

SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the proceedings of the **JANUARY
MONTHLY MEETING** of the **Council** held at
**7 p.m. via Microsoft Teams, on
Monday 11th January 2021**

- Present** **Cllr. Mel Carr (Chairman)**
Cllr. Gloria Wills (Vice-Chairman) and
Cllrs. Allan Blakemore, David Brown, Mark Cant, Vanessa Carmichael, Ann Carr, Chris Lines, Leo McCormack, Julie Towler, Alfred Walton, Fiona Warrant, Mavis Wayman and Stephen Winter
- Officers** Dr Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)
Ms Natalie Chowns-Traynor (Meeting Moderator)

The Chair, Cllr Mel Carr, wished everyone a Happy New Year and expressed the hope that life could return to some normality in 2021.

1. **Apologies:**
None.
2. **Declaration of interest:**
None.
3. **STC Minutes / Committee Reports:**
 - a. **Minutes of Special Town Council meeting held Monday 7th December 2020:**
These were confirmed as a correct record. (MCant / MW)
 - b. **Minutes of Finance Working Group meeting held Thursday 10th December 2020:**
These were confirmed as a correct record. (GW / AB)
 - c. **Minutes of the Monthly meeting held Monday 14th December 2020:**
These were confirmed as a correct record. (MCant / SW)
 - d. **Minutes of the P&R committee held Monday 14th December 2020:**
These were confirmed as a correct record. (AW / MCant)

RESOLVED: To accept all of the minutes as above and recommendations contained therein.
4. **Matters of Information:**
 - 4.1 **Planning Application DM/18/00536/FPA – land to the West of junction of A689 and Stockton Road:**

The Clerk has written to Mr Henry Jones of DCC in accordance with the Town Council's wishes. On 12th June 2019 Mr Jones reported that he had no further update regarding this application but was hopeful of drawing a conclusion to the work soon so that it could go before Members for determination. No specific Planning Committee date is yet known.

The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

4.2 S106 Monies:

The Finance Working Group at its most recent meeting has considered the latest annual information produced by DCC regarding available S106 monies and as a result of this identified several areas of concern. A letter has been sent to Mr Stephen Reed of DCC, with copies to both local County Cllrs, seeking clarification regarding the exact position of S106 monies in our Electoral Ward. Mr Reed has confirmed receipt a reply has now been received which will be considered by the Finance Working Group at its meeting on 21st January 2021. The Finance Working Group to continue to monitor this situation and keep the P&R Committee updated.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

4.3 Building Back Communities:

County Cllr David Brown to keep the Town Council updated regarding the Town Centre Safety Fund and associated programme so that the Town Council can play an integral part in this work with DCC to support local businesses and economy. No further information has yet been received. County Cllr Brown to keep the Town Council updated.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

4.4 Councillor Resignation:

Discussions between the Clerk and chosen co-opted Cllr in order to complete all necessary paperwork to allow them to take up their position. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

4.5 Planning Application DM/18/00274/FPA:

The Clerk wrote to Mr Stuart Timmiss of DCC expressing the Town Council's objections to this planning application on the grounds of lack of parking in this area of the Town.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

4.6 Current Planning Applications:

The Clerk has forwarded to DCC Planning Officers the Town Council's comments on planning applications 1-3.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

5. Dates of Meetings:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all details of all meetings in January 2021 plus civic events until March 2022. The Clerk highlighted that the Policy & Records Management Working Group scheduled for 26th January 2021 had now been rescheduled to 2nd February 2021. In addition, and again circulated prior to the meeting, was a schedule of Town Council Committee meetings for 2021/22 which included a clear key explaining how such meetings would take place and how they would be reviewed in light of COVID.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

6. Public Participation:

The Chairman, Cllr Mel Carr closed the meeting whilst the public gave their views and comments. No comments were made. The Chairman re-opened the meeting.

7. Internal Reports:

7.1 Chairman's Report:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Chairman's Report which detailed

the actions he had undertaken since the last Monthly Meeting.

Cllr Gloria Wills expressed her thanks to all who had been involved in the Town Council's festive celebrations and Citizen of the Year Award saying this had been a very good example of good teamwork. Cllr Chris Lines echoed these sentiments and said the Town Council had been innovative and its actions had been welcomed by residents. Cllr Lines expressed particular thanks to the Projects & Media Co-ordinator for her sterling work on the Town Council's on-line festive activities. He hoped that much of this work could continue in the future to compliment any other activities as the on-line events had improved engagement with businesses and residents. The Clerk thanked Cllrs for their comments and said that a debrief report regarding these activities would be presented at the February 2021 P&R Committee meeting for consideration.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

7.2 Mayor's Report:

No Mayor's Report was received.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

8. External Reports:

None.

9. Correspondence:

None.

10. Current Planning Applications:

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

10.1 DM/20/03308/LB – listed buildings consent for restoration of 6 no window frames to front, 1 no rear window door glazing and garage door including replacement of single pane glass units with double glazed units, 10 West End, Sedgefield:

Cllrs did not have any objection to this application.

10.2 DM/20/03615/FPA – two storey side/rear extension, single storey rear extension

with first floor balcony, 37 Station Road, Sedgefield:

Cllrs did not have any objection to this application.

10.3 DM/20/03712/FPA – loft conversion including 2 no dormer windows to each roof slope, 21 Turnpike Road, Sedgefield:

Cllrs did not have any objection to this application.

RESOLVED:

The comments on planning applications 1-3 above to be submitted to DCC Planners.

APPROVED

The Clerk informed Cllrs that earlier that day DCC had published the latest list of planning application and this had included:

DM/21/00006/FPA – single storey rear extension and loft conversion including roof alterations and dormer windows to rear, 25 Boynston Grove, Sedgefield

RESOLVED:

Cllrs to consider the above planning application and to forward any comments to the Clerk by no later than Monday 18th January 2021.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.13pm.

SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY & RESOURCES



Minutes of the proceedings of the **JANUARY POLICY & RESOURCES** of the Council held following the Monthly meeting via Microsoft Teams on **Monday 11th January 2021.**

Present

Cllr. Gloria Wills (Chairman)

Cllr. Mel Carr (Vice-Chairman) and

Cllrs. Allan Blakemore, David Brown, Mark Cant, Vanessa Carmichael, Ann Carr, Chris Lines, Leo McCormack, Julie Towler, Alfred Walton, Fiona Warrant, Mavis Wayman and Stephen Winter

Officers

Dr Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

Ms Natalie Chowns-Traynor (Meeting Moderator)

1. Apologies:

None.

2. Declaration of interest:

Cllr Chris Lines declared an interest in agenda item 6.8 as he is an allotment holder. No other Cllrs made any declaration of interest.

3. Matters of Information:

3.1 Sedgefield Town Council Corporate Plan:

This matter has also been discussed at a recent Finance Working Group at which the Council's Internal Auditor was in attendance. It is recognised that whilst this Plan is important to have it must also be put into context of the Council's other on-going work priorities. A proposed structure was presented to the Finance Working Group meeting held in September 2018 and time is now required for the Clerk to prepare a brainstorming session with all Cllrs to identify what they believe to be the Council's priorities as part of an exercise to agree collectively such activities. Note: This had been previously delayed due to the want to have a full complement of Cllrs. One Cllr is now away from their duties until 1st December 2020 and another has recently resigned. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.2 Legal Issues (Ceddesfeld Hall and Grounds):

The Clerk has informed Mr Anthony Walters that the Town Council instruct him to oversee the registration of Ceddesfeld Hall and grounds once information has been obtained by the Clerk from the Church of England archives. Information has now been received from the archives and forwarded to the Solicitor for consideration and additional information has now been requested which the Clerk needs to consider. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on these matters.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.3 Village Green Issues:

The Estates Working Group are currently drafting a Village Green Policy and will then oversee the production of a letter to businesses/resident whose properties border village green informing them that the Town Council is reviewing its Village Green Policy. This Policy will include the essence of the licences/letters currently being prepared by the Town Council's solicitor in relation to several village green related issues. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on these matters.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.4 Station Road Playing Field:

The Clerk has written to Mr John Reed of DCC acknowledging receipt of his latest correspondence and informed him that Town Cllrs are now considering the current terms of the lease and will be in touch again soon. This matter was placed on the agenda of the most recent Estates Working Group meeting and Cllrs are now considering the lease shared. The Estates Working Group to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.5 Expansion of Butterwick Road Cemetery:

A draft Section 106 application form has been finalized, considered by the Butterwick Road Cemetery Working Group at its most recent meeting and a request has now been submitted for a virtual meeting between Working Group members and Mr

Stephen Reed of DCC plus both local County Cllrs to discuss on 28th January 2021.
The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.6 Butterwick Road Cemetery – Amended Rules and Regulations:

Letters were not issued due to the lockdown situation. The Regulations are to be reviewed by the Policy & Records Management Working Group at their February 2021 meeting with recommendation brought to a subsequent P&R Committee meeting. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.7 Terrace Hill Funding:

No further update has yet been received from Sedgefield Bowling Club. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.8 Pedestrian Safety Review:

The Clerk has written to both local County Cllrs requesting they give their support to lobbying DCC for Sedgefield to be included as one of the venues for mobile flashing speed signs. An email was received from County Cllr John Robinson dated 18th February 2020 stating that he had asked how much 3 cameras would cost for all entrances with a view to applying for Section 106 funding towards them or paying via Neighbourhood Budget. Cllr Robinson said he would keep the Town Council updated. No further information has been received. The Clerk has issued a reminder to County Cllr Brown. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.9 Speed Watch Findings:

The Clerk has asked PCSO Jorgeson if a full traffic survey could be undertaken in Sedgefield. Due to the coronavirus lockdown period the Clerk has sent a follow-up

request. A response has now been received confirming that for such a survey to take place would be determined by traffic management at highways at Cleveland and Durham Specialist Operations Unit. The Clerk has now issued a request to this section. No response has been received as yet. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.10 Re-covering Town Council Polytunnel:

The materials to re-cover the polytunnel have now arrived. Work is now underway looking at potential options for moving the tunnel in order to accommodate recycling bays as the existing bays in the cemetery will need to be removed as part of the cemetery expansion project. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

Cllr Alf Walton said that he intended to bring a report to the February 2021 meeting regarding the future potential for recycling from the Council's bays as this was something which was currently not happening. The Clerk said that whilst it had always been the Town Council's wish to be able to recycle from the current bays this had not been possible as a result of their location being accessible to the public which resulted in inappropriate/contamination materials being placed into the bays.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.11 Ash Tree Within Grounds of Ceddesfeld Hall:

Cllrs Gloria Wills and Mel Carr to discuss this matter as agreed with Sedgefield Squash Club's Management Committee and report back to the Town Council.

Note: Further to the December 2020 P&R Committee meeting the Clerk has requested AW Treecare to provide a recommendation and quote for work required to this tree. Cllrs Gloria Wills and Mel Carr plus Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.12 Matters of Information from Environment Committee and Community

Development & Engagement Committee:

See agenda item 5.1.

Following discussions between the Clerk and Chairs of the Environment Committee and Community Development & Engagement Committee it was agreed that for January 2021 any items for those Committees would feature on the P&R Committee's agenda.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.13 Children's Play Area and Dogs:

The matter of whether or not dogs are permitted at Station Road Playing field was considered at the last Estates Working Group meeting. The Clerk has been asked to check the wording contained in the Field's lease (to see if there are any stipulations that dogs must not be permitted) and report back to the Estates Working Group. This cannot be done until paper files can be accessed in the Town Council Offices. The Estates Working Group as part of their on-going review of how Station Road Playing Field is used to bring a subsequent report back to a future P&R Committee.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.14 Request For Donation – Citizens Advice County Durham:

No further information has been received as yet from Mr Watmough. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.15 Cycle Trail at NETPark:

No further progress has been reported regarding this matter. Cllr Chris Lines to keep Cllrs updated as and when progress is made.

Cllr Julie Towler expressed concerns about an area of woodland within Hardwick Park where trees had been removed but dangerous spikes remained. Cllr Towler noted that ramps had been placed nearby and she agreed to make DCC aware of this matter through their Do It On-line reporting system.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.16 Health Centre Car Park:

The Clerk has forwarded to Mr Paul Anderson of DCC the Town Council's suggestions regarding the removal of the island in the health centre car park which would generate additional parking bays. A response is now awaited. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.17 Town Council Offices Refurbishment

The Estates Working Group continue to oversee this project. Work on the toilets refurbishment has not yet commenced. The glass screen in reception area has been fitted. Internal doors are being ordered. Electrical work will be finalized once the toilets refurbishment has been completed. The Estates Working Group continue to oversee the delivery of this project within the budget allocated by the Town Council. The Estates Working Group to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.18 Gypsy/Traveller Unauthorised Encampments:

Cllr Gloria Wills to organize a meeting between volunteer Cllrs and concerned residents in order to seek their views and concerns which can then be discussed at a meeting with DCC Officers. Cllr Gloria Wills to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.19 Hardwick Hall Hotel New Premises Licence:

An email was received from Ms Yvonne Raine of DCC on 24th November 2020 informing the Town Council that the Licensing Authority had agreed that it was in the public interest to further extend the time limit for the hearing regarding Hardwick Hall Hotel's new premises licence until no later than 28th February 2021. The Clerk had shared with information electronically with all Cllrs. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated

on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.20 Parish Hall:

The Parish Hall remains closed due to the coronavirus restrictions. The Clerk and Estates Working Group are continuously monitoring this matter. Communications are continuing with regular Parish Hall users to keep them updated on the latest situation. The Estates Working Group to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.21 Cowley House Community Benefit Offer:

The Clerk has written to Mr Turner accepting the Cowley House Community Benefit Office and request that he now prepares and submits to the Town Council, when possible, a formal Community Benefit Deed of Offer and associated documents for counter signing. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.22 Community Ball / Community Event 2021:

As a result of on-going COVID-19 restrictions letters to community groups via the Sedgefield 700+ group regarding a potential community day in July 2021 will be issued in late January 2021 with active planning work and promotion commencing in Spring 2021 if possible. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on these matters.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.23 Festive Celebrations:

The Town's Christmas lights switch-on took place by live streaming at 4.30pm on Saturday 28th November 2020. The Town Council's on-line festive celebrations were judged and winners announced on 16th December. A debrief report will be presented to the February 2021 P&R Committee meeting for review.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.24 Village Green / The Pickled Parson:

The Town Clerk issued the Town Council's solicitor with instruction on 10th November 2020 as agreed by the November 2020 P&R Committee meeting. An update is now awaited from the Town Council's solicitor. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.25 Village Green / 33 Front Street:

The Town Clerk issued the Town Council's solicitor with instruction on 10th November 2020 as agreed by the November 2020 P&R Committee meeting. An update is now awaited from the Town Council's solicitor. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.26 Village Green / 7 Church View:

All necessary documentation has been signed by Cllr Mel Carr, as Chair of the Council, to enable necessary utilities work to take place.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

3.27 Village Green / 26 Front Street:

The Town Clerk issued the Town Council's solicitor with instruction on 10th November 2020 as agreed by the November 2020 P&R Committee meeting. An update is now awaited from the Town Council's solicitor. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.28 Christmas Tree Lights – Temporary Upgrade:

The Estates Working Group to investigate the longer-term work required to resolve this matter in 2021 and beyond. A recommendation report will be brought to a future P&R Committee for consideration.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

3.29 St Edmund's Church Path Lighting:

The Estates Working Group meeting to consider additional information provided by Mr Brian Mutch at their next meeting. The Estates Working Group to keep the P&R Committee updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.30 Village Green / Dun Cow:

The Clerk has requested from Mr Geoff Rayner a to scale detailed site plan for the village green area at the front of the Dun Cow. Following receipt of that the Clerk to request the Town Council's solicitor to prepare a draft licence based upon the terms proposed by Cllrs at the December 2020 P&R Committee meeting and seek advice regarding the matter of white line marking. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.31 Proposed Treeworks In Grounds Of Ceddesfeld Hall:

As instructed, the Clerk has requested an updated quotation from AW Treecare. A quotation is yet to be received. The Clerk to keep the P&R Committee updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.32 Yew Hedging – Butterwick Road Cemetery:

The Clerk has issued a letter of instruction and Purchase Order to AW Treecare for the procurement of yew hedging for the new area of Butterwick Road Cemetery. Materials have also been purchased to prepare the area ahead of planting. The Clerk

to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.33 Parish Hall Potential Usage:

The Clerk has liaised with DCC's Head of Civil Contingencies Unit. Work has been undertaken by NHSE regarding venues at this stage focusing upon hospital hubs, network of regional centres and local issues delivered by primary care networks (12 sites across the County). Work is about to start looking at community pharmacy venues too. At this stage no requests have been made to identify further local community venues but this may happen later in the year and the CCU will keep in touch.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

4. Public Participation:

The Chairman, Cllr Gloria Wills, closed the meeting whilst the public gave their views and comments. No comments were made. The Chairman re-opened the meeting.

5. Reports:

5.1 Matters Of Information Update From Environment Committee and Community Development & Engagement Committee Report by Town Clerk:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Matters of Information Update From Environment Committee and Community Development & Engagement Committee Report.

Cllr Allan Blakemore said that he was exploring information regarding potential grant funding to mark forthcoming Armed Forces Days on 25th and 26th May 2021, however, with the current pandemic situation it was very unclear what, if anything, could happen. Cllr Blakemore said he would update the P&R Committee if required.

Cllr Alf Walton expressed his concerns regarding the state of the bins outside the Indian takeaway on Front Street which had been overflowing during the festive season. The Clerk reminded all of the work which is ongoing through the Town Council's solicitor in relation to this entire property (including the pizza takeaway side) as it is surrounded by village green and covenants are being considered. Cllr Leo

McCormack said that a resident had been in touch with him to complain about the lighting from the Indian takeaway. Cllr McCormack agreed to advise this resident to raise their complain with DCC as the property is within the Town's Conservation Area. Cllr Mavis Wayman asked why the Indian takeaway did not obtain more bins, however, it was agreed by all that such was a business matter between the owner and DCC and that the real issue for the Town Council was that of getting clarification regarding the village green matters in order to progress. Cllr Walton asked if it was known who owned the property and the Clerk confirmed that this was known and the Town Council's solicitor was in contact with that person. Cllr Walton asked for the owner's name but this could not be given due to data protection. Cllr Walton said he would continue to monitor the bins.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

5.2 Annual Headstone Safety Testing 2020/21 Report by Town Clerk and Head Gardener & Cemetery Superintendent:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all an Annual Headstone Safety Testing 2020/21 Report.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

5.3 Town Council Personnel Policies For Review Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Town Council Personnel Policies for Review Recommendation Report by the Personnel Committee.

RESOLVED:

To re-adopt the reviewed Disciplinary Policy, Resolution Policy and Code of Our Values, Behaviours and Conduct with immediate effect.

Note: Reports related to information exempt from the public are considered under agenda item 8.

6. Financial Matters:

6.1 Invoices for payment by cheques for approval after 14th December 2020:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all details of cheques for approval after 14th December 2020 numbered 109878 to 109889. The Clerk highlighted an amendment to cheque numbered 109888 which should be made payable to Mr L

Maddison for an amount of £56.00. Cllrs confirmed their support for the authorization of all cheques.

RESOLVED:

i) All cheques and invoices were approved for payment.

ii) Cllrs Mel Carr and Allan Blakemore plus the Town Clerk to duly sign the cheques.

6.2 Financial Budget Comparison as at 18th December 2020:

Cllr Gloria Wills reminded all that from the 2020/21 budget there remained a further three months worth of running costs to pay, however, there were sufficient funds at present to cover this and she thanked everyone involved in the scrutiny of the budget when considering the difficulties of the last year. The Clerk confirmed that work is now progressing with the Energy Management SLA which the Town Council recently entered into with DCC and two requests had been submitted earlier that day to commence the process for transferring some utilities accounts to new providers which would achieve efficiency savings.

RESOLVED:

To receive the Financial Budget Comparison as at 18th December 2020.

6.3 Debtors List as at 18th December 2020:

RESOLVED:

To receive the Debtors List as at 18th December 2020.

6.4 Direct Debits and BACS List for 1st – 31st December 2020:

The Clerk circulated to all a Direct Debits and BACS List for 1st – 31st December 2020.

RESOLVED:

To receive Direct Debits and BACS List for 1st – 31st December 2020.

6.5 December 2020 Bank Reconciliations Plus November 2020 Public Sector Deposit Fund Reconciliation Report by Town Clerk:

The Clerk circulated to all December 2020 Bank Reconciliations Plus November 2020 Public Sector Deposit Fund Reconciliation Report.

RESOLVED:

To receive the December 2020 Bank Reconciliations and November 2020 Public Sector Deposit Fund Reconciliation.

6.6 Local Restrictions Support Grant For Businesses Update Report by Finance Working Group:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated a Local Restrictions Support Grant for Businesses Update Report by the Finance Working Group. The Clerk reported that earlier that day an additional payment of £238.21 had been received. Cllr Gloria Wills thanked the Clerk for her work in this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

6.7 2021/22 Budget and Precept Recommendation Report by Finance Working Group:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated a 2021/22 Budget and Precept Recommendation Report by the Finance Working Group.

Cllr Allan Blakemore said he supported the recommendations in this report and reminded all Cllrs that the Town Council in recent years has lost its LCTRS Grant funding from DCC, lost Parish Hall income and has to oversee the expansion of the Butterwick Road Cemetery as well as all associated demands on the Council as a result of the Town expanding in size. Cllr Blakemore said that he believed in the future an additional financial burden for the Council would be the state of the trees along Front Street.

Cllr David Brown said that he was a member of the Finance Working Group but had not agreed with the recommendations now being presented. Cllr Wills referred all Cllrs to the Finance Working Group minutes approved at the earlier Monthly Meeting which detailed Cllr Brown's views. Cllr Brown stated that the expansion of Butterwick Road Cemetery was work that could not be avoided but that it should be work which was funded as a lifetime project and in ways other than through precept increase. Cllr Brown said that interest rates were very low and would like to see all cemetery expansion costs going into "one pot" funded by long-term borrowing in the form of a Public Works Board Loan. Cllr Brown concluded that not all tax payers in the Town would want to be buried and asked how it was then possible to justify? Cllr Wills said that it was not yet possible at this stage to finalise the full cost of the cemetery

expansion as the work that was needed now, and its associated costs, related to obtaining planning approval. Once planning approval is obtained then work would be needed in producing specifications, collating costs and at that stage looking at funding options and one would be the consideration of borrowing over a long-term period. The Clerk referred Cllrs to the report being considered which detailed a range of work currently underway which influenced the precept being sought for 2021/22. Cllr Brown reminded all Cllrs that money had been set aside in a Public Sector Deposit Fund for use in relation to the expansion of the cemetery and that he understood the Council had reserves but did not know the status of such. The Clerk reminded all Cllrs of the considerable work undertaken over recent years in relation to the Council's reserves and reminded all of the Council's balance sheet detailing those as approved at the Council's Special Town Council meeting on 1st June 2020 and clearly displayed on the Council's website. Cllr Vanessa Carmichael reminded everyone that the Police were proposing a considerable increase in precept.

RESOLVED:

- i) Sedgefield Town Council to increase its precept for 2021/22 by 5.5% thereby requesting from DCC £339,796.99 (i.e. an increase of £17,269.81 plus the yield of £ 8530.35 totalling £25,800.16). Note: This increase in precept will be shown on Council Tax billing information as a 5.4% increase on a Band D tax.**
- ii) The proposed article in Appendix 1 of the report be included in the next edition of the Sedgefield Extra and displayed on the Town Council's website.**
- iii) The Income and Expenditure budget for 2021/22 in Appendix 2 of the report be accepted.**

6.8 Review of Fees and Charges For 2021/22 Recommendation Report by Finance Working Group:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated a Review of Fees and Charges For 2021/22 Recommendation Report by the Finance Working Group.

RESOLVED:

- i) The price of a pack of dog bags remains at 60p as per the current charge in 2021/22.**
- ii) Allotment fees to be increased by 2% in 2021/22 rounded up to £44 for a full plot and £34 for a half plot.**
- iii) From 1st April 2021 the Town Council charges:**

- To regular groups – 15p per page black and white copying and 20p per page colour copying
- To private individuals – 25p per page black and white copying and 30p per page colour copying.

(Note: these charges are for single sided copies. Double sided copies would be charged at double the price)

- iv) To freeze Parish Hall hire charges from 1st April 2021 at the rate for 2020/21 as a way of supporting users coming back to the Parish Hall as part of the Town's recovery from the COVID pandemic.
- v) Cemetery fees to be increased by 2% for 2021/22 from 1st April 2021 as detailed in the report.

6.9 Reviewed External Grant Funding Policy & Procedures Recommendation Report by Finance Working Group:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated a Reviewed External Grant Funding Policy & Procedures Recommendation Report by the Finance Working Group. Cllr Mark Cant suggested that within this Policy a reference should be made to Section 106 monies. Cllrs agreed that this would be a useful additional reference.

RESOLVED:

The Clerk to draft appropriate wording regarding Section 106 monies for inclusion in this Policy document and to present such wording to the Finance Working Group. The P&R Committee delegate to the Finance Working Group authorization to approve wording and for this to be included in the Policy so that it can be re-adopted with immediate effect thereafter.

7. Correspondence

7.1 Double Taxation Report For Councils (email from CDALC dated 7th December 2020):

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated a Double Taxation Report For Councils (email from CDALC dated 7th December 2020).

Cllr Allan Blakemore provided background explanation regarding double taxation whereby it is defined as a situation where residents in certain local council areas are paying twice for particular public services as a result of some services being concurrent functions, i.e. they can be managed and delivered either by local parish or town councils or by the principal council. Typically double taxation comes about in relation to the most locally delivered services such as maintaining children's play

areas, closed churchyards, playing fields, open spaces, public conveniences, street lights, cemeteries, allotments and footpaths as examples. Cllr Blakemore said that larger Town and Parish Councils can be considerably affected by this matter. He pointed out that when the new DCC came into effect on Vesting Day that a compensatory grant was given to affected Town and Parish Councils which whilst it did not cover the full impact it did offer some funding, however, this ceased many years ago. Cllr Blakemore said that it was possible that over the coming years that DCC would try to hand more services down to the Town and Parish Council sector and it was important to be ready for this. Cllr Wills agreed and said it was essential not to burden the Town's precept further. Cllr Wills gave the recent example of when the Town Council had tried to hand back Station Road Playing Field to DCC but they did not want it as it would have cost them to maintain this facility. Cllr Blakemore proposed that the Town Council supported the motion which was now being raised by CDALC. Cllrs agreed.

Cllr David Brown commented that in October 2020 DCC's Full Council had considered a proposal from the Lib Dems requesting a full review of the double taxation matter, however, this had been defeated due to the shortage of time and staffing resources that would have been needed by DCC.

RESOLVED:

Sedgefield Town Council to support the following CDALC motion:

“Great Aycliffe Town Council acknowledges Durham County Council’s response to the issue of double taxation. We would request that, in the interest of fairness, there is a commitment by Durham County Council to reconsider the issue of double taxation and possible options to alleviate the unfairness that this causes for local council tax payers in County Durham. It is requested that this review is undertaken in consultation with the Local Councils Working Group”.

7.2 North East Transport Consultation (email and attachment from CDALC dated 15th December 2020):

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated a North East Transport Consultation email and attachment from CDALC dated 15th December 2020.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

7.3 Commemorative Plaques In County Durham (email from CDALC dated 15th December 2020):

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated a Commemorative Plaques In County Durham email from CDALC dated 15th December 2020 which sought to identify existing blue or otherwise plaques which commemorate place or people of interest in County Durham.

RESOLVED:

- i) The Clerk to share this information with Ms Norma Neale and Ms Alison Hodgson of the Local History Society asking for their comments.**
- ii) The Clerk to share this information with the Sedgefield News for wider dissemination to local residents (providing this is permitted by Ms Jane Hedges of DCC).**
- iii) The Clerk to highlight to Ms Jane Hedges of DCC the Manor House in Sedgefield and the Serpentine Bridge in Hardwick Park.**
- iv) Individual Cllrs to make any other suggestions directly to Ms Jane Hedges of DCC.**

7.4 PCVC Precept Consultation (email from CDALC dated 4th January 2021):

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all an email from CDALC dated 4th January 2021 in which attention was brought to a current consultation regarding the proposed precept increase being requested by the PCVC.

Cllr Mark Cant expressed concern that the information provided on p6 of this document when relating specifically to Sedgefield quoted figures for a Band D as being significantly higher than was case and discussed earlier during this meeting under agenda item 6.8.

Cllr Gloria Wills noted that an increase of £15 per Band D dwelling was being predicted for the coming financial year which was an increase of nearly 7%, however, the associated Medium Term Financial Plan clearly stipulated that an increase of £10 per dwelling had been needed in 2020/21 in order to then have a 1.98% increase for 2021/22. Cllr Wills expressed concern that no evidence was now being presented explaining why such a significant increase was required in 2021/22 and said that such was needed in order to be able to qualify such a request. It was recognized that when this significant increase was combined with the increased requests from the Fire Service and DCC as well as the Town Council's that this would be a considerable increase for residents. It was acknowledged that the survey monkey

questionnaire which accompanied this consultation was not designed to be completed by a corporate body as the questions were pertinent to individuals. It was agreed that Cllrs could complete the survey monkey questionnaire if they wished to do so but that would be on an individual basis as not in their role as a Councillor. The Clerk was asked to write in response to this consultation stating that the Town Council cannot support this proposed increase without a clear explanation and evidence as to what this increase is for.

RESOLVED:

- i) Cllrs to complete the consultation survey monkey questionnaire if they wish but in their own private capacity as not as a Town Councillor.**
- ii) The Clerk to write in responses to this consultation in stating that the Town Council cannot support this proposed increase without a clear explanation and evidence as to what this increase is for.**

(Cllrs Vanessa Carmichael, Julie Towler and Leo McCormack left the meeting at this point)

The Chair, Cllr Gloria Wills, explained that due to the confidential nature of the following items these would be discussed under Exempt Information and had any members of the public and/or press been present they would have been asked to leave the meeting at this point (Section 1 Sub-Section (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission of Meetings) Act 1960).

(Cllrs Fiona Warrand and David Brown left the meeting at this point)

8. Consideration of Reports Exempt from Public:

8.1 Butterwick Road Cemetery Expansion Project Update Report by Butterwick Road Cemetery Working Group:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated a Butterwick Road Cemetery Expansion Project Update Report by Butterwick Road Cemetery Working Group. This was duly considered by Cllrs and a way forward agreed in order to progress the Town Council's cemetery expansion project.

8.2 Internal Auditor 2021/22 – 2023/24 Recommendation Report by Finance Working Group:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated an Internal Auditor 2021/22 – 2023/24 Recommendation Report by the Finance Working Group which was duly considered and approved.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.50pm.

APPROVED

APPROVED