



## **BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Environment Committee held via Zoom on Thursday 25 February 2021 at 4.30 pm**

#### **Present:**

**Councillors:** M Richardson (Chair), E Anderson-Smith (Vice Chair), A Cartie, K Nisbet, A Parsons, J R Potts, J Reid, S Stanger, W Taylor

Also Present: Councillor G Webb

#### **Officers:**

Joseph Hughes, Town Clerk  
Malcolm Wilkinson, Deputy Town Clerk  
David Clough, General Services Officer  
Maureen Hawthorne, Committee Clerk

**Members of the Public - 8      Invited Guest(s) 4**

#### **Allotment Holder Questions**

##### **Question 1**

Having had numerous allotment holders and members of the committee voice their concerns about further restrictions to access to Bolam Avenue allotments for vehicles I have been instructed to object to any further restrictions as they feel that they are being discriminated against the reasoning is that most of the other sites owned by b t .c have good road surfaces whereas bolam allotments have a dirt road and vehicle traffic is increasing to allow disabled and disadvantaged people to access the site. they know the lanes were raked and rolled recently, they now feel that a more substantial surface be put in place .

I must insist that the council have a duty to maintain these roadways as landlord of the site and always allow access for all.

## **Question 2**

Having been contacted by numerous members and members of the committee about proposals to put further restrictions to access onto Bolam Avenue allotments I have been instructed to object to this as members feel that they are being discriminated against as other sites in blyth have vehicle access and bolam has a dirt track road can an alternative be found as this is now the 21st century and equal opportunity for all whether disabled, aged, or disadvantaged.

I must inform the council that it is their duty as owners of the land that they keep roadways in good order as they are liable for any persons injuring themselves.

## **Q 1 & 2 Answer**

The Town Council have in past years agreed to contractors carrying out improvement works on the lanes within the Bolam site to a required specification. As the members of the association rightly point out the lanes currently are in a poor condition because of the high volume of vehicles entering onto the site. The Town Council as owners of the land are obligated to keep the roads in good order, if the roads were upgraded to the same levels that have been used on other sites the costs for this to be carried out would be more than £100,000.00. Based on that figure the cost to upgrade the lanes on this one site because of its size could even be as much as 5 times the present maintenance budget.

## **Question 3 – Gates onto Bolam Site**

These are very big heavy gates, and my concerns are safety and the difficulties and the health impact it puts on the allotment holder with disabilities.

As the allotment holder needs to gain access via gates as they arrive in their car Needing to park in the allocated car park

Once again, I wish to point out the pathways and car park area is not disability friendly.

The paths need to be addressed as they are Unsatisfactory for people with disabilities High rents are paid by Allotment holders. we would like to see that the gates and pathways carpark maintained to a good standard and for decisions to be made about concerns for the locked main gate the impact this has on people with disabilities.

### Q3 Answer Gates onto Bolam Site

Regarding the gates being heavy and difficult for those that have disabilities while entering the site. The double gates are hinged and only need to be pushed back and do not need to be lifted, once the tenant has parked his car, he only must push the gates back together and lock the padlock which is fixed in placed. This also applies to the pedestrian gate on the baths entrance to the Bolam site.

<b>Minute No</b>	
<b>1</b>	<p><b>Apologies for Absence</b></p> <p>Councillors: D Carr</p>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Disclosure of Interests and Grant of Dispensations</b></p> <p>There were no disclosures of interest.</p>
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Balloon/Lantern Releases</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed Stephen Wardle and John Robertson, NCC and referred to Agenda Item 9, Decision Report. Stephen gave the following information: NCC can issue Fixed Penalty Notices to anyone who organises a balloon release. If NCC are made aware of a large scale event, work will be done with the organiser to educate them about the risks and encourage them to use alternatives. Stephen highlighted the need to handle such events in a sensitive way. John reiterated the comments and agreed that the best way forward is to educate people via the NCC and BTC website. Members agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information to go on BTC website to highlight the risks to the environment and marine life of balloon releases.</li> <li>• Anyone who becomes aware that a balloon release is going to take place should contact the General Services Officer at BTC who will in turn alert the Environmental Enforcement team.</li> <li>• BTC to hold a green week and balloon releases will be part of this. Possibly involving schools at an appropriate time in the future.</li> <li>• Stephen will send links from NCC website (see below)</li> </ul> <p><a href="https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Bins-Recycling-and-Waste/Alternatives-to-balloon-releases.pdf">https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Bins-Recycling-and-Waste/Alternatives-to-balloon-releases.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.northumberland.gov.uk">www.northumberland.gov.uk</a></p>

	<p><a href="http://www.mcsuk.org/campaigns/dont-let-go">http://www.mcsuk.org/campaigns/dont-let-go</a></p>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Blyth Estuary</b></p> <p>Lesley Silvera, Community Projects Manager, Groundwork UK gave some background to the plans which have evolved for the Blyth Estuary and followed with a very detailed presentation (see attached). Councillors and members of the public who were present were asked to treat some of the information as confidential as it is not in the public domain as yet. Some of the work will include plastic strips for fish egg lays, vertipools installed on the East Pier and West Staithes is to be scoped further. There will also be a site visit with Port of Blyth. Lesley indicated that her colleague would be welcome the opportunity to become involved with the “green week” being planned by BTC. Information will be released on the BTC website in due course.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Lesley for her very informative and interesting presentation.</p>
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Phase 2 – Blyth Offshore Demonstration Wind Farm</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed Mark Hazelton who gave a presentation on the new and innovative floating offshore technology being used for phase 2 of the windfarm. Permission is being sought at the Blyth site for the installation of up to five more turbines, in an already identified locations. On completion, it would be among the first projects of this kind in English waters. Members noted this is another first for Blyth and look forward to receiving further updates.</p>
<b>6</b>	<p><b>Previous Minutes</b></p> <p><b>6.1 Minutes of the Environment Committee held on Tuesday 26 November 2020</b></p> <p><b>6.2 Minutes of the Partnership Working Group held on Tuesday 19 January 2020</b></p> <p>Members noted all of the above minutes as a true record.</p>
<b>7</b>	<p><b>Actions arising from Previous Minutes</b></p> <p><b>7.1 Minute No 7.1 -Ownership of South Beach Play Area - no further update. GSO still investigating. (Ongoing)</b></p>

<p><b>8</b></p>	<p><b>Environment Committee Budget Monitoring Report</b></p> <p>The report was noted. No queries raised.</p>
<p><b>9</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Report 1</b></p> <p><b>Commissioning of Bespoke Litter Bins</b></p> <p>The Committee RESOLVED to commission 3 litter bins to be situated at suitable points on the Quayside at a cost of <b>£5,500. Cost to be met from Future Development Projects, budget code 889 (£25,000).</b></p> <p><b>Balloon/Lantern Releases</b></p> <p>Committee RESOLVED to adopt the NCC stance on the banning of balloon and lantern releases. BTC will publicise information on their website to help educate residents of the risks to the environment.</p> <p><b>Blyth in Bloom Competition</b></p> <p>Committee RESOLVED that this should take the form of an online competition with the public voting. Date to be confirmed.</p>
<p><b>1</b> <b>2</b>  <b>3</b>   <b>4</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Report 2</b></p> <p><b>Isabella Colliery Memorial Sculpture</b></p> <p>Committee RESOLVED to agree to management of the sculpture following installation. <b>The sculpture has been approved from County Councillor Webb’s Northumberland County Council’s Capital Programme schemes fund including installation, at a cost £11,250.</b></p> <p><b>South Farm Allotment Car Park</b></p> <p>Committee RESOLVED to the regrading and stabilisation on South Farm Allotment Car Park, by the appointed contractor at a cost of £6,788 from the 2020/21 budget Planned Maintenance Programme (code 696).</p> <p><b>Bolam Allotments Lane Restrictions</b></p> <p>Committee RESOLVED:</p>

<p><b>5</b></p>	<p>1. Restrict the access of vehicles onto the site, other than Emergency Services and Agricultural Vehicles. 2. To install a barrier at the Isabella end of the site to restrict access. Indicative cost £675 from 2020/2021 Planned Maintenance Programme (code 696).</p> <p><b>Cycle Stands</b></p> <p>Committee RESOLVED:</p> <p>to accept the 4 x Sheffield style cycle stands from NCC, and add them to the Blyth Town Council Asset Register.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One at Plessey Road NE24 4AF</li> <li>• One outside the former Black Diamond Public House NE24 4NP</li> <li>• One outside the shops at South Beach NE24 3RJ</li> <li>• One outside the shops on Newsham Farm Estate NE24 4PZ</li> </ul>
<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>Broadway Plants</b></p> <p>Committee RESOLVED:</p> <p>To approve the recommendation from Partnership Working Group to purchase new varieties of perennials for the beds around Broadway and Quayside. Indicative cost - <b>£2,900.</b></p> <p><b>Standing Orders to extend the meeting were agreed.</b></p>
<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b>Play Area – Kitty Brewster</b></p> <p>Committee RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To agree to providing another Play Area in 2023/24 , and in the meantime continue to clarify ownership of the land at South Beach, which may result in this Play Area being installed in 2022/23 . It was further agreed to invite Rob Murfin to a future meeting to get clarification around S106.</li> </ul>
<p><b>8</b></p>	<p><b>Dog Fouling – request for additional bins</b></p> <p>Committee RESOVLED that there is adequate provision of ground mounted bins (5) in Miners Memorial Park and Gallagher’s Field. Officers will monitor the situation.</p>
<p><b>9</b></p>	<p><b>Town Council Flagpole</b></p>

	<p>Committee RESOLVED to agree to the necessary application being made for a Flagpole to be installed in the Elfin Walk area of the Town. <b>Cost for purchase and installation of flagpole will be approximately £900. Flags will cost £30-£40. Costs to be met from Committee’s overall budget.</b></p>
<b>11</b>	<p><b>Decision Report 3</b></p> <p>Committee RESOLVED that the current Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Northumberland County Council be extended to the 31 March 2022 for the Enforcement Officer provision, in line with the 2021/22 budget.</p>
<b>12</b>	<p><b>Delegated Actions Report</b></p> <p>There were no delegated actions to report.</p>
<b>13</b>	<p><b>Information Report</b></p> <p>Members noted the contents of the information report with regard to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Trees</li> <li>2. Allotments</li> <li>3. Play Areas</li> <li>4. Bins</li> <li>5. Bus Shelters</li> <li>6. Seats</li> <li>7. Spirit of Staithes</li> </ol>
<b>14</b>	<p><b>Specific Allotment Issues</b></p> <p>There were no specific allotment issues to discuss.</p>
<b>15</b>	<p><b>Environment Enforcement Officer Report</b></p> <p>Members noted the information contained in the reports for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. November 2020</li> <li>2. December 2020</li> <li>3. January 2021</li> </ol>
<b>16</b>	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>Councillor Webb announced that he is commissioning a sculpture for the Quayside to commemorate the heritage of</p>

	the Staithes and Shipping in Blyth. The GSO is currently working with a company on the design.
<b>17</b>	<p><b>Date and time of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>The next meeting of the Environment Committee will be held on Thursday 20 May 2021. If the current arrangements continue this may be a virtual meeting.</p>
<b>18</b>	<p><b>Part II</b></p> <p>Pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960; that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be excluded and they are instructed to withdraw.</p> <p><b>Tender for Broadway Play Area</b></p>

**Members of the Environment Committee**

Councillors:

- M Richardson (Chair)
- E Anderson-Smith (Vice-Chair)
- D Carr
- A Cartie
- K Nisbet
- A Parsons
- J R Potts
- J Reid
- S Stanger
- G Thompson