

RECREATION COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 27TH NOVEMBER 2024

Minutes of the meeting of the **RECREATION COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, on **WEDNESDAY, 27TH NOVEMBER 2024** at 7:00pm

PRESENT

Councillor Michael Stead (Chairman) and:
Councillors: Eddy Adam, Tony Armstrong, Martin Ashcroft, Lindsey Aston, Arun M Chandran, John Clark, George Gray, Ian Gray, Brian Haigh, Phillip Hawkins, Andy Hill, Jed Hillary, Wendy Hillary, Brian McAnaney, John Moore, Carl Robinson, Anne Woodward and John Woodward.

OFFICERS

Mr Dan Austin (Town Clerk)
Mr Andrew Clark (Sports Complex Manager)
Mr Steve Cooper (Works and Environment Manager)
Mr Lee Williams (Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator)
Mrs Vikki Anderson (Corporate Assistant)

IN ATTENDANCE

Two members of the public were in attendance.

54. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Peter Bergg, Dorothy Bowman, Neil Collinson, Sandra Haigh, Joanne Jones, Neville Jones, Sandra Kirby and Ken Robson.

55. MEMBERS' DISPENSATIONS

No applications for dispensations had been received.

56. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Carl Robinson declared an interest in Item 7 – Golf Complex Report as a Committee Member of Oak Leaf Golf Club.

57. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

A member of the public commented that the music was very loud in the Sports Complex bar and as they are hard of hearing it is difficult to hear clearly.

The Sports Complex Manager advised that staff have been asked to read the room from day to day and make a judgement based on the situation. It was highlighted that the speakers on the previous system were very old and with the new system the sound is louder. The Sports Complex Manager agreed to speak to staff regarding the volume of the music and ensure it is not too loud.

58. MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor John Clark, seconded by Councillor Eddy Adam and:

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting of the Recreation Committee held on the 16th October 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

59. GOLF WORKING GROUP NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Members received the notes and recommendations of the meeting of the Golf Working Group held on the 22nd October 2024.

It was proposed by Councillor Jed Hillary, seconded by Councillor Eddy Adam and:

RESOLVED - that it be recommended that:

- i) The notes and recommendations of the meeting of the Golf Working Group held on the 22nd October 2024, be agreed, confirmed as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

60. OAKLEAF GOLF COMPLEX REPORT

Members considered an update report relating to the Oak Leaf Golf Complex for the six weeks ending the 17th November 2024.

The Town Clerk highlighted that the income figures are positive, with green fees up by 17% on last year and driving range takings up by 3%. Membership numbers are also up by 79 from the corresponding period last year to a total of 264 members. Positive feedback from visitors and members on the quality of the golf course and greens was also highlighted.

The Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator highlighted that significant works have been done on the greens since the last meeting. He referenced an incident whereby two greens on the golf course had been damaged by motorbikes. This had been reported to the police.

The Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator reported that the tree planting project in conjunction with North East Community Forest had unfortunately been delayed.

It was proposed by Councillor John Clark, seconded by Councillor Andy Hill and:

RESOLVED - that it be recommended that:

- i) The report be received.

61. OAKLEAF SPORTS COMPLEX USAGE COMPARISONS

A report was received from the Sports Complex Manager, updating members on statistical information in relation to the attendance and income at the Oak Leaf Sports Complex for the month of October, compared with the last five years.

It was proposed by Councillor Eddy Adam, seconded by Councillor Martin Ashcroft and:

RESOLVED - that it be recommended that:

- i) The report be received.

62. OAKLEAF SPORTS COMPLEX NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Members considered a report from the Oak Leaf Sports Complex Manager with an update on new developments relating to the Oak Leaf Sports Complex.

The Sports Complex Manager requested members to share the social media post regarding the pantomime.

Regarding the use of the Oak Leaf playing field by 102 Battalion REME for training exercises, Councillor Arun M Chandran proposed that that they be offered free usage of the land.

Councillor Martin Ashcroft asked where the proposed Rotary Club plaque would be sited. The Sports Complex Manager advised that it would be hung on the wall in the entrance between toilets and main entrance door.

It was proposed by Councillor Arun M Chandran, seconded by Councillor Martin Ashcroft and:

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- i) The report be received.
- ii) The early closing of the Sports Complex at 5pm on New Years Eve be agreed.
- iii) The request from 102 Battalion REME to use the running track and outer perimeter of the Oak Leaf sports pitches to carry out critical annual training and testing be approved at no charge subject to officers drawing up an appropriate licence and seeking the relevant assurances.
- iv) The request from The Rotary Club of Great Aycliffe to install a plaque at the Sports Complex be approved.

63. PARKS UPDATE

A report was received from the Works and Environment Manager providing an update on issues relating to the parks.

The Works and Environment Manager drew attention to the anti-social behaviour and significant damage caused at Moore Lane Park and football pitches recently which is an ongoing issue. Officers have been working with the police regularly who had promised to increase their patrols and move one of the rapid deployment CCTV cameras to the area.

Councillor Carl Robinson referenced the football pitch at Aycliffe Village, highlighting that the goal posts had been removed for repairs seven months ago, and asked when they would be reinstated. The Works and Environment Manager said he thought they had been reinstated, that they are ready in the depot and he would ensure they are reinstated within the week.

Councillor Jed Hillary expressed his disappointment at the time being taken to move the 'rapid deployment' CCTV cameras and requested that officers chase Durham County Council and Newton Aycliffe Police to ensure that a camera is moved to Moore Lane as soon as possible. He advised that this had been requested previously due to issues with off road bikes and that the Town Council had made a significant financial contribution to the CCTV cameras.

The Works and Environment Manager advised that Newton Aycliffe Police have also expressed their frustrations at the time it takes to move the rapid deployment CCTV cameras, and there had been issues with Durham County Council's role in moving the cameras, and that he would welcome any assistance that County Councillors could provide to speed up this process.

Councillor Eddy Adam explained that the rapid deployment CCTV cameras are only 'rapid' when systems are in place to make them so, and the issue is likely more about the time it takes measuring and checking the street lights are able to take the cameras.

Councillor Martin Ashcroft referred to the item in the report regarding recent Council events and asked for it to be recorded in the minutes, the Council's gratitude to the Works Section staff, proposing that the Town Clerk sends a letter of thanks to the works operatives on behalf of the Council. Councillor Andy Hill agreed and commented on the quality of the Christmas lights display.

Councillor Tony Armstrong asked if Moore Lane Sports Club have CCTV as they have pitches etc on site, and asked if officers could work with them to try and tackle the issue together.

Councillor Lindsey Aston asked if there is any feasibility of calculating the damage and repair costs resulting from the antisocial behaviour. The Works and Environment Manager confirmed that a record of costs is maintained where this is feasible and measurable.

It was proposed by Councillor Jed Hillary, and seconded by Councillor Martin Ashcroft and:

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- i) The report be received.
- ii) Officers chase up Durham County Council and Newton Aycliffe Police to ensure that a rapid deployment CCTV camera is moved to Moore Lane Park as soon as possible.
- iii) The Town Clerk writes a letter to the works department operatives expressing councillors' gratitude for their work on recent events including the fireworks display, Cyclocross, Remembrance Sunday and the Christmas trees and lights.

Chairman