealth Canopy, five trees (silver birch, rowan and hazel) given to Helen Goodman MP, were planted on 1 December in association with Trees for Teesdale.

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

Pursuant to Minute 40(iv)/Oct/18, volunteers, including six members of the Workers, assisted to plant 5000 narcissi, blue bells and snowdrop bulbs on 14 and 15 November alongside staff members of English Heritage in the Castle. In addition, thirteen apple and two pear trees were planted on 21 November.

Wildflower seed would be spread in the spring on the sloping land on the town side of the newly planted area.

### **(iv) Links to HMYOI Deerbolt**

Further to discussion at the October meeting, Cllr Raw gave a verbal update on his meeting with Del Fiddes, Industries Manager at Deerbolt, along with the Gardens Manager, Peter North. They were developing both the Cycle Workshop (maintenance, sales and hire) and Horticultural facilities at a pace and with considerable investment and commitment. Cllr Raw was maintaining contact with those two and with The Prison Governor, Andy Hudson.

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

### **53. FLOODLIGHTING**

There was nothing to report.

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

### **54. PUBLIC SEATS**

English Heritage had donated a bench surplus to its requirements to the town council. This was to be refurbished by HMYOI Deerbolt. Work was complete to the Queen's Jubilee Bench, which would be returned to its original location.

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

### **55. WAR MEMORIALS**

The use of wire around the main Town Memorial in the grounds of The Bowes Museum had been successful in securing wreaths on Remembrance Sunday.

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

### **56. DOG FOULING**

It was reported that, on the morning of Remembrance Sunday, town council staff removed at least eight bags of dog mess prior to the service at the Town Memorial in the grounds of The Bowes Museum. Further dog mess had been removed from on and around the Town Memorial on 9 November by the town council's grounds maintenance contractor at no cost.

**Resolved** – (a) That the information be noted; and  
(b) That thanks be given to staff and the grounds maintenance contractor for removing dog mess on and around the Town Memorial in the grounds of The Bowes Museum.

### **57. DURHAM WILDLIFE TRUST**

Pursuant to Minute 44/Oct/18, when it was 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, it was proposed to open out the vista near where people park on the Lower Demesnes and carry out work to Flatts Wood paths.

**Resolved** – (a) That the information be noted; and  
(b) That it be delegated to the Clerk to explore opening up further vistas with DCC and Raby Estates.

### **58. BUDGETARY BIDS 2019/20**

Received – a report considering budgetary bids, including fees and charges where applicable, for Play Areas, Wednesday Market, War Memorials, Floodlighting, Floral and Open Spaces, Mini Golf, Dog Fouling and Allotments, for inclusion in the overall Town Council budget for 2019/20.

Members were reminded that it had been resolved by Resources Committee on 10 September that pay and non-pay inflation of 2% be assumed.

**Resolved** – (a) That the Play Areas expenditure be £14,000 – increase of £2,500;  
(b) That the Play Areas 2019/20 income be £100 (no change);  
(c) That the 'Play Areas Repairs and Future Provision Reserve Fund' Continues, with any underspends from the year end transferred to this fund; and

- (d) That the play areas inspection contract awarded to Park Lane Playgrounds be extended for the 2019/20 financial year.
- (e) That Wednesday Market expenditure be set at £3,000 (no change) and income at £7,000 for 2019/20 (decrease of £1,000); and
- (f) That the scale of fees and charges remains as set in February 2017 (Minute72(ii)/Feb/17 refers).
- (g) That War Memorials 2019/20 budgetary allocation be £500 (no change); and
- (h) That, if a suitable stone cannot be found locally, a dressed stone with embedded plaque for Merchant Navy Memorial be purchased at a cost of £200 from Dunhouse Quarry, out of War Memorials earmarked reserves.
- (i) That the Floodlighting budget be £700 (no change).
- (j) That the Floral and Open Spaces 2019/20 budget be £9,500 (no change);
- (k) That the total Floral and Open Spaces 2018/19 underspend be earmarked for additional Grounds Maintenance in 2019/20; and
- (l) That Lowfield Gardens be requested to carry out the 2019/20 floral displays watering service.
- (m) That the Mini Golf income be £10,000 and expenditure £10,000 (no change); and
- (n) That the 2019/20 fees and charges be as follows (no change):
- £3.00 per round for all users (£2.50 plus 20% VAT);
  - £9.00 group ticket (up to 4 players – saving £3.00) (£7.50 plus 20% VAT);
  - £15.00 loyalty ticket (7 rounds in advance – saving £6.00) (£12.00 plus 20% VAT);
  - £1.00 lost ball (83p plus 20% VAT); and
  - £6.00 damaged club (£5.00 plus 20% VAT).
- (o) That the 2019/20 dog fouling budget be £200 (decrease of £100).
- (p) That the 2019/20 Allotments expenditure be £4,217 (no change) and income be £4,217 (no change); and
- (q) That the Allotment rental for 2020/21 remain at £47.00 (no change).

## **59. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (IN RESPECT OF ITEM 60, 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 matter referred to at item 60, below.

## **60. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT**

Submitted – a report seeking to determine a recommendation from Services Committee to extend the town council's existing Grounds Maintenance contract for the 2019/20 season at full Council on 21 January 2019.

**Resolved** – That the 2019/20 grounds maintenance contract be awarded at full Council on 21 January 2019.