

SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY & RESOURCES

Minutes of the proceedings of the **FEBRUARY**
POLICY & RESOURCES of the **Council** held following the Monthly
meeting in the **Council Offices**, Advice & Information Centre,
Sedgefield, on **Monday 9th February 2015**.

Present **Cllr Gloria Wills (Chairman)**

Cllr Lynne Dentith (Vice Chairman) and

Cllrs Allan Blakemore, David Brown, Mark Cant, Mel Carr, Tim Jeanes, Chris Lines, John Robinson, Maxine Robinson, Ian Sutherland, Dudley Waters and Alf Walton

Officer **Dr Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)**

1. Apologies

Cllr Vanessa Carmichael.

2. Declaration of interest

None.

3. Matters of Information

3.1 Community Right To Bid:

DCC have acknowledged receipt of the Town Council's expression of interest in the Parish Hall Car Park and are now considering this.

RESOLVED:

Estates Working Group to keep P&R Committee informed of developments.

3.2 Recycling Policy:

No further action has been undertaken with regard to this Policy. This will be progressed by Cllr Allan Blakemore and the Clerk when time allows.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.3 Registered STC Land:

Work is on-going in this area to draft a report for consideration by the Estates Working Group.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.4 PRS:

Discussions regarding this matter are on-going with the Estates Working Group.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.5 Potential Land For STC To Register:

Work is on-going in this area to draft a report for consideration by the Estates Working Group.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.6 SCA Lease:

Feedback has now been received from Ms Sonia Hunter of BHP Law in response to questions asked by Cllrs Wills and Dentith. A meeting is to be scheduled to consider Ms Hunter's feedback and then set up a meeting with the SCA to try and bring this matter to a swift conclusion to the satisfaction of both STC and the SCA. The Clerk to keep Cllrs informed.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.7 Public Participation:

Mr and Mrs Scott are continuing to compile a copy of their evidence file in relation to Station Road Playing Field issues.

RESOLVED:

The Clerk to arrange an Open Spaces Working Group meeting once the evidence file is received from Mr and Mrs Scott.

3.8 Recording Meetings:

An order is being placed to purchase appropriate audio recording equipment in order to record future Committee meetings.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.9 Review of Expenditure Payment and Financial Reporting:

To be considered under agenda item 6.4.

3.10 Community Right To Bid – Consideration of Methodist Church Building:

The Clerk has written to the Methodist Church Council explaining the Community Right to Bid Scheme and why the Town Council would be interested in expressing an interest. The Methodist Council have been asked to notify the Town Council of any objections.

RESOLVED:

Estates Working Group to keep P&R Committee informed of developments.

3.11 Local Councils Award Scheme:

The Council has now registered with NALC to take up the free year as a Foundation Award Council under this new Quality Scheme. Upon receipt of further detailed information regarding the Scheme, and following discussions with the new Internal Auditor, the Clerk will bring a subsequent recommendation report to a future P&R meeting for consideration by Cllrs.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.12 Royal Garden Party:

Cllr Dudley Waters had been entered into the CDALC Draw to determine who would represent the County at the forthcoming Royal Garden Party. Unfortunately Cllr Waters had not been successful on this occasion.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.13 Church Turning Circle Update:

Two retractable bollards have been installed at the entrance to the Turning Circle and the associated extended maintenance period (at no cost) has been accepted. An article regarding this refurbishment work has been included in the Sedgefield Extra (Note: a further update on the refurbishment work is on the February 2015 Environment Committee agenda).

Cllr John Robinson asked where the keys would be kept for the retractable bollards and how these would be operated. The Clerk replied that the Estates Working Group will soon be meeting to prepare a procedure covering these matters and once produced this will be shared with all Cllrs for information.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.14 Precept:

Precept paperwork has been submitted to DCC. DCC have acknowledged receipt of this request for £236,083.10, equivalent to a Band D charge of £129.85. This will appear on the council tax bills as a 1.76% increase as it is the charge in Band D that is reported, not the change in precept. An explanatory article regarding the increased precept has been included in the Sedgefield Extra.

Cllr Maxine Robinson asked for clarification as to why the January 2015 P&R Committee minutes state a 2% increase in precept was set when the information contained in the council tax bills will state a 1.76% precept increase. The Clerk explained that the information displayed by DCC in the council tax bills reflects the % increase charge in Band D and not the % increase in precept overall.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.15 Parish Hall Usage:

The Clerk has arranged to meet with a representative from the Players and is progressing this matter via the Estates Working Group in order to give reassurance to all Parish Hall Users.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.16 Classified Listing in BT Phone Book:

The current listing in the classified section of The Phone Book from BT has been cancelled.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.17 Station Road – Consideration of Lease:

The Clerk is writing to DCC to determine what action they are doing regarding the Town Council's previously reported encroachment restricting vehicular access to this field. The Clerk to keep Cllrs informed.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.18 NALC and SLCC National Salary Award:

The Clerk has notified appropriate staff and Thirsk Payroll of the associated changes which were back dated to 1st January 2015.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

4. Public Participation

The Chairman, Cllr Gloria Wills, closed the meeting for the public to give views and comments. The public present did not have any comments to make. The meeting was then re-opened.

5. Reports

Note: Reports related to information exempt from the public are considered under agenda item 9

6. Financial Matters

6.1 Monthly Accounts: Income (as at 2nd February 2015) / Expenditure (as at 2nd February 2015 minus unapproved cheques after 5th January 2015)

Cllr Dudley Waters questioned budget heading "Ceddesfeld Friends". Cllr Gloria Wills explained that this is a historic budget heading which has appeared on the Town Council's system for some time and that, as previously reported via the Finance Working Group, work is now underway to build a more realistic budget with accurate headings that reflect the Council's current operations.

Cllr Maxine Robinson questioned why no financial allocation is displayed next to the budget heading "Terrace Hill". Cllr Gloria Wills explained that the Town Council's system has not historically allowed for carry forward balances. The Terrace Hill money is within Council reserves as a ring-fenced amount.

The Clerk explained that through the Finance Working Group considerable work is underway to improve the accountability and transparency of financial reporting matters including the exploration of different options to present future financial reports to make the information easier for Cllrs to understand and interpret.

Cllr Mark Cant questioned why the allowances paid to some Cllrs varied in amount. Cllr Gloria Wills replied that this is influenced by the individual's personal tax situation.

RESOLVED:

The monthly accounts as had been circulated were approved for payment.

6.2 Cheques for approval after 5th January 2015

In addition to the details of cheques requiring approval for payment since 2nd February 2015, the Clerk circulated a list of those invoices which had been received in the interim period (i.e. 3rd - 9th February 2015) since the circulation of Committee papers that also required approval for payment.

Cllr Gloria Wills queried 108179, 108180, 108181 and 108185 which had already been approved. The Clerk confirmed that cheques 108179 and 108180 related to donations which had been approved at the Community Chest meeting on 12th January 2015. Cheque 108181 had been paid as an emergency item to Mr Matt Wilson who had been unaware of the new payment arrangements. This matter had been approved by the Council Chair as a one-off arrangement in order to ensure that necessary work was maintained on The Sedgefield Plan website. Cheque 108185 was to ensure the Council's petty cash system was maintained.

Cllr Tim Jeanes asked what work had been undertaken by Ian's Handyman Services in relation to the noticeboard and bus shelter. The Clerk detailed the work.

RESOLVED:

All cheques were approved for payment and duly signed by Cllrs Wills and Carr in addition to the Town Clerk.

6.3 Itemised Income Presented To Bank (period 6th January – 2nd February 2015)

The itemized income presented to the bank as at 2nd February 2015 had been circulated to all prior to the meeting.

Cllr David Brown queried the Wayleaves income from Northern Electric. Cllrs Gloria Wills and Maxine Robinson confirmed that whilst the Town Council historically waived Wayleaves agreements with private householders these remained in place with commercial organisations.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

6.4 Draft Financial Regulations & Delegation Scheme (Report by Finance Working Group)

Prior to the meeting a "Draft Financial Regulations & Delegation Scheme" Report by the Finance Working Group had been circulated to all Cllrs. This Report was accompanied by a set of Draft Financial Regulations and a Draft Delegation Scheme. Cllr Gloria Wills and the Clerk explained the Draft Financial Regulations are based upon the latest model provided by NALC and that the Finance Working Group have worked through this model in order to make it applicable to the Town Council. This work has then been sent to Mr Gordon Fletcher as the Council's new Internal Auditor in order to seek his comments on the Regulations being presented to Councillors. The Finance Working Group felt it was extremely important to also review the Council's Delegation Scheme at the same time as the two documents are inter-related.

RESOLVED:

- i) To approve and adopt the DRAFT Financial Regulations with immediate effect.**
- ii) To approve and adopt the DRAFT Delegation Scheme with immediate effect.**
- iii) The Clerk to update the footers on both documents to reflect their approval and adoption by the P&R Committee.**

6.5 Terrace Hill Money Update (Report by Town Clerk)

Prior to the meeting a Terrace Hill Money Update Report by the Clerk had been circulated to all Cllrs. This report reminded Cllrs how the £110,000 of Large Grant Pot money had been allocated amongst various groups within Sedgefield. All funding had been retained by the Town Council and was to be given to groups when they could demonstrate they had everything in place to proceed with their project. These groups were also informed that if their project was unable to move forward within the next 2 years (i.e. by 29th March 2015) they could apply for an extension if necessary of up to one year and after this time the allocated funding offer would be withdrawn.

RESOLVED:

- i) To receive this information.**

- ii) To write to each group reminding them of the terms of the funding allocation and request a current status report from each and, if necessary, to remind them to request a one year extension to their allocation.
- iii) The Finance Working Group to develop a procedure for ensuring the monitoring of issued funding allocations so as to guarantee money is spent on the projects submitted and that any unspent allocations are returned to the Town Council promptly.

6.6 Sedgefield 1st Scouts – Request to access Terrace Hill funding (Report by Town Clerk)

Prior to the meeting a report by the Clerk had been circulated to all Cllrs informing them of the recommendation made at the January 2015 Community Development & Engagement Committee meeting to approve the release of £15,000 Terrace Hill money to Sedgefield 1st Scouts.

RESOLVED:

The Terrace Hill funding for £15,000 allocated to Sedgefield 1st Scouts be issued with immediate effect.

7. Training

7.1 CiLCA Mentoring Course (Report by Ms Jane Young)

Prior to the meeting a “CiLCA Mentoring Course Report” by Ms Jane Young had been circulated to all Cllrs. This report explained that Ms Young has now started her CiLCA Mentoring Course and this will continue over the coming months. A further report will be submitted upon completion of the qualification.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

8. Correspondence

8.1 Use of electronic summonses for council agendas etc (email from Mr Steve Ragg dated 12th January 2015)

Prior to the meeting a copy of an email from Steve Ragg dated 12th January 2015 had been circulated to all Cllrs for information. This email explained that The Local Government (Electronic Communications) (England) Order 2015 modifies provisions in Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972 for the purpose of enabling and

facilitating the use of electronic communications in sending of summonses to members of both principal councils and parish councils in England to meetings of those authorities. This Order was implemented on 30th January 2015.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

(Cllr Lynne Dentith left the meeting at this point)

9. Consideration of Reports Exempt From Public

Cllr Wills explained that due to the confidential nature of the following items these would be discussed under Exempt Information and as such members of the press and public were requested to leave the meeting (Section 1 Sub Section (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960).

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.56p.m.