

SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENGAGEMENT
COMMITTEE

Minutes of the proceedings of the **NOVEMBER COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT AND ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE** of the **Council** held at
7 pm in the **Council Offices**, Advice & Information Centre, Sedgefield, on
Monday 17th November 2014.

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| Present | Cllr. Alf Walton (Vice-Chairman) and Cllrs. David Brown, Mark Cant, Mel Carr, Lynne Dentith, Tim Jeanes, Chris Lines, Ian Sutherland, Alf Walton, Dudley Waters |
| Officer | Dr. Jane Ayre (Town Clerk) |

1. Apologies

Cllrs. Allan Blakemore, Vanessa Carmichael, Rebecca Hagan and Gloria Wills.

2. Declaration of interest

None

3. Matters of Information

3.1 Bowling Club:

The Bowling Club have now submitted their planning application. The Clerk reported that this application was due to be considered at the Environment Committee meeting on 17th November 2014.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.2 Equality Act 2010:

Rather than forward Cllr Hagan's presentation to all Cllrs it will be given to the Policy & Records Management Working Group for consideration as part of their work on policy review. Cllr Hagan to supply her presentation to the Clerk for her to then share with those Cllrs not present at the original presentation.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.3 Youth Working Group:

Since issuing Committee papers prior to this meeting the Clerk confirmed that a date for the inaugural meeting of the Youth Working Group has now been set for Monday 1st December 2014 at 10am in the Council Offices.

RESOLVED:

- i) **To receive this information.**
- ii) **The Clerk to issue an invitation to Working Group members (Cllrs Rebecca Hagan, Lynne Dentith, Dudley Waters, John Robinson, Maxine Robinson and Chris Lines) along with an agenda.**

**4. County Durham & Darlington Fire & Rescue Service – Strategic Plan
Consultation: Presentation by Colin Bage, Assistant Chief Fire Officer**

The Chair, Cllr Alf Walton, welcomed Mr Colin Bage, Assistant Chief Fire Officer from County Durham & Darlington Fire & Rescue Service (DDFRS) to the meeting.

Mr Bage explained that DDFRS are currently undertaking a public consultation on their latest 3 year strategic plan 2015/16 – 2017/18 which sets out how the Service deals with risk across its area and how its resources are allocated to match those risks. Mr Bage reported that in response to central government's decision to cut funding by 25% in 2010 that DDFRS had introduced an array of measures to cut back office costs while saving front-line services. These measures have included:

- Reducing non-uniformed staff by over a third since 2010;
- Reducing the number of fire-fighters by 19%;
- By maintaining the number of retained fire-fighters;
- By reviewing the Service's estate and using premises in different ways including sharing with other emergency services etc.

In the period 2015/16 – 2017/18 DDFRS are anticipating a further reduction of £3.6million from its funding. The Service is looking at innovative ways in which to use its staff and still deliver services. The Service is looking to identify £1million of efficiency savings and is suggesting 5 proposals to save the remaining £2.6 million.

One of these proposals directly relates to Sedgefield hence Mr Bage's request to attend a Town Council meeting.

The proposal relating to Sedgefield is to re-develop on the existing site of Sedgefield Fire Station a shared facility with the Ambulance Service which is currently located in a very dated and dilapidated property at Fishburn. Mr Bage stated that DDFRS must keep a Fire Station in Sedgefield in order to maintain their response times and keep its crew of highly trained retained fire-fighters. The Ambulance Service work to different response times and these can also be maintained by transferring their operations from Fishburn to Sedgefield.

The remaining proposals for DDFRS are:

- The introduction of a co-responding scheme across the County to support the Ambulance Service whereby if a Category Red incident occurs and the Ambulance Service is unable to attend within the required 8 minutes DDFRS will attend (Note: This is being piloted successfully in Teesdale at the moment);
- To crew the aerial ladder platform at Darlington Fire Station in a different way which will reduce 10 firefighters but see greater use of retained firefighters;
- To reduce the number of supervisory officers by 4-6 in the Service but still ensure compliance with national incident command recommendations;
- To revise staffing levels at Spennymoor Fire Station with the removal of whole-time firefighters and go back to retained firefighters as per 2009 level.

The current public consultation is live until 1st December 2014. The 3 year strategic plan can be viewed at www.ddfire.gov.uk/service-plans. Mr Bage urged Cllrs to participate in the consultation and gave the Clerk consultation questionnaires for Cllrs to complete.

The Clerk had been asked by Cllr Rebecca Hagan to read out her thoughts "I feel it is important that Sedgefield retains its Fire Station. I have discussed this in depth with a former fire fighter who worked for many years at Sedgefield. I have explained to him that there was a brief discussion last week about the possibility of the ambulance and fire stations being merged, and potentially, both services being moved to Fishburn. Logistically he explained that this would be impossible for Sedgefield fire fighters to travel to Fishburn to respond to calls in the allocated time. On this basis alone this would mean we would lose very experienced fire

personnel and new inexperienced personnel would have to be trained to operate from Fishburn. He states Sedgefield has already lost over 130 years experience of fire fighting experience in the last few years and the merge between the two respective stations (fire and ambulance) and the relocation to Fishburn would have a huge impact on the response times and safety of people living locally. Furthermore, Wingate has a fully manned station, which is nearer to Fishburn, and therefore he feels logically Sedgefield needs to retain its fire station. I personally agree with him and I hope that my fellow councillors will give this full consideration when considering their responses to the survey. I hope that my friend will consider elaborating on my comments during Public Participation”.

Mr Bage reiterated that DDFRS’s proposal is to merge with the Ambulance Service at the existing Sedgefield Fire Station site in order to retain personnel and to achieve required response times. He pointed out that Wingate is not a whole-time (i.e. fully manned) station but is also retained.

Cllr Chris Lines sought clarification regarding the funding of the proposed redevelopment of the existing Sedgefield Fire Station. Mr Bage reported that each year central government make available a central pot of money for local authorities, another for Police Forces and a further one for Fire Services all of which must be used for “transformational” purposes. For 2014/15 the transformational pot for all Fire Services in England and Wales was £75million and DDFRS secured £3.8million for its creation of a quad-station at Barnard Castle which will see Fire, Police, Ambulance and Fell Rescue Service all being located together. Between receiving central government funding from DCLG there is a relatively short turnaround time to getting the project completed. All funding for 2014/15 has been allocated. Funding for 2015/16 will come on-line in April 2015 when DDFRS will immediately submit their express of interest for a further funding allocation. It is felt that 2017 is a realistic timescale for the re-development of Sedgefield Fire Station.

Cllr Ian Sutherland asked whether the period of site redevelopment will impact upon the Fire Service delivery in Sedgefield. Mr Bage replied that the site of Sedgefield Fire Station is sizeable which means that redevelopment work can happen alongside the running of the Fire Service without any anticipated impact upon service delivery.

Cllr Dudley Waters asked whether the Fire Service had also spoken to the Police to see if they wanted to be part of a future shared facility. Mr Bage confirmed that

whilst DDFRS meet regularly with the Police this particular matter had not been discussed, however, it was very good idea and one that he would take forward.

Cllr Chris Lines asked what happens after the public consultation closes on 1st December 2014. Mr Bage replied that responses will be analysed and considered in order to prepare a report for the Combined Fire Authority on 12th December 2014.

Cllr Tim Jeanes asked whether developers are required to liaise with the Fire Service when plans are being prepared for large-scale planning applications. Mr Bage confirmed that there are legal requirements which must be met in such applications and developments to ensure that emergency response times and access are considered.

Cllr Alf Walton thanked Mr Bage for his time and presentation and asked if he would be willing to stay for public participation should any members of the public have questions relating to this consultation. Mr Bage replied he was happy to stay for public participation.

The Clerk asked Mr Bage to pass on the Town Council's thanks to the crew at Sedgefield Fire Station who had attended the Town's Remembrance Day Service on Sunday 9th November 2014 and administered first aid to a soldier who collapsed during the event.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

5. Public Participation

The Chairman, Cllr. Alf Walton, closed the meeting whilst the public gave their views and comments.

One gentleman asked what would happen to the existing site of Sedgefield Fire Station if it was decided that the Station should move elsewhere. Mr Bage replied that DDFRS has no intention of relocating Sedgefield Fire Station. DDFRS own the land and also need to maintain their statutory response times.

Mrs Julia Bowles congratulated DDFRS's approach to cost savings and stated that it was reassuring to know that the Town's Fire Station was to be retained.

One gentleman raised his concerns for the safety of retained staff having to travel to Fishburn if the Fire Station moved out of the Town. Mr Bage again reiterated that DDFRS do not wish to move the Fire Station out of Sedgefield and the retaining crew and ensuring their safety were key factors in this decision.

There were no further questions for Mr Bage. Cllr Alf Walton again thanked Mr Bage for this attendance. Mr Bage left the meeting at this point and public participation continued.

Mrs Julia Bowles on behalf of the Residents Forum questioned when the Town Council would respond to the comments made in the previous week's Monthly Committee meeting regarding their belief the Town Council has not supported a co-ordinated approach with regard to the County Durham Examination in Public process. She referred to the minutes of the July 2014 Monthly Meeting when it was stated that joint meetings would be held to prepare for the pre-hearing meeting with the Inspector and then again to consider the findings obtained from that meeting. Mrs Bowles referenced digging which is taking place on the Eden Drive site. During a visit with the Inspector of the County Durham Plan Mr David Bowles had spoken to the archaeologist on site and learned that they had found evidence of a medieval site dating back to the Iron Ages 800BC to 100AD and perhaps further. Mrs Bowles expressed the hope that the Town Council would write to DCC's County Archaeologist requesting a full site investigation which could include the involvement of local school children. Finally, Mrs Bowles asked by it is necessary to have so many roadworks and digging on Durham Road.

The meeting was then re-opened.

6. Reports

6.1 Grants/Projects Update Report by Mrs Angela Simpson

This report had been circulated to all Cllrs prior to the meeting. Cllr Ian Sutherland queried whether all the necessary information had now been sent to the County Durham Community Foundation in relation to the application by the Friends of St Edmund's for funding of the final phase of the Church Wall. The Clerk confirmed that all information is now with the Foundation and that they have indicated to Mrs Simpson they are dealing with a backlog of applications.

Cllr David Brown stated he was pleased with the much improved format for conveying information regarding grants/projects.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

6.2 Fireworks Display 2014: Report by Cllr Alf Walton and Clerk (to be issued separately in advance of meeting)

Prior to the meeting a report prepared jointly by Cllr Alf Walton and the Clerk had been circulated to all.

Cllr Ian Sutherland expressed his concern regarding hot ash falling onto the crowd and was surprised that considerable numbers of people had not come forward to complain. Cllr Chris Lines replied that he was also in the crowd during the Display and said that lots of people both during and afterwards had praised the event citing it as the best Display yet organized by the Town Council. Cllrs Lynne Dentith and Dudley Waters agreed with Cllr Lines.

Cllr Alf Walton informed fellow Cllrs that he has investigated whether the Sedgefield Show site could be used for the 2015 Display, however, this is not possible due to covenants on the land. Another alternative could be the Race Course, however, this site is some considerable way out of the centre of the Town and would necessitate a sharing of income. It was felt that the most appropriate solution was to continue with the grounds of Ceddesfeld Hall with fireworks being lit from the other side of the Lake.

RESOLVED:

- i) **The 2015 November event to go ahead on Saturday 31st October 2015.**
- ii) **The event to take place at Ceddesfeld Hall grounds.**
- iii) **Reaction Fireworks to be contacted now with regards to the suggestion that fireworks are set up and executed from the far side of the Lake.**
- iv) **Reaction Fireworks be asked that the unused fireworks from this event be put towards next year's event.**
- v) **No unpaid for reserved tickets to be kept at the gate.**

6.3 Doncaster Trip: Verbal Update by Clerk

The Clerk reported that 43 tickets had been sold for the recent coach trip to Doncaster on 4th November 2014. Tickets were priced at £8.50. Income for this event was £365.50 while the cost of the coach was £395.00 resulting in a deficit of £29.50. Cllr Ian Sutherland requested that better means of promotion be used for future.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

6.4 New Year's Eve Fireworks: Report by Cllr Alf Walton and Clerk (to be issued separately in advance of meeting)

Prior to the meeting a report had been circulated to all Cllrs. Cllr Alf Walton clarified that the 1st paragraph of the "Background" section of this report should reflect that whilst County Cllr John Robinson had volunteered to fund the reinstatement of this event the Clerk had in fact stated that whoever conducted the fireworks if these took place on Town Council land would require the Town Council to insure them. There was not a budget commitment made. Other Cllrs agreed that this was also their recollection of the Community Development & Engagement Committee meeting on 20th January 2014.

Cllrs agreed that as this event is now to take place on non-Town Council land that it is no longer an issue for the Town for this year, however, it was agreed to discuss the issue of the 2015/16 New Year's Eve Fireworks at the January 2015 meeting of the Community Development & Engagement Committee.

Cllr Chris Lines stated that this issue should have been considered much earlier in the year. He suggested that the Town Council contact the petition organizer and explain the background to the current position with regards to this event. The Fireworks Working Group has highlighted a number of health and safety plus insurance issues that had not previously been considered by the Town Council at the New Year's Eve Display which means that to deliver this event in a safe and enjoyable manner will require a significantly higher amount of funding than previously allocated to ensure the correct resources

are available. Cllr Alf Walton stated that a clear explanatory article is required for the Sedgefield News so that residents fully understand the situation.

Cllr Ian Sutherland stated that he believed the Council does not have the will to host the New Year's Eve Fireworks. Cllr Chris Lines strongly disputed this claim and requested that Cllr Ian Sutherland refer to the minutes of the October 2014 Community Development & Engagement Committee meeting when the Fireworks Working Group were given the clear instruction to do everything in its power to make the New Year's Eve Fireworks happen. Cllr Alf Walton stated that for the event to take place other issues such as safety distances, stewarding, road closure and SAG involvement must also occur, things which have never been considered in the past. Cllr Chris Lines reiterated that the decision that was taken to cancel the 2013/14 New Year's Eve Display had been a collective decision by the entire Council and should be discussed again in January 2015. However, the Town Council will still be letting the public know too late in the day that this event will not be being hosted by the Town Council. Cllr Chris Lines offered to go and meet with Mrs Freda Dovaston who had organized the Town's petition in January 2014 to explain the current circumstances to her. Cllrs thanked Cllr Chris Lines for this.

RESOLVED:

- i) **New Year's Eve Fireworks 2015/16 to be discussed at the January 2015 meeting of the Community Development & Engagement Committee.**
- ii) **Cllr Chris Lines to meet with Mrs Freda Dovaston.**
- iii) **An article to be prepared and submitted to the Sedgefield News.**

6.5 Snow Party Report by Mrs Angela Simpson

Prior to the meeting a Snow Party Report had been circulated to all. Cllr Alf Walton reported that a Christmas Tree is now being provided by the Rotary Club and will be delivered on 24th November 2014 and be placed on the Green. Cllr Ian Sutherland asked whether in future years the tree growing near to the Ball Game statue could be used. Cllr Mel Carr replied that this is the intention for the future and that work is underway currently to identify the best means of getting a permanent electrical supply to this tree.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information

7. Correspondence

7.1 Sedgefield Snow Group (minutes of meeting held 22nd October 2014)

Prior to the meeting the minutes of the Sedgefield Snow Group meeting held on 22nd October 2014 had been circulated to all Cllrs.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

7.2 County Durham Community Foundation – Outstanding Achievement Award – Sedgefield 700+ Nomination

Prior to the meeting a letter detailing Sedgefield 700+'s nomination for an Outstanding Achievement Award from the County Durham Community Foundation had been circulated to all. The Clerk reported that Cllr Allan Blakemore (Chair of Sedgefield 700+) and Mrs Angela Simpson along with Mr John Dale of Sedgefield Veterans had attended the Awards ceremony on Friday 7th November 2014 at Shildon. Sedgefield 700+ had won a runners' up prize and received a cheque for £50.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

7.3 Sedgefield Village Residents Forum (minutes of meeting held 3rd November 2014)

Prior to the meeting the minutes of the Sedgefield Village Residents Forum meeting held on 3rd November 2014 had been circulated to all Cllrs.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

7.4 Sedgefield In Bloom (minutes of meeting held on 5th November 2014)

Prior to the meeting the minutes of the Sedgefield In Bloom meeting held on 5th November 2014 had been circulated to all Cllrs.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

7.5 Sedgefield Plan Steering Group (minutes of meeting held on 21st October 2014)

The Clerk circulated to all Cllrs for their information a copy of the minutes from the Sedgefield Plan Steering Group meeting held on 21st October 2014.

Cllr Ian Sutherland asked if copies of the draft Sedgefield Plan were available. Cllr Chris Lines confirmed that copies of the “work in progress” Sedgefield Plan were available on the Sedgefield Plan website. Cllr Chris Lines also reported that the Plan is still a work in progress and when it is ready a special Town Council meeting will be called so that the Steering Group can present this Plan to Cllrs for their approval.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

8. Financial Position

RESOLVED:

To approve the CD&E Committee Financial Position.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.00p.m.