

# **SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL**

## **POLICY & RESOURCES**

Minutes of the proceedings of the **DECEMBER POLICY & RESOURCES** of the **Council** held following the Monthly meeting in the **Council Offices**, Advice & Information Centre, Sedgefield, on **Monday 8 December 2014**.

**Present**                    **Cllr. Gloria Wills (Chairman)**  
**Cllr. Lynne Dentith (Vice-Chairman) and**  
Cllrs. Allan Blakemore, David Brown, Mark Cant, Mel Carr, Tim Jeanes, Chris Lines and Dudley Waters

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

**1. Apologies**

Cllrs. Vanessa Carmichael, Rebecca Hagan, Ian Sutherland and Alf Walton.

**2. Declaration of interest**

Cllr David Brown declared an interest in Item 10.1 and Cllr Allan Blakemore declared an interest in Item 5.1. There were no other declarations.

**3. Matters of Information**

**3.1 Community Right To Bid**

The Estates Working Group has considered in detail the Parish Hall Car Park, Police Station, Fire Station and the Methodist Hall under the Community Right To Bid Scheme. The Police Station and Fire Station are not appropriate, however, an expression of interest has been submitted regarding the Parish Hall Car Park. The Methodist Hall is to be considered under agenda item 5.1.

**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 Barclays Bank Mandate**

Barclays have now provided the Town Council with a compensation offer of £400. This offer was received before a letter was submitted to the Ombudsman.

**RESOLVED:**

**The Clerk to accept this offer of compensation and to close this matter.**

### **3.5 PRS:**

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

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive this information.**

### **3.6 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.**

**3.7 SCA Lease:**

Ms Sonia Hunter has provided a summary of the feedback from the SCA's Solicitor. This was discussed with Cllrs Gloria Wills and Lynne Dentith and additional information requested from Ms Hunter. The Clerk will update the P&R Committee when information is received from Ms Hunter.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive this information.**

**3.8 Public Participation:**

Mr and Mrs Scott have notified the Clerk they are currently collating 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.**

**3.9 Recording Meetings:**

Work is still underway to purchase appropriate audio recording equipment from the recently awarded grant for improvement works to the Town Council Offices and the Parish Hall.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive this information and for the Clerk to keep Cllrs updated.**

**3.10 Standing Orders:**

The Council's Standing Orders have been amended. The updated Standing Orders have been placed on the Council's website.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive this information and to close this matter.**

**3.11 Cheques For Approval:**

Cllr Ian Sutherland to raise with the Sedgefield In Bloom the options for holding their

own money or continuing with new Town Council financial procedures. The Clerk reported that Cllr Ian Sutherland had raised the issue of the Town Council's new payment authorization process at the Sedgefield In Bloom meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2014 at which the Bloom had agreed at this point in time to continue with Town Council holding their money rather than opting to hold it themselves.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive this information and to close this matter.**

**3.12 Review of Expenditure Payment and Financial Reporting:**

Work has started on reviewing the Council's Financial Regulations. Revised Financial Regulations will be presented to the January 2015 P&R Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive this information.**

**3.13 Finance Working Group:**

The first Finance Working Group meeting took place on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2014 with attendance from Cllrs Gloria Wills, Ian Sutherland, Allan Blakemore, Tim Jeanes and Mel Carr. Future recommendations will be brought from this Group to the P&R Committee.

**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**

**5.1 Community Right To Bid – Consideration of Methodist Church Building (Report by Estates Working Group)**

Prior to the meeting the Estates Working Group had circulated to all Cllrs a report entitled "Community Right To Bid – Consideration of Methodist Church Building". The

report explained that whilst the Methodist Church building had been identified as a valuable asset to the Town there had been no approach made to the Methodist Church to explain the Community Right To Bid Scheme.

**RESOLVED:**

- i) To receive the information in this report.**
- ii) The Clerk to write to the Methodist Church Council explaining the Community Right To Bid Scheme and the purpose of any expression of interest in relation to this property would be about securing a valuable Town asset for the long-term and is not about trying to take away an asset from the Church.**

Cllr Gloria Wills explained that other reports to be considered by the Committee related to information exempt from the public and will be considered under agenda item 10.

**6. Financial Matters**

**6.1 Monthly Accounts: Income (as at 1<sup>st</sup> December 2014) / Expenditure (as at 1<sup>st</sup> December 2014 minus unapproved cheques after 10<sup>th</sup> November 2014)**

**RESOLVED**

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

**6.2 Cheques for approval after 10<sup>th</sup> November 2014**

In addition to the details of cheques requiring approval for payment since 10<sup>th</sup> November 2014, the Clerk circulated a list of those invoices which had been received in the interim period since the circulation of Committee papers that also required approval for payment.

**RESOLVED:**

**All cheques were approved for payment and duly signed.**

**6.3 Itemised Income Presented To Bank (period 10<sup>th</sup> November – 1<sup>st</sup> December 2014)**

The itemized income presented to the bank as at 1<sup>st</sup> December 2014 had been circulated to all prior to the meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive this information.**

**6.4 Notification of Tax Base and Request for Precept 2015/16 (letter from DCC dated 5<sup>th</sup> November 2014)**

Prior to the meeting a copy of a letter from DCC dated 5<sup>th</sup> November 2014 giving notification of the Tax Base and requesting Precepts for 2015/16 had been circulated to all. This provided confirmation that the Council will have a reduction in LCTRS Grant in 2015/16 of £13,942 which was in-line with previous indications. Cllr Gloria Wills informed the Committee that the contents of this letter is going to be considered at the next Finance Working Group meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2014 so that a recommendation regarding the precept request for 2015/16 can be brought to the January 2015 P&R Committee meeting. It was felt that an increase of 2% in the precept for 2015/16 should be considered.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive this information.**

**6.5 Sedgfield Weekend 2014: Income and Expenditure Balance Sheet**

An income and expenditure sheet prepared by Mrs Angela Simpson in relation to the Sedgfield Weekend 2014 had been circulated to all prior to the meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive this information.**

**7. Training**

**7.1 "Policies, Social Media plus Health and Safety" 10<sup>th</sup> November 2014 (Report by Ms Jane Young)**

Prior to the meeting a report by Ms Jane Young detailing her recent attendance at CDALC's "Policies, Social Media & the Press, Health & Safety" training had been circulated to all. Cllr Chris Lines commended Ms Young upon her report. The Clerk confirmed that the content of this report will be an extremely useful starting point

when reviewing the Town Council's Policies and Procedures.

The Clerk informed Cllrs that Ms Young is due to start her CiLCA Mentoring Course with CDALC in January 2015.

**RESOLVED:**

- i) To receive this information.**
- ii) The Clerk to convey Cllrs comments on her report to Ms Young.**

**8. Correspondence**

**8.1 Durham Association News December 2014**

Prior to the meeting a copy of the December 2014 Durham Association News had been circulated to all Cllrs. The Clerk highlighted references to the forthcoming Local Council Award Scheme on pages 1 and 2. This Scheme will replace the current Quality Status.

**RESOLVED:**

- i) To receive this information.**
- ii) The Clerk to prepare a report on the forthcoming Local Council Award Scheme to be discussed at the January 2015 P&R Committee meeting.**

**9. Station Road Playing Field**

**9.1 Consideration of Village Green Proposal by Mr Norman Holmes**

Cllr Gloria Wills read out to all Cllrs details of a recent legal case in which England's most senior law court dismissed a residents' group's appeal against North Yorkshire County Council's decision to refuse village green status. Cllr agreed this information should be shared with Mr Norman Holmes as it appeared from this legal case that the Station Road Playing Field would not be eligible for village green registration.

Cllr Mark Cant reminded Cllrs that during previous Council meetings he has recommended the Council reviews the contents of the current lease with DCC in relation to the Station Road Playing Field and consider whether this lease should continue in the future. The Clerk assured Cllr Cant that his comments had not been lost but had been included onto the draft agenda for the next Open Spaces Working

Group which will be scheduled when the Evidence File from the Residents Alliance has been received.

**RESOLVED:**

- i) To receive this information.**
- ii) The Clerk to write to Mr Holmes and make him aware of the recent legal ruling. This letter to also assure Mr Holmes the Council wishes to see Station Road Playing Field remain a valuable asset to the Town in the future and inform him that work is planned with the recently formed Station Road/Ivy Row Residents Alliance to resolve current on-going issues of concern with the field.**
- iii) The lease of Station Road Playing Field to be considered as an agenda item at the January 2015 P&R Committee meeting.**

Cllrs Tim Jeanes and David Brown left the meeting at this point.

**10. Consideration of Reports Exempt From Public**

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.25p.m.