

SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT

Minutes of the proceedings of the **MAY ENVIRONMENT** of the **Council** held following the Community Development and Engagement committee in the **Council Offices**, Advice & Information Centre, Sedgefield, on **Monday 19th May 2014.**

Present

Cllr. Mel Carr (Chairman)

Cllr. Mark Cant (Vice-Chairman) and

Cllrs. Allan Blakemore, David Brown, Gloria Wills, Vanessa Carmichael, Rebecca Hagan, Tim Jeanes, Maxine Robinson, Ian Sutherland, Alf Walton, Dudley Waters

Officer

Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

1. Apologies

Cllrs. Lynne Dentith, Chris Lines and John Robinson

2. Declaration of interest

None

3. Matters of Information

3.1 Previous Public Participation Query

Cllr David Brown questioned the outcome of a comment made by a resident recently during public participation in relation to the Town's Garden of Remembrance. The Clerk and Cllr Tim Jeanes reported that no action had previously been undertaken, however, this matter is now being dealt with.

RECOMMENDED

To receive the information

3.2 Trees Mitford Court

In response to the Town Council's request to DCC (1st May 2014) to carry out works to tree T1 whose branches overhang the garden of 30 Mitford Court (in particular over children's play equipment) and also to remove the extra trunk on the other two trees to improve their

appearance, Hilary Sperring of DCC has stated that in order to validate such an application she requires further information as to why the proposed works to the trees are necessary. Additional information from an arborist in respect of the health/condition of the trees would be required.

Cllr Mel Carr had previously taken photographs of the trees in question which it was agreed would be useful to send to Ms Sperring. In addition it was also agreed that DCC's Tree Officer also be requested to undertake a site visit. If this site visit was refused or the outcomes were unsatisfactory then independent advice could be sought.

RESOLVED

- i. Cllr Carr to forward to the Clerk photographs of Mitford Court trees.**
- ii. The Clerk to forward Mitford Court trees photographs to Ms Hilary Sperring.**
- iii. The Clerk to request DCC's Tree Officer undertake a site visit based upon Ms Sperring's comments.**

4. Public Participation

The Chairman, Cllr. Mel Carr closed the meeting whilst the public gave their views and comments.

Mrs Scott expressed thanks to Cllrs Mel Carr and Alf Walton for visiting the Station Road field. Currently there is no water standing in the field, however, there has been very little rainfall recently. Mr Paul Armin of DCC had previously stated the flooding problem was due to the high water table in the field, however, Mrs Scott reported that a hole had been dug in her garden near to the boundary with the field and had got to a depth of just under 1m before reaching the water table thereby proving Mr Armin's theory incorrect. Mrs Scott stated the flooding issue is one that will not go away and she encouraged the Town Council to continue investigating this problem.

Mr Howard Smith expressed his disappointment at the over-flowing wheelie bins outside Pizza Castle, an area which is on the walking route for the Bloom competitions. As an aside he was concerned about potential vermin issues. Also of concern was the array of cigarette butts around the village.

The meeting was then re-opened.

5. Reports

5.1 Open Spaces Working Party

A report of the Open Spaces Working Party meeting held on 22nd April 2014 had been circulated to all prior to the meeting. Cllr Maxine Robinson commented that the views she had expressed at this meeting in relation to the Church Turning Circle had not been recorded. During the meeting she had asked for an assurance that the Town Council would consider the inclusion of a flat area to ensure suitability for the disabled and pushchairs with the area from the Lych Gate to Rectory Row being included in that as a minimum. It was recognised that these comments should have been included in the report, however, Cllr Mel Carr provided Cllr Maxine Robinson with an assurance that the subsequent specification for this work was to have the entire area as a flat surface suitable and accessible for all.

RECOMMENDED

To receive the information

Cllr Mel Carr gave a verbal update on the latest meeting of the Open Spaces Working Party which had taken place immediately prior to the Environment Committee meeting on 19th May 2014. The Working Party had discussed the Church Turning Circle, the Cemetery fence, the Church Wall as follows:

Church Turning Circle – Cllr Mel Carr had developed a specification based upon discussions at the Working Party meeting on 22nd April 2014 and had received three quotes. One quote had been identified as the most favourable and Cllr Carr will now speak to that contractor in order to arrange a meeting to discuss in more detail their submitted quote requesting they also bring along samples of the materials they propose to use. Cllr Carr will also request that this meeting takes place at a location of the contractors choice so they can demonstrate to Cllrs a piece of work they have already completed. If Cllrs are happy then a proposal will be brought to a future P&R Committee meeting or more work will be done with the other contractors who have submitted quotes.

Cemetery Fence – Cllr Mel Carr reported that quotes have now been obtained to erect fencing in the new area of the cemetery behind the recycling bay. This work is only to erect the fencing and is not to remove the hedge. The Clerk to prepare a draft specification for the removal of hedges and following liaison with Cllr Carr to put this work out to tender.

Church Wall – Cllr Mel Carr also reported that 6 quotes have been obtained in relation to repairing the Church Wall. The most competitive tender had been submitted by the contractor who had already undertaken extensive work on the Church Wall. The Clerk had been instructed to apply for grant funding in order to progress this work.

RESOLVED

- i. Cllr Mel Carr to arrange an appropriate meeting with the identified contractor for the Church Turning Circle and progress as required in order to develop a proposal for a future Policy & Resources Committee.**
- ii. The Clerk to prepare a draft specification for the removal of trees in the cemetery and in turn finalise this with Cllr Mel Carr prior to going out to tender.**
- iii. The Clerk to liaise with the Community Engagement Officer to submit a grant for the next phase of the Church Wall repair work.**
- iv. The Clerk to request DCC's Tree Officer undertake a site visit based upon Ms Sperring's comments.**

5.2 FOI Response from DCC

Previously the Town Council had requested from DCC, through FOI, a copy of the geotechnical survey which accompanied the application for the Ivy Row development in Sedgefield in 1996. In particular the plan which identifies an access chamber in the garden of plot 1 Ivy Row and a line which also appears to be a culvert. Prior to the meeting the information the information supplied by DCC in response to this request had been circulated. DCC had responded to this request under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 as the enquiry related to measures which affect the environment as opposed to FOI which covers non-environmental information. DCC do not hold a Geotechnical Survey in relation to this site, however, they do hold records in relation to inspection chambers and drainage. When considering the paperwork supplied by DCC all Cllrs agreed that a site visit was necessary in order to compare the actual site with the information provided. Cllr Gloria Wills highlighted an area on the plan which could suggest a possible culvert.

RESOLVED

- i. Cllrs Tim Jeanes, Alf Walton, Gloria Wills and Mel Carr to arrange a site visit and report back their findings to a future Environment Committee meeting.**

5.3 Station Road Tree

Prior to the meeting a letter from Mr Lamb had been circulated to all detailing his concern regarding tree branches from the Station Road field overhanging his property. Cllr Alf Watson reported that he had visited the site and circulated copies of a photograph from this visit. It was agreed that no branches are overhanging the actual property and that no action is required at this moment by the Town Council.

Cllr Mel Carr suggested that a Working Party be established to focus upon the Station Field looking at the state of the field, the plants and the trees. It was agreed to consider this further at another Environment Committee meeting.

RESOLVED

- i. The Clerk to write to Mr Lamb informing him the tree has been inspected and it is the view that no action is required by the Town Council at this moment in time.**
- ii. The proposal for a Station Field Working Group to be added to the next Committee agenda.**

5.4 Woodland: Neville Drive

Cllr Mel Carr reported that he and Cllrs Alf Walton and Gloria Wills had visited the woodland area along Neville Drive in order to view the state of the area which had been purchased by DCC using Section 106 money with the remainder of the money available being used for maintenance. All felt the area was not being maintained effectively by DCC and that this area should be of high amenity value. Photographs taken by Cllr Mel Carr were circulated and it was agreed to contact DCC requesting that footpaths be made usable for cyclists and pedestrians. Cllr Rebecca Hagan commented that a request for the provision of dog bins should also be made at the same time.

RESOLVED

- i. The Clerk to write to DCC stating the Town Council's concerns regarding this area of woodland (including photographs) and state Cllrs from the Town Council would be happy to participate in a joint site visit.**

6. Correspondence

6.1 Clothes & Shoes Banks: College for International Co-operation and Development (CICD)

Cllrs considered an email from Ms Sara Calado of the CICD requesting the Council consider allowing a Clothes and Shoes Bank being placed in Sedgefield in order for them to raise money to support the training of their volunteers to work in community based projects in Africa and India. It was agreed there are already a number of local groups already offering such facilities within the Town and that it was not possible to accommodate CICD's request.

RESOLVED

- i. The Clerk to write to CICD informing them of the Council's decision.**

6.2 Turning Circle: DCC

This matter had already been discussed under Item 5.1. of the meeting.

6.3 23 North End

Prior to the meeting an email from Mr Steven Jackson of 23 North End, Sedgefield had been circulated to all. Mr Jackson had detailed the current status of the guttering and downpipe for this property in relation to the outside drain and had detailed proposed work which he was hoping to undertake. Mr Jackson was approaching the Town Council for their permission to carry out the proposed works. Cllr Mel Carr reported that he had been to see Mr Jackson at the property to view the proposed relocation of the downpipe on his property. Cllr Carr proposed this work be approved.

RESOLVED

- i. The Clerk write to Mr Jackson stating the Town Council have no objections to the work being proposed provided this complies with any requirements stipulated by DCC and their Conservation Officer.**

6.4 Limited Parking

Prior to the meeting a letter from DCC to a resident on Front Street, Sedgefield had been circulated proposing the introduction of limited parking on Front Street/East End in the Town. These restrictions would limit parking to 30 minutes, no return within 30 minutes (Monday – Saturday 9am – 6pm). Initial concern was expressed that the Town Council were not included by DCC in this consultation exercise. All Cllrs present acknowledged that parking is becoming more difficult in the Town, however, it was agreed that to limit parking to 30 minutes would have a detrimental impact upon the businesses in that area. It was agreed that a limit of 2 hours would be more realistic. Cllr Maxine Robinson also highlighted the over-sized bus stop in this area which if reduced to the correct size would create additional parking space. It was agreed that the Town Council's views be submitted to DCC as part of the consultation exercise.

Cllr Ian Sutherland recommended that "Parking Suggestions" be put on the next agenda for further discussion and this was agreed by all. Cllr Gloria Wills suggested that the Infrastructure Sub-Group of the Sedgefield Plan Steering Group could also provide some useful information.

RESOLVED

- i. The Clerk to contact DCC to express concern that the Town Council were not included in this consultation process.**
- ii. The Clerk to submit to DCC the Town Council's view that a 2 hour limited parking policy would be more appropriate.**
- iii. The Clerk to request DCC review the size of the bus stop with a view to**

freeing up more potential parking space.

- iv. **The Clerk to put “Parking Suggestions” on the agenda for the next Environment Committee.**
- v. **The Clerk to liaise with the Sedgefield Plan Infrastructure Group to obtain any comments/suggestions regarding parking in the Town.**

7. Financial Position

RESOLVED

The Environment Committee Financial Position had been circulated and was approved.

8. Tenders: -

i. Church Wall

This matter had already been discussed under Item 5.1. of the meeting.

ii. Tree – Removal branch

Cllr Mel Carr informed Cllrs that three quotes had been received in order to remove a limb of a sycamore in the grounds of Ceddesfeld Hall and that the most competitive tender was being recommended by the Open Spaces Working Party. The Clerk confirmed that Mr Stuart Timmiss of DCC had written to the Town Council on 12th March 2014 stating that as this tree was in the Sedgefield Conservation Area DCC had six weeks (i.e. by 18th April 2014) in which to consider making a tree preservation order on the tree. The Clerk confirmed that no such order had been imposed by DCC and the Town Council can carry out the work so long as it is done within 2 years of the date of initial notification (7th March 2014).

RESOLVED

- i. To appoint A W Treecare as the contractor to undertake this work.**
- ii. The Clerk to write and inform A W Treecare of their appointment.**

iii. Winterton Allotments – Shed Roof

Cllr Mel Carr reported that quotes had been obtained from three contractors in order to renew the felting on the roof of the portacabin on the Winterton allotments. Cllr Alf Walton reported he had visited the portacabin and confirmed that repair work is necessary. Cllrs Dudley Waters and Allan Blakemore expressed the view that as the portacabin is less than two years old the original supplier should be contacted in the

first instance to undertake the repairs as there is concern the portacabin was not fit for purpose.

RESOLVED

- i. The Clerk to liaise with the Community Engagement Officer in order to write to the original supplier seeking a site visit and repair.**

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.25p.m.