

Allotment & Environment Committee

16 June 2026 6.30pm

Town Council Offices, Kingsway, Bishop Auckland

Present: Cllr M Siddle (Chair), Cllr J Fox Deputy Chair, Cllr R Elliott, Cllr T Redman

Also Present: Sarah Harris – Town Clerk, Clerk, John Turnock –Governance Support Officer, Vicki Booth – Deputy Clerk and 3 members of the public.

AEC001/26 - Apologies for absence – Cllr L Zair submitted her apologies.,

Resolved: that members accepted the apologies from Cllr L Zair, and they did not accept apologies from Cllr A Legge, as none were given so they asked for him to be marked as not attended.

AEC002/26- Declaration of Interest - no declarations were made.

Resolved: that no declarations were made.

AEC003/26 – Action Log Update was given

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

AEC004/26- Allotments

a. Allotment Officer Report

- i. Allotment Landscape – 260 tenants with 269 allotments and a waiting list of 68 but only 28 applicants due to multiple site applications. Thanks were given to Edgehill and Pollards for the flowers they grew for the community bedding gardens

Resolved: that Members agreed that the new format reports, were good and that steps would be made to make copies available online and be printed for future meetings for members of the public. hat Members agreed that the new format reports, were good and that steps would be made to make copies available online and be printed for future meetings for members of the public.

- ii. Site Issues, works, maintenance plans inc. Committee Woodhouse Visit regarding surface repairs and possibly other sites should time allow.
 - iii. Summer Inspection Programme is underway, confirmation next week after the drone imagery training session has taken place.
- b. National Allotments Week – The Clerk will have a plan for the allotment week in August, to incorporate local schools and community groups.
- c. Finance
- i. Costs and Charges 2026 -2027 – budget looks healthy due to early part of the year; Forecasting would be added moving forward to show a clearer picture.

There was a proposal to increase plot clearance cost in line with real costs (£260) and for this to be implemented immediately.

Members voted on a large deposit increase to help alleviate poor plot conditions.

Resolved: that those members vote was against immediate increase 3 to 1, and that the proposal to increase plot clearance cost by gradually increasing numbers to be determined for costing to be provided by the Clerk at the next meeting.

Resolved: that the members vote for a gradual increase in cost and clerk to provide proposal figures at next meeting to identify amount that clearance increased by.

Woodhouse Close – fly tipping has taken place in the car park; an address is present.

Resolved: that members agreed that the Clerk is to write to the addressee contained in the fly tipping requesting payment, as Fly-tipping is illegal

AEC 005/26 Environment

- a. Floral Displays 2026 – springs tubs in place, and the summer planters are due to be out in place shortly. Plans to complete the Railway Garden are underway as well as work with the Kings Trust project outside of the Council offices.

Resolved: members agreed that the Clerk is to procure two remembrance silhouettes, one male and one female from the Royal British Veterans Enterprise to be in the round flower beds each side of the war memorial.

- b. In Bloom – judging has taken place for round 1 and summer judging will take place on 15th July.

Resolved: Members agreed to provide refreshments including a light lunch and transport for the judges of in bloom.

- c. Environment Working Group

- I. Volunteer days for maintenance of community beds.

Resolved: Members noted the update and that they were grateful for the partnership working which the group are facilitating.

AEC006/26 Allotment and Environment Diary – proposed Calendar of Activity

Diary is provided to show members what happens each month over the next 12 months, this will be updated monthly.

Resolved: That members agreed that the Diary is very useful, and that they wished to have an updated copy, at meetings to show what is happening each month.

AEC007/26 Public Participation – To hear from any members of the public.

Suggestion of potentially licencing livestock to allow water to be used 12 months a year. It was confirmed that the only site to allow livestock other than poultry and pigeons was Mill Race, and the tenants have to provide licence information. All poultry and Pigeon tenants have to also provide the council with details of their flocks, including DEFRA numbers and that any changes to numbers have to be reported to the council, failure to do so can be deemed a breach in tenancy.

Resolved: it was agreed that the Clerk would provide, as site breakdown for each allotment site, detailing the plots, type of site, and water usage for the next meeting. to enable the Committee to make informed decision on the future water and maintenance charges.

Resolved: That the Clerk is to communicate to sites that Inspections will be scheduled and released Friday 19th June.

AEC008/26 Strategy Consultation – to note and ask all members to promote the ongoing strategy consultation with residents and service users. To be shared with the associations.

Resolved: that the members agreed that clerk is to share the strategy with the associations, and that members would promote via their own networks.

AEC009/26 Exclusion of the press and public

Resolved: that Members 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.

AEC010/26 Update – Toronto - current process with Secretary of State re de designation of 3 allotment gardens.

Sale of plot 1 at Broken Banks gone through, plots 3 and 4 with solicitors, plots 5 and 6 next, with plots 7 and 8 going onto the market.

Resolved: that members noted the update and agreed that a more detailed strategy session on development of the action plan is needed to discuss Edge Hills Lease and that of self-managed sites. The Clerk to look to schedule a session.