

AMENITIES COMMITTEE – NOVEMBER 2018

Minutes of the Amenities Committee held on Thursday 29 November 2018 at 18.00 in the Town Council Office, Fourways 2, 6 Dilston Terrace, Amble.

PRESENT: Cllrs H Lewis (Chair), I Parks, C Weir, M Horn, J Dargue, K Morrison
H Shepherd (minute taker).

The Chair explained that the meeting was recorded for the benefit of accuracy.

80: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

No apologies

81: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

Cllr Weir, Cllr Lewis and Cllr Parks declared an interest in allotments.
Cllr Weir declared an interest in Pride in Amble.

82: 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.

82.1 Amble Allotment Holders Society Report

There were no representatives in attendance and a report was not submitted although apologies were received retrospectively.

82.2 Health and Wellbeing Gardening Project

ATC was approached for AAHS contact details to set up an orchard or butterfly garden in the town. It is assumed that this has come back to ATC because the AAHS has a waiting list for allotments but HS has also been informed that AAHS had accepted the project. It was agreed that this item could be discussed in more detail at the Full Council Meeting once further information has been gathered.

Clerk

The WI have also offered some trees/bushes for planting around the town. There are approximately 50. NCC are currently taking care of the trees. Councillors expressed concerns that people often do not consider the long-term maintenance requirements and therefore the Town Council should be involved in any decisions regarding planting locations.

Cllr Horn has been approached by resident living in the West Crescent area who would like to plant a tree in the grass area near her home. Cllr Horn asked her to contact the Town Clerk as this would need to be discussed with NCC.

Clerk

83: CLERK'S REPORT & MATTERS ARISING THEREFROM:

83.1 Cllr Weir asked if any staff had attended the Allotment Holder Seminar. It was suggested that someone should attend in the future as a matter of interest.

Clerk

Other matters are within Agenda Items to be discussed.

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84: Cemeteries

West Cemetery Update

84.1 Update on burial records to be transferred to mapping software

Cllr Lewis has been checking the accuracy of the databases against the original book records. There is one query. The office has a copy of the checked record. The TC will now send the database to the software developer and will ask them to note any anomalies they come across which can then be checked against individual section books. As far as we know, the records are as accurate as possible.

Clerk

84.2 Update on West Cemetery Signage

Signage is now in place at the cemetery to reinforce that dogs, except assistance dogs are not permitted and to warn the public of unstable memorials.

84.3 Update on planting for West Cemetery

A lot of work has been completed by NCC. Branches and bushes have been cut back and the area is looking a lot tidier. The trellis has been purchased and will be fixed to the memorial wall by NCC. Clematis plants have also been purchased. Any other work left to do will continue over the next few weeks. Much of the rubbish has been cleared from the compound area.

84.4 To approve mapping of section N

Councillors formally agreed that this will be the next section to be used. It was proposed that the layout will be different to other sections, with headstones being back to back. Councillors agreed to this proposal. The software developer will be asked to map out this area.

Clerk

84.5 Cremated remains section

Ma cremated remains will also be plotted on the mapping software as this area has been increased.

Clerk

84.6 Update on Tree Surgery

The tree surgeon attended site to look at the damaged tree in the compound area. Two further trees needing maintenance were identified during his visit. Councillors agreed that this is necessary work. The TC is to chase up quotes and is delegated to arrange the work.

Clerk

East Cemetery Update

84.7 Update on signage

New signage has been installed as in West Cemetery

84.8 Wildflower Area Update

Cllr Lewis presented some photographs of the East Cemetery. The TC is the delegated contracts manager and therefore responsible for the monitoring of the work carried out through the SLA. Cllr Lewis suggested that East Cemetery checking should be a priority.

Clerk

Cllr Lewis also raised concerns that work requirements may not be explicit enough and drew attention to the installation of the new signage boards which have been concreted and therefore do not match the tarmac base. This could be the fault of either members or staff not being specific enough. Staff should not assume that contractors will use the same criteria. Black paint has been suggested to resolve this particular issue. Staff are to request/give more precise instructions in the future.

Clerk

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85: Play Areas

85.1 Paddlers Park

85.1.1 Update on communication with NCC

There has been ongoing correspondence between Mike Jefferey of NCC and Fresh Air Fitness aiming to reimburse ATC and figures are being considered. This was a little while ago and therefore needs to be chased up as once the new year comes, work will have to commence for the spring. TC to urge an update from Mike Jefferey.

Clerk

85.2 Philip Drive

85.1 Nothing to report

86: Town Furniture

86.1 Update on works to Church Street Bus Shelter Wall

This work has been completed.

Clerk

A letter of thanks is to be written to Sarah Holt. An invoice has not been received.

86.1 Update on the bus shelter for Church Street

There are delays with installation of the shelter due to a problem with the contractors resources. Cllrs asked for a firm date within the next 28 days otherwise they would like to request to a refund and find an alternative supplier. HS to contact the supplier

HS

87: Planting

87.1 Purchase of shrubs for West Cemetery spoil area and natural burial site

HL showed a plan of the natural burial area and explained the planting plan which has been discussed with NCC. The new fence has been installed around the spoil area and Cllr Lewis proposed asking NCC to remove the old area of fence behind the cremated remains and clear it out before a new section of fence is installed- it was agreed to approach NCC at the next SLA meeting. A new post and gate to the office has been fitted- it was agreed to replace the hasp with a bolt for greater stability.

Cllrs retrospectively agreed the payment of the invoice for the installation of the replacement fence, including the additional section which had not been previously agreed but in retrospect it was decided that it should be included at the same time.

87.2 Consideration of plans for next year's planting areas

Cllrs Lewis and Weir will liaise NCC to agree their work as part of the SLA. Cllr Lewis would like to keep the partnership with Acklington Prison going, for the supply of plants. Cllrs agreed to delegate this work to the Clerk with Cllrs Weir and Lewis.

88: COMMUNICATIONS

Cemetery Charges

A request was made to place a vase at the same time as a headstone and it was not clear if this should be an additional charge. Cllr Lewis advised to make an admin charge only in this instance, of £35, and this will be considered further for 2019/20 Cemetery Fees.

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89: AGENDA ITEMS

89.1 To discuss the current Deeds Transfer procedure and consider new options.

Staff feel that the book currently used is not appropriate and professional looking and would like to suggest that a new certificate is issued to new deed owners when rights are transferred. As there is currently money in funds available for new burial registers, Cllrs agreed to delegate up to £150 to the purchase of a new book for this purpose.

Clerk

89.2 To consider the use of Memorial Plinths in section N

Cllrs discussed the proposal to install plinths in the new section area to make out graves. The quote for two lengths is £6873.13. There are a number of considerations:

- 1) The quote is £3500 per plinth containing x 60 graves, therefore £58 cost per grave. This would be an upfront payment which would have to be recouped through cemetery fees.
- 2) If there are approximately x20 interments per year, it might take 6 years, for the area to be full leaving empty plinths with marked out graves for a number of years.
- 3) What are the repercussions if a memorial moved, where would the responsibility lie?
- 4) Tree roots would also need to be considered
- 5) The installation of plinths may restrict memorial headstone sizes and shapes.

It would make the grave lines straight but Cllrs agreed that the cemetery would look unsightly. There are other options that could be considered such as installing kerb sets as a guide or a weed killed line.

Cllrs

Cllrs rejected the proposal to install plinths and will explore other possibilities.

89.3 To review and agree header board options for the Town Noticeboard

Cllrs had previously agreed to a budget of £1,000 for the noticeboard. The quote for a two door board is £974.00 plus delivery. The cost of a matching header board is an additional £204.00

Cllrs discussed if one of the old header boards could be used and agreed to this option.

Clerk

Cllrs also agreed to the quote to the removal of the old board and wall mounting of the new one on the wall where the previous wall mounted board was positioned.

Clerk

TC to order the new board and arrange installation with the contractor.

Cllrs agreed to move £500 from the environment fund into the noticeboard fund.

89.4 Memorial Audit: To determine the section rotation for inspections

It been suggested that a 4-year cycle is developed and that the audit begins with Section M and the cremated remains area in 2019, sections I,J,K,L for 2020, sections C,D,E,H,G for 2021 and sections F,B,A and East Cemetery for 2022. NCC is not sure if they will complete this full audit in the 4 year cycle but will by all means, endeavour too.

89.5 Memorial Audit: To consider the Memorial Inspection Procedures and

Clerk

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Protocol

The current procedures are 10-years old and dated. The Town Clerk has asked NCC for a template and ATC are amenable to following County Council guidelines at present until ATC procedures can be updated in line with these.

89.6 Equipment: To consider the disposal of the Tractor and trailers

The tractor is not being used but regardless of if it is retained or sold, the battery needs to be replaced. The agricultural dealer has quoted £75 for the replacement of the battery. Cllrs agreed that this is a necessary purchase. Further discussion took place about the use of the tractor. It was suggested that an alternative storage area could be explored closer to the centre of the town where most of the events take place. This may alleviate the need for a tractor. Cllrs to explore possibilities and discuss further in January.

Clerk

89.7 Memorial Gardens:

From every direction, the flagpole is a visual intrusion of the view of the new memorial. Cllr Lewis proposed that prices are sought for the relocation of the pole, which may involve moving the current pole or if not possible, may require the purchase of a new one. ATC will also need permission from Amble Development Trust and possibly conservation area approval to do this. Cllr Morrison did not feel there was a need to move the pole. Cllrs agreed to exploring costs. Cllrs will advise the TC of the proposed new location.

Clerk

89.8 Raised Bed Allotment: To consider requesting NCC to use pesticides next Spring and until further notice and to discuss the query received by Craig Weir

Cllr Weir has been advised that the Syrian refugee families, have expressed an interest in growing their own food. AAHS suggested that they approach the Council about the possibility of using the raised beds. The decision has already been taken by ATC to cease letting out the raised beds as there was lack of interest from the public. There are also concerns that the families could not also maintain the wider area around the raised beds. Cllr Lewis proposed that the response to an official request should be that the Council has already decided to close the raised bed area as it is no longer maintainable and suggest that any requests should be directed to AAHS, to be considered to be placed on the waiting list for an allotment plot.

Clerk

Clerk

Clerk

Cllrs agreed to ask NCC to weed-kill the raised bed area as part of the SLA.

89.9 Proposal for new certificate for Garden Awards

Cllrs Weir and Lewis have suggested that the Garden Award certificates should be redesigned for 2019. Councillors discussed the draft design provided and possible wording and font changes.

Two new drafts are to be requested with the changes that were proposed, for discussion at the Full Council meeting.

As an aside, Councillors were disappointed with the quality of the Christmas cards, which are curling after a few days of being stood up. TC to bring this to the attention of the printer.

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90. INFORMATION ITEMS

90.1 Damaged dog bins

Two damaged dog bins have been reported by NCC which will be included in the next replaced phase.

90.2 Thank you letter to NB Clark

The letter was noted.

91. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting date will be held on 31st January 2018 at 6.00pm

PUBLIC VERSION OF PRIVATE

92. PRIVATE AGENDA ITEMS

92.1 Compound area

ATC are considering usage of this now redundant area and a suggestion was to consider selling it. Cllrs agreed to engaging a land agent to value the area of land so the proposal can be discussed further at the Full Council meeting.

The meeting closed at 7.30 p.m.