

PETERLEE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARKS &  
CEMETERY COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, SHOTTON HALL

ON MONDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2015

PRESENT: COUN M A CARTWRIGHT (CHAIR)

Mesdames: K Liddell, S McDonnell, V Watson, S Simpson,  
& K Hawley

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

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

35. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been submitted and accepted from Councillors C J Metcalfe, (personal reasons), L Wood (ill) and G Cowie, (ill).

**RECOMMENDED the Council approve the reasons submitted for absence received from the Councillors on the grounds given above, and their apologies for absence be recorded.**

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

37. WOOHOUSE PARK – USE OF THE CLASS ROOM BUILDING – DIRECT STEPS

The Deputy Town Clerk gave a brief verbal progress report of the discussions at the meeting held on the 16<sup>TH</sup> October 2015 to discuss in detail Direct Steps proposed occupation in Woodhouse Park classroom building and the terms to be agreed for this use. Members were keen to

support this use and partnership in Woodhouse Park and following consideration it was **RECOMMENDED:-**

- (i) **A Service Level Agreement be written and agreed with Direct Steps;**
- (ii) **The Group be responsible for the utility and broadband costs;**
- (iii) **As part of the agreement, Direct Steps be requested to finance the roof repairs to the unit at either the mid or upper level standard of repair as outlined at the meeting.**

38. LAND AT ESSINGTON WAY

Several Members met on site on 12 October 2015 with representatives of the garage to determine the exact dimensions and boundary to be sold to the garage. This was now to be confirmed on plan by the Garage owner and a final value would be obtained from the District Valuer and the sale would then proceed, and, as agreed previously, restrictive covenants be put in place regarding building on the site and its future use, and all legal fees and costs to be paid by the applicant.

**RECOMMENDED the action taken in agreeing the parcel of land to be sold, be endorsed and the sale proceed as detailed.**

39. DATE OF THE COUNCIL MEETING – WEDNESDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2015

**RECOMMEN DED it be noted the Council Meeting would be held on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2015 at 6.30pm.**

40. HELFDOR ROAD PLAY AREA – CONSULTATION & PETITION RECEIVED

Members had been circulated with a copy of a petition received from several residents of Helford Road against any review to re site the Helford Road play area to the site of the former cricket club. A brief verbal update of the consultation that had been held on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> October 2015, was given at the meeting and a full report was awaited and would be presented to Members.

During discussions it was suggested East Durham Homes be approached with regard to possible use of land at Teign Close.

**RECOMMENDED the petition be accepted. FURTHER RECOMMENDED the full report on the consultation from Groundwork NE & Cumbria, be awaited and East Durham Homes be contacted about the land at Teign Close.**

41. LOWHILLS ROAD FOOTBALL FIELDS

(i) Recent Damage

This item had been requested by Councillor S Miles following recent damage to the field by two vehicles on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2015. Councillor Miles circulated a proposal for boulders being put in place around the perimeter of the fields, which he felt would address the issue of unauthorised access, not only by vehicles causing damage but also travellers camping on the site. In considering this matter discussions lead onto the indiscriminate parking by footballers and their spectators.

There was considerable discussion on the pros and cons of restricting access to the site with either a fence or boulders and it was **RECOMMENDED costings be collated for fencing or boulders; the developers for the Mickle Hill site be approached with regard to their development and the various access points to the site from Lowhills Road and the potential for Section 106 funding towards any scheme. Once this information had been gathered a public meeting be arranged with residents on Lowhills Road. FURTHER RECOMMENDED in the meantime the Horticultural Supervisor would arrange to install appropriate signage at this site.**

(ii) Gypsy, Romany, Traveller Over View

Members were circulated with a copy of this presentation which was made by Durham Constabulary at a recent parish & Town Council Meeting, where it was asked that parish councils “embrace the principles of problem solving, be part of the solution and not just the problem and where working groups emerge, to be part of it with an open mind”.

**RECOMMENDED the information give be noted.**

42. CENOTAPH

Members were circulated with an enquiry regarding the relocating of the obelisk currently in place at Eden Lane Cemetery to the site of the current cenotaph at St Cuthberts Church. This had been an issue

considered previously by the Council in December 2009 and it was confirmed the obelisk was never intended to be a cenotaph it was a centre piece/focal point for the cemetery. It was suggested that perhaps the current cenotaph could be raised which would improve its impact, however the Diocese would need to be consulted on this.

**RECOMMENDED the request to re locate the obelisk be refused, however the Diocese be approached about enhancing the current cenotaph.**

43. RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC  
IN VIEW OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED, THE COMMITTEE IS ASKED TO PASS THE FORMAL RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING, PURSUANT TO THE PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSIONS TO MEETINGS) ACT, 1960 & THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985.

COUNCILLORS W M JEFFREY & J ALVEY DECLARED AN INTEREST IN THE MATTER AND LEFT THE ROOM FOR THE DURATION OF THE ITEM. COUNCILLOR WATKINS LEFT AT THIS POINT ALSO AND DID NOT RETURN.

44. PETERLEE LEISURE GARDENERS ASSOCIATION - FINAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

A copy of the final report produced by DCC Audit Services had been circulated to each Member for their attention.

In considering the report reference was made to advice that was required from the NSALGA (National Society of Allotments & Leisure Gardens Association) and copies of suggested constitutions and rules had been received and passed on to the PLGA for their urgent attention. and arrangements were being made for Officers to meet to have the Association's input into these issues.

There was once again discussion on the Town Council's role with the management of the two sites, not only as landlord but on the operation and running of the gardens and the PLGA's non compliance with this.

**RECOMMENDED a Special Parks & Cemetery Committee be convened following advice from the NSALGA.**

45. DRAFT SOLUTION PROPOSAL – VOLUNTEER STRATEGY & RECRUITMENT & MANAGEMENT OF VOLUNTEERS, PETERLEE PARKS

Members were circulated with a proposal received from Groundwork NE & Cumbria which the Horticultural Supervisor felt would support the Council well, in Woodhouse Park particularly, and would also tie in to the works they had carried out in relation to the Play Strategy.

**RECOMMENDED this proposal be considered further during budget discussions for 2016/17 budget.**

46. HORDEN RUGBY CLUB

The Deputy Town Clerk provided an update for Members on discussions with the Club. A letter of comfort had been provided to the Club as required by the grant funders. The Valuation report was awaited to allow Council to agree the specific terms of the lease. Refurbishment of the changing rooms and the building had been discussed and it was reported the partnership with East Durham College was progressing and specifications and costs were awaited.

**RECOMMENDED the progress be noted and further developments be reported.**

PRIOR TO CONSIDERATION OF THIS ITEM COUNCILLORS A WATSON, R J CURTIS AND W M JEFFREY DECLARED AN INTEREST AND LEFT THE ROOM.

47. TOWN CLERK

- (i) Recovery of occupational sick pay
- (ii) Internal Investigation

These items had been placed on the agenda at the request of Councillors M J Thompson & W M Jeffrey.

Reference was made to the recommendation made at the Extra Ordinary Council Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2015, Minute Number 27 refers where it was agreed not to commission an independent investigation and report into the way in which the Town Council dealt with the Town Clerk's Grievance. As per Standing Order No 7 – Previous Resolutions

“ a resolution shall not be reversed within six months either by special motion, etc.....” and there was no further discussion on this matter.

For reference a copy of advice received from the Governance Solicitor, Durham County Council, where if Members agreed to commission a report which covered the same areas as the NEREO report, then the Council should carefully detail its reasons as this could be construed by the public as a waste of public funds.

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