

**Minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee meeting held on  
Thursday 22nd September 2011 in the  
Council Chamber, Clayport Street Alnwick at 7.30pm.**

**Present:** Cllrs M Harrington (Chairman), S Allcroft, J Bell, R Roberts, S Walton, G Watson.

**In attendance:** W Batey, Chief Officer and Town Clerk.

**RA 11/10. Apologies:** Cllrs Grisdale and Cllr, Patience.

**RA 11/11. Declaration of Interests**

None

**RA 11/12. Budget Update**

The Committee budget position for income and expenditure as at 21<sup>st</sup> September was considered. The overall budget for events was expected to be overspent by some £400, although expenditure on projects was likely to be below budget by perhaps £2,000. Expenditure on assets appeared to be on budget. In discussions, councillors requested further information on the costs associated with Robertson's fountain. Councillor Harrington gave an update on the Peter's Mill project. He outlined that Northumberland Estates and the landowner were happy with the proposals and he hoped the project could be completed in the spring. It was also reported that the communications group were looking at the replacement of the website which was included in the budget. Allotment rent increases had also been proposed by the Allotments working group.

**RESOLVED: The budget update be received.**

**RA 11/13. Update on TPO request for woodland to rear of former Thomas Percy School**

It was reported that a meeting was proposed for 27<sup>th</sup> September. Councillors Patience and Castle would be attending and meeting council officers to look at options. A woodland Management Plan had been suggested by the planning officers. Councillors highlighted the presence of bats in the woodland and maintained their support for protection of the woodland.

**RESOLVED: The update be received.**

**RA 11/14. Allotments update**

The clerk reported that he had met with Northumberland Estates and had requested a 10 year lease for the Ratten Row site to replace to annual agreement. This was particularly as a result of the investments levels required to upgrade the water supply. He had received a letter from the Estates indicating that they did not wish to become tied into a 10 year agreement as this could impact on future development opportunities. Instead the Estates have said they would be keen to potentially take back the land in hand and lease the sites directly to the allotment holders. Councillors discussed the issue and some felt it was difficult to justify costs of upgrading if there was no long term security. It was proposed to make a recommendation to full council to offer the allotments back to the Estates for them to manage. In the light of this, it was confirmed a meeting with allotment holders planned for the near future would not take place, such a meeting would be better after the council had made a decision.

**RECOMMENDATION: That discussions be held with Northumberland Estates regarding the handing back of the Ratten Row allotments for them to manage.**

The meeting closed at 8.24pm