

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 26TH FEBRUARY 2025

Minutes of the meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, on **WEDNESDAY, 26TH FEBRUARY 2025 at 7.55 pm**

PRESENT

Councillor Ian Gray (Chairman) and

Councillors: Eddy Adam, Tony Armstrong, Martin Ashcroft, Lindsey Aston, Dorothy Bowman, Arun M. Chandran, John Clark, Neil Collinson, George Gray, Brian Haigh, Phillip Hawkins, Andy Hill, Jed Hillary, Wendy Hillary, Joanne Jones, Neville Jones, John Moore, Ken Robson, Carl Robinson, Michael Stead, Anne Woodward and John Woodward.

OFFICERS

Mr Dan Austin (Town Clerk)
Miss Amanda Donald (Corporate and Policy Officer)
Mr Lee Williams (Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator)
Mrs Sharna Stretch (Senior Admin. Officer)

IN ATTENDANCE

One member of the public was in attendance.

67. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Peter Bergg, Sandra Haigh, Sandra Kirby and Brian McAnaney.

68. MEMBERS' DISPENSATIONS

No applications for dispensations had been received.

69. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

70. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

A member of the public asked about the avian flu zones referenced in the Allotments Report, which the Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator provided some further clarification on.

71. MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor Andy Hill, seconded by Councillor Martin Ashcroft and:

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Environment Committee, held on 15th January 2025, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

72. ALLOTMENTS REPORT

Members considered an update report from the Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator on items relating to the allotments for the six weeks ended the 16th February 2025.

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

73. ENVIRONMENT REPORT

Members considered an update report from the Works and Environment Manager on items relating to the environment for the six weeks ended the 16th February 2025.

Councillor Andy Hill asked if a report would come back to the committee with an update on progress with the bus shelters and the priorities for further repairs, and asked if the glass bus shelters in the town centre could be cleaned.

The Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator confirmed it bus shelter repairs were part of a rolling programme and that report would be brought to a future meeting highlighting the next priorities.

Councillors discussed various issues with storm damaged trees along the burn.

Councillor John Moore wished to have his personal thanks noted to the Town Clerk, Works and Environment Manager, Durham County Councillors and officers for the successful outcome regarding the trees in North Agnew Plantation, adding that the proposed actions were a direct result of the letter which was sent by the Town Clerk to Woodham Golf Club as requested at the last Environment Committee meeting.

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

74. CEMETERIES REPORT

Members considered an update report from the Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator on items relating to the cemeteries for the six weeks ended the 16th February 2025.

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

75. GREAT AYCLIFFE GARDEN GUILD USE OF CLARENCE CHARE ALLOTMENTS – CONTRACTED OUT TENANCY AGREEMENT RENEWAL

The Town Clerk submitted a report for Members consideration and approval, regarding the renewal of the contracted-out tenancy agreement for the use of Council land at Clarence Chare Allotments site by Great Aycliffe Garden Guild.

Members queried the issue of the extended opening times that had been requested by the Garden Guild.

The Town Clerk advised that the decision would need to be agreed with the Planning Department at Durham County Council as the opening hours were likely a condition of the planning approval.

Councillor Martin Ashcroft suggested that an 'addendum' could be added to the contracted-out tenancy agreement at a later date, to provide for any increase to the opening hours, following advice from the Planning Department and Council solicitors.

The Town Clerk agreed to investigate this.

Councillor Lindsey Aston suggested that the Town Clerk be granted the delegated authority to process this request if needed.

It was further clarified that if a small cost is incurred for further legal advice, that the Town Clerk would use the Consultancy Budget to cover the costs.

It was proposed by Councillor Jed Hillary and seconded by Councillor Martin Ashcroft, and

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:-

- i) The report be received.
- ii) A further Contracted-Out Tenancy Agreement be issued to Great Aycliffe Garden Guild on the basis of a one-year agreement.
- iii) The amendments to the wording of the agreement are agreed to incorporate:-
 - The reduction in the required public liability insurance cover from £10 million to £5 million;
 - Adding in reference to the annual rental fee of £55.55
- iv) The contracted-out tenancy agreement and contracted-out paperwork be signed and sealed in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders.
- v) The Town Clerk be given delegated authority to liaise with the Council's solicitors with a view to adding an addendum to the agreement to cover any agreed increase to the opening hours, if this is agreed by Durham County Council's Planning Department;

76. GREEN ARTS USE OF MOORE LANE ECO CENTRE – CONTRACTED OUT TENANCY AGREEMENT RENEWAL

The Town Clerk submitted a report for Members consideration and approval, regarding the renewal of the contracted-out tenancy agreement for the use of Moore Lane Eco Centre by Green Arts.

It was proposed by Councillor Jed Hillary and seconded by Councillor Martin Ashcroft, and

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:-

- i) The report be received.
- ii) A further Contracted-Out Tenancy Agreement be issued to Great Aycliffe Garden Guild on the basis of a one-year agreement.
- iii) The amendments to the wording of the agreement are agreed to incorporate:-
 - the addition of a number of new arts, crafts and creative projects activities and events to the Permitted Use Section.
- iv) The contracted-out tenancy agreement and contracted-out paperwork be signed and sealed in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders.

Chairman