

PETERLEE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARKS & CEMETERY
COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, SHOTTON HALL, PETERLEE

ON MONDAY 18th JUNE 2012

PRESENT: COUN. J ALVEY (CHAIR)

Mesdames: M Milsom, J I Measor,
S McDonnell & L Wood

Messrs: C J Metcalfe, J Hardy, T Jones,
W M Jeffrey, D Milsom, C Watkins, R Jones,
R Kyle, R Curtis, C Austin, D Langan

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

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors:- H
Bennett MBE (holiday).

RECOMMENDED that the apologies submitted, be accepted.

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

3. NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

The Chairman welcomed Glenn McGill and Liz Hughes, who
were Consultants for a Durham based Consultancy Company,
MD2, they specialised in development, planning, environmental
and project management. Members had been circulated with a
copy of their proposal to the Town Council.

Mr McGill elaborated on the current planning system in County Durham and the key objectives of the County Durham Plan to 2030 for Peterlee. Members were advised that if they wished to view the existing green SHLAA sites plan, they could do so by accessing Durham County Council's website. It was stressed that the final decision on all planning applications would still remain with Durham County Council.

A question and answer session took place. MD2 offered their services free of charge to investigate initial future work, and then to come back with a price to be further considered by Members.

RECOMMENDED that the offer from MD2 be accepted and the Town Clerk meet with MD2 to discuss initial options.

4. NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDENS

An email had been received from Durham County Council, a copy of which had been circulated to Members, giving an up date on the recent changes implemented.

A Member referred to a recent incident which had occurred on 30th April 2012, with a stray dog and after several attempts of requesting help from the street wardens and the Police, was offered no assistance, being told that the street wardens were not on duty. Her last resort was the charity 'Stray Aid' who came and collected the dog.

Members expressed their concerns at not being consulted with these changes, and felt that the facts given in the email were not an accurate reflection of the changes to the service.

RECOMMENDED that a letter be sent to County Durham Association of Local Councils, to include the following concerns raised by Members;-

- i) **Why had the Town and Parish Council's not been involved in the consultation process of these changes,**
- ii) **due to Members' recent experiences with the street wardens, the information given in their email appeared**

not to be a true reflection of the services being provided.

5. THE REPORT OF THE HORTICULTURAL SUPERVISOR

a) Summer Bedding Schemes

Planting of the summer bedding had began on 11th June, the emphasis was placed on roadside planters being planted on the Olympic torch route first, closely followed by the planting of roundabouts within the Town Centre (Burnhope Way). Due to the Bank Holidays within June, this had meant that planting was slightly later than previous years. However, by prioritising the planting regime. Hanging baskets had been supplied by the Shinwell Centre based at Woodhouse Park for Shotton Hall and also for Eden Lane Cemetery.

The metal ornamental hanging basket tree had been removed from the Burnhope Way roundabout and had been placed within the cemetery for extra impact and also to reduce the risks associated, (access to the roundabout), with the need to water this basket on a daily basis.

The Parks Supervisor reported to Members that the efforts of the workforce in planting the Summer bedding and keeping the work programme on track had been exemplary.

RECOMMENDED that the information given be noted.

b) Shotton Hall

Capital works on the first stage of improving the kerb appeal to the rear entrance to the Brandling Suites had commenced this month, with the removal plants at either side of the entrance and being replaced with “permeable” block setts. As agreed at the Finance & General Purposes Meeting, the design and work for the “Jubilee Bell” had been awarded to Kraftwerk Fabrication and the final design modifications were being discussed prior to the design being started. Within the price for the design, Kraftwerk had also been asked to include two ornate posts within the entrance to the Brandling Suites as it had been noticed that taxi/motorists were setting down their passengers within this area.

RECOMMENDED that the information given be noted.

COUNCILLOR MRS J I MEASOR DECLARED AN INTEREST ON THE FOLLOWING ITEM.

- c) Pitch Allocations & Bookings/Use of Eden Lane Facilities
All football and rugby pitches had been allocated to teams within the Peterlee & District Sunday League, Wearside League and Russell Foster Youth Leagues totalling 23 no. teams. Letters would be sent out with team invoices emphasising terms and conditions relating to conduct, litter, parking problems etc. and the responsibilities of the home team.

Peterlee Town F.C. Men's and Women's teams had vacated the premises at Eden Lane by removing all of their equipment and there were no longer any keys being held by anyone for this side of the building other than the Town Council. Both Teams had re-applied for seasonal usage of the pitch/changing rooms and had requested the exclusive use of the kitchen facilities for the forthcoming season. Clearly, any decision, regarding future use of the kitchen facilities would require discussion and a fully documented approach together with an agreed scale of fees.

A Member queried the use of the facilities by way of a dance class that was not complying with the authorised booking procedures. The Town Clerk confirmed that there had been a recent occurrence of this nature despite assurances being given that the dance class was no longer taking place. However, new operating procedures would ensure that there would be no such problems in the future and this practice had now ceased.

RECOMMENDED that the information given be noted, and a further Report be submitted to the next Parks Committee for Members' consideration on the kitchen hire and football/rugby training facilities at Eden Lane and the Pavilion.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED that the full conditions of use and terms of hire be agreed and in place ready for the start of this football season.

d) Skate Park Working Party Meeting

A copy of the minutes of the last meeting held with youngsters of the Youth Club and the Skate Park Working Party, had been circulated to Members.

RECOMMENDED that the information given, be noted.

e) Tree Problems/Failures

The Supervisor advised of several tree failures that had been dealt with by the Parks Department and Arbor Services Ltd, notably at Shotton Hall and the North Denes. As a result he had commissioned Arbor Services to begin an initial risk survey on trees within Shotton Hall, although there were some 1,100 trees situated within Shotton Hall, a risk based assessment, (visual), would be carried out by Parks Staff.

Arbor Services would then record and complete a more thorough risk based survey in line with requirement to BS 8516 Recommendations for tree safety inspection. After a basic survey 2 trees situated within Shotton Hall would need to be felled, notably a mature horse chestnut and also a mature sycamore.

Early indications suggested that some of the problems of the tree failures could be down to a number of diseases such as phytophthora and other bacterial diseases, however, this needed to be confirmed by sampling of affected trees.

RECOMMENDED that approval be given for the urgent arbour works to be carried out and the outcome be awaited.

f) Woodhouse Park

The Supervisor advised Members of an increase in the number of incidents of anti-social behaviour within the public toilet areas and the Skate Park facility.

There had also been acts of vandalism to date consisting of damage/theft of galvanised steel fencing, now recovered, around the skate park facility; there had also been damage to the steel gate leading in to the skate park area; additionally when contacting the Neighbourhood Wardens to supervise

remedial works, due to threats of vandalism, they were unable to attend due to other priorities.

Parks staff were currently assisting with youth activities prior to competitions being held at the skate park facility, such as litter picking and setting up of events/checks etc. This now meant that the Parks staff at Woodhouse Park had increasing priorities in relation to their current roles. He advised he intended to engage two trainees in order to increase the manpower of the Park's staff.

RECOMMENDED that:-

- i) A press statement be released with a suggested headline 'Abuse It and You Will Loose It', informing the public of the mindless vandalism to the park, a park which was provided by the people of Peterlee, for the people of Peterlee,**
 - ii) The responsibilities, conditions and joint working arrangement on the use of the facility, as agreed to be reiterated to the Youth Club,**
 - iii) in future, cancellation of and re-arrangement of youth events in the Park, not be left to Parks personnel, but, agreed and fully communicated by the youth workers from the Youth Centre.**
- g) Parks/Play Areas
The Supervisor referred Members to the current problems associated with the evening/weekend attendants service due to sickness levels. As a result of the limitations of cover by the current Parks day staff, it had not been possible to maintain the current levels of service provision normally associated with the evening attendant service due to limitations on working hours. More importantly this had an implication on the working time directive for the daytime personnel, especially as the number of men currently covering the evening attendant duties were coming up to very busy periods within their normal working days.

The Supervisor suggested that a pilot of keeping the Park and the play areas open and the toilet facilities closed early or

fully. The Town Clerk has entered into discussions with the Police and the Safe Durham Partnership, who were looking into providing a team to clear up the Park every Saturday morning should this pilot initiative cause any litter problems.

RECOMMENDED:-

- (i) early closure or full closure, if necessary, of the public toilet facilities at Woodhouse Park and Eden Lane, be agreed, with notices explaining the reason for this being vandalism problems and mis-use of the facilities,**
- (ii) Woodhouse Park not be locked up on an evening, allowing pedestrian access only, for a trial period of one calendar month commencing from 2nd July 2012. Appropriate signage be put in place advising of this trial period and a leaflet drop be arranged for nearby residents to advise of the situation and request feedback. The Parks Development Officer also discuss this fully with the “Friends Of” Group to explain the reasons for the action.**
- (iii) The play areas also remain open for a trial period of one month and appropriate signage be put in place to report any issues and give feedback on the trial,**
- (iv) Close monitoring be carried out, and at the Supervisor’s discretion these trial arrangements cease at any time.**

h) Annual Parks Inspections

The following dates were recommended for the annual parks inspections by Members of the Parks Committee:-

Saturday 7th July 2012 (9am – 12pm)

Saturday 14 July 2012 (9am – 12pm)

RECOMMENDED that the dates and times as above, be agreed.

6. DENE COMMUNITY SCHOOL FESTIVAL – OLYMPIC TORCH – SUNDAY 17TH JUNE 2012

A thank you letter had been received from the above School thanking all Members involved in supporting and attending this event.

Members who had attended commented that this was a fantastic day, there was a lot of activities provided free of charge for the children, and a lot of hard work had gone into making this event a success.

RECOMMENDED that the Town Clerk send a letter conveying the Town Council's appreciation in providing a great day for the people of Peterlee.