

SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the proceedings of the **JULY MONTHLY MEETING** of the **Council** held at **7 p.m.** in the **Council Offices**, Advice & Information Centre, Sedgefield, on **Monday 14th July 2014.**

Present **Cllr. Chris Lines (Chairman)**
Cllr. Gloria Wills (Vice-Chairman) and
Cllrs. David Brown, Vanessa Carmichael, Mel Carr, Lynne Dentith, Rebecca Hagan, Tim Jeanes, John Robinson, Maxine Robinson, Ian Sutherland, Alf Walton, Dudley Waters

Officer Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

1. Apologies

Cllrs. Allan Blakemore, Mark Cant.

2. Declaration of interest

None

3. STC Minutes / Committee Reports

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

Cllr Rebecca Hagan requested that under Item 11 of these minutes her request for the Council to give consideration for meetings to take place during the day should be recorded.

With the inclusion of the above amendment, these were confirmed as a correct record. (CL / MC)

b) Minutes of the Monthly Meeting held Monday 9th June 2014

These were confirmed as a correct record. (MC / DW)

c) Minutes of the P&R committee held Monday 9th June 2014

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

d) Minutes of the Special P&R committee held Monday 16th June 2014

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

e) Minutes of the Special Full Council Meeting held Monday 16th June 2014

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

f) Minutes of the Environment committee meeting held Monday 16th June 2014

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

g) Minutes of the Community Development and Engagement committee meeting held Monday 16th June 2014

These were confirmed as a correct record. (RH/MC)

RESOLVED: To accept all of the minutes as above and recommendations contained therein

4. Matters of Information

4.1 Spring Lane Mobile Home and Caravans

The Clerk reported that Ms Susan Porter (Senior Planning Enforcement Officer DCC) has sought advice from DCC's Landscapes Team and now needs time to consider this advice. Ms Porter will research the history of the site to assess what is lawful on there to compare any new use. She will also be visiting the site later this week and provide the Town Council with a further update.

4.2 Recording Meetings

The Clerk reported that the first meeting of the Recording Meetings Working Group had taken place on 12th June 2014. A proposal from the Group was to be presented to the P&R Committee on 14th July 2014.

4.3. Election of Mayor

A special meeting had been held on 16th June 2014 and Cllr Mel Carr had been elected as Mayor for 2014/15.

4.4 Policy Log

Work has commenced on identifying existing Town Council policies and further work is on-going for future report to the P&R Committee.

4.5 Sedgefield Plan

The timetable for the development and completion of the Sedgefield Plan had been circulated to all Councillors for their information.

4.6 DCC – Proposed Disposal of Land at Sedgefield Community College

The Clerk had written to Ms Becky Mollen of DCC and requested the strategy behind the

proposal to dispose of land at the Community College and stated the Town Council's concern that disposal may restrict the future expansion of the College. Ms Jenny Morris (DCC Strategy Officer) had responded and stated that, subject to the necessary approvals, DCC was looking to dispose of the land to generate capital receipts which would be used for the construction of new classrooms on the College site. DCC had considered carefully the capacity at the school against the projected pupil numbers for the area. The disposal of the land, if approved, would result in new classrooms being provided at the school, which would be sufficient space for the number of children DCC expect to be seeking a place at Sedgefield in the future, particularly in relation to any additional pupils that may emerge from the housing development planned for this area.

4.7 Isles Wind Farm Planning Application

The Clerk had drafted a response to this application on behalf of the Town Council. The draft had been circulated to all Cllrs for comment and amended based upon feedback received before being submitted to DCC on behalf of the Town Council.

4.8 Planning Applications

Comments made on planning applications considered during the June Monthly Meeting had been submitted to DCC Planning Officers.

5. Dates of Meetings

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

Cllr Mel Carr reported that a date for his Civic Service as Mayor is currently being discussed and details will be shared with all Cllrs as soon as possible.

RESOLVED

To receive the information.

6. Police Report

Sgt Alex Clarke verbally delivered a Police Report for the period 9th June 2014 – 14th July 2014. In this period the following crimes had been recorded:

- 1 robbery whereby a 22 year old victim was at Sedgefield Racecourse car boot sale on Sunday 29th June, when he was approached by a man asking if he would like to buy an Apple MacBook Pro computer. After viewing the computer, the victim agreed to buy it and accepted a lift from the suspect into Sedgefield Village to withdraw money from a cashpoint. The victim got into a burgundy-coloured, five door Ford Focus in which a second man was sitting in the front passenger seat. During the short journey, the front

seat passenger produced a knife and put it to the victim's throat, instructing him to withdraw his daily limit at the ATM. The victim withdrew £250 and was again threatened, this time with a meat cleaver, before handing over the money to the suspects. He was dropped off unharmed near to the racecourse. It is believed that a short time after the robbery the vehicle and its occupants were involved in the theft of fuel from the Rontec Service Station on the A689 at Sedgefield. A press appeal warning members of the public has gone out to local media and social media outlets.

- 1 dwelling burglary occurred between 12:00 on 28th June 2014 and 00:30 on 29th June 2014 at a flat in Cunningham Court, Sedgefield. The communal door to the flats was forced together with the front door of one of the properties. Nothing was taken and police believe this may have been a case of mistaken identity. Enquiries are on-going with a possible suspect.
- 1 theft from a motor vehicle occurred between 21:00 on 19th June 2014 and 07:00 on 20th June 2014 in St Luke's Crescent, Sedgefield with the front nearside window of a red Citroen motor vehicle being smashed and a bag containing personal possessions being taken. Following a search of the area police recovered the bag and all contents in nearby trees. The police are awaiting the results of a forensic examination of the scene and vehicle.
- 2 instances of criminal damage. The first between 4th and 7th July 2014 when damage was caused to five sections of pre-cast concrete forming the walls of the recycling bays at the cemetery at East End, Sedgefield. The second at 8.40am on 9th July 2014 the windscreen of a bus in Salters Lane, Sedgefield when it is believed an object was thrown from a school bus travelling in the opposite direction. Enquiries are on-going with Sedgefield Community College to identify the person responsible for the second incident.
- 4 minor assaults. Two were domestic related with the first being a 19 year old female who was given a police caution and the second a suspect has been identified and enquiries are on-going. The other two incidents involved offences under the Dangerous Dogs Act and both dog owners have been identified. One has been interviewed and will be reported this week and enquiries are on-going to trace the second owner.
- 1 incident of shoplifting occurred at the Co-op with a prolific shoplifter from the Sunderland area having been identified and arrested in the Northumbria Police Area. He has admitted the offence which will be taken into consideration when he appears in court.
- 2 drive-offs. One at Bradbury on 21st June 2014 whereby a 36 year old female from the Middlesbrough area was later arrested and charged. The second on 29th June 2014 at the Rontec Services on the A689. Police have arrested a 34 year old male suspect from the Spennymoor area. He was arrested on 2nd July 2014 and interviewed for this and other offences and has been bailed pending further enquiries regarding the other offences.

- 6 thefts as follows:
 - Between 16:30 on 1st July 2014 and 11:37 on 2nd July 2014, a steel container was broken into at the Hardwick Country Park and 17 mountain bikes were taken. Police recovered 7 near to the scene and later came across an unattended vehicle in the Fishburn area which contained the other 10. Police have identified a suspect and enquiries are on-going.
 - Between 16:00 and 16:30 on 29th June 2014, an Iphone 4 was taken from a park bench in the Hardwick Country Park. The phone had been left at that location and when the owner returned it had been taken. No suspects have been identified.
 - Overnight on 13th July 2014, persons have attempted to force open the parking meter at the Hardwick Park. Entry was not gained and no cash was taken. Police are following up a line of enquiry and arrests will follow.
 - Between 10:00 on 24th June 2014 and 10:00 on 25th June 2014, a sheep feeder was taken from a field in Merton Grange, Stillington. No suspects have been identified.
 - On the evening of 17th June 2014, 200 litres of diesel were taken from an HGV parked in a layby on the A689 at Bradbury. No suspects have been identified.
 - Overnight on 10th June 2014, a manhole cover was taken from Bleach House Bank, Stillington. No suspect(s) have been identified at this time.
- 2 offences of sexual assault (touching) amongst children. For one offence a male youth has received a caution/RA and for the second a male youth has been interviewed and enquiries are on-going.
- 1 drink driving offence on 28th June 2014 a 34 year old male from Fishburn was arrested in Salters Lane, Sedgefield. He was searched and found to be in possession of two small bags of cocaine. He was later charged with both offences.

32 incidents of anti-social behavior occurred in June 2014 compared with 33 in June 2013. 15 incidents of youth anti-social behavior occurred in June 2014 compared with 17 in June 2013.

The next PACT meeting is on Tuesday 14th October 2014 at 7pm in the Fletcher Room of the Parish Hall.

Cllr Maxine Robinson thanked Sgt Clarke and his colleagues for all their work, however, she expressed concern at the number of incidents having taken place during the last reporting period. Sgt Clarke stated that the number of incidents reported was unusual and this could in some way be explained by the length of time since the last reporting period and the fact that previously perhaps not all crimes had been reported.

RESOLVED

To receive the information.

7. Public Participation

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

Mrs Julia Bowles of the Residents Forum reported that a letter had been sent to the Town Council recently requesting the opportunity to discuss the forthcoming EIP of the County Durham Plan with the Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Group to ensure that all views are presented.

One gentleman raised his concerns about the potential impacts upon parking in the area in relation to the proposed planning application to build two dwellings at the rear of the Hope Inn. He also stated that the proposed dwellings were identified as two detached properties when in actual fact they will be two semi-detached properties.

Mr Howard Smith raised the issue of the recent vandalism to the newly installed recycle bays at the Cemetery. He also expressed concerns regarding the number of young people congregating in the shelter in the Cemetery during the evenings despite the gates being locked.

The meeting was then re-opened

The Clerk confirmed that a letter dated 8th July 2014 had been received from the Residents Forum as copies were to be circulated to Cllrs later in this meeting under agenda item 9.4. The Chair confirmed that the Hope Inn planning applications will be discussed later in the meeting. The Chair also confirmed the Council has reported the vandalism to the Police and made them aware of the issue of young people in the Cemetery.

8. Internal Reports

8.1 Chairman's Report

The Chair reported that over the past month he had:

- Continued his on-going work with the Sedgefield Plan Steering Group;
- Worked with the Sedgefield Village Games Committee in relation to the Sedgefield Weekend and also with the progression of sporting bursaries available within the Town;
- Continued to work closely with the new Clerk to support her in her new role;
- Worked with the Clerk and the Community Engagement Officer to prepare the latest edition of the Sedgefield Extra;

RESOLVED

To receive the information.

8.2 Mayor's Report

Cllr Mel Carr reported that he had undertaken duties as Mayor:

June:

- 19th Tub Planting on the Crosshill with Town gardeners Stephen and Roy, involving the nursery and infant school children in Sedgfield, Rectory Row and Hardwick.
- 27th Chilton Town Council, Mayors Charity night
- 28th Spennymoor , Mayoress " At Home" in Spennymoor Town Hall

July:

- 6th Sedgfield Farmers Market Crosshill, visit and talk to stallholders regarding sales and customers, generally satisfactory, consensus that continued adverting is important.
- 6th Peterlee Town Council, Mayors Civic Service at St Cuthbert's Church
- 8th Hardwick Infant School, judging model paper planes ready for Sedgfield weekend (110 models)
- 10th Keith and Nancy Wells Diamond Wedding, presentation of a bouquet of flowers. Keith was clerk to the Council and is a burgess.
- 11th Sedgfield Parish Hall, visit to "local produce market" organised by Durham County Market Society.
- 12th Sedgfield Weekend, overseeing children's flying paper planes awards in St Edmunds Church (assisted by Councillor Alan Blackmore judging Rectory Row School entries, 150 models)
- 13th Sedgfield Weekend attending the closing ceremony.

RESOLVED

To receive the information.

9. External Reports

9.1 Report from DCC Members (JR / RL)

County Cllr John Robinson reported the following:

- The new super authority now has a constitution and organizational structure (copies of which were brought to the meeting by Cllr John Robinson) and of particular note was the working being undertaken in relation to integrated transport which will see the current Tyne and Wear Metro system being expanded into Durham in the future.

- Central Government are soon to be making radical changes to the electoral roll registration system. Currently DCC write to everyone on the electoral roll to check validity of information held, however, the new system will require individuals to apply to the County Council to be on the electoral roll. It is envisaged this change will have potentially significant implications with predictions of 18% (75,000 people) being removed from the electoral roll across the entire County. Looking at this specifically for Sedgefield, it is predicted that 932 people are likely to 'fall off' the roll (equating to 14%). It is vital that the public are made aware of these changes and Cllr John Robinson urged other Cllrs to spread this message.
- Along with County Cllr Rachel Lumsdon, a meeting will take place the week commencing 21st July 2014 with DCC Planners and EON representatives to discuss the recent windfarm planning application.
- Concerns have been expressed to County Cllr Robinson regarding the Hope Inn planning application with calls for the applications to be called in for consideration by Planning Committee.
- The County Durham Plan is progressing and Inspectors have now already visited Sedgefield. It is important that different groups meet prior to the Plan's hearing in order to ensure the views of their community are presented in the most effective way.
- Youth issues have been identified as a priority with money being used from the Neighbourhood Budget to support the Play Scheme activities.
- Nothing further has been heard about Spring Lane Mobile Homes and Caravan Park in Sedgefield and it is important that answers are obtained prior to consideration of the County Durham Plan. Cllr John Robinson will investigate this issue.
- Members of the Fire Brigade Union are participating in 8 days of strike action. To date there have been no major problems or damage, however, members of the public are being asked to be mindful of this industrial action and consider carefully their own safety.
- There are concerns regarding the number of pubs for sale within Sedgefield with questions being asked as to why and the impact of such sales upon the economy of the Town. A meeting has been scheduled between Cllr John Robinson and the Chief Executive of NetPark to discuss further.
- The School Benevolent Fund (of which Cllr John Robinson is a member) is a registered charity which offers grants towards shoes and coats for school pupils. The Fund has experienced its highest ever number of applications

which proves that economic hardship is being experienced by many across the County.

- The latest deployment plan providing an overview of the fibre infrastructure rollout for the Digital Durham Project was left with the Clerk for future reference.

County Councillor Rachel Lumsdon joined the meeting at this point. She reported from the joint Neighbourhood Budget held by herself and County Cllr John Robinson £8,000 has been given towards a Play Scheme which will offer activities from Fishburn for 3 days per week for 4 weeks in August. The location has been chosen so as to attract a good mix of both Fishburn and Sedgefield children. Enquiries are currently being made to see if some activities can be held at Ceddesfeld. Money has also been identified to continue such provision during the half-term school holidays in October and February. Consideration will then be given to longer-term provision and possible roll-out over a wider area if successful.

Cllr Gloria Wills asked which age group were being targeted and County Cllr Lumsdon replied the 11-16 year age group, however, some 17 year olds can also access the provision. Cllr Dudley Waters commented that such events need to be appropriately publicized to ensure success. County Cllr Lumsdon replied that this was correct and stated that work is underway to promote these events via channels which are used by young people.

It was agreed by all that this Play Scheme sounded very positive and Cllr Rachel Lumsdon offered to attend Sedgefield Town Council's next Community Development & Engagement Committee meeting on Monday 21st July 2014 at 7.30pm to discuss this and other youth issues. All Cllrs thanked the County Councillors for their report.

RESOLVED:

- To receive the information.**
- The Clerk to place Cllr Rachel Lumsdon on the Community Development & Engagement Committee's next agenda.**

9.2 Sedgefield Plan (Steering Group minutes 23.6.14)

Minutes from the Sedgefield Plan Steering Group meetings held on 23rd June 2014 had been previously circulated.

RESOLVED

To receive the information.

9.3 Sedgefield Plan – Progress Report for Town Council

A progress report from the Sedgefield Plan Steering Group in relation to the Sedgefield Plan had been previously circulated.

RESOLVED

To receive the information.

9.4 Sedgefield Plan – Strategic Site Decisions Required For The ‘Plan’

The Clerk circulated copies of the above report which had been supplied by Mr David Bowles, Chair of the Sedgefield Plan Steering Group, on 8th July 2014. Cllr Dudley Waters highlighted the first paragraph on the second page of this paper which reflected that despite some Neighbourhood Plans having been approved that several developers were challenging them. Cllr John Robinson commented that no-one as yet knows on what grounds such challenges have been made. Cllr Gloria Wills reiterated that with regard to the Sedgefield Plan it had been recognized and previously agreed that 300 houses for Sedgefield was the preferred number and that the key issue was the location of that housing. However, the brownfield preference highlighted in this report is not yet ready. Cllr Chris Lines stated that DCC have stated that they won't change the designation of the brownfield site's status. He also stated that to date the Town Council has not rejected Eden Drive as a site for all housing development but that it has specifically objected to the recent planning applications for that site but not the actual principle of any new housing being built there.

In addition, the Clerk also circulated a letter from Mrs Julia Bowles of the Sedgefield Village Residents' Forum dated 8th July 2014 regarding the forthcoming EIP process for the County Durham Plan. Cllr Chris Lines explained that the County Durham Plan is due to go through the examination in public process in September. Prior to this on 31st July 2014 an Examination in Public Pre-Hearing meeting will be held. Cllr John Robinson reiterated the purpose of this meeting is to share information about how the examination will be undertaken and the timetable for the process. As the Town Council responded to the County Durham Plan consultation process and have been issued an ID they are eligible to attend this pre-hearing meeting as well as actual meetings later in the process. It was agreed that it would be extremely helpful to ensure that prior to attending the pre-hearing on 31st July 2014 the various groups representing the Town met to plan their approach to this meeting to ensure that no conflicting messages are given as well as ensure that maximum information is obtained to benefit the longer-term process. Indeed, this approach to pre-meetings of interested parties must also be adopted throughout the actual public examination process. This approach was supported by the County Cllrs present.

RESOLVED

- i) **To receive the information.**
- ii) **The Clerk to represent the Town Council at the pre-hearing meeting on 31st July 2014.**
- iii) **The Clerk to arrange a meeting before the pre-hearing meeting between Cllr John Robinson, Cllr Rachel Lumsdon, Mr David Bowles, Mrs Julia Bowles, Mr Dominic Waugh, Cllr Gloria Wills and Cllr Mel Carr.**

10. Correspondence

10.1 Submission of County Durham Plan and Community Infrastructure Levy

A letter from Mr Stuart Timmiss, Head of Planning and Assets (DCC) dated 17th June 2014 entitled "Submission of County Durham Plan and Community Infrastructure Levy" had been circulated prior to the meeting. This confirmed that the County Durham Plan and CIL draft charging schedule had been submitted to the Secretary of State and would be examined by the Planning Inspectorate.

RESOLVED

To receive the information.

11. Planning: New Large Scale Development

11.1 Isles Windfarm

A letter from Mr Stuart Timmiss, Head of Planning and Assets (DCC) dated 25th June 2014 had been circulated prior to the meeting. This letter related to the recent planning application for 24 wind turbines on land near the A1 in Bradbury/Mordon (known as the Isles application) and gave the opportunity for people to inspect the submitted application at drop-in sessions attended by DCC Officers on:

- Tuesday 8th July 2014 at Sedgefield Parish Hall (between 4pm and 7pm)
- Thursday 17th July 2014 at Mordon Village Hall (between 4pm and 7pm)

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):

1-2 Cllrs did not have any objections with regards to Planning Applications 1-2.

- 3 Hope Inn:** Cllrs objected to this application to erect two detached dwellings at the rear of the Hope Inn on the grounds that it will result in the loss of amenity space with historic value within the heart of the Town's Conservation Area (contravening Article 4 Directions). In addition, Cllrs raised their concerns regarding the impact upon parking within the Town and supported the objections already lodged by DCC Highways. However, Cllrs do not have any objection to the development of the actual Hope Inn and the proposed extension.

Cllrs requested this application be referred to DCC's Planning Committee for determination.

County Cllrs John Robinson and Rachel Lumsdon duly noted this request.

- 4 Hope Inn:** Cllrs did not object to the application to erect an extension to the rear of the Hope Inn which included the demolition of existing outbuilding.

- 5 53 West End:** Cllrs expressed dissatisfaction that this was a retrospective Planning Application. It was agreed by Cllrs that now is an appropriate time for DCC Planners to work with the Civic Trust and Sedgefield Town Council to review the designation of the Town's Conservation Area and clarify what materials can and cannot be used within that Area.

Cllr Gloria Wills commented that this is also an issue which must feature in the Sedgefield Plan.

- 6-7** The Clerk read out a courtesy email received from Mr Steve Welton of the Squash Club informing the Council of their revised planning application in-line with requirements of the Planning, Heritage and Landscaping Departments of DCC.

Cllrs did not have any objections with regards to Planning Applications 6-7.

RESOLVED

The above comments to be forwarded to DCC Planning Officers.

13. August 2014 – Walk-around

The Clerk asked Cllrs whether they would like to have a Town walk-around in August 2014 as per previous years. All Cllrs agreed that there was no need to have a walk-around the Town

in August as the Working Groups are now actively involved in issues concerning key sites within the Town.

RESOLVED

To receive the information.

Cllr John Robinson informed fellow Cllrs of the passing of Dr Elisabeth Sutherland who for many years had served on the Town Council as an Independent Councillor and who held the position of Mayor and Chair for the periods 1975-1977 and 1985-1986. The Clerk will arrange for a card of condolence to be sent to Dr Sutherland's family and to request details of any future planned memorial event to celebrate Dr Sutherland's life.

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