

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 19th AUGUST 2020

Minutes of the meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, and virtually, on **WEDNESDAY, 19th AUGUST 2020 at 7.15 p.m.**

PRESENT

Councillor M. Ashcroft, (Chairman) and:
Councillors Eddy Adam, Derek G. Atkinson, Jim Atkinson, Kathy Beetham, P.J. Bergg, Bill Blenkinsopp, Mrs D. Bowman, Arun M. Chandran, R.S. Fleming, George C. Gray, I Gray, Mrs S. Haigh, Dave Hardaker, Jed Hillary, Wendy Hillary, Mrs V.M. Raw, Ken Robson and Paul Symons

OFFICERS

Mr A. Bailey (Town Clerk)
Mrs C.A. Walton (Corporate and Policy Officer)
Mr L. Williams (Grounds Maintenance Service Coordinator)
Miss A. Donald (Town Clerk's PA)

79. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors J. Clark, Mrs M. Dalton, B Hall, Kate Hopper, M. Iveson and Mrs S.J. Iveson.

80. MEMBERS' DISPENSATIONS

No applications for dispensations had been received.

81. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

82. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

83. MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor Dave Hardaker, seconded by Councillor I. Gray, and

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment Committee, held on the 26th February 2020, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

84. CEMETERY WORKING GROUP – NOTES

The notes and following recommendations from the meeting of the Cemetery Working Group held on the 28th July 2020 were submitted for consideration:-

- i) That future consideration be given to designating a dedicated member of staff to work in West Cemetery.
- ii) That the section in the Cemetery Rules relating to the sowing of grass seeds by staff over the whole grave following the interment be amended to show that this would take place unless there was a specific request from the family to do otherwise.
- iii) That the paragraph naming decorative items which were prohibited be amended to emphasise that any hazardous items posing a safety risk or access problems for maintenance staff would be removed following every effort to contact family members and stored for 30 days before disposal. This would permit non-hazardous items to be used to decorate graves.
- iv) That Officers re-draft the Cemetery Rules to take into account these recommendations, prior to submission to the Environment Committee.

It was proposed by Councillor Eddy Adam, seconded by Councillor I. Gray, and

RESOLVED – that the notes and recommendations of the meeting of the Cemetery Working Group, held on the 28th July 2020, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

85. ALLOTMENTS REPORT

The Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator submitted a report updating members on the Council's allotments, for the twenty five week period ended 9th August 2020.

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

86. ENVIRONMENT REPORT

The Works and Environment Manager submitted a report to update members on environment items.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- i) The report be received.
- ii) Durham County Council be approached regarding the possibility of CCTV coverage of the area of School Aycliffe where trees have been deliberately poisoned.

87. CEMETERIES REPORT

The Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator submitted a report giving information regarding burials and grants of grave spaces which had been issued.

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

88. CHANGES TO CEMETERY REGULATIONS

The Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator submitted a report updating members on proposed changes to the Cemetery Regulations, as recommended by the Cemetery Working Group

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- i) The report be received.
- ii) Amendments to the Cemetery Regulations be approved.
- iii) Amendments to the West Cemetery Information booklet be approved, subject to minor style consistency amendments between the West Cemetery and Stephenson Way Cemetery Information booklets being made.
- iv) Amendments to the Stephenson Way Cemetery Information booklet be approved, subject to minor style consistency amendments between the West Cemetery and Stephenson Way Cemetery Information booklets being made.
- v) The proposal to increase the establishment of the Council by providing a Cemetery Attendant/Grounds Maintenance Operative be noted and referred to a future meeting of the Personnel Sub-Committee for consideration.

89. WEST CEMETERY NATURAL BURIAL SITE

The Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator submitted a report requesting members to consider the implementation of an Environment Agency Groundwater Risk Assessment for the possible development of a woodland/natural burial site at West Cemetery.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- i) The report be received.
- ii) The Officer be commended for his work on the proposal to date.
- iii) Progress on the proposal be deferred pending forthcoming budget planning discussions.

90. REQUEST FOR CHRISTMAS TREE DISPLAY – SCHOOL AYCLIFFE

The Works and Environment Manager submitted a report requesting members to consider a request from School Aycliffe Residents' Association for the Town Council to provide a Christmas tree, with lights, outside the Community Centre.

RESOLVED - that it be recommended that:

- i) The report be received.
- ii) The request not be agreed.
- iii) Officers approach the Residents' Association with a recommendation to approach the Great Aycliffe and Midldridge Partnership (GAMP) for funding and also to consider a request to Darlington Borough Council to place a tree on their land, adjacent to School Aycliffe Lane, where more residents of School Aycliffe would be able to see it.

CHAIRMAN.