

SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the proceedings of the **JUNE MONTHLY MEETING** of the **Council** held at **7 p.m.** in the **Council Offices**, Advice & Information Centre, Sedgefield, on **Monday 9th June 2014.**

Present **Cllr. Mel Carr (Vice Chairman) and**
Cllrs. Gloria Wills, Allan Blakemore, David Brown, Mark Cant, Vanessa Carmichael, Lynne Dentith, Ian Sutherland and Alf Walton

Officer Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

1. Apologies

Cllrs. John Robinson, Maxine Robinson, Dudley Waters, Chris Lines, Rebecca Hagan and Tim Jeanes.

2. Declaration of interest

Cllr Mel Carr declared an interest in Items 3 and 4 of Agenda Item 12 (Current Planning Applications).

3. STC Minutes / Committee Reports

a) Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held Monday 12th May 2014

Cllrs requested the following amendments be made to the minutes of the AGM held on 12th May 2014:

- More detail be included in Item 5 to reflect why and how the decision to hold a secret ballot was taken for the election of Mayor;
- Item 6 to reflect it was the Chair's Allowance that was agreed and not the Mayor's Allowance;
- Item 8 c) to reflect that Cllr Hagan was elected Chair based upon a show of hands and not upon the Chair using his casting vote;
- To show the role of Sedgefield Town Council representative on the Sedgefield Development Trust is to be shared between Cllr Ian Sutherland and Cllr Tim Jeanes;
- To leave the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) representative as blank while further information is obtained regarding the new CAB structure.

Cllr Vanessa Carmichael stated the Council had previously agreed that written reports should accompany requests to place an item on a Committee agenda. It was agreed that this procedure should continue, however, it was acknowledged that in emergency situations this may not always be possible.

RESOLVED

i) The Clerk to amend the minutes accordingly and bring back to the next Full Monthly Meeting.

ii) Where possible Cllrs to provide written reports to accompany agenda items which can be circulated with paperwork prior to Committee meetings.

b) Minutes of the Monthly Meeting held Monday 12th May 2014

These were confirmed as a correct record. (AB, DB)

c) Minutes of the P&R committee held Monday 12th May 2014

These were confirmed as a correct record. (LD,IS)

d) Minutes of the Environment committee meeting held Monday 19th May 2014

Cllr Alf Walton reported that Item 5.3. refers to him as Cllr Alf Watson. With this minor amendment, these were confirmed as a correct record. (AW, VC)

e) Minutes of the Community Development committee meeting held Monday 19th May 2014

These were confirmed as a correct record. (GW, IS)

f) Minutes of the Personnel committee meeting held Monday 2nd June 2014

These were confirmed as a correct record. (GW/IS)

RESOLVED: To accept all of the minutes as above and recommendations contained therein, with the exception of the minutes of the Annual General Meeting.

4. Matters of Information

4.1 Hardwick Park

Cllrs Gloria Wills and Mel Carr attended the Licensing Sub-Committee on 29th April 2014 and stated as that as previously submitted in a letter on 27th March 2014 that this should be a one evening event rather than a two evening event and that more efforts needed to reduce sound. The result of the Statutory Licensing Sub-Committee was to grant the application to hold the two day event, subject to tickets being provided in the West Park and extra monitoring of the sound issue raised. The Town Council is concerned that one night parking may take place and will note carefully what actually happens on the weekend.

4.2 Spring Lane Mobile Home and Caravans

Cllrs questioned the current status of the Spring Lane Mobile Home and Caravans Park. The Clerk reported that she had emailed Ms Susan Porter of DCC asking for the background to this site and the current position.

RESOLVED

- i) The Clerk to report back to the next meeting the latest information received from Ms Porter.**

4.3. Recording Meetings

The first meeting of the Recording Meetings Working Party will take place on Thursday 12th June 2014 at 11.30am.

4.4. Durham Association News

The Clerk confirmed that Mrs Lesley Swinbank had written a letter of condolence to the family of the late Cllr Bill Waters in April 2013.

4.5. Request to change name of Sedgefield

The Clerk confirmed that a letter from the Chair had been sent to Mr Phil Wilson MP regarding the proposal to change the name of Sedgefield to Royal Sedgefield. The letter stated the admiration and support of the work of the Sedgefield Village Veterans. However, it was the view of Councillors that it would not be appropriate to seek to change the name of Sedgefield and the Town Council does not support the proposal. No response has yet been received from Mr Wilson.

4.6. Sedgefield Plan Steering Group Meetings

The Clerk reported that Mr David Bowles had confirmed that all Cllrs were welcome to attend future Steering Group meetings. Cllr Wills stated that it was important to ensure the Town Council do not take over this Group or overcrowd the public representation on the Steering Group so as not to compromise the outcome from the Group.

5. Dates of Meetings

Dates for meetings taking place in June had been circulated prior to this meeting.

RESOLVED

To receive the information.

6. Police Report

Sgt Alex Clarke verbally delivered a Police Report for the period 12th May 2014 – 9th June 2014. In this period the following crimes had been recorded:

- 1 commercial theft on 31st May 2014 where the driver of a silver Ford Mondeo absconded without paying for £55 worth of fuel at the Bradbury Services.
- 1 assault and criminal damage on 17th May 2014 when a minor entered the Premier Store on Front Street and attempted to buy cigarettes. When refused the minor attacked the shop keeper and then kicked and cracked the shop window. The minor was arrested and is being dealt with via the Youth Offending Service. This was the only incident to take place during the day of the Sedgefield Medieval Fayre which otherwise was a great day for everyone and passed off without incident.
- On 30th May 2014 an unknown person(s) pushed off the top tub of the planters outside the Crosshills pub on the village green. Police are reviewing CCTV footage.
- A tray of flowers was stolen from the Cemetery Garden. Similar incidents happened several times last year. PC Todd will be attempting to identify those responsible.

19 incidents of anti-social behavior occurred in May 2014 compared with 17 in May 2013. 11 incidents of youth anti-social behavior occurred in May 2014 compared with 11 in May 2013. Complainants report ongoing youth nuisance within the vicinity of The Willows at Sedgefield which is located at the top of Spring Lane prior to the bridge over the A689. The properties at this location are flats and are occupied by elderly persons. A den was identified and subsequently dismantled which coupled with increased patrols in the area appear to have resulted in no further complaints being reported.

In May 2014 a sneak-in burglary was reported in Trimdon Village. The suspect was going door to door selling loft insulation. Following an appeal on social media a resident of Sedgefield was able to provide vital information which led to the arrest and charge of a prolific burglar from the Stockton area. The male is currently on remand.

The next PACT meeting is on Tuesday 10th June 2014 at 7pm in the Fletcher Room of the Parish Hall.

Cllr Alf Walton reported that during a recent Family Day event held at Hardwick Hall a number of children had caused damage to a newly planted hedge and trees. Cllr Walton had reported this to the Police via 101 while the children were in the process of causing the damage, however, no Officers had attended the scene.

Cllr Gloria Wills asked Sgt Alex Clarke to clarify the age group which appears to cause the problems being experienced in the area. Sgt Clarke replied that the older the child the harder it was to impact upon their behavior, particularly so for the 14-15 year old age group. However, in

some instances this behavior was being experienced in the 12-13 year old age group. Sgt Clarke suggested that some provision for children in these age groups could potentially help address current issues in the Town.

Cllr Mark Cant reported that he had been made aware of potential problems between some members of the Fishburn Boxing Club and young people in Sedgefield.

RESOLVED

- i) To receive the information.**
- ii) Sgt Clarke to investigate the 101 call made by Cllr Alf Walton.**
- iii) Sgt Clarke to liaise with Fishburn Boxing Club.**

7. Public Participation

The Chairman closed the meeting whilst the public gave their views and comments.

Mrs Julia Bowles of the Residents Forum reported:

- A resident had expressed concerns regarding a gathering of horses and traps on the Village Green and questioned whether the Town Council had given permission or endorsement for this activity.
- Concern regarding the wide area from which pupils are drawn by Sedgefield Community College with many travelling from the Gilesgate area. Over time this could see children from within the Town being unable to obtain a place at their local school.
- There had been an armed incident in Boyne Court, however, this had not been included in the earlier Police Report.
- The Neighbourhood Plan is now entering the phase of developing policies and an invitation is extended to as wide an audience as possible in order to try and capture the views of all.

Mrs Bowles then asked if the Town Council would be objecting to the proposed Wind Farm Planning Application at Bradbury and the Isles.

Finally, Mrs Bowles reported that she found requesting a meeting with a Durham County Council Officer to be a much more effective way of getting issues progressed rather than writing letters or sending emails.

The meeting was then re-opened.

Cllr Mel Carr reported the Town Council do not have any powers to stop the travellers using the Village Green and it was felt by Cllrs present that this gathering had not caused any problems or damage. He also stated the Wind Farm Planning Application was due to be considered later on the agenda.

RESOLVED

To receive the information.

8. Internal Reports

8.1 Election of Mayor

The Chair and Clerk had jointly prepared a report on the Election of Mayor at the Town Council's AGM held in May 2014. This report had been prepared after verbal consultations with both CDALC and NALC. This report had been circulated to all prior to the Monthly meeting.

Cllr Vanessa Carmichael asked the Chair if there was a definitive answer as to whether or not the previous election had been legal. Cllr Mel Carr responded by stating there was no definitive answer as following detailed discussions with Cllr Chris Lines it was possible that with hindsight the incorrect Standing Orders were used, i.e. those which contained the option for the secret ballot.

Cllr Gloria Wills stated that she had no wish to change the outcome of the original vote but instead wanted to see the correct procedures being followed by the Town Council.

Cllrs considered the options available to them and agreed that rather than seek further legal opinion at a cost to the Town Council on this matter to declare the previous election of Mayor as null and void in order to hold a Special meeting with a single agenda item of electing a Mayor.

RESOLVED

- i) To declare the election of Mayor at the AGM in May 2014 null and void.**
- ii) To hold a special meeting on Monday 16th June 2014 prior to the Community Development and Engagement Committee meeting. This special meeting will be a one item agenda for the election of Mayor with the previously identified nominees being considered. The ballot for this will be via a show of hands.**
- iii) The Clerk to prepare and issue appropriate paperwork to all Cllrs informing them of the Special meeting.**
- iv) The Clerk to liaise with CDALC to clarify whether only Cllrs who took part in the original vote can participate or if it is open to all.**
- v) The Clerk to commence the introduction of the draft Policy Log which was**

included as Appendix A to the Election of Mayor Report.

8.2 Chairman's Report

Cllr Mel Carr read out a Chairman's report which had been provided by Cllr Chris Lines. Over the past month the Chair had:

- Attended various meetings and dealt with correspondence relating to the Sedgefield Plan;
- Dealt with several enquiries from residents and directed them to appropriate sources of assistance;
- Worked closely with the new Clerk to support her in her new role;
- Liaised between Sedgefield 700+ and Sedgefield Village Games regarding the provision of activities during the Sedgefield Weekend;

8.3 Mayor's Report

The Mayor, Cllr Mel Carr, reported that he had attended the following:

- 5th June 2014 – Diamond Wedding of Mr and Mrs Jay
- 6th June 2014 – Memorial at the Cenotaph to lay a wreath on behalf of the Town Council

Cllr Carr read out a note of thanks from Mr and Mrs Jay.

9. External Reports

9.1 Report from DCC Members (JR / RL)

No report was given.

9.2 Sedgefield Plan

Minutes from the Sedgefield Plan Steering Group meetings held on 21st May 2014 had been previously circulated. The next Steering Group meeting is to be held on 23rd June 2014 at 7pm in the Fletcher Room of the Parish Hall. Recent press releases issued by the Group had also been previously circulated along with findings from the recent Site Preference Survey. Cllr Ian Sutherland commended the Steering Group for their work in producing the Site Preference Survey findings and hoped these would influence future development. Cllr Allan Blakemore stated that a number of outline parts of the Plan are now being put together and that a timetable is in place which needs to be adhered to.

The Clerk reported that regular progress reports need to be submitted to the Community Development Foundation with regard to the Neighbourhood Plan Grant. A meeting will take place with Mr David Bowles to prepare and submit the next progress report which is overdue and then to agree a procedure to future reports.

(Cllr Vanessa Carmichael left the meeting at this point)

RESOLVED

- i) To receive the information.**
- ii) The Clerk to circulate to all the timetable for Sedgefield Plan development and completion.**

10. Correspondence

10.1 Durham County Council – Land at Sedgefield Community College

The Clerk circulated copies of an email from Ms Becky Mollen, Asset Strategy Assistant from Durham County Council advising the Town Council of the availability of an area of land amounting to 14700m² (3.63 acres) near to Sedgefield Community College which is potentially surplus to County Council requirements. An accompanying site map was attached. Ms Mollen requested that Town Council inform her by 26th June whether it had any interest in the site or any comments regarding the proposed surplus declaration. The County Council would be looking to obtain the full market value for this site.

Cllrs identified this area of land as having historically being part of the school's farm site. Cllrs wanted to understand the strategy behind this proposal and to ensure that any disposal of the site would not restrict the future potential for the school to expand.

RESOLVED

- i) To receive the information.**
- ii) The Clerk to write to Ms Mollen requesting information about the strategy behind the proposal and state the Council's concern that this disposal could mean there is not room for Sedgefield Community College to expand in the future and cater for the growing educational needs of the Town and wider catchment area.**

11. Planning: New Large Scale Development

11.1 Media Coverage

Recent media coverage had been previously circulated.

RESOLVED

To receive the information.

12. Current Planning Applications

A schedule of current planning applications had been circulated prior to the meeting. Each application was then considered and the following comments made (Note: number refers to the number on the circulated list):

- 1 **EON Climate and Renewables – Land Near Mordon, Bradbury and Preston le Skerne to erect The Isles Wind Farm.** It was agreed that an appropriate objection to this application should be submitted by the Town Council to reflect the visual impact that will be felt by local residents.

RESOLVED

- i) **Cllr David Brown to attend the Wind Farm Working Group Meeting on Wednesday 11th June 2014 at 4.30pm in Mordon Village Hall.**
 - ii) **The Clerk to liaise with Steve Ragg to obtain examples of other objections being submitted for this application.**
 - iii) **The Clerk to draft and circulate to all Cllrs proposed wording for objecting to this application.**
- 2 **5 Millclose Walk.** It was agreed that the Town Council respond to this application (relating to tree pruning) by requesting this issue is considered by Durham County Council's Tree Officer.

Cllr Mel Carr declared an interest in Planning Applications 3 and 4.

- 3-4 **Cross Hill Hotel and Restaurant.** Cllrs agreed to these applications in principle, however, whatever new systems are put in place should not interfere with the neighbours and should follow the advice of the Conservation Officer for Listed Building Consent.

- 5-9 **Cllrs did not have any objections with regards to Planning Applications 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9.**

RESOLVED

The above comments to be forwarded to DCC Planning Officers.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.30pm.