

RECREATION COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 13th APRIL 2022

Minutes of the meeting of the **RECREATION COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, on **WEDNESDAY, 13th APRIL 2022 at 8.50pm**

PRESENT

Councillor Carl Robinson (Chairman) and:
Councillors Eddy Adam, Martin Ashcroft, Jim Atkinson, Dorothy Bowman, Arun M. Chandran, Neil Collinson, Bob Fleming, George Gray, Ian Gray, Brian Haigh, Mrs Sandra Haigh, Phillip Hawkins, Andy Hill, Kate Hopper, Joanne Jones, Neville Jones, John Moore, Ken Robson, Michael Stead and John Woodward

OFFICERS

Mr. D. Austin (Town Clerk)
Mrs. T. Woodhead (Finance Manager)
Mr. S. Cooper (Works and Environment Manager)
Mr. L. Williams (Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator)
Mrs. J. Thexton (Head of Leisure and Events)
Miss A. Donald (Corporate and Policy Officer)
Mr. A. Clark (Sports Complex Manager)

93. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tony Armstrong, Peter Bergg, Jed Hillary, Wendy Hillary and Maureen Shelton.

94. MEMBERS' DISPENSATIONS

No applications for dispensations had been received.

95. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman, Councillor Carl Robinson, declared an interest under Agenda Items 6, 13 and 14 as a member of the Oakleaf Golf Complex.

96. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

97. MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor Arun M. Chandran, seconded by Councillor Martin Ashcroft, and

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting of the Recreation Committee, held on the 23rd February 2022, be confirmed as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

The Vice Chairman, Councillor George Gray, took the chair for the following item.

98. OAKLEAF GOLF COMPLEX REPORT

The Golf Administrator and Head of Leisure and Events submitted a report and statistical information related to income at the Oakleaf Golf Complex for the seven-week period ended 3rd April 2022.

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

Councillor Carl Robinson resumed his role as Chairman.

99. OAKLEAF SPORTS COMPLEX USAGE COMPARISONS

The Head of Leisure and Events submitted a report and statistical information related to the attendance and income at the Oakleaf Sports Complex for February 2022 compared with the same periods in 2021 and 2020.

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

100. OAKLEAF SPORTS COMPLEX NEW DEVELOPMENTS

The Sports Complex Manager submitted a report updating members on new initiatives at the Sports Complex.

The Sports Complex Manager highlighted that although members had been requested to consider extending the bar opening hours for the forthcoming all-British heavyweight boxing event, there were a number of outstanding issues to be resolved in a very short time frame and the BT Sport Pay Per View fee was considered too expensive.

The Sports Complex Manager was thanked for his work in promoting new initiatives.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- i) The report be received.
- ii) Screening of the boxing event does not proceed on this occasion.

101. OAK LEAF SPORTS COMPLEX SERVICE PLAN 2022/23

The Sports Complex Manager submitted the 2022/23 Oak Leaf Sports Complex Service Plan for members' consideration and approval.

Councillor Eddy Adam asked a question about the staff training arrangements at the sports complex. Members were advised that comprehensive training arrangements were in place and would be referenced in future Service Plans.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that the 2022/23 Oak Leaf Sports Complex Service Plan be approved.

102. PARKS UPDATE

The Works and Environment Manager submitted a report updating members on items relating to the Council's parks.

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

103. FOOTBALL PITCH ALLOCATION FOR THE 2022/23 SEASON

The Works and Environment Manager submitted a report updating members regarding proposed football pitch allocation for the 2022/23 season.

Following discussion it was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran, seconded by Councillor Bob Fleming and

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that

- i) The report be received.
- ii) The football pitches be allocated on the basis outlined in the report.
- iii) Consideration be given to creating further football pitches on the field adjacent to the Council Depot and Sports Complex, subject to a further report and costings.

104. OAKLEAF SPORTS COMPLEX BAR – PERCENTAGE PROFIT MARGINS

The Head of Leisure and Events, Finance Manager and Sports Complex Manager submitted a report providing members with information on current profit margins and pricing at the Oakleaf Sports Complex bar, with options for, and the potential financial impact of increasing the percentage profit margin targets and prices.

Officers were thanked for a comprehensive report.

Councillor Michael Stead spoke in favour of increasing the profit margin targets and prices in line with those at other local establishments.

After considerable discussion, and it was proposed by Councillor Martin Ashcroft, seconded by Councillor Eddy Adam and

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- i) The report be received.
- ii) No changes are made to the current bar profit margin targets.
- iii) Officers be given delegated authority to implement new prices in response to supplier cost increases.
- iv) A further review of the bar pricing be undertaken when the new brewery contract has been awarded later in the year.

Councillor Michael Stead requested that it be recorded that he was not in favour of the decision to retain the current bar profit margin targets and prices.

The Vice Chairman, Councillor George Gray, took the chair for the following two items.

105. DRIVING RANGE BALL COLLECTION ISSUES

The Golf Administrator and Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator submitted a report requesting members to consider the current difficulties in relation to the collection and availability of balls on the driving range and the various options available to address the problems.

Councillor Bob Fleming requested that a number of the options for addressing the problems, as highlighted in the report, be referred to the Golf Course Working Group for further consideration.

Councillor Arun Chandran invited the Labour Group to submit the names of two councillors to join the Golf Course Working Group, if this was desired.

Councillor Eddy Adam agreed to advise this if required.

Councillor Eddy Adam proposed that no further investigations be made into increasing the height of the driving range fence and that the Golf Administrator be given permission to bring in casual staff to pick the range balls when supplies were low at busy times.

Following the closure of the debate it was proposed by Councillor Bob Fleming, seconded by Councillor Arun Chandran and

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- i) The report be received.
- ii) No further investigations be made into increasing the height of the fences on the driving range.
- iii) The Golf Administrator be authorised to use casual golf shop staff to undertake additional ball collections when supplies are running low and customer demand is high, in the short term.
- iv) The following issues be referred to a future meeting of the Golf Working Group for further consideration:-
 - Works Section support for range ball picking;
 - The consideration of the creation of a permanent part-time Driving Range Ball Picker and Golf Course Assistant post;
 - The upgrade of the existing ball dispenser machine; and
 - The facility to hire golf clubs.

106. DITCH CLEARANCE ON OAK LEAF GOLF COURSE

The Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator submitted a report requesting members to consider the need for additional drainage works on the golf course.

It was advised that the Oak Leaf Golf Club had offered to make a financial contribution of £300 towards the cost of the works.

Councillor Bob Fleming requested that further consideration be given to obtaining an opinion on the golf course drainage from a hydrology expert.

It was proposed by Councillor Arun M. Chandran, seconded by Councillor Eddy Adam, and

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- i) The report be received.
- ii) Ditch clearance works be undertaken by Stewart Ground Improvements, subject to approval by the Policy and Resources Committee of an additional £2,475 in the 2022/23 Capital Budget.
- iii) A provisional sum for ditch clearance works be made in the Medium-Term Financial Plan to ensure necessary maintenance can be undertaken in future years.
- iv) Further consideration be given to obtaining an opinion regarding the golf course drainage from a hydrology expert.

Councillor Carl Robinson resumed his role as Chairman.

107. AYCLIVE MUSIC FESTIVAL

The Head of Leisure and Events submitted a report requesting members to consider an application for the holding of a music festival event on the Oak Leaf sports pitches on Saturday 30th July 2022, as well as a financial grant from the Council towards the cost of holding the event.

A detailed debate took place.

Members expressed thanks to the organisers for providing a comprehensive application form and safety management plan for what they believed would be an excellent new event for the town.

It was highlighted that it was very important to ensure that all of the relevant documentation and assurances were in place before the event was given approval to take place on Town Council land.

The view was also expressed that the request for a grant towards the costs of the event should be turned down.

It was proposed by Councillor Eddy Adam, seconded by Councillor Arun Chandran that

- i) The report be received.
- ii) Approval be given in principle for the event to go ahead, subject to all the required assurances and documentation being provided.
- iii) No grant funding be provided.

Councillor Joanne Jones spoke in favour of providing grant funding to support the event, highlighting the fact that it was a joint event, and any unused resources could be returned to the Council, and proposed that:

- i) Grant funding of £10,000 be provided.

This was seconded by Councillor Neville Jones.

After further discussion it was

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- i) The report be received.
- ii) Approval be given in principle for the event to go ahead, subject to all the required assurances and documentation being provided.
- iii) Further consideration of the grant funding of £10,000, be referred to the Full Council meeting on 27th April 2022.

108. QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE EVENT UPDATE

The Head of Leisure and Events submitted a report updating members on the planning of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Event, and requesting consideration for a commemorative tree and stone or plaque to be placed in the Town Park.

Following discussion, where concerns were raised about potential vandalism, it was proposed by Councillor Bob Fleming, seconded by Councillor Arun M. Chandran, and

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- i) The report be received.
- ii) Officers plant a small commemorative copse of native tree species at an undisclosed location in the town.
- iii) No tree be planted, or plaque placed in the Town Park.

109. COBBLER'S HALL PLAY AREA COMPLAINT

The Works and Environment Manager submitted a report requesting members to consider concerns from a local resident regarding night-time anti-social behaviour within Cobbler's Hall play area.

It was proposed by Councillor Martin Ashcroft, seconded by Councillor Arun M. Chandran, and

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- i) The report be received.
- ii) No further action be taken at this time.

CHAIRMAN.