

EVENTS SUB-COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 2nd OCTOBER 2024

Minutes of the meeting of the **EVENTS SUB-COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, on **WEDNESDAY 2ND OCTOBER 2024** at **7.00pm**.

PRESENT:

Councillor Martin Ashcroft (Chairman) and:

Councillors Tony Armstrong, Arun Chandran, John Clark, Neil Collinson, Andy Hill, Carl Robinson, and John Woodward

OFFICERS:

Mr Dan Austin (Town Clerk)

Mrs Rachel Goddard (Events Clerical Assistant)

Mrs Judith Thexton (Head of Leisure and Events)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Three members of the public

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

It was proposed by Councillor Andrew Hill, seconded by Councillor Carl Robinson, that Councillor Martin Ashcroft be appointed as Chairman of the Events Sub-Committee for the Municipal Year 2024/25.

RESOLVED – That Councillor Martin Ashcroft be appointed as Chairman of the Events Sub-Committee for the Municipal Year 2024/25.

Councillor Martin Ashcroft took the Chair for the Meeting

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

It was proposed by Councillor Andy Hill and seconded by Councillor Arun Chandran that Councillor Carl Robinson be appointed as Vice Chairman of the Events Sub Committee for the Municipal Year 2024/25.

RESOLVED – that Councillor Carl Robinson be appointed Vice Chairman of the Events Sub-Committee for the Municipal Year 2024/25.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jed Hillary, Sandra Kirby and Anne Woodward.

4. MEMBERS' DISPENSATIONS

No requests for dispensations had been received.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Arun Chandran declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 8 and 9 (3.9) regarding the Senior Citizens' Trips and Santa Tours events.

6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no questions from members of the public.

7. MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran, seconded by Councillor Andy Hill and

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting of the Events Sub-Committee, held on the 27th March 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

8. SENIOR CITIZENS TRIPS

The Head of Leisure and Events submitted a report updating members on the 2024 Senior Citizens' Excursions and requesting consideration of the proposed locations and itinerary for the 2025 Senior Citizens' Excursions.

Please note that the meeting was adjourned during the discussion of this agenda item to allow the Town Clerk to deal with a disruptive member of the public.

A lengthy discussion took place regarding the 2025 destinations.

Councillor Arun Chandran and Councillor Carl Robinson expressed concern that Scarborough was too far to travel as a destination.

Councillor Carl Robinson proposed that the suggested Scarborough trips are swapped for York. This was seconded by Councillor Arun Chandran.

It was further suggested by Councillor Carl Robinson that officers contact the Hilton Hotel in York to request permission for the coach to pick up and drop off in their layby, and paying for this if necessary.

Councillors discussed the meal allowance given to customers attending the event. It was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran that all the excursions move to a £15 cash payment, issued on the day, with no trips, other than the new Oak Leaf Sports Complex event, having a sit-down meal in a restaurant. This was seconded by Councillor Carl Robinson.

Councillors then debated the possible introduction of a £5 refundable deposit per applicant in 2025 and several councillors raised concerns about taking a deposit, highlighting the administration issues that this may cause.

It was highlighted by the Town Clerk that if a £15 cash payment is introduced for all trips, the need for a deposit would be negated.

It was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran and seconded by Councillor Carl Robinson that a £5 deposit should not be implemented.

Councillors debated the possibility of increasing the age limit for the trips in line with the state retirement age. It was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran and seconded by Councillor Carl Robinson that the age limit remain at 60.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- i) The report be received, and the officer be thanked for the detailed report.
- ii) The destinations for 2025, be agreed as York, Seahouses, Harrogate, Keswick, Ripon/Knaresborough, Hexham, Helmsley, and a local event at the Sports Complex.
- iii) Each excursion will be on the basis of a £15 cash payment with the exception of the Sports Complex event.
- iv) A small refundable cash deposit of £5 per applicant is not introduced.
- v) The age limit for attending the excursions is not increased in line with the state retirement age.
- vi) Officers are given discretion to put back the booking date for applications to the end of April.

9. COUNCIL EVENTS UPDATE

The Head of Leisure and Events submitted a report updating members on the progress of the Council's community events programme for 2024/25, which includes Fun in the Parks, Santa Tours, D-Day, 75th Anniversary, Big Brass Bash, Fireworks Display, Santa Letters, Santa Tours and the plans for the 2025/26 programme of events including consideration of two new events; the 80th Anniversary of VE Day and a music festival event for young people.

Fun in the Parks

The Head of Leisure and Events gave a verbal update on the 2024 Fun in the Parks, the event was again well attended and a success.

Members were asked to consider a small charge being introduced for some attractions at Fun in the Parks.

After a lengthy discussion it was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran and seconded by Councillor Carl Robinson that the budget receives an annual inflationary increase, and the event stays the same with all attractions and rides that are currently free of charge, remaining free of charge, and that a small charge is only introduced for additional attractions, subject to this being properly publicised.

It was proposed by Councillor Andy Hill that sponsorship be sought for the Fun in the Parks Events, and this was seconded by Councillor Arun Chandran.

Members were then asked to consider if they would like to continue with the Animal Theme Fun in the Park as the donkey rides upper age limit has now changed to 7 years old. Members agreed to cease the Donkey Rides, and officers were requested to explore other options for this event.

Alternative Skate Park Event

The Head of Leisure and Events highlighted the difficulties officers had experienced in finding a company willing to run a skate fest event.

It was requested that members consider authorising officers to investigate an alternative event for the teenager age range in the form of an afternoon mini music festival in the Town Park during the summer of 2025 at a maximum budget cost of £6,500 funded from the 2025/26 Large Community Events Budget.

It was proposed by Councillor Carl Robinson and seconded by Councillor Andy Hill that officers undertake further investigations with a view to holding this event.

Big Brass Bash

It was agreed that officers go ahead with booking a Big Brass Bash for 2025, if and when it is offered by Durham County Council.

Colour Run

The Head of Leisure and Events highlighted the lack of progress in arranging this event due to not being able to secure the assistance of a suitable third party who has the knowledge and experience of running events similar to these. Therefore, officers have not been able to progress this event at this time.

It was proposed by Councillor Carl Robinson and seconded by Councillor Martin Ashcroft and agreed that this event is not progressed at this time.

Fireworks Display

The Head of Leisure and Events informed the members that the planning for the Fireworks Display is well underway. It was requested that members consider reducing the number of wristbands issued without question, from 8 to 6.

Councillor Arun Chandran made a political comment about the Labour Group's involvement in the original decision regarding wrist band numbers.

Councillor John Clark wished it to have it recorded in the minutes that he took offence to this comment.

After a lengthy discussion it was unanimously agreed to reduce the number of wristbands to six.

80th Anniversary of VE-Day

The Head of Leisure and Events informed members that an email has been received from the Pageant Master regarding the national celebrations that will take place next May to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of VE Day.

Members were asked to consider holding a celebratory community event similar to the Platinum Jubilee and King's Coronation event, at a maximum budget cost of £6,500, funded from the 2025/26 Large Community Events Budget.

It was also requested that the beacon is lit on the Oak Leaf playing fields at sunset, and that two VE Day flags are purchased at a cost of £110.

It was proposed by Councillor Carl Robinson and seconded by Councillor Martin Ashcroft that the Council registers its involvement in the national celebrations in the form of the lighting of a beacon at 21:30 on 8th May 2025, that a celebratory community event is held at a maximum budget cost of £6,500 and that two 'VE80' flags are purchased.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- i) The report be received.
- ii) The following actions are agreed in relation to each individual event:-

Fun in the Parks

- a) That the budget receives an annual inflationary increase, and the event stays the same with all attractions and rides that are currently free of charge, remaining free of charge, and that a small charge is only introduced for additional attractions, subject to this being properly publicised.
- b) That sponsorship be sought for the Fun in the Parks Events.
- c) That the donkey rides are ceased at the Animal Theme Fun in the Park and officers are requested to explore other options for this event.

Big Brass Bash

- d) That officers go ahead with booking a Big Brass Bash for 2025, if and when it is offered by Durham County Council.

Alternative Skate Event

- e) That officers undertake further investigations into an alternative event for the teenager age range in the form of an afternoon mini music festival in the Town Park during the summer of 2025, at a maximum cost to the 2025/26 Large Community Events Budget of £6,500.

Colour Run

- f) That this event is not progressed at this time.

VE-Day

- g) Officers register the Council's involvement in the national celebrations in the form of the lighting of a beacon on the Oak Leaf playing fields at 21:30 on 8th May 2025.
- h) That officers undertake further investigations into holding a celebratory community event, similar to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and King's Coronation events in May 2025, at a maximum cost to the 2025/26 Large Community Events Budget of £6,500.
- i) That two 'VE80' flags are purchased at an approximate cost of £110 to be funded from the Large Community Events Budget.

10. EXTERNAL EVENTS FUNDING APPLICATIONS

A report was submitted for consideration highlighting an events application received from Go Well Community CIC to hold a Primary Olympics event on Friday 11th July 2025 on the playing fields at the Oak Leaf Sports Complex.

It was proposed by Councillor Martin Ashcroft and seconded by Councillor Arun Chandran that the recommendations of the report be agreed.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- i) The report and Event Application Form be received.
- ii) Approval is granted for the Primary Olympics event to take place at the Sports Complex playing fields on Friday 11th July 2025, subject to all relevant paperwork being received and checked by officers.
- iii) Officers are permitted to allow Go Well to hold up to three similar events per year, as long as there is no financial cost to Council, the events do not clash with other events, and that officers have all the relevant paperwork submitted to the required standard.

Chairman