

Minutes of the Meeting of the **ALLOTMENTS AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE** held in the Four Clocks Centre, Bishop Auckland on **TUESDAY, 27th MAY 2014 AT 4.30 P.M.**

Present: Councillor Anderson, (in the Chair) and Councillors Blackburn and Race.

Also Present: David Anderson (Town Clerk).

A&E.15/13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S. Zair.

A&E.16/13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were submitted.

A&E.17/13 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public in attendance.

A&E.18/13 POLICY ON SELLING ALLOTMENT PLOTS

Consideration was given to a policy on selling allotment plots.

Allotments were a valuable community space that provided people with the opportunity to enjoy physical exercise, meet new people and benefit from a healthier diet regardless of income. Therefore there were many legal and policy safeguards in place to make sure that their disposal was properly and thoroughly handled.

Councils could not dispose of statutory allotment land without the Secretary of State's consent. The Secretary of State would only agree to the disposal of allotments established using statutory powers if there was no demand for the allotments and/or adequate provision was made elsewhere.

The Council's allotments sites were transferred from the former Wear Valley District Council. With the exception of Toronto, it was not clear in the transfer documentation whether the allotment sites were 'statutory'. With regard to allotment plots at Toronto, most of these had been sold by Wear Valley District Council with only 3 out of the original 14 plots being transferred to the Town Council. There is therefore a precedent established for the disposal of these allotment plots.

RECOMMENDED: 1. That, with the exception of plots at Toronto where a precedent has been set, the Council do not sell allotments.

A&E.19/13 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.

A&E.20/13 REQUESTS TO PURCHASE ALLOTMENT PLOTS

Consideration was given to requests received to purchase the following allotment plots:-

1 Broken Banks
4-5 Broken Banks

Signed:
Chair

RECOMMENDED: 1. That the requests to purchase allotment plots be refused.

A&E.21/13 APPLICATION TO EXTEND A STABLE ON AN ALLOTMENT

Consideration was given to an application to extend the existing buildings on 54-55 Woodhouse Close to incorporate a field shelter to accommodate a foal which had been born on the plot in 2013. The foal and dam had been located elsewhere over the winter period. The tenant was wanting to return both horses to the allotment.

RECOMMENDED: That the request be refused.

A&E.22/13 APPLICATION TO EXTEND A STABLE ON AN ALLOTMENT

Consideration was given to a request for retrospective permission to erect a stable to accommodate 2 horses.

Members were reminded that a previous request for retrospective permission to erect a stable to accommodate 4 horses had been refused as Members were of the opinion that the plot was not large enough to accommodate 4 horses. It was however agreed at that meeting that previous permission to keep a pony overnight be confirmed. (Minute No A&E.14/13 refers).

The tenants had relocated 2 horses and were in the process of reducing the size of the stable accordingly.

RECOMMENDED: 1. That the request be refused.
2. That permission to keep a small pony overnight be confirmed.