

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 30th NOVEMBER 2022

Minutes of the meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE** held in the Church Hall, St Clare's Church, St Cuthberts Way, Newton Aycliffe, on **WEDNESDAY, 30th NOVEMBER 2022 at 7.50p.m.**

PRESENT

Councillor Martin Ashcroft (Chairman) and

Councillors, Eddy Adam, Lindsey Aston, Jim Atkinson, Arun M Chandran, Bob Fleming, Ian Gray, Brian Haigh, Sandra Haigh, Andy Hill, Sandra Kirby, John Moore, Carl Robinson, Ken Robson, Michael Stead, Anne Woodward and John Woodward.

OFFICERS

Mr D Austin (Town Clerk)

Mr S Cooper (Works and Environment Manager)

Mr L Williams (Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator)

Mrs J Walton (Corporate and Policy Assistant)

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Ian Templeton, Allotment Tenant

58. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors, Tony Armstrong, Peter Bergg, Dorothy Bowman, John Clark, Neil Collinson, George Gray, Philip Hawkins, Jed Hillary, Wendy Hillary, Joanne Jones, and Neville Jones.

59. MEMBERS' DISPENSATIONS

No applications for dispensations had been received.

60. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

61. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Mr Ian Templeton submitted the following public questions:

- i) Have there been any further allotment inspections, and if so, what was the outcome of these, and will any further inspections take place this month?
- ii) Please clarify what evidence tenants need to submit to prove they are resident of the Parish?
- iii) With regard to Plot 127, as nothing has been done with this plot, would it be possible to split this into two allotments?
- iv) With reference to the site representative meetings which take place before each Environment Committee Meeting, could the outcome of these meetings be reported to the Environment Committee Meeting?

It was agreed that these questions would be addressed by the Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator as part of the Allotments Report.

62. MINUTES

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

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment Committee, held on 19th October 2022, be confirmed as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

63. PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran, seconded by Councillor Ian Gray and

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Sub Committee, held on 24th October 2022, be confirmed as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman

64. ALLOTMENTS REPORT

The Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator submitted a report updating members on issues relating to the Council's allotments for the six weeks ended 20th November 2022.

The Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator also provided the following response to Mr Ian Templeton's questions

1. The allotment inspections went ahead in November and further maintenance letters were sent where needed. Some work has been done on others and these will be checked at the next inspection, which will take place this week. Due to the weather the inspections have gone on later than normal. It was also advised that some sites are now too wet to work on.
2. A new tenant is asked to provide two forms of identification; usually a utility bill and a form a photographic identification. In some cases they may be asked for further proof to check their postal address. Previously, proof of address was also checked when existing tenants renewed their tenancy, but this is now more difficult as many people pay by BACS transfer. The Council also asks for the reference number from the invoice which proves they have had sight of it. It was further advised that allotments law states that if you don't live within the Parish you cannot apply for an allotment, but existing tenants can move within a mile of the Parish boundary.
3. Plot 127 has not been taken. It is made up of 2 plots; 1 large and 1 small. Offers of tenancies have been withheld due to non-payment and also there are plots in better condition than plot 127 which will be offered first.
4. The outcome of Allotments Representative Meetings is not directly reported to the Environment Committee, but notes are taken, and operational issues are dealt with by Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator. However, anything requiring a Council decision would be included in the Allotments Report and reported to the Environment Committee.

A discussion was held around the legalities of allotment tenancies for tenants moving outside of the parish. It was requested by Councillor Chandran that officers check the legal position and report back to the Committee.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- i) the report be received.

- ii) Officers check the legal position regarding tenants who have moved outside of the parish boundary.

65. ENVIRONMENT REPORT

The Works and Environment Manager submitted a report to update Members on issues relating to the environment for the six-week period ended 20th November 2022 and request consideration for an appropriate charge for dog bags.

Councillor Lindsey Aston requested that thanks should be passed to the Works Section staff for their hard work and dedication in installing the festive lights during adverse weather conditions

It was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran and seconded by Councillor Michael Stead and

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that

- i) the report be received.
- ii) A charge of £1 be implemented for a pack of 50 Dog Bags
- iii) Works Section staff be thanked for their work installing the festive lighting.

66. CEMETERIES REPORT

The Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator submitted a report giving information regarding burials and grants of grave space, providing Members with an update on issues relating to the cemeteries for the six-week period ended 20th November 2022 and requesting consideration for the implementation of a charge for supplying and installing memorial benches and adopting and planting memorial trees.

A discussion was held around the situation of memorial benches and memorial trees and the possibility of other options for the siting of these and other types of memorials in other Council facilities such as parks.

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 principle of implementing a fee for the supply and installation of memorial benches and the adoption and planting of memorial trees be agreed subject to the Policy and Resources Committee agreeing the relevant fees.
- iii) The full cost of supplying and installing memorial benches and trees be covered by the fees.
- iv) Options for different types of memorials and locations be investigated by officers and a report be brought to a future meeting of the Environment Committee.

67. PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE VACANCY

Members considered the appointment of Councillor Peter Bergg to the vacancy on the Planning Sub Committee.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- i) Councillor Peter Bergg be appointed to take up the vacancy on the Planning Sub Committee.

Chairman