

PETERLEE TOWN COUNCIL

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Your Ref:

Our Ref: 10th January 2017

Date:

A MEETING OF THE PARKS & CEMETERY COMMITTEE

WILL BE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,

SHOTTON HALL, PETERLEE, ON

MONDAY 16TH JANUARY 2017 at 6.30pm

Mr I Morris M.C.I.H
Town Clerk

A G E N D A

MEMBERS ARE REMINDED OF THE NEED TO DISCLOSE ANY INTEREST, PREJUDICIAL OR PERSONAL, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CODE OF CONDUCT.

The Chairman shall now advise both members of the committee and members of the public that part of the meeting may be recorded by both audio and video, and it may be that photographs are taken.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

3. MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORT OF THE HORTICULTURAL SUPERVISOR

The progress report for the information of Members under the various headings:- Shotton Hall, Leisure Gardens, Eden Lane, Peterlee Rugby Club & Summer Bedding Schemes. (Circulated)

4. UPDATE ON MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR PETERLEE LEISURE GARDEN SITES

To note the contents of the report, await the internal audit report, agree the level or rents to be set at £45.00 per plot, (£22.50 per half plot) and finally to agree the Town Council formally withdraws permission for the operation of the shop at the Lowhills Road site (Circulated)

5. NUMBER OF BURIALS

For Member's information (Circulated)

6. BANDS FOR THE SHOW

Referred from the Finance Meeting held on Monday 9th January 2017 and then the Show Working Party held on Monday 16th January 2017 to agree the Bands to perform at this year's Event

7. PROVISION OF SALT BINS – REQUEST MADE BY A LOCAL RESIDENT TO DCC

Item submitted by Councillor A Watson (Circulated)

8. DRAFT BUDGET 2017/18

Members are asked to note the contents of the report and provide feedback (Copy to follow)

Report of the Parks Supervisor to the Parks & Cemetery Committee
Monday 16th January 2017

Report Purpose: General area based report to update Members on current operational matters of the Peterlee Town Council Parks Department.

1. Shotton Hall

Grounds - A Large Beech tree (T90) as indicated in the 2012 Tree Stock condition report was removed from the main drive area after concerns were raised as to the overall integrity of the specimen. After a site visit by Durham County Council Arboricultural Officer and a Picus test (structural integrity) of the specimen, meant that the tree had to be removed as a matter of urgency.

The tree had been on a regular monitoring by Parks staff and was subject to a Tree Preservation Order, additionally, because of the diameter of the stump and proximity to the main driveway, this is also due to be “ground out” in January.

Shotton Hall (Passfield Way) – A semi mature Ash tree and two smaller trees were also removed from the Shotton Hall site, due to damage from a passing articulated vehicle rendered the largest of the three unsafe, these trees were also removed after consultation with Durham County Council Arboricultural Officers. If left unchecked at least one of the trees would have fallen across the Passfield Way. Assistance was gratefully received from Durham Constabulary in providing Officers to provide Emergency Traffic Management.

Shotton Hall Resurfacing- Remedial “Patch up” works have been completed in house by Parks Staff and the Contractor who was awarded the road surfacing contract has been contacted about work guarantees. I can confirm that a 1 year latent defects period will apply to workmanship and that the material used for re-surfacing should ensure a minimum 10-year life span. We are working towards a target start on site for week commencing 23rd January 2017, subject to temperature conditions. I have also liaised with the Facilities Manager to ensure that there is minimal impact on Shotton Hall users.

2. Lowhills Leisure Gardens

Lowhills Road Site - Parks staff have rotovated vacant plots within the site and will be assisting plot members with wooden chippings to create a weed “buffer zone” along allocated fence line areas. Additionally, high grade soil will be imported in to enable Plot 9 Community Garden to be utilised for planting up by Primary school children. Additionally Parks staff will be repairing potholes throughout various points of access roads and trimming up overhanging branches from adjoining areas.

Thorntree Gill Site – Parks staff are assisting with the provision of wood chippings to enable the leisure gardeners to re dress paths at the site.

3.Eden Lane

Open Spaces- Damage to fencing is continuing to be a problem for Parks Personnel as is the continuing nuisance caused by stray horses, which are now a regular occurrence on the Yoden Village site. Agencies involved include Durham County Council Street Wardens and the RSPCA and measures are being taken to try to co-ordinate a multi-agency approach to this ongoing anti-social problem.

Off Road Motorcycles- Following increased visits by Durham Constabulary/Street Wardens and an increase in logged calls via 101 this has resulted in two Traffic 183 Notices being issued to members of the public who were apprehended whilst using off road-motorcycles in the area. These notices are valid for twelve months and are required before a Traffic 184 notice Vehicle seizure notice can be issued. I would like to express my thanks to members of the public, elected Members and the Rugby Club for their persistence with reporting the incidents through the 101 number via the Police.

Peterlee Rugby Club Drainage work- In house drainage works have now been completed in the Eden Park ground and have been successful in the reduction of surface water onto the main pitch (Pitch 1) the addition of several lateral drainage branches to the main land drainage system appears to have been successful in reducing the water build up after flash flooding of the tarmac and concrete areas.

4.Summer Bedding Schemes- Orders have been placed for the Summer Bedding Schemes which will equate to 30,000 plants which is a reduction from previous years, due to the re-sizing and elimination of beds within Woodhouse Park and outlying areas. Traditionally we have used one local Authority supplier on a 4-year fixed cost deal. In line with Financial Regulations I will produce a detailed specification based on past quantity and delivery systems and will forward a more detailed breakdown to a future meeting.

Another additional factor which may influence this process will be the requirement to revisit the 1999 Service Level Agreement between Durham County Council Highways/Green Team and Peterlee Town Council Parks Department with regard to roundabout planting works and Dene Parks maintenance schemes. The Town Clerk has confirmed that he will be taking this matter up with the DCC Highways Team before the end of the financial year.

Report to: Parks & Cemeteries Committee

Date: 16th January 2017

Report of: Brendan Arnell, Parks Supervisor
Ian Morris, Town Clerk

Subject: Update on management arrangements for Peterlee Leisure Gardens

Report Purpose: To provide Members with an update on progress with management arrangements for the Lowhills Road and Thorntree Gill leisure gardens sites.

Background: In November 2015 the Town Council received a 'limited assurance' report from Durham County Council's Internal Audit service on the Peterlee Leisure Gardens Association (PLGA) main and shop accounts. The report recommended a number of actions be taken to improve accounting practice by the PLGA and to improve the arrangements between the association and Peterlee Town Council in respect of the management of the Council's leisure garden sites.

Whilst the Audit was being carried out the P.L.G.A. 'split' into two separate groups by mutual consent of members of the two sites, however this still left a number of Audit Compliance measures unresolved.

Current

Situation: Since the dissolution of the P.L.G.A. in late 2015 the Council has not formalised the management arrangements for the two leisure gardens sites insofar as there is no formal agreement (e.g a lease, management agreement or other form of binding agreement) in place at a site level. Individual leisure gardeners do however have 'tenancy' agreements in place, and rents have been collected for the two sites to cover the 2016/17 financial year. Water utility charges have been billed and paid by the two sites, and to the best of my knowledge suitable insurance is in place as is membership of the National Allotments Society.

The Thorntree Gill leisure gardens plot-holders have elected an executive committee, developed a constitution, are holding regular meetings and held an Annual General Meeting in November 2016. Thorntree Gill association has also submitted an (unaudited) Income and Expenditure report the Town Council.

The Lowhills Road leisure gardeners have not yet formally constituted a committee nor held any ordinary meetings since the dissolution of the PLGA. In affect, there is no committee in place for the Lowhills Road site. Several individuals from the Lowhills Road site have indicated that they would be willing to stand for positions in a new committee if

the outstanding issues relating to the unresolved dispute between the two sites relating to grant funding and the shop situation at the Lowhills Road site were to be resolved.

Durham County Council's internal audit service recently completed an audit of the Council's Leisure Gardens service. This is due to be presented to the Finance Committee in February 2017, and includes a number of recommendations for the future management of leisure gardens. It is recommended that once this report is received the Parks Committee receives a further detailed report on the future arrangements for the management of the two sites.

Rents:

Gardeners from both sites have contacted the Town Council at the back end of 2016 to enquire about rent payments for 2017. Although the gardeners are actually 'paid up' until 31st March 2017, traditionally rent demand letters have been sent to individual gardeners in January each year with rents (roughly £35 per year, including water rates, insurance and NAS membership) then collected by the PLGA/local committee during January and February. In March the Council would invoice the PLGA/local committee for the council rent due (roughly £11 per year per garden). The Council would also invoice the PLGA/local committee as a when water bills were issued by Northumbria Water. The PLGA/local committee would then retain the balance of the rent payments and use this to pay the insurance premium, NAS membership and would retain any small balances for the committee's use.

At the Parks & Cemetery Committee meeting in December 2016 Members agreed that the Council would make contact with all leisure gardeners on both sites to initially confirm that they were still a garden holder and wished to retain their gardens for 2017, and then to follow this up with a rent demand letter. I can confirm that the first letters were issued last week and Officers are currently compiling responses. Further detail will be presented at this meeting.

In terms of rent setting for 2017, it is proposed that for this year a single rent charge is applied across both sites to achieve some level of parity. In future years the Council may well agree to devolve rent-setting to local committees on the two sites, and rent charges may change to reflect the different contexts of the two sites.

On this basis, I have met with the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk and Management Accounts Officer as well as consulting with representatives from Lowhills Road and Thorntree Gill to establish a single rent level for 2017 of £45 per garden per year. For illustrative purposes it is useful to break this charge down as follows:

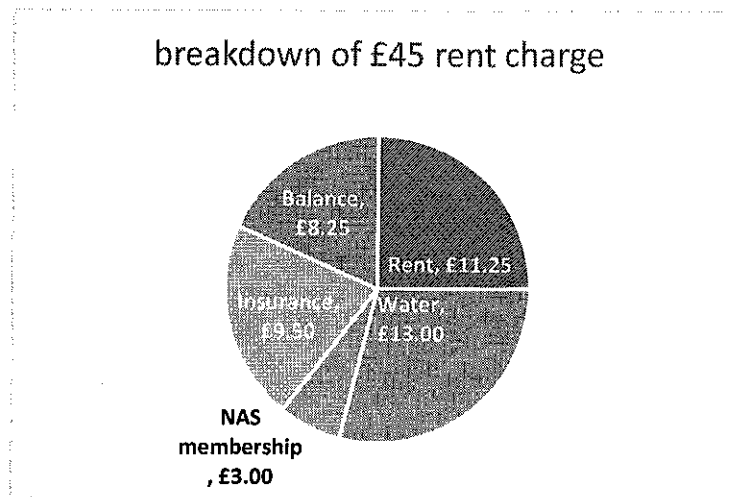


Figure 1: Chart showing illustrative breakdown of leisure gardens rent charge

It should be noted that this breakdown is indicative only. The water charges are based on previous usage and as the supply to both sites is metered this can vary. The NAS membership at £3 per plot per year has been confirmed, however we have not yet sought new quotations for insurance so these costs may also change.

The proposal is to apply this £45 flat rate across both sites, but then to 'pool' the rents and make any surplus (ie the balance between the rent collected and costs incurred) available to the committees of each site (once properly constituted and recognised by the Town Council) to spend on their local agreed priorities.

Shop: As Members are aware, an 'allotment shop' has been in operation at the Lowhills site for a number of years. The shop was originally funded through National Lottery grant funding to PLGA, and as such it is not a council-owned building. There is no record of a formal lease agreement between the Council and PLGA for the siting of the building on the council's land on the gardens site.

There have been a number of issues regarding the shop over the last few years, including the issues with the 2015 internal audit report and ongoing allegations of inappropriate trading and/or record keeping.

Notwithstanding any issues currently under investigation by the relevant legal authorities, the fact remains that the shop continues to open and operate, and it is recommended that while the work continues to properly establish constituted committees on both sites the Council formally withdraws permission for the operation of the shop and arranges for its closure with immediate effect. Options for the future provision of a shop for the leisure gardens sites could then be properly explored by the Council and the committees at a future date.

Recommendations:

Members are recommended to note the contents of this report and:

1) await the internal audit report on Leisure Gardens in February 2017, and to monitor the implementation of the report's action plan once agreed;

2) agree that the Leisure Garden rent level is set at £45 per plot (£22.50 per half plot) for the 2017/18 financial year, and the principle of making surplus balances from the rent collected available to the local committees for investment in their locally-agree priorities for their sites. (Further detail on this process to be agreed by this Committee at a future date); and

3) agree that the Town Council formally withdraws permission for the operation of the shop at the Lowhills Road site, with the Town Clerk granted plenary powers to arrange for the closure of the shop on that site as soon as practicable;

PETERLEE TOWN COUNCIL

PARKS & CEMETERY COMMITTEE

MONDAY 16TH JANUARY 2017

CALENDAR YEARS

NUMBER OF BURIALS

JANUARY-1992-DECEMBER 2016

1992 - 9 BURIALS.

1993-19 BURIALS

1994-14 BURIALS

1995-24 BURIALS

1996-22 BURIALS

1997-24 BURIALS

1998-24 BURIALS

1999-26 BURIALS

2000-22 BURIALS

2001-28 BURIALS

2002-29 BURIALS

2003-47 BURIALS

2004-45 BURIALS

2005-37 BURIALS

2006-43 BURIALS

2007-39 BURIALS

2008-46 BURIALS

2011 – 39 BURIALS.

2012 – 47 BURIALS.

2013 – 42 BURIALS.

2014 – 35 BURIALS.

2015 – 40 BURIALS.

2016 – 35 BURIALS.

2009-44 BURIALS

2010-40 BURIALS



Karen Duffy

1 hr

SALT BIN REQUEST FOR EASTFIELD - REJECTED!!!

I contacted Durham County Council requesting that a salt bin be located on the hill out of Eastfield. Every year traffic gets stuck on this hill especially between the speed humps, Eastdene Way junction and the T-junction with Manor Way. It is a steep bus route and used as an access road for our schools. Children also walk up and down to and from school. Vehicles career, out of control, down the hill and thankfully so far nobody has been seriously injured or worse. DCC have rejected the request for failing to meet the required level - what do they want, BLOOD?

Dear Mrs Duffy,

Provision of Salt Bins

With reference to your request for the provision of a salt bin at Eastfield, Peterlee, County Durham, SR8 4SS.

The County Council spends a significant proportion of its budget on the winter maintenance service and countywide we currently service over 2500 salt bins which absorbs a significant amount of resource in terms of both budget and labour.

In order to help keep the resource issues under control, the provision of salt bins is managed through the application of an approved assessment criteria laid down in the Council's Winter Maintenance Plan, a copy of which can be viewed on the Council's website at;

<http://www.durham.gov.uk/winterserviceplan>

The location you requested has been assessed against the aforementioned criteria but unfortunately failed to meet the required level, therefore we will be unable to provide and service a salt bin.

I am sorry we cannot be more positive at this time.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Hutchinson

Technician – Asset Management

Appendix 1 - Carriageway Network Hierarchy

Category	Hierarchy Description	Type of Road - General Description	Detailed Description
1	Motorway	Limited access. Motorway regulations apply.	Routes for fast moving long distance traffic. Fully grade separated and restrictions on use.
2	Strategic Route	Trunk and some Principal 'A' roads between primary destinations	Routes for fast moving long distance traffic with little frontage access or pedestrian traffic. Speed limits are usually in excess of 40mph and there are few junctions. Pedestrian crossings are either segregated or controlled and parked vehicles are generally prohibited.
3a	Main Distributor	Major Urban Network and Inter-Primary links. Short – Medium distance traffic.	Routes between strategic routes and linking urban centres to the strategic network with limited frontage access. In urban areas speed limits are usually 40mph or less, parking is restricted at peak times and there are positive measures for pedestrian safety.
3b	Secondary Distributor	Classified Road (B and C Class) and unclassified urban bus routes carrying local traffic with frontage access and frequent junctions	In rural areas these roads link the larger villages and HGV generators to the strategic and main distributor network. In built up areas these roads have 30mph speed limits and very high levels of pedestrian activity with some crossing facilities including zebra crossings. On street parking is generally unrestricted except for safety reasons.
4a	Link Road	Roads linking between the main and secondary distributor network with frontage access and frequent junctions.	In rural areas these roads link the smaller villages to the distributor roads. They are of varying width and not always capable of carrying two way traffic. In urban areas they are residential or industrial inter-connecting roads with 30mph speed limits, random pedestrian movements and uncontrolled parking.
4b	Local Access Road	Roads serving limited numbers of properties carrying only access traffic	In rural areas these roads serve small settlements and provide access to individual properties and land. They are often only single lane width and unsuitable for HGV. In urban areas they are often residential loop roads or cul-de-sacs.

Appendix 2 - Footway Network Hierarchy

Category Number	Category Name	Brief Description
1a	Prestige Walking Zone	Very busy areas of towns and cities with high public space and streetscene contribution
1	Primary Walking Route	Busy urban shopping and business areas and main pedestrian routes
2	Secondary Walking Route	Medium usage routes through local areas feeding into primary routes, local shopping centres, etc.
3	Link Footway	Linking local access footways through urban areas and busy rural footways
4	Local Access Footway	Footways associated with low usage, short estate roads to the main routes and cul-de-sacs

Appendix 3 - Cycleway Network Hierarchy

Category	Description
A	Cycle lane forming part of the carriageway, commonly 1.5 metre strip adjacent to the nearside kerb. Cycle gaps at road closure point (no entries allowing cycle access).
B	Cycle track; a highway route for cyclists not contiguous with the public footway or carriageway. Shared cycle/pedestrian paths; either segregated by a white line or other physical segregation, or un-segregated.
C	Cycle trails; leisure routes through open spaces. These are not necessarily the responsibility of the Highway Authority but may be maintained by an Authority under other powers or duties.

Appendix 4 – Salt Bin Assessment Form

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

SALT BIN REQUEST (Valid from December 2014)

Location:	Date:	Assessor:
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	Characteristic	Description / Severity	Scores	Score (road)	Score (footways)
1	Description of gradients	Steep	60		
		Moderate	30		
		Slight / level	Nil		
2	Description of bends	Sharp / many	50		
		Moderate / few	20		
		Slight / straight	Nil		
3	Traffic type	Domestic / housing est	20		
		Industrial	10		
		Rural	Nil		
4	Traffic flow	Heavy	20		
		Light	10		
5	Pedestrian activity	Elderley / less mobile	40		
		Heavy (town, large village)	30		
		Light (small village)	10		
6	On a treated route	Yes	Priority 1 Priority 2 / other	-80 20	
		No		0	
7	Salt bin / heap nearby	Yes		-80	
		No		20	
8	Proximity of health centre / surgery	Near		40	
		Distant		Nil	
9	Other important local services - pharmacy, schools, comm centre, shops etc.	Near		30	
		Distant		Nil	
10	Bus route	Untreated		20	
		Treated		10	
11	Accident history	Yes		20	
		No		Nil	
TOTAL					
				150 to qualify	150 to qualify

Signed
Assessor

Signed
Highways Superintendent

Date