

SEDFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT

Minutes of the proceedings of the **JULY ENVIRONMENT** of the **Council** held following the Community Development and Engagement committee in the **Council Offices**, Advice & Information Centre, Sedgfield, on **Monday 21st July 2014.**

Present

Cllr. Mel Carr (Chairman)

Cllr. Mark Cant (Vice-Chairman) and

Cllrs. Allan Blakemore, David Brown, Lynne Dentith, Rebecca Hagan, Tim Jeanes, Alf Walton, Dudley Waters

Officer

Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

1. Apologies

Cllrs. Vanessa Carmichael, Gloria Wills, Chris Lines, John Robinson, Maxine Robinson.

2. Declaration of interest

None

3. Matters of Information

3.1 Remembrance Garden

A letter has been sent from the Town Council to Mr Davison explaining the procedures for the memorial garden and asking him to contact the Town Clerk should he wish to take further action. The Clerk reported that Mr Davison had not contacted her. The Clerk also expressed her thanks to Cllr Jeanes for his assistance in compiling this letter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and close this matter.

3.2 Pizza Castle

Cllr Mel Carr reported that he has not spoken to the owner of Pizza Castle while work is still on-going to identify what land the Town Council does and does not own.

RESOLVED:

To reconsider this issue once ownership of the land around Pizza Castle is known.

3.3 Woodland: Neville Drive

The Clerk reported that following consultation with Stephen Reed of DCC the Council's request for clarification regarding the purchase, ownership and maintenance of the Neville Drive woodland area had been passed to Jeff Talbot of DCC. Mr Talbot had confirmed that Section 106 money had been used to purchase the woodland and to fell numerous trees plus undertake extensive pruning to diseased trees and limbs. A further amount of 106 money had been used to re-plant within the woodland area. Mr Talbot confirmed the 106 money has now been spent but a maintenance schedule is in place relating to this area which has been agreed by DCC Landscape Architects and Planners with an appropriate budget allocated. Mr Talbot has offered to meet with Cllrs on-site at 10am on Friday 25th July 2014 to discuss this area of land and the agreed maintenance schedule.

RESOLVED:

- i) Cllrs to inform the Clerk if they would like to attend the on-site meeting.**
- ii) Cllr Mel Carr to provide a report at the next Environment Committee meeting.**

3.4. Public Participation: Drainage Plans For Station Road Playing Field

The Clerk reported that as agreed at the last Environment Committee meeting, Mrs Scott had been given a copy of the drainage plans provided by NWL for Station Road Playing Field.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and close this matter.

3.5. Open Spaces Working Party: Quote to Repair Church Wall

The Clerk reported that the preferred contractor for this work had confirmed that his quote was open-ended and did not have an expiry date.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and close this matter.

3.6 Station Road Field:

The Clerk had now supplied Mr Paul Armin of DCC with a copy of the drainage plans provided by Northumbrian Water for Station Road Playing Field and requested that he look at them and give an expert opinion. Mr Armin had responded to the Council stating the information provided is no more than he already had. There are no records of land drainage within the field where flooding occurs. The drainage to the north east of the field is the main surface water and foul water sewers which are owned and maintained by Northumbrian Water, these have been checked and are running clear. The main reason for the field and gardens flood is that it's the lowest area of the field and surrounding area and due to the high level of natural water table over the past few years the slightest amount of rain causes the ground to become saturated which then causes the area to flood as the water has nowhere to go. There is a possible solution to install new land drainage and a soakaway chamber, but this solution may still not work in heavy rain as the area is so low and to install this drainage does currently not meet DCC main priorities.

RESOLVED:

This latest response from Mr Paul Armin to be considered by the Open Spaces Working Group.

3.7 DCC Response To Proposed Parking Restrictions

The Clerk had written again to Mr Lee Mowbray of DCC reiterating the Town Council's concerns regarding the impact of a restricted waiting time on Front Street/East End and requesting upon what basis DCC would make its final decision on this matter. Mr Mowbray's response received via email dated 3rd July 2014 had been circulated prior to the meeting. Mr Mowbray confirmed that response to the consultation had been limited with one objection having been received from the Chinese takeaway and support being received from 2 or 3 others. The final decision would be based on the responses gathered but as it stands it looks like it will be referred to highways committee who have the final say on how the scheme progresses.

The Clerk had also spoken to Mr Steven Muse of DCC to seek clarification regarding the size of the bus stop in this area of the Town. Mr Muse had checked the historical correspondence in relation to the bus stop and confirmed that DCC have no record of ever having received correspondence in relation to it. Two years ago DCC took over

responsibility from the Police for marking up and enforcing bus stops. The bus stop in question is a standard size used across the County.

The Clerk reported that a letter had been received on 4th July 2014 from Ms Loraine Holding (Legal Assistant – Highways DCC), a copy of which had been circulated prior to the meeting, detailing a public consultation period from 11th July 2014 – 1st August 2014 providing notification of a Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting and Stopping, Parking Places and Disabled Parking Order 2011 notice to introduce a Parking Mon-Sat 9am-6pm 30 mins no return with 30 mins restriction outside numbers 58-62 Front Street, Sedgefield.

RESOLVED:

The Clerk to submit the Town Council's objections to the proposed parking restrictions as part of the public consultation exercise.

3.8. County Durham Environment Awards 2014

As agreed, the Clerk, on behalf of the Town Council, had nominated Sedgefield in Bloom for the Community Partnership Category of these Awards and informed Mr Howard Smith of the Bloom Group of this nomination.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and close this matter.

3.9. Heritage Open Days

Information had been circulated to Ean Parsons, Dudley Waters, David and Wendy Gill, Michael Gobbett, Alex Clarke and Norma Neal regarding the forthcoming Heritage Open Days.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and close this matter.

3.10. Request for Bouncy Castle on Village Green

The Clerk had written to Mr & Mrs Quilty agreeing in principle to their request to have a bouncy castle on the Village Green as part of a fund raising event on 27th July 2014 on the proviso that they supplied copies of a risk assessment and insurance certificate, clarified event timings and paid a fee of £100. In response Mrs Quilty has withdrawn her request citing the cost of the Village Green hire to be too expensive.

RESOLVED:

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.

Ms Marina Arceri of the Crosshills Hotel expressed concerns regarding the state of the walk-way around the Hotel bordering onto the village green. The walk-way is coming apart and is a potential tripping hazard. Clarification was sought as to whose responsibility it was to look after this walk-way in order that appropriate repairs can take place.

Mrs Scott thanked the Town Council for the drainage plans in the area surrounding Station Road Playing Field. She stated that Northumbrian Water undertook work earlier in the previous week looking at drains 1 and 3. There are still problems with the balancing tank in the Station Road Playing Field and the reason for water in the field is still unknown. Mrs Scott has asked Northumbrian Water for the current situation regarding the drains going into the balancing tank for Ivy Row.

Mr Trevor Terry thanked all the volunteers in the village who keep the Town looking so tidy but expressed concerns regarding the state of the cemetery when grass cutting has been undertaken. Grass cutters go between graves and then leave cuttings which then stick to headstones leaving the cemetery looking very untidy and letting the rest of the Town down.

Mr Howard Smith expressed concerns regarding the state of the pavements on Rectory Row opposite the Social Club which are crumbling and coming away in clumps. Historically this area has been patched extensively but would be grateful if the Town Council could request Durham County Council look at this area. Mr Smith, on behalf of the Bloom Group, expressed thanks to the Town Council for all the help with the imminent Bloom judging.

The meeting was then re-opened.

Cllr Mel Carr informed Ms Arceri that the walk-way is the responsibility of the Town Council and assured them that a written response will be given to them. With regard to the grass cutting in the cemetery, Cllr Carr reported that he had spoken to the contractor who had himself recognized the quality of the cutting work had not been up to standard recently and that this was due to a number of experienced strimmers having left his employment. The

contractor had provided reassurance that future work would be of the expected standard. Cllr Alf Walton reported that grass cutting had been undertaken earlier that day in the cemetery and had been done to a very high standard.

Cllr David Brown requested that a new item be added to each Committee agenda prior to exempt information to allow Cllrs to analyse comments made during public participation. Cllr Lynne Dentith supported this agreeing that it would allow an opportunity to give public reassurance that action is being undertaken as a result of their participation at meetings.

RESOLVED:

- i) The Clerk to investigate the validity of having “Analysis of Public Participation” as a standing agenda item on all Committees.**

(Cllr Rebecca Hagan left the meeting at this point).

5. Reports

5.1 Trees: Mitford Court

5.2 Tree: North End

Prior to the meeting a recommendations report had been circulated by Cllr Mel Carr regarding trees at Mitford Court and North End as based upon the advice received from Mr Rodger Lowe of DCC at an on-site meeting. Cllr Dudley Waters supported all proposed recommendations and Cllr Mark Cant seconded this.

RESOLVED:

- i) To approve all the recommendations contained in the report.**
- ii) The Clerk to action the recommendations in conjunction with Cllr Mel Carr.**

5.3 Tree: Hasledon Grove

Cllr Alf Walton verbally reported that concerns had been raised regarding the state of a tree outside 13 Hasledon Grove. Cllr Walton had visited the tree and taken photographs. This tree was not owned by the Town Council nor on Town Council land. The Clerk had written to the property owners and given them the contact details for Mr Rodger Lowe, Senior Tree Officer of DCC.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

5.4 Trees: Station Road Playing Field / Hornby Avenue

Cllr Alf Walton verbally reported that he had visited a tree in this locality which had died. Concerns had been expressed by a member of the public, however, there is no danger to the playground equipment in this area and no action is required.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

5.5 Trees: Beacon Avenue

The Clerk reported that Mrs Wears of 8 Beacon Avenue had contacted the Council Offices to report concerns regarding trees to the rear of her property. The trees are affecting TV reception and Mrs Wears has had to declare them on her house insurance. Cllr Allan Blakemore informed Cllrs that the issue affecting Mrs Wears property would affect the entire street and therefore careful consideration of this matter was essential. It was agreed that this issue needed to be investigated further to determine who owns the trees and what work, if any, is required before any decisions could be made.

RESOLVED:

The Open Spaces Working Group to investigate further and report back to the Environment Committee.

5.5a Trees: South View

The Clerk reported that Mrs Stubbing of 4 South View had contacted the Council Offices to report concerns regarding trees overgrowing in her garden from Ceddesfeld Hall causing considerable shelter and requesting they be cut back or removed by the Council. It was agreed that this issue needed to be investigated further to determine who owns the trees and what work, if any, is required before any decisions could be made.

RESOLVED:

The Open Spaces Working Group to investigate further and report back to the Environment Committee.

5.6 Water Tank at Cemetery Lodge

Cllr Alf Walton verbally reported that the new water tank at Cemetery Lodge has been completed and is working well with the tank filling in approximately 1½ minutes compared to the previous 45 minutes that was being taken. Cllr Walton was thanked

for his work.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

5.7 Cemetery Recycling Bays

The Clerk reported that the newly installed Cemetery recycling bays had been vandalised at some point during the weekend of 5th-6th July 2014. This matter had been reported to the Police and a Crime Reference Number (DHM-10072014-0206) obtained in order to progress an insurance claim. As the bays had only been installed several days before they were vandalised they had not been put onto the Council's insurance, however, Zurich had confirmed the Town Council had 6 months in which to register the bays and in the interim they would be covered under the Council's existing insurance policy. Work is already now underway to get the bays included on the insurance policy. In addition, an insurance claim form is being completed and two quotes are required detailing the cost of repair works. One quote has already been requested from Mr Brian Pike (the original supplier) and another is needed. Cllrs Alf Walton and Mel Carr reported that the damaged bays do not pose a health and safety hazard in their current state. It was agreed that ideally this repair work should not be undertaken immediately but at a time that it can coincide with the proposed work to the adjacent cemetery hedge and fencing.

RESOLVED:

- i) To receive the information.**
- ii) Cllr Mel Carr and the Town Clerk to obtain a second repair quote.**
- iii) The Clerk to progress the insurance claim.**

5.8 Church Turning Circle

Prior to the meeting copies of an email from Cllr Mel Carr to the Open Spaces Working Group membership dated 26th June 2014 had been circulated to all. This email detailed the specification upon which the Town Council has obtained quotations for the proposed redevelopment of the Church Turning Circle area along with details of sample sets obtained. As a result of this email Cllr Mel Carr had met with Judith Miller (Senior Design and Conservation Officer, DCC) at the Town Council Offices on Tuesday 15th July 2014 to view the sample sets obtained. Ms Miller's recommendation was to use Brett Landscape, Alpha Antique, 80mm, using the large size where possible, smaller one may have to be used in the centre around the stone centre piece in order to maintain the round circular pattern also round the perimeter.

The colours are to be mixed – Silver Haze 40%, Charcoal 40%, Burnt Oak 20% and the edging in Charcoal. Planning permission is not required as the scheme is similar to the existing design and is Town Council owned/maintained. Confirmation is to be obtained from the final contractor that rain water/drainage will be no worse, possibly better than existing.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

5.9 Allotment Challenge 2014

Prior to the meeting an article from the Summer edition of Sedgefield Extra detailing the Allotment Challenge 2014 had been circulated to all. Cllr Alf Walton reported that judging for this event would take place on Wednesday 23rd July 2014 with prizes and trophies for the best kept and productive plot plus most improved plot.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

5.10 Allotment Waiting List

Prior to the meeting a report by the Town Clerk had been circulated to all detailing that as of 2nd July 2014 there were 12 people on the waiting list for Council allotments. It was envisaged that 2 allotments would be ready for re-letting by 31st July 2014 bringing the number of people on the waiting list down to 10.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

5.11 The Bloom Bicycle

Cllr Mel Carr reported that the Sedgefield in Bloom's display bicycle has now been planted up and has been temporarily fixed and secured to the lamp post on the Village Green so as to form a key part of this year's Gold themed Bloom display.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

6. Correspondence

6.1 Northumbrian Water response to North End grass verge

Prior to the meeting an email dated 24th June 2014 from Stella Wright of Northumbrian Water had been circulated to all confirming that contractors had attended the site near to the Hardwick Arms to excavate the grass verge and repair the defect which had previously been identified on a transferred drain. On completion of this work the grass verge had been reinstated. Northumbrian Water now considered this matter to be closed. Cllr Lynne Dentith reported that holes were now re-opening at this site and further investigation was required. Cllr Mel Carr believed the problem had been rectified.

RESOLVED:

Cllr Mel Carr and the Clerk to undertake further investigation.

6.2 Eden Drive: Drainage Problem

The Clerk circulated copies of a letter received from Mr and Mrs Steward of Eden Drive which highlighted their concerns regarding drainage problems on the green fronting 23-51 Eden Drive. It was agreed that this matter should be investigated further.

RESOLVED:

- i) The Open Spaces Working Group to investigate further and report back to the Environment Committee.**
- ii) The Clerk to write to Mr and Mrs Steward acknowledging receipt of their letter and confirming that investigations will be undertaken.**

6.3 St Edmund's Churchyard – Footpaths

The Clerk circulated copies of a letter received from Ms Rachel Stephenson of St Edmund's DCC Secretary regarding the state of paths within the Churchyard at St Edmund's requesting they be cleaned on a more regular basis to avoid accidents. It was agreed that this matter should be investigated further. Cllr Dudley Waters stated that the specification for the materials used in the current footpaths in the Churchyard were imposed by Durham County Council and the Town Council had previously raised their concerns regarding slippery surfaces. Previously power washing had been undertaken in this area. In addition, the steps from the Chip Shop up to the Churchyard had not been weeded and did require attention. Cllr Dudley Waters also reiterated the importance of work being undertaken by qualified and fully insured people rather than any Councillor undertaking work on a voluntary basis.

RESOLVED:

- i) The Clerk to write to Ms Stephenson requesting precise locations of**

concern.

- ii) The Clerk to liaise with Mr Stephen Young to determine previous work undertaken in this area.**
- iii) Open Spaces Working Group to investigate further and report back to the Environment Committee.**

6.4 St Edmund's Lychgate Power Supply

The Clerk circulated copies of an email from Mr Brian Whitehead, Hon Treasurer, St Edmund's Church regarding the power socket installed in the lychgate. The current installation has no earth and electricians undertaking work at St Edmund's have therefore disconnected the socket. Mr Whitehead's email contained 3 options for consideration. It was agreed that this matter should be investigated further and appropriate quotations should be sought. Cllr Lynne Dentith suggested that purchasing a generator may be a more cost effective option.

RESOLVED:

- i) The Open Spaces Working Group to investigate further and report back to the Environment Committee.**

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.

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