

Minutes of the meeting of the **RECREATION COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, on **Wednesday 17th OCTOBER 2018 at 7.28 p.m.**

PRESENT Councillor Jed Hillary (Chairman) and
Councillors Eddy Adam, M Ashcroft, Jim Atkinson, Derek G Atkinson, Kathy Beetham, P J Bergg, Bill Blenkinsopp, Mrs D Bowman, Arun M Chandran, J D Clare, Mrs M Dalton, R S Fleming, I Gray, George C Gray, Mrs S Haigh, B Hall, Dave Hardaker, K Henderson, Wendy Hillary, Kate Hopper, M Iveson, Mrs S J Iveson, Mrs V M Raw, Ken Robson, Paul Symons and Sally Symons.

OFFICIALS Mr A Bailey (Town Clerk)
Mr D Austin (Finance Manager)
Mr S Cooper (Works and Environment Manager)
Mrs M J Robinson (Leisure & Environment Assistant)
Mrs J Thexton (Leisure Manager)
Mr L Williams (Grounds Maintenance Service Coordinator)

47. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors B A Clare, and J Clark.

48. **MEMBERS' DISPENSATIONS**

No applications for dispensations had been received.

49. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

50. **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

Councillor R S Fleming addressed the meeting explaining his background on the Town and his responsibilities as an elected member for Great Aycliffe Town Council. He advised that the Council had never intended to cancel the Santa Tours. He said that some people using Facebook decided that the Santa Tours had been cancelled. He then read the press release that had been issued earlier in the day. Councillor Fleming explained that the Council was made up of Labour and Independent Councillors who gave up their time to attend many Council meetings including sub-committees and working groups. He also explained that the Events Sub-Committee also consisted of both Labour and Independent councillors.

Questions and statements were then made by members of the public. These included::

- Santa stopping in designated areas would cause parking and congestion problems, causing safety concerns for the people.
- Some families will drive and congregate in an area and Santa may not be able to get through.

Councillor R S Fleming answered that timings and routes may change. The Town has 7 Parish Boundary Areas. Councillors for each area will be asked where the best stopping place will be. Staff will travel the routes to see if it can be done in the allotted time 9 – 10 stops in each ward, a minimum of 63 or if we use 8 vehicles it will be about 77 stops.

When Officers and Members go around, it may be that there may be places which will not be suitable. We have taken your comments on board. If there is more congestion we will take it into consideration.

- Designated stops will ruin the event and see some children miss out.
- The Tours should continue as they are with unlimited stops. There should be a driver, navigator, Santa and a Mrs. Claus and its format should be preserved as it is inclusive for the old, disabled and everyone else.
- A volunteer driver said that he had no problem with unlimited stops and that is what he had been doing whilst on the Tours.

Councillor R S Fleming said “If the message coming from you tonight is that you don’t want specific stops we will consider that”.

- Why has it taken until October before this has been brought to the Council?

Councillor R S Fleming answered that the Santa Tours are usually discussed at the Events Sub-Committee and Recreation Committee following the summer recess. In a fortnight it has been resolved. Other events taking place at other times in the year like Fun in the Parks will be dealt with in the Spring. What has been resolved is that the Santa Tours will take place.

- A driver volunteer said that he was allowed to use discretion about when to stop. Will the Santa Tour drivers be allowed to stop if they see a group of children congregated?
- Why did you have to go to Mike Barton and just not get an exemption?

Councillor R S Fleming answered that the Chief Constable has given a dispensation. He has this discretion and we have to follow his conditions. We have looked at exemptions from the Ministry of Transport and all vehicles have to be adapted and assessed. However, most of these vehicles do not belong to us and therefore cannot be adapted.

- Not all streets are accessible for the vehicles but this was acknowledged as acceptable, with vehicles stopping nearby.
- When will a final decision be made?

Councillor R S Fleming explained that there would be a meeting at the beginning of November after the Events Sub-Committee. Councillor Fleming said that the routes, timings and arrangements would be advertised.

Councillor M Iveson read the letter from the Chief Constable of Durham Constabulary, M Barton. Councillor Iveson added that he understood people want the Santa Tours to go to every street and this had already been discussed and would be further discussed at the Events Sub-Committee.

The Chairman, Councillor J Hillary, thanked members of the public for attending the meeting and putting questions, suggestions and statements to the committee. He assured those attending that their suggestions and comments would be considered at the next meeting of the Events Sub-Committee.

51. **MINUTES**

It was proposed by Councillor M Ashcroft seconded by Councillor Mrs M Dalton and

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting of the Recreation Committee held on the **5th September 2018** be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

52. **EVENTS SUB-COMMITTEE**

The minutes of the meeting of the Events Sub-Committee held on the 3rd October 2018 were discussed in detail. A number of items were raised, including the problems of finding sufficient vehicles and volunteers, any requirement for DBS checks, the format for the tours, the date the issue was first raised and the date of the next Events Sub-Committee.

It was proposed by Councillor Bill Blenkinsopp, seconded by Councillor M Ashcroft

RESOLVED – That it be recommended that the notes and recommendations of the Event Sub-Committee held on 3rd October be received subject to the following:

- i That minute number 29 (ii)

‘That it be recommended that the Santa Tours in its present format be replaced with the vehicles stopping in strategic locations throughout the parish for the public to come to visit Santa’

be referred back to the next meeting of the Events Sub-Committee for further consideration.

53. **OAKLEAF GOLF COMPLEX REPORT**

The Town Clerk submitted a report for the period ended 7th October 2018. The report gave comparisons of income from the corresponding periods in 2016 and 2017 and six month usage figures. The report also gave information on the addition of Lynx golf equipment in the shop and a Lynx demo day to be held in November.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that the report be received.

54. **OAKLEAF SPORTS COMPLEX – USAGE COMPARISONS**

The Leisure Manager submitted a report for the period ending 7th October 2018. The report compared usage figures and income from the same period in 2017.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that the report be received.

55. **OAKLEAF SPORTS COMPLEX – NEW DEVELOPMENTS**

The Leisure Manager submitted a report which advised of the financial outcome of the Mixed Marshall Arts event which had taken place, and of a Scranimals Fun Dog Show which is to be held.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- i. The report be received.
- ii. Officers investigate the possible use of recyclable drinks glasses.

56. **PARKS UPDATE**

The Works and Environment Manager submitted a report which gave information regarding the progress on the Town Park Skate Park and Aycliffe Village Play area. The report also advised of tree damage caused by a recent storm, and detritus removed from West Park Lakes.

RESOLVED - that it be recommended that:

- i. The report be received.
- ii. Officers contact Durham County Council with a view to having a zebra crossing to Cobbler's Hall Play area.

57. **2019/20 DRAFT RECREATION REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS**

The Finance Manager submitted a draft Revenue and Capital Budget for 2019/2020 for members' consideration in respect of the Recreation Committee.

Members considered each section of the Budgets for the Recreation Committee and

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that

- i. The report and draft Revenue and Capital Budget figures for 2019/20 be received.
- ii. The new play area in West Ward not be progressed in 2019/20 but that the amount of £40,000 remains in the Medium Term Financial Plan.

CHAIRMAN.