

## RECREATION COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2024

Minutes of the meeting of the **RECREATION COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, on **WEDNESDAY, 4<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2024 at 7:00pm**

### PRESENT

**Councillor Michael Stead (Chairman)** and:  
Councillors: Eddy Adam, Martin Ashcroft, Lindsey Aston, Dorothy Bowman, Arun M Chandran, Neil Collinson, George Gray, Ian Gray, Phillip Hawkins, Andy Hill, Jed Hillary, Joanne Jones, Neville Jones, Sandra Kirby, Brian McAnaney, John Moore, Peter Musa, Carl Robinson, Ken Robson, Anne Woodward and John Woodward.

### OFFICERS

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

### IN ATTENDANCE

Six members of the public.

#### 29. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tony Armstrong, Peter Bergg, John Clark, Sandra Haigh and Wendy Hillary.

#### 30. MEMBERS' DISPENSATIONS

No applications for dispensations had been received.

#### 31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Carl Robinson declared an interest in Item 6 – Golf Complex Report as a Committee Member of Oak Leaf Golf Club.

#### 32. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No public questions were received.

#### 33. MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor Andy Hill, seconded by Councillor Ken Robson and:

**RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the meeting of the Recreation Committee held on the 10<sup>th</sup> July 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **34. OAKLEAF GOLF COMPLEX REPORT**

A report was received setting out statistical information related to usage, income and improvements at the Oakleaf Golf Complex for the eight weeks ended the 24<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

Councillor Martin Ashcroft asked when the new footpath on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> holes and would be completed.

The Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator advised that most of the materials are in stock now and the initial work will be started next week, with ground cover membrane and then tarmac scrapings from the tee to the ditch, then onto the proposed winter green.

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

**RESOLVED** - that it be recommended that:-

- i) The report be received.

#### **35. OAKLEAF SPORTS COMPLEX USAGE COMPARISONS**

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

It was proposed by Councillor Arun M. Chandran, seconded by Councillor Eddy Adam and:

**RESOLVED** - that it be recommended that:

- i) The report be received.

#### **36. 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 advised that the opening times trial is going well and requested that the trial be extended through the winter, with a further report to the committee after Christmas outlining any permanent recommendations.

Details of bar entertainment systems were outlined which would offer music, bingo, quizzes, games etc and it was requested that the systems be tested on a trial basis during the remainder of the financial year to assess their viability and success in attracting additional customers and usage.

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

**RESOLVED** – that it be recommended that:

- i) The report be received.
- ii) The trial opening times be extended to March, with a further report to the Committee in the new year.
- iii) The Sports Complex Manager organises a trial of the entertainment systems during the remainder of the financial year and decide on the best option.

### **37. PARKS UPDATE**

A report was received providing Members with an update with issues relating to the parks.

Councillor Andy Hill requested that consideration be given to removing the flower bed from outside St Clare's due to the positioning between two trees and poor soil quality which resulted in a poor-quality flower bed.

A discussion was held and Councillor Jed Hillary requested that if the flowerbed was to be removed, the creation of a new flowerbed elsewhere on town council land should be considered in its place.

Councillor Martin Ashcroft proposed that this issue be picked up and dealt with under the Environment Report on the Environment Committee.

This was agreed.

Councillor George Gray raised a number of issues in relation to West Park, including the issue of a tree stump not being ground out, the frequency of lake cleaning and the issue of overhanging trees, and a resident's request for the installation of a bench, as well as the issue of a sign at Aycliffe Village Park which cannot be seen because of tree growth.

The Town Clerk clarified that all of these issues have been raised with himself and the Works and Environment Manager and answers provided to Councillor Gray.

He provided a summary of the officer response and current status of each issue for the benefit of the Committee.

Councillor George Gray confirmed he was happy with the Town Clerk's response.

Councillor Arun Chandran requested that the issue of the willow tree stump be included in the next Parks Update Report for consideration.

**RESOLVED** – that it be recommended that:

- i) The report be received.

### **38. WEST PARK BRIDGE IMPROVEMENTS UPDATE**

A report was submitted to update Members on the grant funded improvements undertaken to the pedestrian bridge at West Park, and to request Members' consideration and approval of further improvements for essential future maintenance of the bridge and lakes.

If agreed, it was advised that the £10,205 cost of the additional works would be funded from the West Park Lakes provision in the Medium-Term Financial Plan, part of which would be brought forward to this year.

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 funding of further bridge adaptations, to include the retrofitting of a maintenance hatch, installation of a raking screen, and the replacement adapted guard rail, to aid future management of the bridge structure and surrounding area of the lake, be agreed.
- iii) The £10,205 cost of the works be met from the West Park Lakes Capital Budget currently set aside in the 2027/28 year in the Medium-Term Financial Plan.
- iv) Approval be sought to bring this budget forward to 2024/25 from the Policy and Resources Committee.

### **39. REPAIRS TO SCOTT PLACE PLAY AREA CLIMBING FRAME**

The Grounds Maintenance Service Co-ordinator submitted a report to request an additional budget approval to repair and renovate the large Kompan 'Galaxy' climbing frame unit located in Scott Place Play Area.

A lengthy discussion was held regarding the condition and remaining life of the play equipment and whether the rubber mount needed to be replaced or whether the joining block could be repaired / resealed.

The Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator advised that he was unaware of a product that would seal the rubber and be hardwearing enough, but could explore this and highlighted that it was advisable to follow the manufacturer's recommendations from an insurance point of view.

Councillor Eddy Adam expressed concerns around trying to save money on children's play equipment and the need to take expert advice.

Councillor Lindsey Aston asked about the timescale for the work to be carried out. The Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator advised of a three-week lead time from raising the Purchase Order to completing the work.

Councillor Arun M. Chandran advised that whilst the Council should look to save money wherever possible, the safety of children's play area equipment is paramount and expert advice should be taken.

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

**RESOLVED** – that it be recommended that:

- i) The report be received.
- ii) The 'option 1' repairs be approved.
- iii) The request for an additional capital budget approval of £5,250, for the funding of the repairs, be taken to the next Policy and Resources Committee for approval.

**Chairman**