

Minutes of the meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, on **WEDNESDAY 29th MAY 2013** at 7.15 p.m.

PRESENT **Councillor J D Clare** (Chairman) and
Councillors J Atkinson, B Blenkinsopp, R Bowman,
A M Chandran, Mrs B A Clare, J Clark, Mrs M Dalton,
M A Dalton, R S Fleming, I Gray, G C Gray, B Hall,
K Henderson, Mrs W P Hillary, M Iveson, Mrs S J Iveson,
W Iveson, Mrs V M Raw and D Summers.

OFFICIALS Mr A Bailey (Town Clerk)
Mr S Cooper (Environment Officer)
Mrs M J Robinson (Leisure & Environment Assistant)
Mrs J Thexton (Leisure Manager)
Mr D Thompson (Works Manager)
Mrs C Walton (Corporate and Policy Officer)

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of E Adam, N Collinson, Mrs S Haigh, Mrs I Hewitson, J P Hillary, P Kjenstad, T Twissell and C Wheeler.

2. **MEMBERS' DISPENSATIONS**

No applications for dispensations had been received.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor J D Clare submitted a Declaration of Personal Interest in Agenda Item 13.2(m), Planning.

4. **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no questions from the public.

5. **MINUTES**

It was proposed by Councillor R S Fleming seconded by Councillor Mrs M Dalton and

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment Committee held on the 10th April 2013 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. **ALLOTMENTS REPORT**

The Works Manager submitted his report for the 7 weeks ended the 19th May 2013. The report detailed inspections and general maintenance to the allotments.

RESOLVED - that it be recommended that the report be received

7. **ENVIRONMENT REPORT**

The Works Manager and Environment Officer submitted their report for 7 weeks ended the 19th May 2013. The report updated members on the work being undertaken by volunteer groups, public and community events which had been held during April and May 2013.

Additionally, it was reported that a number of trees at School Aycliffe had been vandalised.

The Environment report also advised of some improvements which had been made to seats and a bin at the bottom of Well Bank following a letter which had been received from Aycliffe Village Primary School.

RESOLVED - that it be recommended that:-

- i The report be received.
- ii Legal action be taken if the perpetrators of the tree vandalism at School Aycliffe are identified.

8. **BUS SHELTER REFURBISHMENT**

The Works Manager submitted a report which requested members to consider the replacement or refurbishment of some town centre bus shelters.

RESOLVED - that it be recommended that:-

- i The report be received
- ii A sum of £5,212.36 is taken from the 2013/14 Capital Works Budget for bus shelter replacement to be used for repair and refurbishing the bus shelters.
- iii Queensbury Shelters Ltd. carry out the repair and refurbishment of the 5 bus shelters.
- iv A budget allocation for bus shelters be included in the asset management plan
- v The shelters be painted black.

9. **GRANTS OF GRAVE SPACE**

RESOLVED - that it be noted that the undermentioned grants of grave space have been issued:-

West Cemetery

Grave No. R 31	Doreen Holt
Grave No. I 127	Mary Redhead
Grave No. R 116	Craig Johnson and Victoria James

10. **JOHN MEYNELL FUNERAL SERVICE – SIGNAGE**

Members were requested to consider a request from John Meynell Funeral Service to erect a sign on the verge at the entrance to Stephenson Way Cemetery.

RESOLVED - that it be recommended that:-

- i The report be received.
- ii One sign be authorised to be placed at the entrance to Stephenson Way Cemetery.

11. **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATE**

The Town Clerk and Policy Officer submitted a report which provided members with information and a draft outline regarding the preparation of the Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan.

RESOLVED - that it be recommended that:-

- i The report be received
- ii The Service Review Working Group be tasked with considering the makeup of a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

12. **LORRY PARK**

The Town Clerk submitted a report which provided members with information following a complaint regarding the lack of toilet facilities in the School Aycliffe Lorry Park.

RESOLVED - that it be recommended that:-

- i The report be received.
- ii The Town Clerk be asked to investigate any legal restrictions or covenants that may be in place following the original land transfer.
- iii Subject to (ii) above, the parking area be closed to lorries and suitable signage and barrier restrictions be put in place.

13. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

(1) The Committee considered the undermentioned planning applications:

- (a) Erection and display of internally illuminated 2 No. fascia signs – 1 projecting sign and ATM collar signage – Halifax – 58 Beveridge Way, Newton Aycliffe.
- (b) Erection of conservatory to the rear – 2 Cheltenham Way, Newton Aycliffe.
- (c) Installation of pitched roof over existing flat roof – 10 Wycliffe Close, Newton Aycliffe.

Councillor J D Clare declared a personal interest in Item 13.2(m) and left the Meeting during any discussion thereon. Councillor I Gray took the Chair.

(2) The Council received for information the undermentioned planning applications, prior notice of which had been circulated to Chairman, Vice-Chairman and appropriate Ward Members. Durham County Council have been advised of Town Council's comments.

- (a) Erection of porch to front and single storey extension to rear – 4 Hickstead Rise, Newton Aycliffe. - No objections.
- (b) Outline application to demolish existing buildings and construct 7 No. houses (appearance reserved for future consideration) Bluebell Filling Station, Greenfield Way.

The Town Council would have no objection to the proposal for outline planning permission, however, they would like to note that there may be future highway issues on an already busy road and junction with the proposed future housing development planned for Eldon Whins on the other side of Middridge Lane from this development. It is expected that part of the development on Eldon Whins will include the construction of a roundabout at the junction of Middridge Lane and the C35 (i.e. near the location of the above application).

- (c) Car park extension to provide 27 additional car parking spaces at 3M (UK) Ltd. – Heighington Lane, Newton Aycliffe. - No objections.
- (d) Erection of conservatory to the rear – 14 Hickstead Rise, Newton Aycliffe. - No objections.
- (e) Conversion of existing garage to study / utility room, single storey front extension, side extension to provide garage and rear extension to provide sunroom – 15 Burnynghill Close, School Aycliffe.

The Town Council would normally object to any forward extension as it may have a detrimental impact on the street scene. However, in this instance, this is the only property without a partial forward extension or front canopy. This proposal would bring the property in line with the rest of the street. Therefore the Council would, in this instance, have no objection to the proposal.

- (f) Trimming of all overhanging branches to the common boundary of 1 No. Sycamore tree at Ashwood, The Grange, Newton Aycliffe.

The Town Council would have concerns over the cutting back of the tree in question and would object to the application. However, if the application was to be approved, the tree must be pruned in a sympathetic manner using sound arboriculture practices to ensure the shape and stability of the tree remains. The Town Council's concern is that a severe cut to one side could render the tree unstable which may lead to the tree needing to be totally removed at a future date. Any recommendations from D.C.C.'s Tree Officer must be followed for any works that may be undertaken in relation to this application.

- (g) Erection of conservatory to the rear – 35 Oaklea Mews, Aycliffe Village. - No objections.
- (h) Non-material amendment for additional window in the east facing elevation of extension – 10 Felton Close, Newton Aycliffe. - No objections.
- (i) Erection of first floor extension – 14 Durham Road, Aycliffe Village. - No objections.

- (j) Internal first floor office extension with new window arrangements at IK-PEI Ltd. – Grindon Way, Aycliffe Industrial Estate. - No objections.
- (k) Reserved matters pursuant to planning permission 7/2010/0248/DMJ (131,540 sq. m of Bi, B2 and B8 floor space) including details of layout, scale, appearance and landscaping for the erection of phase 3A building with ancillary works, land south of Heighington Lane, Newton Aycliffe.

The Council would support the proposals in order to accommodate the proposed Hitachi development.

- (l) Screening option for development of Class B2 train assembly and testing facility, access roads, car parking areas, rail lines, landscaping and drainage – land at Heighington Lane, Newton Aycliffe.

The Council does not have a comment on this application and the need or otherwise for a further additional environmental assessment is left to Durham County Council to decide.

- (m) Change of use from industrial unit to gym – Unit 8, Northfield Way, Aycliffe Industrial Estate.

The Council would object to the proposal as the proposed gym falls outside the uses identified as acceptable under the local plan policy IB6.

Although the industrial estate has relied heavily on a wide range of business and manufacturing uses in the past there is a clear need to be flexible in the range of future uses for currently empty units. However, the frequency of the change of use to leisure purposes is not allowing sufficient time to test the viability and sustainability of this type of use in an industrial setting.

Although a precedent has been set with a number of change of uses from business to leisure this proposal will only create 1 full-time job. Clearly the Town Council would prefer to see this unit employing more people in an industrial use.

RESOLVED - that it be recommended:-

- (i) Application 1 (a) to (c) – no objections
- (ii) Applications 2 (a) to (m) - that the applications be received and comments noted.

CHAIRMAN