

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 11th JANUARY 2023

Minutes of the meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, on **WEDNESDAY, 11th JANUARY 2023 at 7.28pm**

PRESENT

Councillor Martin Ashcroft (Chairman) and

Councillors, Eddy Adam, Tony Armstrong, Jim Atkinson, Arun M Chandran, John Clark, Bob Fleming, George Gray, Ian Gray, Phillip Hawkins, Andy Hill, Jed Hillary, Wendy Hillary, John Moore, Carl Robinson, Ken Robson and Michael Stead.

OFFICERS

Mr D Austin (Town Clerk)

Miss A Donald (Corporate and Policy Officer)

Mr S Cooper (Works and Environment Manager)

Mr L Williams (Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator)

Mrs J Walton (Corporate and Policy Assistant)

IN ATTENDANCE

Four public representatives from Middridge Parish.

67. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Lindsey Aston, Peter Bergg, Dorothy Bowman, Neil Collinson, Brian Haigh, Sandra Haigh, Joanne Jones, Neville Jones, Sandra Kirby, Anne Woodward, John Woodward.

68. MEMBERS' DISPENSATIONS

No applications for dispensations had been received.

69. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Jed Hillary declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 7 as he is an allotment tenant.

70. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Mr David Bate spoke on behalf of the residents of Middridge Parish giving a brief, but informative summary of the grounds for objection to planning application DM/22/02110/WAS. Reasons for objection included an increase in traffic, health and safety risks to residents and endangering a site of special scientific interest. Mr Bate asked that the Town Council support the objection.

71. MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor Ken Robson, seconded by Councillor Andy Hill and

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment Committee, held on 30th November 2022, be confirmed as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

72. ALLOTMENTS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NOTES

Members considered the notes of the Allotments Annual General Meeting as prepared by the Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator.

It was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran, seconded by Councillor Ken Robson and

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that the notes of the Allotments General Meeting be received.

73. ALLOTMENTS TENANCY AGREEMENT REVIEW

Members considered a report from the Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator requesting consideration of possible changes to the allotments tenancy agreement in relation to tenants who move outside of the Parish boundary..

It was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran and seconded by Councillor Carl Robinson that the relevant section of tenancy agreement for new allotments tenants be amended to reads as follows:

“The Tenancy of the Allotment Garden hereby granted shall terminate: -

(e) By re-entry by the Council at any time after giving one month’s previous notice in writing to the Tenant:-

(iv) if the Tenant becomes resident outside of the parish boundary.”

It was further proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran and seconded by Councillor Carl Robinson that the relevant due notice should be given to current tenants that their tenancy agreement will be updated to reflect the above change, subject to advice and confirmation from the National Allotment Society.

A lengthy debate was held and a vote was requested on each proposal.

The results were as follows:

1. That the relevant section of tenancy agreement for new allotments tenants be amended to state that the tenancy will be terminated if the tenant becomes resident outside of the Parish boundary.

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| In favour | 8 |
| Against | 8 |

The Chairman used his casting vote in favour of the proposal and the proposal was therefore carried.

2. That the relevant due notice should be given to current tenants that their tenancy agreement will be updated to reflect the above change, subject to confirmation from the National Allotment Society.

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|-----------|---|
| In favour | 8 |
| Against | 8 |

The Chairman used his casting vote in favour of the proposal and the proposal was therefore carried.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- i. the report be received.
- ii. the relevant section of tenancy agreement for new allotments tenants be amended to read as follows:

“The Tenancy of the Allotment Garden hereby granted shall terminate: -

(e) By re-entry by the Council at any time after giving one month’s previous notice in writing to the Tenant:-

(iv) if the Tenant becomes resident outside of the parish boundary.”

- iii. the relevant due notice should be given to current tenants that their tenancy agreement will be updated to reflect the above change, subject to advice and confirmation from the National Allotment Society.
- iv. following the period of due notice, a revised tenancy agreement be issued to all tenants stating their tenancy will be terminated if they become resident outside of the Parish boundary.

74. ENVIRONMENT REPORT

The Works and Environment Manager submitted a report to update Members on issues relating to the environment.

It was proposed by Councillor Carl Robinson and seconded by Councillor Tony Armstrong and

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

75. CEMETERIES REPORT

The Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator submitted a report giving information regarding burials and grants of grave space and providing Members with an update on issues relating to the cemeteries for the six weeks ended 6th January 2023.

A lengthy discussion was held regarding the recent problems and public complaints regarding drainage and standing water at the cemeteries and possible solutions to these problems.

It was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran and seconded by Councillor Ken Robson and

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that

- i. the report be received.
- ii. the current problem areas be topped up with soil when ground conditions allow.
- iii. the problem areas within both cemeteries be photographed and mapped and a long-term drainage resolution be investigated.
- iv. that a further report be brought to the Environment Committee in due course following a full investigation of the problems.

76. MIDDRIDGE QUARRY LANDFILL PLANNING APPLICATION

Members considered a report from the Corporate and Policy Officer asking the Council to consider supporting Middridge Parish Council in making a corporate response to the consultation on a planning application for the infilling of the disused quarry in Middridge.

It was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran and seconded by Councillor Ken Robson and

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- i. the report be received
- ii. the Council support Middridge Parish Council by submitting an objection letter to Durham County Council on the grounds that:
 - a. The access route to the quarry is too narrow to safely accommodate the proposed high number of HGV movements over a number of years.
 - b. Local roads in and around the Parish of Great Aycliffe will be adversely affected by the near-constant movement of HGVs.
 - c. There is a concern that heritage, ecological and geological features of international palaeontological importance at a site of Special Scientific Interest in and around the quarry site will be adversely impacted by the scheme.
 - d. The scheme will have an adverse impact on the overall amenity of local communities and the use of the area by residents, walkers and runners.

The public representatives from Middridge Parish left the meeting.

77. THERMAL HEAT TREATMENT FACILITY – PUBLIC ENQUIRY OUTCOME

Members considered a report from the Corporate and Policy Officer advising Members of the outcome of the public enquiry into the planning appeal in relation to the high temperature thermal treatment facility.

Councillor Arun Chandran wished it to be recorded that the Council extended its thanks to the officers involved in preparing the Council's opposition to the planning application and the appeal for all the time and effort involved.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- i. the report be received
- ii. the content of the report be noted.

78. NOTICE OF MOTION

Members considered the Motion from Councillor George Gray:-

“Following the resolution at the Environment Committee Meeting in September 2022 that ‘perch seating is no longer considered as a seating option for bus shelters’, I propose that this Council considers replacing the perch seating previously installed in the bus shelters on Central Avenue, Williamfield Way and Stephenson Way and instructs officers to bring forward a report with costings and seating options”

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Arun Chandran.

A discussion was held following which a named and recorded vote was requested, and the results were as follows:

In favour Councillors Tony Armstrong, Martin Ashcroft, Jim Atkinson, Arun Chandran, Bob Fleming, George Gray, Phillip Hawkins, Andy Hill, Jed Hillary, Wendy Hillary, John Moore, Carl Robinson, Ken Robson, Michael Stead

Abstentions Councillors Eddy Adam, Ian Gray, John Clark

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- i. a report be brought to the Environment Committee advising of options and costs for replacing the perch seating previously installed in the bus shelters on Central Avenue, Williamfield Way and Stephenson Way.

Chairman