

PETERLEE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARKS &  
CEMETERY COMMITTEE

HELD ON MONDAY 14<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2013

PRESENT: COUN. J ALVEY (CHAIR)

Mesdames: L Wood, M Milsom & J Black

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

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

40. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors:- R Jones (poorly), J Hardy (poorly) and C Austin (poorly).

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

Minute No. 39 (d) – Helford Road Playing Fields (Sports Surveys)  
The amendment made at the Finance and General Purposes Meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2013, be noted.

42. THE REPORT OF THE JOINT MEETING HELD ON 14<sup>TH</sup>  
DECEMBER 2012 – WOODHOUSE PARK

A draft copy of the above minutes had been circulated to Members for their information.

The Town Clerk advised that she had made amendments and the final version of the minutes would be circulated accordingly.

**RECOMMENDED that the revised minutes, be awaited.**

43. REPORT OF THE HORTICULTURAL SUPERVISOR

a) MAINTENANCE ISSUES -

i) Shotton Hall Grounds

Due to the recent inclement weather, increased maintenance had to be accounted for regarding roof issues and also saturated grounds had led to localised flooding. There had also been increased maintenance with the cleaning of drainage gullies. The Parks Department were conducting trials with the use of a tractor mounted leaf blower for large open areas (car parks etc.) He anticipated having the use for a free trial period of one to two weeks and intended to do an evaluation on the strengths and weaknesses of switching from what was now a manual task, to an automated regime for leaf and debris removal.

**RECOMMENDED that the information given, be noted.**

ii) Tree Survey (Shotton Hall)

In house maintenance work had centred around identifying problem trees as indicated in the recently completed Arbor Report. The work would consist of removing benches and seats from wooded areas and moving them to more suitable open areas. Additionally, at risk trees were being monitored on a regular basis with personnel from the Parks Department's own Arboricultural Team.

**RECOMMENDED that the information given, be noted.**

***COUNCILLOR C J METCALFE DECLARED AN INTEREST IN THE FOLLOWING ITEM AND TOOK NO PART IN THE DISCUSSION THAT ENSUED.***

iii) Lowhills Leisure Gardens

Due to the inclement weather the anticipated regime of addressing the problems with the roadway access at Thorntree Gill had to be postponed until February at the earliest, however emergency repairs at Lowhills Road Leisure Gardens would continue as normal. Fifteen tons of MOT grade one roadstone would be purchased from existing Leisure Gardens budget to make safe the areas concerned. The areas in question were "ruts" in the roadway which were being washed out by the severe

weather conditions currently being experienced and localised to two or three areas on the roadway itself, again the area would be monitored by the Parks Department.

A Member expressed his concerns at the length of time these works were being undertaken.

**RECOMMENDED that the information given, be noted.**

b) Woodhouse Park

Following on from the recent multi agencies meeting, remedial security concerns had been addressed by the reduction and thinning out of shrubs within the Balliol Close entrance of Woodhouse Park. The intention was to discourage youths from congregating in dense undergrowth, which could become a problem later on in the year when the trees and shrubs were in leaf. Initial reaction from nearby residents had been positive and there had been a small number of enquiries regarding the re-formation of the “Friends of Woodhouse Park” Group.

The community garden in the Southern area of the park had also been ear marked as a potential project for a joint project with the Probation Service (Community Payback Scheme) in order for recycled wood bark to be used for communal pathways within this area.

**RECOMMENDED that the information given, be noted.**

c) Eden Lane (Pony Fields Site)

Recent severe flooding had meant the collapse of another area of land within the pony fields site. The area had once again been cordoned off and Northumbrian Water Board had been informed. A meeting in December 2012 highlighted the imminent collapse of the area in question and the planned works to the excavation and re-lining of the sewer pipe had been amended to incorporate the additional works.

He had also asked for technical assistance from Northumbrian Water Board Limited, to try and explain the additional holes within the cemetery area and ancient monument sites of Eden Lane.

The Parks Department staff had also carried out debris removal from the surface water gullies at the bottom of the site, together with the excavation of several tons of soil to create a natural watercourse for the excess water to run off. The relocation of the soil would also be increased throughout the year to fill in an area which was being used regularly by off road motorcycles.

Members expressed their concerns as to the length of time these serious issues had been on-going and a local Member explained to Members the distress the local residents were having to endure.

Members and Officers agreed that the water problems had only occurred since the building of Seascape School. The Town Clerk confirmed that the easements had not been signed by the Town Council.

**RECOMMENDED:-**

- i) the Town Council examine the current position with easements and investigate withdrawing any rights to Durham County Council to use their land for water;**
  - ii) the Town Clerk engage a Specialist Solicitor to seek advice on taking legal action against Durham County Council, for any damage/implications as a result of the building of the School, as a matter of urgency.**
- d) Eden Lane (Adjacent to Cemetery)  
The Horticultural Supervisor and the Sports Development Officer had identified both a need and also a possible venue to create additional soccer and rugby training areas. The possible site in question was the length of grassed area between the existing Newtown Ground and the cemetery itself.

Peterlee Town (Women's Team) had been using the area in question for a number of weeks together with the use of the portable 24 no. volt sports lighting and this had proved very beneficial, both from a preservation of pitch perspective, but also enabled outdoor training to be continued until relatively late in the evening for the Team.

The provision of this pilot scheme had also opened up the possibility of creating an additional revenue funding stream from any potential hiring of the lights to other teams or organisations.

**RECOMMENDED that the information given, be noted and Members be kept updated with progress.**

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

45. STRUCTURAL SURVEY SHOTTON HALL & NEWTOWN FOOTBALL CLUB

A copy of the above Interim Report had been circulated to all Members, for their information.

**RECOMMENDED that the Interim Report, be received.**

46. GLOBAL SPORT – EDEN LANE

The Town Clerk advised Members that she had been approached by the above named Company, who were keen to work in partnership with the Town Council to improve the facility and its use, for a trial period of one year. This would provide a daily presence and increased bookings.

**RECOMMENDED that the proposal submitted by Global Sports be approved in principle and further details be presented to Members for consideration.**

47. LOWHILLS ROAD CAR PARK

The Chairman advised he had received complaints from local residents regarding the removal of the bins at Lowhills Road.

**RECOMMENDED that the Horticultural Supervisor make investigations and advise the residents accordingly.**



