

PETERLEE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARKS &
CEMETERY COMMITTEE

HELD ON MONDAY 10TH MARCH 2014

PRESENT: COUN. C J METCALFE (CHAIR)

Mesdames: L Wood, C Baty, K Liddell, M Thompson,
S Simpson, M Milsom, V Watson &
Mrs J I Measor

Messrs: D Milsom, C Watkins, W M Jeffrey, L Cook,
A Watson, S Miles, J Alvey, D Sillito,
C Robbins, A Watson & R Kyle

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

60. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor F Price, (ill).

RECOMMENDED that the apologies submitted be accepted.

61. WOODHOUSE PARK – JOIN IN PROJECT

The Chairman welcomed Mrs Shealagh Pearce, Principal Area Action Partnership Co-Ordinator (East Durham) to the meeting.

Mrs Pearce read out a detailed progress report, a copy of which she advised would be circulated to Members after the meeting. The Urban Legacy Project had seen a significant reduction in anti-social behaviour within Woodhouse Park. She reported that 366 no. youngsters had attended the sports sessions, with the most popular being the Monday night sessions. The two year funding for this project would come to an end in Sept/October 2014. The key

performance indicators had been over achieved in the first year, with every single element being achieved and targets exceeded. These would be reviewed in year two. The youth volunteers involved with the project had gained confidence and experience towards their NVQ & BTec qualifications. She felt this was a unique project in the area and had been used as a pilot and she felt there was scope to develop it further. It had been a successful project from all perspectives aiming to reduce ASB, increasing the use of the Park to name but a few.

The meeting was opened up for a question and answer session. It was asked what the AAP saw as the Town Council's role in taking the project forward. It was explained that costings would be required from the Town Council in relation to the staffing of the project. A Member asked what funding avenues were available to continue this Project. Mrs Pearce advised the following avenues could be viable options:-

- youngsters could apply for additional funding themselves, as long as they could provide evidence they were contributing,
- Councils – Neighbourhood Funding through area budgets
- Match Funding
- Small lottery grants, and
- Heritage Funds

A Member asked what events were planned for 2014 and if the Council could be kept informed. It was assured that this would be done. There was to be a joint a meeting arranged with the various partners and Members would be kept informed with progress.

Councillor J Alvey asked Mrs Pearce if she could contact himself and Councillor Mrs J I Measor, in their capacity as County Councillors for Peterlee, with a possibility of support.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Pearce for her attendance and informative verbal report.

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

Matters Arising

Minute No. 56c Whirly Bird Play Equipment

The Parks Supervisor sought clarification in relation to the above item discussed at the last meeting.

RECOMMENDED it be left to the Parks Supervisor's discretion to repair, or renew any small items of play equipment up to a maximum value of £2,500. Any play items over that value, the Supervisor contact and liaise with the Local Ward Members and it be brought to the Parks Committee for consideration where appropriate.

63. PROGRESS REPORT OF THE HORTICULTURAL SUPERVISOR

The Horticultural Supervisor's progress report had been circulated to all Members, consideration was given to the following headings:-

a) General Overview-

The Parks Department had been continuing with tree works and associated tree works within Shotton Hall, Dene Parks North and Dene Parks South (Methodist Church) additional works (felling) of dangerous trees had continued with the Council's approved contractor Arbor Division Ltd. There were still several areas which would require looking at in line with the 2012 Tree Survey. An area had to be cordoned off within Shotton Hall grounds (Shadforth Close side) for Health & Safety reasons.

The Supervisor had seconded two Parks personnel to do visual checks on vulnerable areas such as footpaths/roads and also bordering or near properties on a regular basis.

Using funds from the 2014-2015 budget the Supervisor asked for consideration to extend the tree surveys/bat surveys to include elements of Lowhills Road (Leisure Gardens, Bowling green and car park gate areas) in order to fulfil the Council's Insurers recommendations (2010 report) relating to the Occupiers Liability Act 1957 (2000) and general Health & Safety best practices.

RECOMMENDED that authority be given to carry out additional tree/bat surveys for areas mentioned above using funds from 2014-2015 budgets.

b) Vehicles-Equipment

In an effort to reduce the amount of wear and tear/damage to the Town Council vehicle fleet, the Supervisor advised he had instigated and

carried out the following measures which would see a reduction in the vehicle repairs and maintenance budget over the coming years.

Accidental damage (vehicle report form), which effectively had been designed to enable quicker and more thorough reporting of vehicular accidents. Similar to the accident reporting system the form was broken down into 3 parts -

Part 1 - Full details of accident

Part 2 - Witness statement

Part 3 - Supervisor Vehicle Investigation Report

The form had been designed to assist in accident investigation and record operatives who had more damage than other operatives and enable investigations as to why this was occurring. Together with other measures such as increased awareness training, check systems and some “in house” repairs and basic servicing of small equipment the Supervisor felt confident that he could bring down the unnecessary expenditure incurred within the Town Council vehicle fleet.

RECOMMENDED that the vehicle accident form and above measures be adopted and used by Peterlee Town Council Parks Department.

c) Play Area Consultation

The Play Area Consultation as requested by Members had been held on Thursday 6th March at Peterlee Youth Centre with some 30 no. participants being invited. 35 youths came along to the event with an age range of 11-15 years. It was a very constructive session and was a mark of the project running in Woodhouse Park.

Agencies involved in the organisation and set up were Groundwork Trust, Durham County Council – One Point Service.

The event consisted of an explanation by the Supervisor regarding vandalism of Council property and how it affected the parents/grandparents and other users of Peterlee Town Council services. This was followed by an open session regarding the five satellite play areas and also the youth facilities at Woodhouse Park.

The main thrust of the consultation was to see whether there was a genuine need to focus on Woodhouse Park as a central point in Peterlee for youth provision and placing of play equipment and to see what

reaction there was relating to the removal of old/vandalised equipment from the satellite areas.

It was envisaged that Groundwork would assist on an on-going basis to help feed information from other youth events and comments, so that a feeling of “involvement” could be created by the end users of our equipment. Additionally, it was seen as an important step in vandalism reduction to involve the youth of Peterlee for future consultations.

It was also intended to highlight the Town Council may decide to remove pieces of equipment due to damage/vandalism in the future years ahead, with support still being given to organised events at Woodhouse Park with partner agencies to make up for the demise of traditional play equipment.

RECOMMENDED that the information given, be noted and the findings of the consultation event be integrated into any future Play Area Strategy relating to future play provision within Peterlee. In addition the Town Council would enter into closer working relationships with Durham County Council and East Durham Groundwork on this piece of work.

64. FELLED TREES

Councillor W M Jeffrey had asked for this item to be placed on the agenda. He referred to the recent felling of trees on Town Council land and asked the Supervisor if there was any possibility revenue could be made by way of selling the felled logs as they were extremely popular with residents with wood burning fires.

The Supervisor explained the procedure that was in place at the moment. The pieces of felled tree were taken to the Eden Lane Compound and residents could help themselves on a first come first served basis with no charge being levied. He felt this method was safe, (stopped operatives being interrupted during felling work on site), and was environmentally friendly and also was a chance for the Town Council to give back to the community. It was stressed the Town Council were in the infancy of a felling programme and also did not have a large amount of felling being carried out. It was asked could the logs be sold. The Officer advised he had no issue with that and suggested he could make investigations with neighbouring authorities

on how they dealt with such surplus wood and advise Members with the outcome.

In discussion a Local Member raised the issue of tree felling at Castle Eden Dene National Nature Reserve and representation made to him by local residents. The Deputy Town Clerk assured she would provide him with some information on this issue.

There was also discussion on the problem of abandoned trolleys all over the Town. Details of the Trolleywise initiative that had been operating for several years now were given. Their contact telephone number was **800 3161241** is a free phone number.

RECOMMENDED that the Parks Supervisor make investigations with neighbouring authorities of the sale of surplus logs and wood and report back in due course.

65. CEMETERY

A copy of the Cemetery Officer's Report had been circulated to Members for consideration under the following headings:-

i) Cemetery Fees & Charges

Comment was made that the Town Councils charges seemed very low in comparison to say Gateshead and Sunderland. It was explained that local cost comparisons were carried out regularly with other Parish & Town Councils. **RECOMMENDED that the 2013 prices be increased by 3% with effect from 1st April 2014, in line with previous year's price increases.**

ii) Purchase of Exclusive Rights

RECOMMENDED that exclusive rights refer to dimensions to 9x5ft dimensions and disregard 4-5ft x 5ft dimensions, with effect from 1st April 2014.

ii) Taps

RECOMMENDED that the Cemetery Officer investigate the replacement of cemetery taps and submit a further report for approval of these works.

66. ILLEGAL TETHERING OF HORSES – FEEDBACK FROM LARGER LOCAL COUNCILS FORUM

Councillor W M Jeffrey advised that he had attended a recent meeting of the Larger Local Councils Forum, which the above subject had been discussed and other neighbouring Councils were also experiencing similar difficulties with illegal tethering of horses on Council owned land.

The Parks Supervisor gave a brief update on the current situation with this ongoing problem. It was also reported that Mr Taylor a local resident intended coming along to the open session on the Council Meeting on this issue.

RECOMMENDED that the information given, be noted.

67. PETERLEE IN BLOOM

A copy of the Show Co-Ordinator's report had been circulated to Members for their consideration.

i) Costings

As the budget for this event had been reduced from £2,200 to £1,200 suggestions were discussed to streamline the costings.

RECOMMENDED:-

- i) **the Lunch for the Mayor, judges and Chairman of Parks be held “in house”, this would make a significant savings,**
- ii) **the Co-Ordinator to provide a more detailed breakdown of the itemised costings,**
- iii) **the judges expenses be clarified,**
- iv) **an additional category be included “Best Street” with a plaque being purchased to an approximate value of £20.00.**

COUNCILLOR W M JEFFREY DECLARED AN INTEREST IN THE FOLLOWING ITEM AND TOOK NO PART IN THE DISCUSSION THAT ENSUED.

ii) Leisure Gardens Judging

The Chairman of this Committee, Councillor Metcalfe, referred to the Co-Ordinator's comments in the Report, which he profusely objected to and stated that he did not change the rules on the day of judging. He had sought guidance from Durham County Council on how he should deal with this matter at this meeting. He then gave a report on what had occurred on the judging day. He explained he had asked what the format was for the day as it was the first time he had been involved as Chairman of the Leisure Gardeners. He had been told it was full plots being judged only. He had asked for a list of plots and numbers from the persons from the Leisure Gardens Shop on site, and had handed this to the Judge and the Officer. He stressed he did not change the rules. The Horticultural Supervisor confirmed it was only full plots that were judged. The Chairman, asked for this to be fully recorded in the minutes. He again stressed he did not change anything on the day.

An email had been received from the Secretary of the Peterlee Leisure Gardeners requesting that half and full plots be judged to encourage all plot holders to be involved.

RECOMMENDED:-

- i) **The Chairman's comments be noted;**
- ii) **The request from the Leisure Gardeners be agreed to half and full plots to be judged, with the Leisure Gardeners providing an up to date list of all plots.**

68. RESOLUTION TO EXLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

69. THE REPORT OF THE HORTICULTURAL SUPERVISOR

- (i) Requests to use Machinery
Overview

The Town Council had a small number of reciprocal arrangements with regard to neighbouring Parish/Town Council Parks Departments.

As a Town Council we were able to borrow/lend equipment which a neighbouring Council may use infrequently or a very specific piece of equipment, which was usually too expensive to buy outright. This arrangement was best practice for financial reasons and was generally called a clustering arrangement between neighbouring councils. The pre-requisites were an item goes on other Council's insurance cover and any damage to be paid for by the Council who had borrowed the equipment.

RECOMMENDED that approval be given to this proposal for the Parks Department to carry out ground works assistance to South Hetton Parish Council on the terms as detailed.

(b) Castle Eden Cricket Club

RECOMMENDED that approval be given to this request and the Parks Department lend equipment to Castle Eden Cricket Club as a “one off” loan, with an option to buy PTC 78 for a sum of £100-£150 for future reference.

(ii) Replacement Plant/Machinery

Tractor

RECOMMENDED that quotation one in the sum of £34,529, be accepted to purchase a John Deere 5 series tractor with appropriate attachments (as per continuance of 2010 asset management plan), using remainder of 2013/2014 budget with the shortfall to be taken from 2014/2015 budget.

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(b) Toro Reelmaster (PTC 9A)

RECOMMENDED that demonstration machines be used over the next few months in order to identify a suitable machine at a cheaper price than the original machine that could be used for this piece of work.

(iii) Peterlee & District Sunday League

A meeting had been held between the Parks Supervisor and the Secretary of the Peterlee & District Sunday League regarding the possibility of hosting cup finals at the Peterlee Newtown ground throughout April going through to May. The suggested dates for some of the finals would be held on Friday nights (6.30 kick off), dates would be confirmed by the League.

RECOMMENDED that a fee be charge of £88.00 per match and the catering arrangements be agreed between Peterlee Town Council and Global Sport.

- (iv) Emergency Works to the Roof at Eden Lane Community Building

RECOMMENDED that the information given, be noted.

- (v) Roof Repairs – Woodhouse Park

Works had been completed to the vandalised roof at Woodhouse Park at a cost of £538.43. Members expressed their concerns that there was still on-going required on the roof in relation to the vandalised turret.

RECOMMENDED that the information given, be noted.

70. EDEN LANE COMMUNITY BUILDING – QUOTES FOR WORK

This item was referred from the Finance and General Purposes Committee. The Deputy Town Clerk gave a verbal report to Members advising that she had received a further details as requested and she outlined them for members.

RECOMMENDED that Quotation 1 be accepted in the sum of £8,840 plus an additional £1,040 plus VAT for bars/mesh at windows. Plenary powers be given to Officer to arrange for these works to commence as soon as possible.

71. ARQIVA TELECOMS MAST, EDEN LANE – RENEWAL

A letter had been received from the above Company, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member for consideration. A Local Member asked that particular reference be made to items 5, 5(i) & 6 and legal advice be taken on these.

RECOMMENDED that the Town Clerk be given authority to engage into negotiations with Arqiva Limited to secure the best arrangement she could for the Town Council.

72. FIRST AID FOR SPORT COURSE

RECOMMENDED that approval be given for this course to run at either Eden Lane or Shotton Hall and the Sports Development Officer be given authority to act on this immediately to get the course arranged before the end of the financial year.