

SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT

Minutes of the proceedings of the **JUNE ENVIRONMENT** of the **Council** held following the Community Development and Engagement committee in the **Council Offices**, Advice & Information Centre, Sedgefield, on **Monday 16th June 2014.**

- Present** **Cllr. Mel Carr (Chairman)**
Cllr. Mark Cant (Vice-Chairman) and
Cllrs. Allan Blakemore, David Brown, Lynne Dentith, Rebecca Hagan, Chris Lines, Maxine Robinson, Ian Sutherland, Alf Walton, Dudley Waters, Gloria Wills
- Officer** Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

1. Apologies

Cllrs. John Robinson and Vanessa Carmichael

2. Declaration of interest

Cllrs Gloria Wills and Rebecca Hagan declared an interest in item 3.2. No other declarations of interest were expressed.

3. Matters of Information

3.1 Remembrance Garden

The Clerk reported that Cllr Tim Jeanes had tried to visit Mr Davidson on several occasions. It was agreed that there is no need for Cllr Jeanes to attempt to make contact any more.

RESOLVED

- i) The Clerk to write to Mr Davidson.**

3.2 Trees – Mitford Court

Cllr Mel Carr reported that since the last Environment Committee meeting several attempts had been made to arrange an on-site meeting with Durham County Council's Tree Officer, Mr

Rodger Lowe, at Mitford Court to consider those trees near to Number 30 overhanging children's play equipment. Two appointments had been cancelled by Mr Lowe, however, an assurance had been given that upon his return from annual leave another meeting would be scheduled. Cllr Mel Carr reported that in the interim two other residents had expressed concerns regarding the trees in this area. Mr Brian Mulligan of Mitford Court had raised concerns regarding the condition of trees adjacent to the Court and requested they be pruned while also highlighting trees on Durham Road between North End garage and the Police Station also had low growing branches. Dr Alan Bell of 42 Mitford Court has also expressed concerns regarding the trees behind and to the side of his property posing structure plus health and safety issues. Cllr Mel Carr reported that he had a meeting with Mr Rodger Lowe scheduled for 11.30am on-site at Mitford Court on Thursday 19th June 2014 to discuss all of these concerns before then considering how best to liaise with residents. Cllrs Alf Walton and Ian Sutherland offered to attend this meeting and Cllr Mel Carr accepted their offer. Cllr Rebecca Hagan stated that once the exact situation is known the Council may need to inform their insurers of the situation. Cllr David Brown stated that if the advice from the County Council's Tree Officer was felt to be unacceptable there was also the option of having an independent tree survey commissioned.

RESOLVED

To receive the information

3.3 Pizza Castle

The Clerk reported that she had written to the owner of Pizza Castle and politely requested the area be kept tidy as requested by a representative of the Sedgefield in Bloom at the last meeting. She had also written to Mr Howard Smith of Sedgefield in Bloom to make him aware the Council had acted upon his comment. No response had been received from the owner of Pizza Castle. Cllrs questioned whether the state of the area outside the shop had improved since the last meeting and also queried ownership of the area in question. The Clerk is currently working at identifying, in conjunction with Land Registry, all Town Council's land in the Town, however, this work is going to take time to complete.

RESOLVED

- i) Cllr Mel Carr to speak to the owner of Pizza Castle.**

3.4 Station Road Tree

The Clerk reported that she had written to Mr Lamb stating the Council's decision. No further correspondence had been received.

RESOLVED

ii) To receive the information and close this matter.

3.5 Woodland: Neville Drive

The Clerk reported that she had written to Mr Stephen Reed of DCC who had acknowledged receipt and is investigating this matter.

RESOLVED

i) The Clerk to contact Mr Stephen Reed for a further update.

3.6 CICD

The Clerk reported that she had emailed CICD informing them of the Council's decision.

RESOLVED

i) To receive the information and close this matter.

3.7 Tree – Removal of Branch

The Clerk reported that AW Treecare have been informed of their approved tender.

RESOLVED

i) To receive the information and close this matter.

3.8 23 North End

The Clerk reported that she had written to Mr Steven Jackson informing him of the Council's decision.

RESOLVED

i) To receive the information and close this matter.

4. Public Participation

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

Mrs Julia Bowles praised the work of the Bloom Group as well as the contributions made by the Town Council Gardeners to keeping the Town such an attractive place. She also voiced her concerns about the state of the bins in and around the Pizza Castle area of the Town.

Mrs Scott reported that she is replanting the area of her garden near to Station Road Field which flooded two years ago. She felt that whatever NWL had done she was still not sure why water was standing in the field. She reported a slight improvement in the situation but felt this was due to the period of dry weather currently being experienced and the actual situation would not be known until there was a period of heavy rain. She also felt that a geophysical survey could be very useful. Mrs Scott requested a copy of the plans the Town Council had received from NWL.

The meeting was then re-opened.

RESOLVED

- i) Cllr Mel Carr to check if it is acceptable for plans provided to the Town Council by NWL to be shared with Mrs Scott.**

5. Reports

5.1 Open Spaces Working Party

Minutes from the Open Spaces Working Party meeting held on 19th May 2014 had been circulated prior to the meeting.

With regard to the repair of the Church Wall, Cllr David Brown questioned why this work had needed to go out to tender when in essence this work was the next (and final) phase of on-going work. Cllr Mel Carr explained that the Council was required to go out to tender when work was going to cost over a stipulated amount. However, the tendering process the contractor who had undertaken the other repair work to the Church Wall had been selected. The Clerk confirmed that the contractor had been made aware that in principle his quote had been successful and was now dependent upon the receipt of grant funding being obtained. Mrs Angela Simpson, Community Engagement Officer, had confirmed that a grant funding application has already been submitted for this work. Cllr Ian Sutherland queried if the contractor's quote had a timelimit.

RESOLVED

- i) The Clerk to ascertain the timelimit attached to the selected quote.**

5.2 Station Road Field

Cllr Mel Carr circulated a summary of the work undertaken by the Council from 27th June 2013 to present in relation to the on-going problems experienced at the Station Road Field since 2004. Cllr Mel Carr reported that he had visited Mr Scott of 2 Station

Road and Mr Scott had informed him that following the previous week's heavy rain there had been no problems caused by flooding. It is possible that this may be the result of repairs carried out two or three months earlier to a drain/manhole on Queens Drive estate which may carry the main waste water away from Station Road area.

Cllr Mel Carr proposed that now the Town Council have obtained drainage plans for the area surrounding the field that Mr Paul Armin, Senior Drainage Engineer of Durham County Council be asked to look at them and give his expert opinion regarding the possibility that the repair of this and possibly other drains/culverts if in need of maintenance could be the answer to solving the excessive flooding that has been occurring in recent years, not only the high water fall. Cllr Mark Cant suggested that if no response was received from Mr Armin within 10 days then the Town Clerk should follow this up rather than wait until the next Committee meeting. Cllr Mel Carr stated that in the eventuality no response is forthcoming then the option of independent advise could be sought.

Cllr Alf Walton reported that he had visited the Field on 16th June 2014 and found the ground to be spongy.

RESOLVED

- i) **The Clerk to write to Mr Paul Armin and follow-up if no response is received.**

5.3 Establishment of Station Road Field Working Party

Cllr Mel Carr reported that the issue of the Station Road Field currently sits within the remit of the Open Spaces Working Party, however, there are many issues requiring attention in relation to this field. Issues include flooding, access, trees and shrubbery. Cllr Mel Carr asked how Cllrs felt about the creation of a Working Party specifically looking at Station Road Field. Cllr Rebecca Hagan questioned how Working Parties can be transparent to the public when the public cannot attend. Cllr Mel Carr replied that Working Parties do not make decisions but instead investigate issues, research and then bring proposals back to Committee for consideration by all Cllrs. Cllr Maxine Robinson stated that Sub-Committees would allow the option of co-opting people with relevant specialist knowledge to attend and be included in round the table discussion. It was agreed that Working Parties and Sub-Committees needed further discussion at a future P&R Committee.

RESOLVED

- i) **The Clerk to prepare a report on the differences between Working Parties and Sub-Committees and then bring this to a future P&R Committee.**

5.4 Church Turning Circle

Cllr Mel Carr reported that since the last Open Spaces Working Party meeting he along with Cllrs Alf Walton, Gloria Wills and Dudley Waters had met with one of the potential contractors on-site at the Church Turning Circle to discuss suitability for wheelchair users, the paving required to the edge and centre of the circle, the detailing of the edge finish, the state of the existing flagstones on the path and consider the Brett Alpha Antique blocks being proposed by this particular potential contractor. As a result of this meeting the potential contractor wants to reconsider the quote he submitted to adjust it to include a 225mm concrete base in lieu of dolomite.

Cllr Ian Sutherland questioned whether the original specification for this project had changed. Cllr Mel Carr confirmed that the original specification had not changed. The meeting with this potential contractor was to check that his quotation had correctly interpreted the Council's specification and the outcome of the meeting was that further work was required by the potential contractor on the quotation he submitted. Cllr Mel Carr stated that once a revised quotation had been received the Open Spaces Working Group would be able to compare all quotations alongside each other knowing that the Council's original specification had been met. It was agreed by all Cllrs that the work on the Church Turning Circle must be done correctly.

Cllr Mel Carr reported that he had requested sample sets of materials, some of which had already arrived with others soon to follow. Cllr Gloria Wills had also obtained some sample sets and Cllr Alf Walton reported he had requested further. Again, the Open Spaces Working Group would look at these sets, liaise with the Conservation Officer and then bring recommendations back to the Environment Committee.

Cllr Maxine Robinson thanked Cllr Mel Carr for looking at the disabled access issues and Cllr Ian Sutherland thanked Cllr Mel Carr for his hard work in this particular project.

RESOLVED

To receive the information

6. Correspondence

6.1 RoSPA inspection

The Clerk reported that the annual inspection of the play areas in Eden Drive and Station Road Field will be conducted by RoSPA during June 2014.

RESOLVED

To receive the information.

6.2 Station Road Field response from Northumbrian Water

Prior to the meeting copies of letters from Northumbrian Water dated 1st April 2014 and 27th May 2014 had been circulated to all Cllrs. These letters informed Cllrs that Northumbrian Water have dye tested both the foul and surface water systems and they are confident that the issue does not stem from their apparatus. In their opinion the problem is caused as a result of groundwater. To this regard they did not feel another visit would be beneficial. They have confirmed that they have provided all the information which the Town Council have now requested.

RESOLVED

To receive the information.

6.3 Northumbrian Water response to North End grass verge

Prior to the meeting copies of letters and emails from Northumbrian Water dated 6th May 2014 and 19th May 2014 regarding the condition of the grass verge at North End, Sedgefield had been circulated to all Cllrs. Northumbrian Water had requested one of their sewerage technicians attends the site to investigate further to ensure that the holes in this area had not been caused by any issues with the underground sewers or drains in this vicinity. Following investigations completed by a sewerage technician, Northumbrian Water confirmed they would attend the site within the next few weeks to excavate the grass verge and repair a defect which has been identified on a transferred drain. The main, public sewer was found to be in good working order and running well. Whilst the damage that had occurred on the surface was not consistent with the defect on the drain, Northumbrian Water were happy to advise that once their repairs were completed they would reinstate the verge to a satisfactory condition.

RESOLVED

To receive the information.

6.4 DCC response to proposed parking restrictions

Prior to the meeting copies of emails between the Town Clerk and Mr Lee Mowbray of Durham County Council both dated 22nd May 2014 had been circulated to all Cllrs. The Town Clerk had submitted concerns raised by Cllrs at the last Environment Committee meeting in relation to the proposed limited parking on Front Street/East End in Sedgfield. Mr Lee Mowbray had then responded to the Town Council's concerns. Cllr Mel Carr asked upon what Mr Mowbray's comments were based as the response received quoted phrases which could be construed to indicate the decision had already been made before consultation was undertaken. It was agreed the Town Clerk should reply to Mr Mowbray and ask him upon what the final decision will be based. Cllr Maxine Robinson also suggested that a specific example of the impact of a 30 minute parking limitation upon a business such as the hairdresser in that area of the Town should be given and reiterate the Council's earlier suggestion that a 2 hour limit would be more realistic.

Mr Lee Mowbray had referred the Town Council's comments regarding the size of the bus stop in this location to Mr Steven Muse of Durham County Council's Strategic Traffic Management Section. The Town Clerk read out a response from Mr Muse received on 10th June 2014 stating he had investigated the size of the bus box and clearway markings in this area. The markings are 25m in length (approximately 5 car lengths), this is required to allow a full-sized bus to make the manoeuvre to the kerb when other vehicles are parked at both ends of the bus box markings. It is essential that buses pull up closely to the kerb aiding access for all to public transport with particular attention given to providing access for the elderly and disabled, as well as parents with young children. Cllr Maxine Robinson recalled that the previous Town Clerk had written to the County Council several years ago regarding the size of this bus stop and indications had been given that it was over-sized.

RESOLVED

- i) **The Clerk to write to Mr Mowbray asking upon what the final decision will be based when considering the proposed introduction of time limited parking and to include an example of a business likely to be impacted.**
- ii) **The Clerk to write to Mr Muse to clarify if there has been any changes in requirement to bus stop sizing over recent years.**

6.5 County Durham Environment Awards 2014

The Clerk reported that nominations are being sought for the County Durham Environmental Awards 2014. Now in their 25th year, the awards recognize and celebrate projects and activities that improve and enhance the environment. Applications are invited from individuals, community groups, organizations, businesses and schools across County Durham for the following categories:

- Built environment

- Climate change
- Community partnership
- Craftsmanship
- Greener business
- Natural environment
- Places and spaces (new category)
- Schools and colleges
- Volunteer group of the year
- Volunteer of the year – under 18
- Volunteer of the year – over 18
- Waste management

The closing date for entries is Friday 25th July 2014.

Cllr Allan Blakemore proposed the Town Council nominate Sedgefield in Bloom for the Community Partnership category. All Cllrs supported this proposal. .

RESOLVED

- i) On behalf of the Council the Clerk to nominate Sedgefield in Bloom.**

6.6 Heritage Open Days

The Clerk circulated copies of an email received from Mr Steve Ragg dated 16th June 2014 promoting the forthcoming Heritage Open Days series in September. This is an opportunity to celebrate England's architecture and culture by offering free access to properties/venues that are usually closed to the public or normally charge for admission. The event attracts widespread media coverage, and allows participants to raise their own profile, explain their work, and attract new visitors from both the local community and further afield. Parish and Town Councils are being asked whether they wish to participate in this year's events. Accompanying Mr Ragg's email was a letter from Ms Margaret Walton of DCC requesting organizations to register their potential interest in this event.

Cllrs felt this was a good idea and suggested the Manor House, Ceddesfeld Hall, St Edmund's Church and the Police Station as possible venues that could be opened to the public.

RESOLVED

- i) The Clerk to forward the Heritage Open Days information to individuals/groups responsible for the Manor House, Ceddesfeld Hall, St Edmund's Church and the Police Station as well as representatives from the Local History Group.**

6.7 Request for Bouncy Castle on Village Green

The Clerk read out a letter received from Sean & Jane Quilty of 46 The Lane, Sedgefield requesting permission from the Town Council to place a professionally hired bouncy castle on the village green, outside The Crosshills Hotel, on Sunday 27th July 2014 from approximately noon until early evening. The inflatable would be for private use and for children attending a celebration/fundraising event at The Crosshills in aid of the North Tees Specialist Care Baby Unit.

RESOLVED

- ii) The Clerk to write to Sean & Jane Quilty stating the Town Council agree in principle to their request but need to see copies of their insurance certificate and risk assessment as well as requiring specific event timings. The Town Council will charge £100 for the use of the village green.**

7. Financial Position

RESOLVED:

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

Members of the public were excluded from the meeting at this point as exempt information was to be subsequently discussed.

8. Tenders – Exempt information.

The remaining issues discussed items exempt from the Public.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.40p.m.