

RECREATION COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 17TH JANUARY 2024

Minutes of the meeting of the **RECREATION COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, on **WEDNESDAY, 17TH JANUARY 2024** at 7:00pm

PRESENT

Councillor Jed Hillary (Chairman) and:
Councillors: Eddy Adam, Tony Armstrong, Martin Ashcroft, Lindsey Aston, Jim Atkinson, Arun M. Chandran, John Clark, Neil Collinson, George Gray, Ian Gray, Andy Hill, Neville Jones, Sandra Kirby, Brian McAnaney, John Moore, Carl Robinson, Ken Robson, Michael Stead, Anne Woodward and John Woodward.

OFFICERS

Mr Dan Austin (Town Clerk)
Mr Steve Cooper (Works and Environment Manager)
Mrs Judith Thexton (Head of Leisure and Events)
Mr Lee Williams (Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator)
Mr Andy Clark (Sports Complex Manager)
Mrs Sharna Stretch (Senior Admin. Officer)

IN ATTENDANCE

Two members of the public.

73. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: Peter Bergg, Dorothy Bowman, Brian Haigh, Sandra Haigh, Wendy Hillary and Joanne Jones.

74. MEMBERS' DISPENSATIONS

No applications for dispensations had been received.

75. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Carl Robinson declared an interest in Agenda Item 6 relating to the Oak Leaf Golf Complex as a committee member of the Oakleaf Golf Club.

76. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

77. MINUTES

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

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting of the Recreation Committee held on the 29th November 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

78. OAKLEAF GOLF COMPLEX REPORT

The Head of Leisure and Events and Golf Administrator submitted a report and statistical information related to income at the Oakleaf Golf Complex for the six-week period ended 6th January 2024.

It was proposed by Councillor Eddy Adam, seconded by Councillor Ken Robson and:

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

79. OAKLEAF SPORTS COMPLEX USAGE COMPARISONS

The Sports Complex Manager submitted a report updating members on statistical information in relation to the attendance and income at the Oak Leaf Sports Complex for the months of November and December compared with the last five years.

Councillor Carl Robinson queried the difference in the figures in November and December. The Sports Complex Manager clarified that during December, the kitchen was closed for two days plus the Christmas bank holidays. A quiet New Years Eve also contributed to the drop in numbers.

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

80. OAKLEAF SPORTS COMPLEX NEW DEVELOPMENTS

The Sports Complex Manager submitted a report to provide Members with an update on previous events and any staff training held in the period since the last meeting of the Recreation Committee and details of proposed new developments.

It was proposed by Councillor Eddy Adam, and seconded by Councillor Carl Robinson and agreed that 'White Collar Boxing' events will not be held in the Sports Complex and that any future boxing events must be licenced by the British Boxing Board of Control.

It was further proposed by Councillor Eddy Adam and seconded by Councillor Jim Atkinson that the Jack and the Beanstalk Pantomime be booked for December 2024 and the officer to approach organisations for sponsorship to offset the cost of the booking.

There then followed a lengthy discussion regarding the payment process to be used for the supplier undertaking the recovering of the bar alcove seating.

It was proposed by Councillor Eddy Adam and seconded by Councillor Carl Robinson that the officers' recommendation of a 33% deposit upfront, a 33% pre-installation deposit and a final payment of 33% on completion of the work and that the second payment is not released until the quality of the work has been checked.

It was further proposed by Councillor Lindsey Aston and seconded by Councillor Eddy Adam that the Nathan Mark Dance Academy hold a dance competition at the Sports Complex on Sunday 4th February and that a mobile takeaway/fast food van be offered a pitch for the duration of the event to limit the impact on the catering facility.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- i) The report be received;
- ii) White Collar Boxing events will not be held in the Sports Complex and that any future boxing events must be licenced by the British Boxing Board of Control;
- iii) The Jack and the Beanstalk Pantomime be booked for December 2024 and the Sports Complex Manager approaches organisations for sponsorship to offset the cost of the booking.
- iv) Meridian Upholstery are paid over three payments, with the proviso that the work is checked by officers before the second payment is issued;
- v) The Nathan Mark Dance Academy competition be agreed and a mobile food unit be sourced for the duration of the event.

81. PARKS UPDATE

The Works and Environment Manager submitted a report providing Members with an update relating to the parks.

He advised that an item of play equipment at the Town Park has been put out of use following an inspection and options for its replacement are being investigated including the identification of external funding sources.

It was further advised that the Town Park needs remedial work to the drainage sumps following extreme rainfall, advised that he is in discussions with Durham County Council and that a further report will be brought to Council if further budget is required.

Councillor John Moore raised a concern regarding quad bikes driving around the town and the potential for an accident.

The Chairman advised that a meeting is to be arranged with the police to discuss anti-social behaviour issues and to review the mobile CCTV unit coverage that the Town Council contributed towards.

Councillor Martin Ashcroft thanked works staff for the efficient and professional response to the tree falling onto property in Ashfield on 21st December.

Councillor Andy Hill commended the staff on the setting up and removal of the Christmas lighting display and the organisation of the Santa Tours.

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

82. NOTICE OF MOTION

The following motion was submitted for members consideration from Councillor George Gray, seconded by Councillor Ken Robson:

“At West Park the Council currently have two picnic tables that are approximately ten yards apart from each other.

I would like to request that in order to make the picnic table more accessible to wheelchair users it is moved more towards the car park area so that it easier for disabled people to use without having to travel too far from their car/vehicle.

We do have people that visit this park regularly that require assistance such as this, and moving the bench closer to the local car park would certainly make it far more accessible and therefore benefit the elderly and wheelchair users to take advantage of this facility”.

A briefing note from officers was also circulated to members with background information on this issue.

It was advised that the Works and Environment Manager had been in contact with local residents and to date had received one written response which was against the relocation of the bench nearer to houses.

Councillor George Gray suggested the bench had originally been installed the wrong way round and that the Council was discriminating against wheelchair users and requested a named vote.

There then followed a lengthy debate on the motion.

Councillor Ken Robson spoke in support of the relocation adding that families attending the school nearby would potentially use it.

Councillor Eddy Adam suggested that if the relocation of the bench was needed then a local resident would have requested it and that by moving it, then potential users from the Horndale area will also have further to go.

Councillor Martin Ashcroft added that as a wheelchair user himself, he has been to the current location and found no difficulty with accessibility.

Councillor Arun Chandran raised further concerns with the request, highlighting the fact that a previous bench had been removed by the Council in this area for reasons of anti-social behaviour, and that one of households in the area was opposed to the bench being moved.

Councillor Ken Robson offered to use some of his County Councillor Neighbourhood Budget monies to fund additional picnic benches in West Park.

Various concerns were raised regarding the costs to remove and relocate the existing the bench.

A named vote then took place with the following results:

For:

George Gray
Ken Robson

Against:

Eddy Adam
Martin Ashcroft
Lindsey Aston
Arun M. Chandran
John Clark
Neil Collinson
Ian Gray
Andy Hill
Jed Hillary
Neville Jones
Sandra Kirby
Brian McAnaney
John Moore
Michael Stead
Anne Woodward
John Woodward

Abstentions:

Tony Armstrong
Jim Atkinson
Carl Robinson

The motion was defeated.

It was further proposed by Councillor Arun M. Chandran, and seconded by Councillor Michael Stead, that the existing hardstanding to the current location of the bench be extended to improve accessibility.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- i) The picnic bench is not moved from its current location.
- ii) The existing hardstanding be extended to improve accessibility to the picnic bench.

Chairman