

ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Environment and Amenities Committee held at 6:00pm on Tuesday 12 May 2015, at Ashington Town Hall, 65 Station Road, Ashington, NE63 8RX.

PRESENT:

Councillors:

Louis Brown
Keith Chambers
Avril Chisholm
Stephen Fenwick
Ely Turnbull

Vicky Brown
Marjorie Chambers
Glyn Davies
Pauline Thompson
Bob Walkinshaw

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mike Slaughter – Town Clerk
Stephen Humphrey – Funding & Projects Officer
Sue Coulthard – Snr. Admin. Officer
Members of the Public – 0

E&A15/263 1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Nominations were formally invited for the position of Chair of the Environment and Amenities Committee.

Resolved:

That Cllr. Keith Chambers be duly elected as Chair of the Environment and Amenities Committee.

E&A15/264 2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Nominations were formally invited for the position of Vice-Chair of the Environment and Amenities Committee.

Resolved:

That Cllr. Marjorie Chambers be duly elected as Vice-Chair of the Environment and Amenities Committee.

E&A15/265 3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Les Alderson, Victor Bridges, Lawrence Henderson, Maggie Lang, Kris Lavery, Liam Lavery, Mark Purvis and Wyn Stewart.

E&A15/266 4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Cllrs L Brown, M Chambers and E Turnbull made disclosures of personal and prejudicial interest with regard to any discussions pertaining to allotments.

E&A15/267 5. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2015 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

E&A15/268 6. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting.

E&R15/269 7. ALLOTMENTS – NURSERY PARK

The Town Clerk informed members that the Town Council had completed a number of outstanding capital works projects at Nursery Park Allotment Site including some fencing work and the renewal of roads and footpaths.

The Town Clerk reminded members that the site was the only one in the town managed directly by the Town Council that was also responsible for rent setting. He stated that the plot rents had not been increased since 2010, and had remained at the level previously determined by the former Wansbeck District Council.

The Town Clerk reported that the current rent level was £65 per year, with a 25% discount for over plot-holders aged over 65. Members were advised that the current expenses and water charges were covered by this level of rent and there was no real demonstrable need to raise the rental level.

Resolved:

That:

The rental charge for an allotment plot on the Nursery Park Allotments Site remain at £65 per annum, with a 25% discount made for those tenant plot holders aged 65 and over.

E&R15/270 8. BUS SHELTER WORK PROGRAMME 2015/2016

Bus Shelter Opposite Bothal Cottages: Cllr. M Chambers had requested that this item be included on the agenda following requests from a number of local residents.

Cllr. Chambers informed members that this shelter did not offer protection from the elements to users and that it was in a location adjacent to old peoples' housing and a school. Members were informed that the current shelter had two sides, but a third side was needed to protect users when there was a prevailing westerly wind.

Cllr. Chambers stated that NCC Highways Officers had indicated that there did not appear to be any problems in altering the design of the shelter, but it would likely need to be relocated in order to meet highway regulations. Cllr.Chambers reported that she had been advised that if, as a result of re-location, additional land was needed, then it was likely that Bernicia would be landowner and that permission would be required.

Cllr. Chambers requested that the Committee consider supporting the cost of either altering the shelter to provide additional protection from the elements for users, or to support the cost of providing a new shelter of an acceptable design.

A lengthy discussion followed regarding whether the existing shelter was fit for purpose and whether it should be considered as a priority for renewal or replacement. Cllr. Chambers stated that, although the shelter was structurally sound, she felt it was not fit for purpose as it did not offer users full protection from adverse weather. Cllr.Chambers stated that she believed that it was important to note that the shelter was used mainly by elderly and vulnerable residents.

Several members felt that more information was needed regarding an alternative design and costs involved for a replacement bus shelter at Bothal Cottages.

Resolved:

That:

- (i) The request for the renewal, or replacement of the at Bothal Cottages be deferred; and that**
- (ii) The request go forward for consideration in a new priority programme for the renewal and replacement of bus shelters, to be discussed as part of the 2016/17 budget discussions.**

E&R15/271 9. ASHINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES PARTNERSHIP

The Chair reported that he and Cllr. Chisholm had attended a meeting of the Ashington Neighbourhood Services Partnership Board had been held on Friday, 1May 2015. He invited Cllr. Chisholm to present her report to the Committee.

Zonal Working: Cllr. Chisholm reported that it had been agreed at the meeting that, overall, the “zonal” system of working over the winter had worked well. However, this system had now ceased to operate as the grass cutting season had arrived. ATC had raised the issue of zonal working continuing during the summer months.

Current Vacancy: With regard to the recruitment situation, the NCC Management Team had been asked to ensure that this was carried out as soon as possible in order to fill the current vacancy on the Ashington Neighbourhood Services Team.

Street Cleaning: NCC Officers had indicated that both sweepers were now operating in the town.

Future Meetings: NCC Officers had requested that future meetings be held every other month, rather than monthly.

A lengthy discussion followed during which several members stated that they were disappointed with the current standard of services being delivered by the Neighbourhood Services Team and that key concerns remained regarding available resources and the planned

management of work programmes over and above the core expected standard.

Following a lengthy discussion, it was agreed that the Neighbourhood Services Management Team be asked to attend the next meeting of Environment & Amenities Committee.

E&R15/272 10. ASHINGTON GARDENS COMPETITION

The Town Clerk invited the Committee to consider the arrangements for this year's Gardens Competition, approve the suggested timetable and nominate members to act as a panel of judges for the Competition.

Resolved:

That:-

- (i) The closing date for entries to the 2015 Gardens Competition be Friday, 19 June 2015,**
- (ii) The judging take place in July 2015,**
- (iii) A Presentation Evening for all entrants be held in September 2015; and that**
- (iv) The Town Council judging panel consist of Cllrs. V Brown, M Chambers, A Chisholm, P Thompson and R Walkinshaw.**

E&R15/273 11. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

Cllr. V Brown requested that a ground mounted litter bin be located placed on Boiler Road. The Town Clerk agreed to have the area checked and a litter bin sited as appropriate.

E&R15/274 12. DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Environment and Amenities Committee was scheduled for 6:00pm, Tuesday, 14 July 2015, in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall, Ashington.

The meeting closed at 7.40pm.