

Bishop Auckland Town Council

Minutes of the Allotment and Environment Committee

Held on Tuesday 2nd March 2021 4pm via Zoom

Present: - Cllrs. D Fleming (Chair), J Cullen (vice Chair) and S Zair.

In attendance: - Mrs Sarah Harris, Town Clerk.

AE16/2020 Apologies for absence – Apologies were received from Cllr J Blackburn.

AE17/2020 Declarations of interest – no declarations were made.

AE18/2020 Public Participation - there were no members of the public in attendance.

AE19/2020 Minutes of the last meeting. Were approved at the December 2020 full Council meeting.

AE20/2020 Rents 2021-22

Members received a report on the Rents for 2021-22. It advised that letters would be issued to tenant's week commencing 8th March 2020. Tenants were advised with their 2020-21 agreements that there would be a rent increase for 2021-22. It is planned that information about the arrangements for the 2021 Town Show would be included in with the letters. It is planned that all rents are to be paid by 30 April 2020.

The Clerk advised that to ensure that payments were undertaken in a Covid Secure way cheque payment and bank transfer are the preferred option. Options for card payment facilities are being looked into and a report will be given to full Council on the 9th March 2021. If tenants only have cash as a payment option, a couple of dates will be made available for those persons to attend the Council premises and make the payment in a Covid Secure way.

Resolved: It was agreed to note the report.

AE21/2020 Community Garden Proposal

A report was presented from cultivate 4 Life relating to the large currently vacant plot at the Woodhouse Close Site. The proposal was for the development of a Community Garden. Members debated the proposal, and aired current concerns relating to demand for the site, costs to the Council, timing, engagement with other tenants etc.

Resolved: It was agreed that no firm decision would be made on this proposal at the moment. It was also agreed that the Clerk would pull together information on demand for plots at that site, establish what community engagement would need to take place, how much the proposal may cost the council etc and report to the next meeting of this committee to help the Members make a more informed decision on the proposal.

AE22/2020 Allotments Work Plan updates and development

Members reviewed the work plan. Some site inspections have taken place with others planned over the next month or so. The work plan would be amended to reflect any necessary repairs etc. The delayed repair to the watermain at West Mills is due to start second week of March, this was a year behind due to COVID-19.

Resolved: It was agreed to accept the work plan and have the information from the further inspections added.

AE23/2020 Rural Community Energy Fund Project

As this Committee deals with Environmental Projects, it would be looking after the Rural Community Energy Fund which the Council successfully secured £35k in funding to commission a feasibility study to access which building within the town may be suitable for solar electric panels.

Phase one of the study is underway with the 'long' list drawn up, and the next stage is to pull the list down to 20 buildings, and work with those organisations to see if they are suitable. The final stage would be to undertake some

community engagement and see if any of those deemed suitable are eligible for funding to bring the solar energy capacity to fruition. The second stage may need to delay due to timescales clashing with purdah.

Resolved: It was agreed to continue with stage one, but stage two may need to be deferred until after purdah. It was also agreed that once the exercise is undertaken the Council will need to access if they are in the right position to move onto the next stage of funding etc.

Signed: -

Mayor at Full Council 9th March 2021