

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 1st JUNE 2022

Minutes of the meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, on **WEDNESDAY, 1st JUNE 2022 at 7.15 p.m.**

PRESENT

Councillor Martin Ashcroft (Chairman) and

Councillors, Tony Armstrong, Jim Atkinson, Dorothy Bowman, Arun M Chandran, John Clark, Bob Fleming, George Gray, Ian Gray, Brian Haigh, Phillip Hawkins, Andy Hill, Joanne Jones, Neville Jones, John Moore, Carl Robinson, Ken Robson, Michael Stead, Anne Woodward and John Woodward

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

Councillor Sandra Haigh

Mr Nick Barker – Aycliffe Beekeepers Association

Mrs Cheryl Blakey – Aycliffe Beekeepers Association

7. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Eddy Adam, Lindsey Aston, Peter Bergg, Jed Hillary and Wendy Hillary.

8. MEMBERS' DISPENSATIONS

No applications for dispensations had been received.

9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

10. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Mr Nick Barker and Mrs Cheryl Blakey from Aycliffe Beekeepers Association made statements in support of their request for additional apiaries, breeding plots and a storage facility as covered in the report at Agenda Item 7.

11. MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor George Gray, seconded by Councillor Andy Hill and

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment Committee, held on 13th April 2022, be confirmed as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

12. ALLOTMENTS REPORT

The Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator submitted a report updating members on issues relating to the Council's allotments for the seven-week period ended 22nd May 2022.

It was moved by Councillor Ken Robson and seconded by Councillor John Clark and

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

13. BEEKEEPING REPORT

The Works and Environment Manager submitted a report to update members on the issues raised at a recent meeting between Council Officers and Aycliffe Beekeepers Association including specific requests to develop further apiaries on other allotments sites, develop a breeding site and for storage space.

It was moved by Councillor Arun M Chandran and seconded by Councillor Tony Armstrong that the meeting be adjourned to allow members questions to be answered by those in attendance from Aycliffe Beekeepers Association.

The Meeting was adjourned at 7.32pm

Following the answering of a number of questions from Members answered by The representatives from Aycliffe Beekeepers Association, it was proposed by Councillor Arun M Chandran and seconded by Councillor Ken Robson that the meeting be reconvened immediately following the questions being answered.

The Meeting re-convened at 7.43pm

Following a discussion it was moved by Councillor Arun M Chandran and seconded by Councillor Jim Atkinson that the Beekeeping Report be deferred until the next meeting cycle to allow a visit to the beekeeping site to be arranged for any interested Members and more information to be provided.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:-

- i) The report be deferred to a future meeting pending a visit to the beekeeping site for any interested Members.

14. ENVIRONMENT REPORT

The Works and Environment Manager submitted a report to update members on issues relating to the environment for the seven-week period ended 22nd May 2022. The Works and Environment Manager gave a verbal update to Members on the following issues:-

- i) A mature willow tree had fallen into West Park lake in the recent winds, exposing the roots of a second willow. A contractor had felled and removed the second tree, and the first tree had been made safe and will be removed from the lake during the week commencing 6th June.
- ii) The garden and allotment competitions will be advertised in the press during the week commencing 6th June. Members were asked to make parishioners aware and ask for nominations.

- iii) The Works and Environment Manager will host a visit and deliver a presentation to officers and members from other Town Councils around the practicalities of developing and maintaining wildflower meadows. Members were invited to attend. The visit and presentation will take place on Wednesday 13th July at 10.00am.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:-

- i) the report be received
- ii) an email be sent to Members confirming the date of the visit and presentation in relation to the wildflower meadow.

15. CEMETERIES REPORT

The Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator submitted a report giving information regarding burials and grants of grave space and providing an update on issues relating to the cemeteries for the seven-week period ended 22nd May 2022.

The Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator drew members attention to the visit to the Woodland Burial Site and confirmed there is now only one available date; Friday 1st July.

It was moved by Councillor Carl Robinson and seconded by Councillor Bob Fleming and

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:-

- i) the report be received.
- ii) members respond to the email invitation from officers to advise if they wish to attend the visit to the Woodland Burial Site.
- iii) permission be granted to install the memorial at Stephenson Way Cemetery as referred to in the report.

16. USE OF HERBICIDES ON COUNCIL LAND

The Environment Manager submitted a report regarding the use of herbicides on Council land, requesting guidance as to how Members wished to see the Council proceed in reducing its use of herbicides on Council land.

Following a lengthy discussion and a number of questions from Members 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 use of herbicides and strimming be discontinued around the base of trees, allowing a grass fringe to grow around the base.
- iii) The use of herbicides elsewhere be continued, where appropriate, but that care be taken when spraying footpaths to minimise overspray onto grass verges.
- iv) A small relevant site be earmarked and allowed to grow wild with no spraying of herbicides.

- v) The public be kept informed in relation to any changes in the use of herbicides and maintenance of public areas.

17. WORKS SECTION SERVICE PLAN 2022/23

The Works and Environment Manager submitted a report presenting the draft Works and Environment Service Plan for April 2022 to March 2023 for consideration and comment by Members.

The Works and Environment Manager highlighted a couple of minor errors within the plan that needed updating.

It was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran and seconded by Councillor Bob Fleming and

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- i) the Works and Environment Service Plan be approved subject to the following amendments:
 - Section 8.11 - *'the Works and Environmental Services Section employs 23 full time staff plus two seasonal operatives'* be amended to say, *"21 full time staff plus two seasonal operatives"*.
 - Section 12.0 Action Plan - That the action to *"provide logistical support for Friends Groups including Friends of Byerley Park LNR and Friends of West Park"* be deleted.

18. DCC SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT CONSULTATION – DEVELOPMENT VIABILITY, AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS.

The Corporate and Policy Officer submitted a report requesting members' consideration and comments on a Durham County Council consultation on a Supplementary Planning Document relating to developer contributions.

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) the response to Section 5.4 of the consultation should remain as set out in the Supplementary Planning Document and not amended as suggested in the report, and should therefore read that *"the Town Council supports the allocation of monies to the Electoral Division where the application site is located"*.
- iii) the Council responds to Section 5.5 of the consultation to request that *"there is town and parish council representation on the Strategic Investment Group for allocating Section 106 monies, potentially through a CDALC nomination, and that information on any available Section 106 Agreement monies is circulated to County Councillors and Town Clerks"*.

19. DCC SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT CONSULTATION – PARKING AND ACCESSIBILITY

The Corporate and Policy Officer submitted a report requesting members' consideration and comments on a Durham County Council consultation on a Supplementary Planning Document relating to parking and accessibility.

It was proposed by Councillor Martin Ashcroft, seconded by Councillor Carl Robinson and

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- i) the report be received.
- ii) a response be sent to DCC advising that any 4 or 5 bedroomed dwellings should have two EV charge points as a minimum:

Chairman