

PETERLEE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARKS & CEMETERY
COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, SHOTTON HALL, PETERLEE

ON MONDAY 14th MARCH 2011

PRESENT: COUN. J ALVEY (CHAIR)

Mesdames: L Wood, J Black
& S McDonnell

Messrs: J Hardy, T Jones, C J Metcalfe,
R Kyle, C Austin, C Robbins, R Huitson,
H Bennett MBE, D Milsom,
C Watkins & D Langan

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

109. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors:- R Jones (illness), W M Jeffrey (operation), M Milsom (illness) and E W Hall (stroke).

RECOMMENDED that the apologies submitted, be accepted.

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

MATTERS ARISING

a) Minute No. 96 – Request for a Memorial Bench Seat

At the Town Council Meeting the Horticultural Supervisor had prepared a plan with a suggested location for the seat, a copy of which was circulated to Members. It was agreed that if the person requesting the seat was happy with this suggested location, then the request be agreed.

The Horticultural Supervisor advised that this matter had been concluded satisfactorily and the party involved was willing to proceed.

RECOMMENDED that the information given, be noted.

b) Minute No. 100 – Nesta Grant Bid

At the Town Council Meeting it had been reported that the Stage 2 application had unfortunately been unsuccessful.

RECOMMENDED that the information given, be noted.

111. THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SPORTS USER GROUP HELD ON 4TH MARCH 2011, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were agreed, subject to Mr Roy Simpson being shown in attendance at the meeting.

A local Member highlighted that the Sports Users had agreed any issues should be raised at this Group and not with local Members directly.

112. PROVISION OF DOG BAGS

The Town Clerk had circulated to Members details of costs for the collective purchase by Councils of dog bags

RECOMMENDED that the Town Clerk find out how much neighbouring Councils' charge for these bags.

113. 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 AND PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING, PURSUANT TO THE PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSIONS TO MEETINGS) ACT 1961 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985.

114. HORTICULTURAL SUPERVISOR’S REPORT

a) VEHICLE ISSUES

Members are advised that the Parks Department have been trialling electric utility vehicles from several companies, in an attempt to be pro-active in saving diesel costs which are escalating on a week to week basis. Last years budget allocation to fuel was £12,600 of which all budget was used. The vehicles demonstrated were ATX-100/200 from epower trucks (www.epowertrucks.co.uk) and also the John Deere Gator (www.greenlay.co.uk)

Additionally there may be further problems associated with the use of “red diesel” (lower fuel duty) which is traditionally used for agricultural or horticultural purposes throughout Peterlee Town Council land assets. It may be that in future that we have to monitor the amount of on/off road usage in order to run our vehicles on “red diesel”.

As an example the current price per litre for “red diesel” is 69.95 pence and the current price per litre for white diesel (full fuel duty) is 119.25 pence.

RECOMMENDED that the information given, be noted.

b) DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL LABOUR RATE ERROR

Whilst compiling information for the 2010 vehicle asset register, it became apparent that Peterlee Town Council were being over charged for some vehicle spares/equipment, which was not consistent with the service level agreement in place. I can now report to Members that Durham County Council have reimbursed Peterlee Town Council with the sum of £729.78 in recognition of this over charge. In order to prevent this problem reoccurring I intend to have a monthly review of all vehicular services relating

to the current service level agreement, such as spare parts, tyre, oils etc.

RECOMMENDED that the information given, be noted.

c) SPORTS SUBSIDY SCHEME

With the recent 25% increase on fees and charges across all sports facilities Members are requested to consider the possible adoption of some form of sports user incentive scheme, aimed at encouraging sports users to access grant funding opportunities in partnership with Peterlee Town Council.

An initial idea which may be of mutual benefit could be to include some form of scoring system aimed at accessing grant funding.

At present there is a small proportion of users who are receiving discounted facilities from Peterlee Town Council e.g. Eden Lane and Lowhills Bowling Clubs. These schemes have been made with the best intentions, but appear to have become somewhat “hazy” over the years. A subsidy scheme which could benefit all users groups may be the way forward.

For example a sports user group may access funding which could bring benefits to the surrounding community and also help Peterlee Town Council in the process. This action could then receive a discount on the facility that the user group uses e.g. a bowling green. This scheme could be used with both Capital and Revenue schemes.

After initial feasibility discussions with the Sports Development officer, who agrees that a sports subsidy scheme could be a way of introducing groups who have traditionally relied on Peterlee Town Council for their funding streams to work along side departments within the council to maximise funding opportunities and also generating greater autonomy amongst existing user groups. This scheme is also considered best practice in large areas of the country.

An example of users who may benefit from a subsidy scheme could possibly include: Football/Rugby Teams, Bowls Groups, Community Groups. Members views were sought.

A local Member made the point that the Sports Development Officer and Horticultural Supervisor should not be doing all the work in connection with sports funding applications, and the Groups must help themselves with funding.

RECOMMENDED that the opportunities to access funding streams be provided to the sporting groups.

d) HIRE OF SPORTS PITCHES

The Horticultural Supervisor had circulated a draft letter to hirers of sports pitches.

RECOMMENDED that the wording of this letter, be agreed.

115. LETTER FROM PETERLEE TOWN BOWLING CLUB

In addition to the letter from the Town Bowling Club, the Town Clerk has also circulated a letter from Lowhills Bowling Club.

Following discussion, it was RECOMMENDED that the charges made to the Bowling Clubs were not considered unreasonable, and in the reply to Clubs the Town Clerk advise what the costs are to provide the bowling facilities.

116. ANNUAL REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES

A local Member stated in his view this Council's fees and charges were still very low in comparison to other Council's, and moved the Council should automatically add inflation each year to its fees and charges.

RECOMMENDED that a report be prepared on the proposed motion that inflation should automatically be added each year, to fees and charges.

117. PETERLEE LEISURE GARDENERS

- i) Letter from Mr & Mrs Malt

RECOMMENDED that a further letter be sent to Mr and Mrs Malt seeking confirmation that their letter could be forwarded to the Leisure Gardeners Committee so the issues raised could be considered.

- ii) Letter from Mr Rippon

The Town Clerk had also circulated to Members a report from Mr Horrocks, the Regional Representative of the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners Limited, which indicated his enquiries found that the procedures of the Association and its Committee could not be faulted.

RECOMMENDED that the information given be noted, and no further action be taken.

- iii) Incident at the Leisure Gardeners Shop involving a Councillor

The Chairman raised this issue and the Councillor involved advised the version which had been related was not true.

RECOMMENDED the Council await the written incident report from the Leisure Gardeners Association.

118. EDEN LANE PONYFIELDS/SEASCAPE SCHOOL – DRAINAGE PROBLEM

The Town Clerk reported the latest position and correspondence on this matter.

RECOMMENDED that the Town Council advise the County Council that:-

- i) **The Town Council will not grant the required easements.**
- ii) **that the Town Council will resolve the issue itself, and**
- iii) **The County Council should make investigations as to how they will alternatively drain water from their site.**

118. INSURANCE SETTLEMENT

- i) Master T Hunt
The Town Clerk advised Zurich had closed this case without payment.

RECOMMENDED that the information given, be noted.

- ii) Mrs M Bevil
RECOMMENDED that the guidance as set out in the report of Barlow, Lyde and Gilbert dated 4th March be followed.

120. THE PAVILION – HELFORD ROAD CCTV

A local Member expressed his concern for the safety of staff having identified certain shortfalls in the CCTV system at The Pavilion.

RECOMMENDED that a meeting be held with the Consultants to address this issue and plenary powers be given for any necessary work and expenditure.

121. BAD DEBTS

A local Member drew to Members attention a bad debt which the Council had been asked to write off.

The hirer had been allowed to continue to hire the MUGA over a two month period whilst no payment had been made.

The Town Clerk advised that arrangements were that long term users were invoiced on a monthly basis, whereas casual users paid in advance or on the day. This was split roughly 50/50.

The individual concerned with this particular bad debt had been spoken to and agreed to pay in three weeks time, this would be confirmed in writing.

RECOMMENDED that any hirer who fails to pay an invoice for use of the MUGA within twenty eight days of issue not be granted any further use until this invoice has been paid.