

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FLOWERS & LIGHTS COMMITTEE OF FEATHERSTONE TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, OLD TOWN HALL, FEATHERSTONE ON THURSDAY 12TH JANUARY 2017 AT 11AM.

Present: Councillor G Isherwood, Councillor M Isherwood (11.10am) Councillor R Taylor, Councillor S Vickers and Councillor J Wright (Chair).

In Attendance: Mr R Webster TCL Group (Plantscape) and Sue Coles (Town Clerk).

357/17 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Councillor C Tennant and Councillor M Tennant-King.

358/17 MEMBERS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

359/17 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The meeting is to be opened for the public to address Members on matters relevant to the business of the committee. However residents cannot take part in the main proceedings of the meeting, this is strictly limited to Councillors.

360/17 PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

To consider, if thought fit, a resolution under the terms of the public bodies admission to meetings act that the press and public be excluded from any items relating at any part of the meeting by reason of the confidential nature of the business being transacted.

361/17 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

It was

RESOLVED: To approve and sign the minutes of the Flowers & Lights Committee held on 15th September 2016, minute numbers 184/16 to 191/16.

362/17 SOLAR POWERED CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTS and FEATHERSTONE IN BLOOM CONTRACT 2017-18

Councillor Wright welcomed Mr Richard Webster Group Operations Support Manager of TCL Group, a company which took over Plantscape in 2016, to the meeting in order to discuss this year's Solar Powered Christmas Tree contract.

Councillor G Isherwood said that the contract had had a very good start from switch on held on the 23rd November for about 10 days then onwards they didn't perform very satisfactorily. It was noticed that the switch on times became variable and when the company had reprogrammed them on the 23rd December they did not work thereafter. Three trees had fallen off the lampposts (one in front of a car) and that didn't include the tree which the company had re-fixed on their visit. When they are working correctly they are superb.

Mr Webster advised that he had not had any complaints regarding the fixings from the 92 councils they had supplied this year and he found it strange that they were falling off. Plantscape had assured him that all were secured with three bands but Members corrected this statement.

He advised that TCL had acquired Plantscape in July. The solar components were upgraded this year and fully tested. They were then programmed for the specific timings. The trees batteries weren't designed to last all year but the company was happy that they would last the duration of the contract. He acknowledged that they had received complaints about the lights failing from other contracts. TCL are in talks with the supplier so that this doesn't happen in 2017 and the company will only go ahead if they are 100% happy with the solar components.

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362/17 SOLAR POWERED CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTS and FEATHERSTONE IN BLOOM CONTRACT 2017-18 Cont'd...

Councillor G Isherwood expressed how very disappointed he was this year of the contract. Previously the trees had been a massive success both with residents and neighbouring parishes and this was why the failure was so vast.

Councillor Wright asked what was the difference in weight compared to a hanging basket and a tree and he was assured that the trees were lighter. Councillor Taylor advised that when the baskets were put up they were in some cases too low and the cable ties were not positioned top middle and bottom, sometimes the top one was in the middle and only two used so this allowed the bracket to bend. Councillor Vickers enquired as to whether the cable ties had been put up using a power tool since a power tool could strip the teeth of the cable tie and unless it was checked for holding sometimes slippage could result which loosened the cable allowing it to come off the lamppost.

Mr Webster advised that TCL have introduced better working practices for Plantscape employee's i.e. permanent contracts. TCL has more staff and teams of staff across the country who could be detailed to cover areas where they are needed should an emergency arise. Members assured Mr Website that they were happy with both contract and acknowledged that the failure of the Plantscape subcontractor to water the flower baskets was very unfortunate. The new operative had been sighted in the early hours of the summer mornings doing a very good job.

After a lengthy discussion Members' requested that for both contracts in 2017 they required:

1. Longer cable ties
2. Three cable ties as minimum to each bracket, top, middle and bottom.
3. Double checks on the fastening of the cable ties
4. Standard height for the baskets and trees of 8 feet off the ground from the bottom of the basket/tree to the pavement.
5. A guarantee that the Christmas trees will work from Switch On to 5th January.
6. A guarantee that TCL have an emergency plan for any problems with watering contractors.
7. A 50% discount on this year's Christmas contract.

It was

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL: That the points 1 to 7 be approved by February's Council meeting.

Closure. The meeting closed at 12.15pm