



Ferryhill Town Council

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Dear Councillor,

I Hereby Summon You to attend a **Meeting** of the **Community Services Committee** at **6.00PM** on **Tuesday, 3rd September 2024**, the meeting will be held at **Ferryhill Town Hall, Chapel Terrace, Ferryhill, Co Durham, DL17 8JL**

Dated 28th August 2024

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'L Owens'.

Leeanne Owens
Town Clerk

Membership

Councillors Carole Atkinson, Curtis Bihari, Judith Donald, Dave Farry, Bernie Lamb, Joe Makepeace, Kim Tinkler, Christine Woods, A Ferguson, Vacancy.

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for absence**
2. **Election of Chairman**
3. **Election of Vice-Chairman**
4. **Declarations of Interest**
To invite members to declare any interest they may have.

5. **Members' Dispensation**

To consider written requests for dispensations from members who have declared interests under Disclosable or Non-Disclosable Pecuniary Interests – Section 33 of the 2011 Localism Act.

6. **Public Participation (Subject to Public Participation Policy)**

Members of the public are permitted to make representations, ask questions and give evidence in respect of any item of business included in the agenda. Questions will not be received by the Council which are in furtherance of a person's individual circumstances or which are about a matter where there is a right of appeal to the courts, a tribunal or government minister. A question will not be received by the Council where the issue it concerns has been the subject of a decision of the Council in the last six months.

7. **Allotments Reserves**

To consider the attached report

8. **Works Manager's Quarterly Report**

To consider the attached report

Subject: Allotments Reserves

Report of: Town Clerk

Committee: Community Services

Date: 3 September 2024

1.0 Purpose of the Report

To provide Members with an overview of the Allotment sites the Town Council Manage.

2.0 Background

2.1 As Members will be aware the Town Council Manages allotments at Paxton Street, Storehouse and East End.

2.2 Currently we have 8 vacant plots at Paxton Street allotment site, 6 vacant plots at Storehouse- 5 of these being the newly created plots and no available plots at East End allotments.

2.3 Seven of the vacant plots at Paxton Street have recently become available after the previous tenants were evicted and require substantial improvement work including fly tipped rubbish removed, this also included asbestos, and groundworks.

2.4 Over the years the Council has tried various initiatives to encourage the take up of plots including free rent for the first year on overgrown plots. This ceased as it resulted in people taking on plots and then not doing any work on them which resulted in the Town Council spending more money.

2.5 Residents who have viewed allotments have often said that our plots are too large.

2.6 As you will be aware because of this feedback we were able to create 4 half sized plots at Storehouse allotment site.

- 2.7 At the time everyone who was on the waiting list for a smaller plot was contacted, however unfortunately nobody made an appointment to view these newly created plots.
- 2.8 To encourage the take up of allotment plots, we have previously offered to clear plots for perspective tenants in the hope that this may encourage take up of plots, however this hasn't encouraged the acceptance of those plots either.
- 2.9 A regular issue that enables plots to fall into poor condition is a high turnover of new tenants with the scenario being, a new tenant will take on a plot, they won't do any work on it and then they will either hand it back, or be evicted from the plot following an inspection process from us.
- 2.10 The next new tenant will then take on a plot that hasn't had any maintenance completed on it in 6/9 months and unfortunately we will find ourselves in the same situation as above.
- 2.11 Unfortunately that is the nature of the idea of an allotment as opposed to something we can counteract. People see an allotment as a nice idea in theory, but it requires a lot of work, cost and time to manage and maintain the plot and this is also dependent upon the condition of the plot when it is handed over.

3.0 Issues for consideration

- 3.1 Due to being a small workforce it is rare that we have the staff time to clear plots, and it is not always the case of just cutting back undergrowth, there is usually rubbish and or asbestos on the plots and staff are not trained to remove asbestos. This would need to be removed by a specialist company at a cost to the Town Council.
- 3.2 Our tenancy agreements have always stated that the council are responsible for external fences only, therefore if we were to start erecting internal fencing on multiple plots then due to lack of staff time this would need to be completed by a contractor, again at a cost to the Town Council.
- 3.3 Consideration would also need to be given to who would be responsible for the maintenance of these fences going forward if this is something the Town Council wished to consider.
- 3.4 For context allotment plots are handed over in various conditions, some won't have fences, therefore the new plots at Storehouse aren't that different to the average plot.
- 3.5 If we are to consider erecting internal fencing at the new plots at Storehouse, would we also put new fences up on any other plot too.

4.0 Allotment reserves

4.1 The reserves for the allotments currently stands at £10,121.

5.0 Priority Areas

5.1 After a thorough investigation of the allotment sites we manage it is felt that the priority areas to be considered using allotment reserves should be repair work to the paths and the spread of Japanese Knotweed in several areas at Storehouse Allotment.

5.2 The main paths at East End and Paxton Street are particularly problematic with large potholes.

5.3 We have previously had staff complete maintenance work on the paths at both sites, however this is becoming more regular and time consuming due to the deterioration of the paths.

5.4 In relation to the Japanese Knotweed our records indicate that in 2020 a survey was completed by a contractor and a quote given to eradicate the Japanese Knotweed from several areas at Storehouse Allotment, however for reasons unknown this work was not taken up.

5.5 Unfortunately this means that the knotweed has spread at our Storehouse site and into the Bungalow compound at Dean Bank Park. The risk we have is that the knotweed is beginning to border the A167 and becoming close to land owned by others.

5.6 We have been advised that if the knotweed was to spread to properties then we will be liable as we are aware of the issue and it would be argued that we have not addressed the issue.

5.7 The other issue we have is that there is a farmers field on the A167 field between the A167 pitch and the youth pitches, therefore we also have the issue that if we address the spread of Japanese Knotweed and the farmer does not as you could argue that both the Town Council and the land owner of the farmers field need to treat their areas of responsibility for any treatment to be fully effective.

6.0 Other areas to consider

6.1 In addition to the priority areas discussed above we have seven plots at Paxton Street that have been returned in poor condition (one tenant had been given four plots and the other had been given three.

6.2 The 4 plots have asbestos piled up amongst other rubbish on the path between the plots.

- 6.3 The 3 plots have been used as a rubbish removal business and have had large amounts of waste brought onto site.
- 6.4 To enable these plots to be safely brought back into use a contractor should be hired to clear the rubbish and asbestos.
- 6.5 We are currently awaiting a quote for waste and asbestos removal.

7.0 Quotations received for priority works

- 7.1 Despite the best efforts of the Works Manager to source 3 quotations for the works required for both the path works and the Japanese Knotweed, only one company has come forward for the paths and the Japanese Knotweed. Financial Regulations allow for a situation where only one tender is received when three or more have been asked for. This quotation is based on a site visit by the firm and a common specification. The quotation received from the company for the path works is listed below.

DGS Limited

- 7.2 The quotations for each site, are:

East End Allotments (to provide grids	£7,890
East End Allotments (to concrete the path, this would be a more hardwearing option	£13,150
Paxton Street – Tarmac	£8,450

The prices exclude VAT.

- 7.3 The quotation received from the company for the Japanese Knotweed is listed below.

Inspectas Land Remediation

- 7.4 The quotation received is:

£15,000 over a 5 year period, which equates to £3,000 per year.

- 7.5 The quotation includes a Japanese Knotweed Management Plan (KMP) that includes 5-years' herbicidal treatment with an additional 2-year monitoring period complete with a 10-year warranty with options to include an Insurance Backed Guarantee.

The price excludes VAT.

8.0 Finance and Budgets

- 8.1 If Members are in agreement to progress with the path works, I would propose that the cost is taken from the allotment reserve.
- 8.2 If Members are also in agreement to progress with the Japanessee Knotweed, depending upon which path they would like to focus on, for example the lowest quote at a cost of £7,890 for East End, then I would propose that the first year for the programme of works to treat the Japanese Knotweed also be taken from the allotment reserve as £2,231 would be left if going with the lowest quotation for the path. This would leave an additional cost of £769 for the first year treatment plan for the Japanese Knotweed and the additional cost could be taken from general reserves.

9.0 Recommendation

- 9.1 It is recommended that Members consider the report and decide upon which options from the report they wish to focus on.
- 9.2 If Members are in agreement to progress with the treatment for the Japanese Knotweed, I would recommend that Members consider using capital reserves to treat the Japanese Knotweed going forward, because due to the management programme that has been put forward for this, this could be viewed as a Capital project.
- 9.3 If Members agree to use capital reserves for the remaining years (years 2-5) to treat the Japanese Knotweed this will reduce capital reserves to £34,970.00.

Subject: Quarterly Community Services Report

Report of: Works Manager

Committee: Community Services

Date: 3rd September 2024

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To update members of the work undertaken and issues in relation to the previous quarter and appraise of the schedule of work for the next quarter.

2.0 DETAIL

2.1 QUARTER 2 - SUMMER

In the period June – August the following tasks have been undertaken.

Daily Tasks

- Litter picked & bins emptied - All Parks
- Play Equipment Inspections
- Gate Security - All Parks & Cemetery
- Health and Safety Inspections - All Sites
- Cleaning of all Public Toilet Facilities

Weekly Tasks

General

- Litter picked - All Open Spaces
- Grass cutting
- Strimming
- Path cleaning and edging
- Fire alarm checks
- Cleaning of All Buildings
- Market Duties - Set up & clear up afterwards
- Notice Boards

Shrub/Flowerbed Maintenance:

- Weeding
- Edge Beds
- Dead Head
- Edging flower beds

Football fields/Cricket/bowls

- Over Marking of Football Fields
- Rolling cricket pitch
- Spraying bowls and cricket pitch
- Scarifying bowls and cricket pitch

Monthly Tasks

- Bus Shelter Cleaning
- Health and Safety Inspections
- Water and electricity readings
- Legionella Inspections - All Buildings
- Barriers put out/brought in for car park service users-Barclays Bank van etc.

Other

- Install Hanging Baskets/Tubs
- Cut & Strim Parish Paths

Shrub Bed Maintenance:

- Spot Treat Weeds

Seasonal Bedding:

- Apply Fertilizer
- Dig and & Prepare Beds
- Remove Seasonal Bedding
- Prepare Flower beds
- Plant Flower Beds

As & When Required

Cemetery:

- Preparation of Graves
- Top up of Graves

Allotments:

- Fence Repairs
- Applying pest control
- Cut and strim paths

Additional work undertaken

1. Memorial bench installed at Mainsforth Sports Complex
2. Gate repairs at East End Allotments
3. Mainsforth Caravan Club event-set up water and bins
4. Summer Gala-set up gazebos, market stall, etc. and dismantle after the event
5. Repairs to water feature pump at Duncombe Cemetery
6. Make safe fallen/damaged trees after high winds 22nd/23rd August.
7. Ferryhill in Bloom judging

2.1 QUARTER 3 – AUTUMN

In the period September - November the following tasks have been undertaken.

Daily Tasks

- Litter picked & bins emptied - All Parks
- Play Equipment Inspections
- Gate Security - All Parks & Cemetery
- Health and Safety Inspections - All Sites
- Cleaning of all Public Toilet Facilities
- Litter picking, sweeping and general street cleansing duties around the Town Centre.

Weekly Tasks

General

- Litter picked - All Open Spaces
- Cleaning of All Buildings
- Market Duties – Set up & clear up afterwards
- Notice Boards
- Path cleaning and edging

- Fire alarm checks
- Graffiti removal
- Cleaning of all Sports Facilities
- Leaf removal or mulching
- Show allotments to prospective tenants and deal with any queries

Shrub/Flowerbed Maintenance

- Planting of Spring bedding plants and bulbs
- Edge Beds
- Dead Head
- Pruning of shrubs.
- Weeding

Football Fields/Bowls

- Over Marking of Football Fields
- Gang Mowing of Football Fields - undertaken by contractor
- Insecticide Application
- Irrigation
- Top Dressing
- Apply Grass Seed
- Clean Out Bowls Drops
- Cut Bowls Banks
- Apply Wetting Agent

Monthly Tasks

- Bus Shelter Cleaning
 - Health and Safety Inspections
 - Water and electricity readings
1. Legionella Inspections - All Buildings

As & When Required

Cemetery

1. Preparation of Graves
1. Top up of Graves

General

1. Playground maintenance
1. Street furniture repairs-benches and planters.

Other Work To Be Undertaken

Awards Presentation evening set up
 Erect poppy net in front of Town Hall
 Remembrance Sunday- Barriers around car park and PA system set up
 Armistice Day-Town Hall Garden set up

Erecting Christmas lights at the Town Hall and around Ferryhill – hoist collected from depot and returned
Christmas Fair/light switch on-set up Town Hall Gardens-gazebos, mats etc, staff to man gates and toilets, play Santa, set up PA system

3.0 RECOMMENDED

That the report be noted.