

PETERLEE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARKS & CEMETERY
COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, SHOTTON HALL, PETERLEE

ON TUESDAY 10TH APRIL 2007

PRESENT: G COWIE (CHAIR)

Mesdames: A Laing, J I Measor & M Cartwright

Messrs: D Coates, D Milsom, T Jones,
W M Jeffrey, H Bennett MBE,
R Jones, R Curtis, C J Metcalfe,
R Huitson, C Robbins, R Kyle
& E W Hall

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

101. SUDDEN DEATH OF COUNCILLOR GEORGE CALVERT

The Leader sadly advised Members that Councillor George Calvert had suddenly passed away and asked Members to stand for a one minute's silence, as a mark of respect.

RECOMMENDED that the Town Clerk send a sympathy card to Mr Calvert's daughter and advise Members of funeral arrangements as soon as known.

Col M

102. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors:-
M Milsom, B Scott and B Joyce.

103. THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were approved.

104. THE ESTATE MANAGER'S PROGRESS REPORT, a copy of which had been circulated to Members, was considered under the following headings:-

a) WOODHOUSE PARK

General maintenance work continued at the Park with pruning of roses and shrubs the priority. Newly appointed Seasonal Worker Alan Pittilla had now been based at the Park with Dave Rogers as fulltime help, along with trainees supplied by David Banks from the Houghall College. The Estate Manager advised that Dave Rogers would prepare a report on the event in the Park held on 11th March 2007.

RECOMMENDED that the information given, be noted.

b) ACRE RIGG INFANTS SCHOOL - PLANTERS & PLANTING

A letter had been received from the above School asking if it would be possible to site two floral planters in their playground, a copy of which had been circulated to Members.

The Estates Manager advised that the Shinwell Centre at Woodhouse Park had agreed to make wooden planters for the school. The planters were not three tiered or as large as requested, but, would provide a reasonable display for the children. The Shinwell Centre also provided plants etc. to fill up the planters. The School were extremely happy with the result and the local press had been invited by the School and photos had been taken.

RECOMMENDED that the information given, be noted.

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c) FIRE RISK TRAINING

Work continued on the 'red zone' recommendations contained in the Fire Officer's original report. Further inspection was still required which would be carried out as soon as possible after red zone works were completed. The Estate Manager had spoken to Tom Welch and training courses were to be provided, as previously discussed.

RECOMMENDED that the information given, be noted.

d) SEASONAL APPOINTMENTS

Both Seasonal Gardener appointments had now been made, namely; Alan Pittilla and Barry Nicholson. Both had worked for the Town Council last year and were praised as hardworking individuals with good attendance records.

RECOMMENDED that the information given, be noted.

e) LOWHILLS WARDENS HOUSE – QUOTES FOR GAS FIRE

Since the last meeting the Estate Manager had visited the Lowhills Wardens House and spoken to Marsha Liddle. Mrs Liddle stated that she was prepared to pay for the gas fire surround as this was not an original item, although it was now needed from a health and safety perspective, as Contractors had stated that they would not free mount a gas fire without a surround, or hearth.

RECOMMENDED that this matter receive further consideration at the next Council meeting.

f) NEW MACHINE PURCHASE

The Estate Manager had spoken to E.A. Clayton regarding the delivery of the new John Deere X595 compact tractor. Claytons were awaiting a delivery of a new cutting deck, this had delayed the delivery of the Town Council's order. Notification of a delivery date had been received and staff training by Claytons for Wednesday 11th and Thursday 12th April 2007.

RECOMMENDED that the information given, be noted.

g) PETERLEE TO HORDEN FOOTPATH REPORT

Kerbing had now been finished and weather permitting tarmac works hoped to be completed by Wednesday 4th April 2007. Debmatt would arrange a final walk around site in due course.

RECOMMENDED that the information given, be noted.

h) NEW PLAY AREA REPORT – EDEN LANE

All equipment had now been installed and work was almost completed including turfing. Although, the site was suffering from vandalism at night time with some graffiti and also damage to new turf. Practical completion was issued on 4th April and Paul Dean at Zurich Insurance would inspect the site on 10th April 2007.

RECOMMENDED that the information given, be noted.

i) APPOINTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

The appointment of the new Administrative Officer, Laura Hartland, was made after interviews on 12th March 2007. Laura took up her appointment on 26th March 2007.

RECOMMENDED that the information given, be noted.

j) ARCHITECTS VISIT AT PETERLEE TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB

The Estate Manager advised he had attended a meeting at Newtown Football Club regarding the proposed new pitch and changing facilities.

RECOMMENDED that the information given, be noted.

k) BEDDING AT SHOTTON HALL

Following a noticeable lack in performance in spring bedding plants at Shotton Hall, the Estate Manager had been actively making investigations and seeking answers to this problem. He advised he had spoken with Darlington Nurseries, from whom the Town Council purchase all bedding plants, and had come to the

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same conclusion as they had, that soil sickness, i.e. growing plants of the same genus in the same soil, year after year had led to pest, fungal and disease build up. Since these initial consultations he had also initiated soil testing to be done on a poor bed and a control bed (i.e. a healthy bed) for Ph and nutrient status and also contaminant sweep. The consensus of opinion seemed to be that soil exchange i.e. removal of contaminated soil and replacement with good soil would be a way forward. Although, further inspection on the beds had also led him to believe that there may be an abnormal amount of pest activity, having found evidence of cutworms, leather jackets and vine weevils and also some root eel worm activity, all of which required confirmation. The Estate Manager intended to prepare a report with all findings for the next meeting.

RECOMMENDED that the information given, be noted.

l) GOAL POST GRANT FORMS

These had now been signed and sent to the Football Association with all relevant documentation for grant payments to be made to the Town Council, with the new football posts being delivered to Eden Lane.

RECOMMENDED that the information given, be noted.

m) FINE TURF

Although the grass had been slow to get away this year, due to cold temperatures, first cut of the season had now been done in most areas. Bowling greens had had a lawn sand dressing application and football pitches were being spiked. Hopefully, soon the warm weather would arrive and grass growth rate would increase.

RECOMMENDED that the information given, be noted.

n) MOLES AT SHOTTON HALL

The Estate Manager advised that he was still seeking insured companies, although mole activity seemed to be slowing down.

RECOMMENDED that the information given, be noted.

o) PIN KERBS – LOWHILLS ROAD

All the pin kerbs had now been completed at Lowhills Road Leisure Gardens. Debmatt had asked if the Town Council would like 40 tonnes of road planeings free of charge, for use on site.

RECOMMENDED that the offer be accepted from Debmatt.

p) LOWHILLS ROAD/HILL RIGG FOOTBALL PITCHES

Easington District Council Sports Development Team had increased out of school football training at Lowhills football pitches after a successful trial had been carried out in March 2007. It had been decided to use the pitches more frequently for all ages for out of school training/tuition. After discussions, with Sean Low this would be more frequent, as they were happy with the grounds.

RECOMMENDED that the information given, be noted.

105. SHOTTON HALL – PROPOSED BAT WALK – FRIDAY 24TH AUGUST 2007

The Town Clerk reported receipt of a request from Mr G Shears at the District of Easington to carry out a Bat Walk in the grounds of Shotton Hall on 21st August 2007.

RECOMMENDED that this request be agreed.

Tom

106. GROUNDWORK EAST DURHAM – REQUEST FOR PARKS DEPARTMENT TO CARRY OUT BEDDING WORKS

The Town Clerk reported receipt of a request from East Durham Groundwork Trust for the Council's Parks Department to supply and plant three small beds at Eden Lane.

RECOMMENDED that the Estate Manager submit a price for this work.

107. DEPARTMENT OF CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS – CEMETERY MEMORIAL SAFETY

The Town Clerk had circulated information received from the Department of Constitutional Affairs on memorial safety.

RECOMMENDED that the letter, be received.

108. HILL RIGG HOUSE PLAY AREA – PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

The Town Clerk reported receipt of an email from Acre Rigg Residents Association regarding the provision of a path to the Hill Rigg House Play area.

RECOMMENDED that the Estate Manager prepare a report on this matter.

109. LOWHILLS ROAD – RECYCLING AREA – PROVISION OF NEW BANKS

The Town Clerk reported receipt of a request from the District of Easington to replace the existing recycling equipment at Lowhills Road car park with new 1100 litre bins, two banks for mixed glass, two for paper, one for cartons and one for cans.

RECOMMENDED that this request, be agreed.

110. RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

IN VIEW OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED THE COMMITTEE PASSED THE FORMAL RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS & PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING, PURSUANT TO THE PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSIONS TO MEETINGS) ACT 1961 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985.

111. ESTATE MANAGER'S REPORT

a) ASBESTOS REPORT

The Estate Manager had circulated to Members details of reports received from APEC Environmental regarding changes to management of asbestos and the need to carry out some additional survey work.

RECOMMENDED that APEC Environmental be appointed to carry out this work at a cost of £960.00.

b) TRAINING COURSES FOR PARKS STAFF

As requested by Members all Staff had been booked to take part on a Manual Handling Course on Tuesday 3rd April 2007 with Beyond Learning. The course had been booked to take place at Shotton Hall and would be divided into two sessions, due to restrictions on the number of people that could be taught at one time.

The course was initially to be at a cost of £800.00 for the two sessions. This had been reduced to £500.00 for both sessions after some negotiation.

A grave digging course had also been booked for 5 no. staff members, also with Beyond Learning, to ensure that there was multiple staff qualified to carry out the job role as necessary. The course was originally at a cost of £450.00, this had been reduced to £400.00, after some negotiation. Certificates of completion would be given for all staff participating in these courses.

RECOMMENDED that the information given, be noted.

GM

c) EDEN LANE BOWLING CLUB

Following the receipt of a letter from Eden Lane Bowling Club, minor improvement works would be carried out.

RECOMMENDED that this matter receive further consideration at a future meeting.

d) PETERLEE TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB

Following a request from Members about the heating system at Newtown Social Club, a report and costings had been received from DTA Consulting Engineers, copies of which were circulated to Members at the meeting.

RECOMMENDED that this item be deferred to the next Parks meeting.

e) CEMETERY LIGHTING AND CCTV PROJECT

Lighting columns had now been installed and working, although one column required a new bulb fitting. This would be attended to shortly. Camera columns were erected and connected although a date was still required for camera installation. The Estate Manager advised that he would be consulting with Mark Smith from DTA regarding cameras.

The Cemetery gate had proven to be a nuisance from a height restriction point of view during the lighting and CCTV project work. Following approval the Leader, adjustments to the gate had been made by Northeast Ironcraft at a cost of £130.00, to enable the gate to be removed more easily if maintenance procedures within the Cemetery necessitated this.

RECOMMENDED that the information given, be noted.

f) LOWHILLS ROAD, REAR STAIRS REFURBISHMENT

Stairs to the rear changing rooms at Lowhills Road were deteriorating and were in an ever increasingly unsafe state. New flooring was required urgently and at present the Estate Manager had only managed to source one quotation for these works, as

flooring specialists were difficult to find. The quotation received was from a Peterlee based company and in view of the urgency of the works the Estate Manager suggested that the works be carried out as soon as possible to comply with health and safety.

A local Member expressed his concern this problem had not been identified as part of the normal building inspection regime.

RECOMMENDED that these works be agreed at a cost of £950.00 with Longstaff Flooring.

g) SHOTTON HALL OUTBUILDING ROOF REPAIRS

The Estate Manager advised Members that there was a leak from this roof, currently showing inside the working area of the building that the Town Council rent to SSCO. The Estate Manager recommended a complete refelting of the roof area and had sought three quotations, on a like for like specification.

Members were concerned that once this work had commenced the timbers underneath this roof were rotten, which would result in a much larger and costly job.

RECOMMENDED that the Estate Manager contact the Council's Architect immediately to lift some sample areas of the roof to inspect and report back to Members to consider the options available.

h) HOLIDAY REPORT

As Members were aware, staff were allowed to carry over three days maximum annual holiday to the following year. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, Carol Greenhaff had to give up two days of her pre-booked holidays, to cover for other staff absence/sickness.

RECOMMENDED that the Council policy be waived on this occasion and Mrs Greenhaff be allowed to carry over five day's holiday.

EdM

112. PRINCE'S TRUST -- FINAL PRESENTATION, FRIDAY 13TH APRIL 2007, PETERLEE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION (THE WHITEHOUSE) -- 2.00PM

The Town Clerk advised of an invitation received from the Prince's Trust, which was open to all Members.

RECOMMENDED that the invitation be received.

113. RETIREMENT OF COUNCILLOR DENNIS COATES FROM TOWN COUNCIL

Councillor Coates expressed his sincere thanks to Members, the Town Clerk and his staff for their support during his time as a Town Councillor. He added that he had met many good people and seen many developments within Peterlee over the years, in particular he referred to the Peterlee Community Garden at the Gateshead Garden Festival, Shotton Hall and the Peterlee Show.

On behalf of all the Members, the Leader wished Councillor Coates well and thanked him for all his hard work and his contribution over the years as a Town Councillor for Peterlee.

RECOMMENDED that the information given, be noted.

