

Allotment & Environment Committee

20 January 2026 6.30pm

Town Council Offices, Kingsway, Bishop Auckland

Present: Cllr Michael Siddle (Chair), Cllr Elliott, Fox, Harker and L Zair.

Also Present: Sarah Harris (Clerk) and 5 members of the public

AEC035/25 - Apologies for absence – Cllr T Redmond is on annual leave

Resolved: that the members noted and accepted the apologies

AEC036/25- Declaration of Interest - no declarations were made.

Resolved: that no declarations were made.

AEC037/25 – Action Log Update was given

Resolved: that members noted the updates and would like to have an exception report, rather than full action log.

AEC038/25- Allotments

a) **Allotment landscape** – that a general overview was given regarding allotments

Resolved: that members noted the update

b) **Tenancies** – an update was given regarding the outstanding tenancies

c) **Enforcement and inspection** – a summary of enforcement for 2025 was given, and inspection scheduled for 2026-27

Resolved: that members noted the update and members agreed that inspections should be brought forward to April/May.

d) **Site Works** - the Deputy Clerk gave an overview of the works in progress at each site. An update was given that orthomosaic mapping was being costed and quoted would be brought to the next meeting.

Resolved: that members noted the update, and liked the sound of the orthomosaic mapping as an additional tool, and looked forward to receiving the quotes.

e) **Rules & Regulations** – the Clerk a reminder that there were now supplementary policies for horses/ponies, pigeons and poultry as well as bees.

Resolved: that members noted the update, and welcomed the more detailed record keeping that had been implemented. They wish to engage in some community engagement with members, such as an annual survey to see what the tenants think of the systems implemented and if they think that improvements are being made.

Signed chair

AEC0039/25 – Environment

- a) **Environment Working Group** – the Clerk gave a summary of the working group and how everyone is enthusiastic about working together and how they intend to move forward, the group had had two meetings.

Resolved: that members were pleased with the working group and look forward to progressing forward.

- b) **Floral Displays** – the council had approved that floral displays would be supported for 2026-27 with a mix of sustainable and seasonal to ensure colour. The Greener Together group are bringing proposals for other environmental projects to help improve the area, and to help to increase bee pollinator corridors etc. the council had stated that they would like to have hanging baskets, however further costing is being done on this to ensure value for money, as watering to ensure that they are maintained at a high standard is costly.

Resolved – that members noted the update and agreed to contact DCC Cllr Fox regarding . members budget for floral displays.

AEC0040/25 Public Participation -

Pollards Allotment association – asked for an updated waiting list and to have another scheduled 1-1 meeting. And that they agreed that the inspections should be brought forward

Resolved: that the waiting list would be supplied this week and a meeting date would be send over in the next week or so. A reminder was given that if an association feels that a plot is falling below standard then they can contact the council at anytime to highlight this, enforcement action can be taken at anytime not just on annual inspection.

South Church – invited the Chair to attend the AGM on Sunday 25th January

Resolved: that he accepted to attend.

General discussion was had regarding Hanging Baskets, and as seasoned gardeners they all agreed that they take a lot of maintenance and often twice a day watering. You can get some feeder systems to drip feed them to ensure that they stay dry. They also thought that some businesses maybe interested in sponsoring a basket. And that they should be in areas of greatest footfall.

Resolved: that members noted the feedback and welcomed their input.

AEC0041/25 Exclusion of the press and public

Resolved: that Members agreed that was agreed to exclude the Press and Public In accordance with the provisions of Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as amended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council do now exclude the press and public for the remaining item on the agenda by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted since publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest. No press or public were in attendance.

AEC042/25 –

A - working draft of the updated Strategy was presented to members.

Resolved: it was agreed that members would take it away and read, with a full discussion to be had at the next meeting. Members agreed that the town wasn't as clean, and that the Clerk is to contact the Clean and Green Team as well as the DCC members regarding improvements that are needed to be made.

Signed chair

B - report regarding the sale of de-designated land.

Resolved: that the members noted the update on the sale of the land, and agreed that the water to be removed for the sale completion if the supply is not taken on by one of the purchasers.

C – De-désignation at Toronto

Resolved : that members noted that the officers continued to chase the Secretary of State and would up the contact to weekly to try to get an answer.