



Skipton Town Council

Public Services Committee
Thursday 7 July 2016 - 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors R G Heseltine [Chairman], C Clark, Mrs W Clark, J Dawson, Mrs P Heseltine, E Jaquin, P Madeley and Mrs K McIntyre

Also present: Councillor Kerr

11 members of the public

Officers: Dave Parker [Chief Officer] and Les Chandler [Estate Manager]

1. To accept representations from the Public between 7.00 pm and 7.15 pm.

The Chairman established that the members of the public present were allotment tenants wishing to speak about the lockable gate which has been installed at the junction of East Castle Street and the access track up to the southern section of Middletown Allotments. He noted that later in the meeting the Council would be considering a proposal to re-establish an Allotments Working Group, and that the gate was one of the issues the Working Group would seek to resolve.

Mr C Johnson of Otley Street, a long-standing tenant at Middletown Allotments, expressed his disappointment that tenants had not been consulted about the installation of the gate. He noted that the access has been in existence since the 1930s and argued that it was unreasonable now to expect tenants to barrow heavy loads for 200 metres up the steep hill. He suggested that the Council's offer to relocate tenants who need motor vehicle access to their allotment is unrealistic because of the money, time and energy that they have invested in their existing plots. He went on to say that the only problem with the access is the condition of the surface. He discounted health and safety, and the possibility of theft and vandalism, as reasons for installing the gate. In conclusion he urged the Council to work with tenants to find a way of restoring the access to the standard required to carry motor vehicles safely.

Mr J Harrison of Neville Street endorsed Mr Johnson's comments and advised Members that he was concerned about the safety of tenants if the gate was locked. He pointed out that ambulances in this area, unlike the fire and rescue service, do not carry bolt-croppers enabling them to remove chains and padlocks on locked gates. In an emergency, therefore, they would not be able to access the allotments to attend anyone in need of treatment. He suggested that, given the number of elderly tenants, this presented a serious risk.

Mrs S Bollen of Alma Terrace stated that, in her view, the access has been in use by motor vehicles for more than 20 years so the allotment tenants using it have an easement by prescription. She said that this was being checked by the District Council's legal adviser.

7. To consider re-forming an Allotments Working Group

Given the need for in-depth consideration of the issues involved it was **RESOLVED** to re-establish the Council's Allotments Working Group - comprising two allotment tenants and Councillors Clark, Dawson, Heseltine and Madeley - with the following remit:

- to find a long term solution to the issues surrounding access to Middletown Allotments;
- to review the arrangements for accommodating tenants wishing to keep livestock on the allotments;
- to consider the management and maintenance costs associated with running the allotments;
- to re-investigate the feasibility of creating an Allotments Association; and
- to look at the possibility of extending or re-siting the Council's maintenance depot at Middletown Allotments to provide improved facilities and to enable it to meet current storage needs.

2. To accept apologies for absence.

None.

3. To record declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in items on the agenda.

None.

4. To consider the recommendations of the Chief Officer relating to requests for dispensations to Members on items requiring a declaration of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests.

None.

5. To approve the minutes from the previous meeting held on 9 June 2016.

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2016 were accepted as a true and fair record of what transpired at that meeting.

6. To report and receive information arising from the minutes of items not on the Agenda from Members and the Chief Officer.

Black Walk footpath: Northern Trains, the District Council and County Councils, and some residents, have responded positively to the letter to stakeholders asking for expressions of interest in helping to improve the condition of the path.

8. (a) To discuss options relating to the security of Millennium Green play area.

In accordance with the governing Trust Deed, and in response to pressure from local people, it was **RESOLVED** to re-open the play area at Millennium Green in spite of the likelihood of continued anti-social behaviour.

- (b) To decide whether to make improvements to the equipment at Millennium Green play area.

Given that they have reached the end of their recommended operational life it was **RESOLVED** that the wooden-framed climbing net and swings at Millennium Green should be removed as soon as the Council's independent play equipment inspector identifies that they are no longer safe to use.

9. To decide whether the Council should change the way it maintains the grass verges on the south side of The Bailey and Harrogate Road.

Although it is a key gateway into Skipton it was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council does not have the funds to maintain the grass verges on The Bailey and Harrogate Road to a higher standard than at present.

However, since it has an interest in them being well-maintained it was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council should invite Skipton Building Society to either take on the maintenance of the grass verges in the vicinity of its offices on The Bailey and Harrogate Road or donate the funds required for them to be maintained to a higher standard than at present.

10. To decide whether the Council should apply to register one of its playing fields as a recreational space dedicated in honour of those who died in the First World War under the Fields in Trust's Centenary Field Programme.

In view of the fact that it has a war memorial at its Gargrave Road entrance it was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council should write to Craven District Council to ask if it would be interested in nominating Aireville Park as a recreational space dedicated in honour of those who died in the First World War under the Fields in Trust's Centenary Field Programme.

11. To receive updates regarding: the perimeter wall at Holy Trinity Church; projects and initiatives being supported by the Skipton Town Partnership; and the Markets Management Group

Holy Trinity: the Estate Manager will be meeting the Council's structural engineer later in July 2016 to finalise arrangements for the surveys which are required before a scheme can be developed to resolve the issues with the boundary wall of the churchyard.

Skipton Town Partnership: the Partnership contributed to this month's Skipton Cycle Races and to the Clog Fest. Members noted that this year's Clog Fest would be the last.

Members also noted that the Partnership's move into the Town Hall has been completed.

Skipton Market: the Markets Working Group will be meeting later in July.

12. To consider excluding press and public for consideration of item 13 on the grounds that it relates to confidential matters.

It was **RESOLVED** to exclude all press and public.

It was also **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Order 15b vi to enable Cllr Kerr to remain in the meeting.

13. To determine the outcome of a claim to the Council for the cost of repairing a vehicle alleged to have been damaged by the Council's highways verge grass-cutting contractor.

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14. To receive an update on the Allotments and Grounds Maintenance Officer vacancy.

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The meeting returned to public session.

15. To receive notification on matters that members would like included on a future agenda.

To decide whether the Town Council should support a proposal from the local community to raise funds to replace the wooden climbing net and swings at Millennium Green Play Area.

To review the validity of the Trust Deed governing Millennium Green Play Area.

To review the Council's policy on the provision of allotments.

Meeting closed at 8.11 pm.

Chairman:

Signature:

Date: