

AMENITIES COMMITTEE – June 2017

Minutes of the Amenities Committee held on Thursday 29th June 2017 at 18.00 in the Town Council Office, Fourways 2, 6 Dilston Terrace, Amble.

PRESENT: Cllrs C Weir (Chair), J Dargue, M Horn, H Lewis, I Parks and Miss V Smith.

Actions

10: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

To receive apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Cllrs Morrison & Hinton.

11: DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS:

None

12: PUBLIC QUESTION TIME: (maximum 15 minutes)

In accordance with Section 1(d-g) of the ATC Standing Orders members of the public present may address the Council at this point on the agenda. The Council/Committee reserves the right to respond or debate the issue at a later date.

12.1 Inspection of Allotments

There was some confusion at the meeting around the Allotment Inspection. It became apparent that the emails inviting ATC to the inspection had gone to a member of staff who was on leave and the message was not relayed. Future invites to inspections are to come one week in advance. It was noted that on this occasion the invitation was within the timeframe but due to annual leave the message was not received in time.

12.2: Amble Allotment Holders Society Report

Discussion was held to determine the correct course of action in relation to a specific allotment that requires some work. Amble Town Council and AAHS are aware of the situation and it was agreed to write to the owner/family of the allotment to establish when this will be done.

AAHS

Further discussion took place on the possibility of ATC conducting their own inspections, concentrating on structural work rather than cultivating, using the same format of inspection sheets as per AAHS. It was reported that ATC could undertake an inspection at any time.

ATC requested the results of the latest inspection and are already aware of 3 allotments that require further work. A meeting to discuss the rules and regulations is required before the July meeting.

AAHS

Going forward, Allotment Inspections will take place regularly and re-inspection's between that time.

Resulting from the last inspection, 13 letters were sent. 12 out of the 13 allotments have made improvements.

A trial run of smaller allotments is currently ongoing after the decision was made to cut one allotment into 3, to try and make smaller allotments more manageable.

It was reported by the AAHS that allotment holders are given 3 warning letters if

AMENITIES COMMITTEE – June 2017

required and this is in accordance with national guidelines.

AAHS agreed to liaise with the National Allotment Society and their forum for guidance and clarity on public liability responsibilities.

AAHS

AAHS are currently looking into the requirements of bee keeping and this may be considered within the new rules. It was understood by all that any persons keeping bees must be appropriately qualified. There is a Bee Association at Alnwick.

A meeting to discuss the Rules and Regulations with ATC is to be arranged possibly by the end of July. The next AAHS meeting takes place on 12th July.

ALL

12.3 WWI Event – 29 July 2017

Cllr Helen Lewis suggested that AAHS provided the carrots for the WW1 event that is taking place on 29 July. Cllr Lewis to confirm numbers the week before. AAHS agreed to purchase two tickets for the event and Lee Taylor agreed to let all allotment holders know of the event and that tickets are available.

AAHS

13: CLERK'S REPORT & MATTERS ARISING THEREFROM:

The contents of the Clerk's Report and any matter arising be considered.

Allotments

13.1: Allotment Wynd entrance water diversion

There was a request from members of the committee to remove this item from the agenda.

VS

13.2: Fire Risk Assessment/Audit of Allotment sites

Clarity was requested on whether or not allotment holders are aware that they are individually liable for their own allotment area. VS to obtain the audit of allotments from The Clerk

VS

13.3: Allotments updated Rules and Regulations

Allotment Rules and Regulations are to be updated and refreshed ahead of the August meeting.

ALL

Cemeteries

13.4: Cemetery Compound update

The fencing and the gate has been done as requested.

An additional skip is needed as not everything could fit onto the one ordered. The area is very overgrown again. Members of the committee reiterated as in previous meetings that they would like the whole area reorganised, with all strimming and trimming done.

The committee queried whether the new lean to shed had arrived given that the original one was delivered broken. VS to clarify and order another skip.

VS

The edging stones on site to be moved to the noticeboard and if necessary, the seasonal worker to assist in these tasks.

VS

13.5: Test bed preparation

The sprinkler has arrived although recent weather has not required any further watering.

AMENITIES COMMITTEE – June 2017

It was noted that the water pressure was ok for the sprinkler. There is a hole in the ground at the natural burial area that needs filled in as this is a health and safety issue and there are some shrubs in that area that need attention.

VS

Cllr Helen Lewis raised the idea of using the office space at the compound for storage. It was queried whether staff still use the office and burial records. It was agreed that the viability of the office should be considered for storage space and the issue was delegated to the Chair and the Clerk.

CW/EB

Members had previously been made aware of a complaint received about the condition of the cemetery and maintenance of the cemetery. The Councillors said it was disappointing to note that since the last meeting there appears to be a lot of weeding and strimming still to be done. A regular programme of strimming and other works needed to be established as well as a continual weed killing programme that will help in the longer term.

Play areas

13.6: Report of Paddlers Park inspections

Cllrs were made aware that the Clerk had requested the play area inspection sheets on numerous occasions but was yet to receive them.

VS to clarify with The Clerk if the telescope had been wiped as there was condensation gathering and to check if this was external.

VS

It was reported that the water feature was working well.

Closer inspection of the wet pour is needed as it appears that this is still not one complete surface which will result in the joints being picked away by the young people.

VS

13.7 Report of the Philip Drive play area inspections

As above – The clerk has asked on numerous occasions to be provided with the inspection reports.

Town furniture e.g. bus shelters, bins, noticeboards, seats

13.8: Leazes Street Litter issue update

It was agreed to make some signs for the bins on Leazes Street to state that they should also put their food cartons in the bin or return them to the shop

VS

13.9: Church Street Bus Shelter update

The bus shelter bin needs relocated to in front of the pillar on the right hand side as you face the shelter. Complaints have been received around the state of the bus shelter floor. VS to query with a contractor how much it would cost to have a coloured skim put on the bus shelter floor once it had been jet washed.

VS

VS

The mural is still unfinished. Cllr Morrison to chase this up and ask when it is expected to be finished.

KM

13.10: Litter pick update.

The litter stickers have been ordered.

A date for the next litter pick is to be decided at the next meeting for sometime in September.

ALL

AMENITIES COMMITTEE – June 2017

13.11: Bay View / Little Shore Bins

The relocation and installation of new bins has been completed.

Planting

13.12: Planting update.

Planting has been arranged with Plants Galore. Plants Galore to be contacted to check that the plants will be ready and Roy to arrange a time to collect.

VS

There has been a delay in completing the planters as there was not enough plants in the original order.

It was noted that the coal trucks and planters have not been prepared for further planting. The clerk to ensure that the environmental operative or seasonal worker have prepared these for planting.

VS

13.13 Bin Stickers

The stickers for the bins have been ordered.

13.14 Responsibilities Board and Window Cover

A window cover has been placed on the door to the office but has been cut accordingly and placed on the outer side of the door so that in the event of an emergency it can be pulled off to see if anyone is inside.

The responsibility board would cost £69 for the cost of the board and £30 for the cost of the artwork. It was queried whether the board was on a stand and rolls up. If so an amount of £200 was agreed to make the final purchase.

EB/VS

13.15 Community Access Defibrillator

In conjunction with Warkworth Harbour Commissioner who have donated £600 towards the cost of a community defibrillator, a location is to be agreed and a letter of thanks to be written. A mayoral ceremony to be arranged in due course.

EB

14: COMMUNICATIONS:

14.1 Complaint about the West Cemetery from Mrs H Hattel

The meeting discussed the complaint received in relation to the grass cutting and tidiness of the west cemetery from Mrs Hattel:

Mrs Hattel was enquiring as to why Amble West Cemetery appeared to be in such a bad state.

She had visited my mother's grave this evening as she does on a very regular basis and was extremely upset at the state it was in. The grass looks as though it hasn't been cut for quite some time, weeds and thistles feet high. Whilst Mrs Hattel understood that due to the recent weather conditions the grass etc is growing rapidly she felt it was no excuse for it's current state. Mrs Hattel felt that the maintenance is deteriorating and has been for some, and is completely unacceptable and needs to be addressed. Mrs Hattel said she had never seen other cemeteries like this and often visits the resting places of her loved ones in other areas for example in Alnwick and Hadston and they are always beautifully maintained.

Mrs Hattel asked why Amble West was not maintained to the same standard as other

AMENITIES COMMITTEE – June 2017

cemeteries in the area given that there had been a 30% increase in Council Tax for the town council

Mrs Hattel attached some photographs to give examples and asked that the matter be addressed as a priority.

The Clerk responded to the complaint from Mrs Hattel with the following response:

I'm sorry to hear that your were upset following your visit to Amble West Cemetery but thank you for raising your concerns.

The Town Councillors and I actually carried out a site visit of the Cemetery at 17.00 hours yesterday evening prior to our Amenities Management Committee and agreed that the kerb set area required cutting as a matter of urgency; this has been scheduled for Tuesday. We also noted that other areas required tidying.

Unfortunately weed killing doesn't seem to have been as effective this year and we are looking into this.

Our Operative prides himself on keeping the Cemetery to a high standard and we will endeavor to maintain this once again. Our Operative was tasked with planting over 3000 plants around the town and unfortunately this diverted his work away from the Cemetery when the grass was growing at a rapid rate.

I welcome your feedback upon your next visit.

I have also attached a link to our website which will provide you with the details relating to the increase of the precept.

<http://www.amble.gov.uk/2017/01/precept-agreed-for-201718/>

15: AGENDA ITEMS:

15.1 Water pressure testing at the cemetery

VS to chase up with Fenders to see if they have been round to check the water pressure of the West Cemetery. It would be useful if all taps could be tested.

VS

15.2 Water Butt v Water Bowser

It was agreed to price a 150L water container with a pump so that it can emptied. The container must be flat bottomed and cubed. Also a battery and pump is to also be priced. Cllr Weir agreed to progress this.

CW

16: INFORMATION ITEMS:

None

17: DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting takes place on 27th July At 6pm. There will be a list of rotation for site visits. A site visit will take place of the West Allotments, meeting at the Wynd entrance.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm

AMENITIES COMMITTEE – June 2017

Under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public will be excluded from the Meeting during consideration of the following items on the agenda due to their sensitive nature.

PRIVATE

18: Trial Franchise Agreement

It was noted that the possible partner was no longer interested in a franchise arrangement therefore it was agreed to send a speculative email to another operator to say that it had been suggested to us that they might like to put on events during the summer holidays.

EB

18.1 Battery Powered Mower

The clerk provided some options for consideration. It was agreed to investigate further and continue as is for now.

18.2 Storage Head

This item was acknowledged and we will revisit if required at a later date.

18.3 Fortnightly meeting with operative

It was requested that a brief report should be provided after every fortnightly meeting so that it was easier to keep track of what was discussed and the progress made. This will also help with the pay review in due course.

EB

DRAFT