

Bishop Auckland Town Council

Minutes of the Allotment and Environment Committee

21st July 2026 at 6PM

Town Council Offices, Kingsway Court, Bishop Auckland

Cllr Present: Chair Cllr M Siddle, Cllr Fox, L. Zair, Elliott, Redmond.

Also, present: V Booth Deputy Clerk J Turnock Governance Support and 6 members of the public including a Bishop Auckland Town Councillor

AEC011/26- Apologies for Absence – None received in advance

Resolved: that the apologies for Cllr Legge passed via a councillor was delivered incorrectly and could not be accepted.

AEC012/26- Declaration of Interests – M Siddle declared an interest in one of the quotes for removal of Knotweed item 4cii

Resolved: Cllr Siddle agree to leave the room at the point of discussion.

AEC013/26 - Action Log from Previous Meeting – action log presented and accepted.

Resolved: that the members noted the action log and members agreed that it was accurately updated.

AEC014/26 – Allotment Landscape

The Deputy Clerk gave an overview of the report presented to council and a discussion around weeks through the pavements in the marketplace.

Resolved: that members accepted the report, and the Deputy Clerk was tasked with contacting Clean and Green at DCC to discuss their pavement maintenance plan going forward to address the weeds and grasses.

AEC015/26–Summer Inspections

The Deputy Clerk gave an update on the current allotment inspections, and a full outcome will be presented at the next committee once inspections are complete.

Resolved: that members noted the update and report and that a follow up will be brought to the next meeting.

AEC016/26 – National Allotments week

That the report presented to Council detailing National Allotment week Grow to Learn was discussed.

Signed:

Resolved: that members agreed to the activities suggested. That members want to plan for the following 12 months in order to have more lead in time to upcoming events.

AEC017/26– Finance

I. Cost and Charges

Chair proposed that the report be deferred until the next meeting due to incomplete data so full consideration can be given.

Resolved: that members agreed to defer the costs and charges discussion.

II. Quotes for Work

Cllr Siddle left the room for the quote discussion to take place.

The deputy Clerk advised on the report and the quotes received.

Resolved: that members agreed to go with the lower quote and for the Clerk to appoint the contactor so work can commence.

Cllr Siddle returned to the room

AEC018/26 – Environment

A summary of the issues with 2026 floral displays and feedback on Northumbria in bloom judging was presented.

DCC no longer do the maintenance on the flower beds in place in Town Centre. A discussion took place whether the Council rely on volunteers or contract out.

Resolved: that members accepted the report and tasked the Clerk/Deputy Clerk to obtain quotes from contracts for maintenance in 2027 including obtaining quotes from works depts at neighbouring councils. That a comprehensive paper be brought to a future meeting.

AEC019/26– Strategy Consultation

That the strategy consultation continues and members were reminded to encourage the public to complete the survey to have their say before the closing date on the 31st Aug 2026.

Resolved: Councillors agreed to further prompt for Strategy Survey returns

AEC020/26 – Public Participation

A member of the public raised the question as to the length of time it takes for enforcement on the allotments. It was explained that it is a legal process which limits cutting down the time between and informal warning, formal warning and notice to quit. That the council acknowledge they need to move in more swiftly at the early stages. That conversations need to be had early on and that smaller plots would be more suitable for modern day living.

The associations asked that the previous months water bills be displayed like they were a few years ago to remind tenants of the increasing cost of water on site.

Resolved: that members discussed the questions posed and answered the queries. That the Council will reinstate putting up signs regarding the previous months water bills.

Signed:

Exclusion of 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.

AEC021/26 – Update

Site De-designation

Resolved: that members noted the update, and that once the de-designation is received, contact the tenants to advise, and the clerk to seek appraisal from the land agent on selling costs, and to advise the tenants that they have the first opportunity to purchase, and that the same ruling as used on Broken Banks of 80% of market value to be obtained.

Land Sales:

Resolved: that members noted the update, and agreed that that plot 6 and 7 Broken Banks remain on the open market and that an offer of 80% or above would be agreed to ensure that consistent rules were applied..

Lease reviews: Edge Hill and South Church

Resolved:

- that the members agreed that the South Church site lease is to be reviewed, with more realistic costings. As part of the review the Association should be charging the same rates and the council as they are bound by the same rules and regulations. The Clerk to set up initial discussion, draft a revised agreement.
- that the members agree that the Edge Hill leaset the member decision on which option they wish to pursue to recommend to council, so that renegotiations can be started or so that tenants can be served notice..

Signed: