

EVENTS SUB-COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 18TH FEBRUARY 2026

Minutes of the meeting of the **EVENTS SUB-COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, on **WEDNESDAY 18TH FEBRUARY 2026** at 7.00pm.

PRESENT:

Councillor Martin Ashcroft (Chairman) and:

Councillors Tony Armstrong, Arun Chandran, Neil Collinson, Andy Hill, Sandra Kirby, Ken Robson, Anne Woodward 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:

Councillor Tracey Williams

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

It was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran, seconded by Councillor Neil Collinson, that Councillor Martin Ashcroft be appointed as Chairman of the Events Sub-Committee for the Municipal Year 2025/26.

RESOLVED – That Councillor Martin Ashcroft be appointed as Chairman of the Events Sub-Committee for the Municipal Year 2025/26.

Councillor Martin Ashcroft took the Chair for the Meeting

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

It was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran and seconded by Councillor Neil Collinson that Councillor Andy Hill be appointed as Vice Chairman of the Events Sub Committee for the Municipal Year 2025/26.

RESOLVED – that Councillor Andy Hill be appointed Vice Chairman of the Events Sub-Committee for the Municipal Year 2025/26.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jaci Beddard, Tony Beddard, Luke Ellis, Richard Hutchinson, Jackie McFadden Lewis and Carl Robinson,

4. MEMBERS' DISPENSATIONS

No requests for dispensations had been received.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no questions from members of the public.

7. MINUTES

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

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting of the Events Sub-Committee, held on the 12th February 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

8. SENIOR CITIZENS' EXCURSIONS

The Head of Leisure and Events submitted a report to advise members on the delivery of the 2025 Senior Citizens' Excursions, and to request members' consideration of the proposed locations and itinerary for the 2026 event.

Councillors Arun Chandran, Martin Ashcroft and Tony Armstrong thanked the officers for the successful delivery of the 2025 event.

Councillor Tony Armstrong suggested that the Council should consider means testing for the excursions. Councillors Arun Chandran and Neil Collinson spoke in support of keeping the excursions open to all.

Councillor Neil Collinson suggested that the Council may need to consider a £5 deposit in the future if non attendance numbers increase, and that the age limit for the excursions may also need to be reviewed in the future.

Councillor Arun Chandran proposed that the locations and itinerary set out in the report be agreed, that officers seek three quotes from coach companies for the coach provision contract and are given dispensation to complete a Standing Orders Exemption Form if less than three quotes are received, and that the age limit for the event is to remain at 60.

This was seconded by Councillor Ken Robson.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- i) The report be received.
- ii) The destinations to be visited in 2026 are York, Whitby, Keswick, Alnwick, Northallerton and Thirsk, Tynemouth, Seaham and Dalton Park and Redcar and the itinerary is as set out in the report.
- iii) Officers seek three quotes from coach companies, for the coach provision contract, as required by the Council's Standing Orders for Contracts and Procurement, and dispensation is given for officers to complete a Standing Orders Exemption Form if less than three quotes are received.
- iv) The age limit for the event remains at 60.

9. COUNCIL EVENTS UPDATE

The Head of Leisure and Events submitted a report to provide members with an update on the progress of the organisation of the Council's community events programme for 2026/27, as well as providing an overview of the successful delivery of the 2025/26 programme.

Each event was discussed in turn.

Councillor Arun Chandran asked how well attended the Big Brass Bash was. It was highlighted by the Head of Leisure and Events and other councillors that the event is very popular with a wide range of age ranges attending. It was agreed that the Council would engage Durham County Council to organise a Big Brass Bash event in 2026.

Councillor Neil Collinson suggested that the Council may need to consider implementing a charge for the fireworks wristbands in the future, depending upon the financial situation of the Council.

With regard to the request for a SEND category on the fireworks poster competition, Councillor Martin Ashcroft proposed that All Disabilities Matter and the Pre-School Manager, be consulted to give guidance on how to approach the new category.

It was further proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran that the decision should be delegated to the Chairman and Vice Chairman and officer.

With regard to the Elevate youth event, it was agreed that this event should be added to the Council's annual programme of events and that the £2 entry charge be maintained.

Councillor Sanra Kirby questioned the age limit for the event and it was clarified that whilst the event is aimed at the 10 to 14 age range, officers would not enforce an age limit if older children wanted to attend. It was agreed that the age limit, in the publicity for the 2026 event, would be increased to 16.

It was proposed by Councillor Martin Ashcroft and seconded by Councillor Ken Robson and

RESOLVED - that it be recommended that:

- i) The report be received.
- i) The update provided regarding the delivery of the Council's programme of events for 2025 be received.
- ii) The update provided regarding the planning of the Council's 2026 programme of events be received.
- iii) Members agreed the following proposals in relation to specific issues relating to each individual event:-

Big Brass Bash

- a) Members agreed that the Council engage the services of Durham County Council for a 2026 Big Brass Bash in the Town Park, in July, at a cost of £6,500.

Elevate

- a) The Elevate youth event be added to the Council's annual programme of events.
- b) An expenditure budget of £9,000 is transferred from the Large Community Events Budget with effect from the 2027/28 financial year.
- c) The event be subject to a £2 entry charge, and budget provision is made for the expected income from this entry charge from 2027/28.
- d) The age range for the event should be advertised as aimed at 10 to 16 years old.

Fireworks Display

- a) Officers investigate the feasibility of adding a SEND category to the Fireworks Display Poster Competition and consult with All Disabilities Matter and the Pre-School Manager for guidance on how to approach the new category.
- b) The decision on this issue is delegated to the Chairman and Vice Chairman and Head of Leisure and Events.

10. EXTERNAL EVENT APPLICATION

The Head of Leisure and Events submitted a report to request Members' consideration an external event application from Coopers Amusements asking to hold a fun fair on Council land at Moore Lane Park in May 2026.

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

RESOLVED - that it be recommended that:

- i) The report be received.
- ii) Permission is granted for Coopers Amusements to use Moore Lane park playing fields for a fun fair between 18th May and 26th May, subject to officers receiving all the relevant paperwork.
- iii) A ground rent of £780 is agreed for the event.
- iv) Standing Orders are waived to allow officers to immediately advise Coopers Amusements of the decision to allow them time to plan and promote the event, without the need to wait for the Events Sub-Committee minutes to be ratified by the Recreation Committee and Full Council.

Chairman