

SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the proceedings of the **MAY MONTHLY MEETING** of the **Council** held following the Annual General Meeting
on
Monday 17th May 2021
in
Sedgefield Parish Hall

Present

Cllr. Mel Carr (Chairman)

Cllr. Allan Blakemore (Vice Chairman) and

Cllrs. David Brown, Mark Cant, Ann Carr, John Finlayson, Allan Nicholson, Jimmy Seymour, Julie Towler, Alfred Walton, Mavis Wayman and Stephen Winter

Officers

Dr Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

1. Apologies:

Cllr Paul Heasman

2. Declaration of interest:

None.

3. STC Minutes / Committee Reports:

a. Minutes of the Finance Working Group meeting held Thursday 15th April 2021:

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

b. Minutes of the Monthly meeting held Monday 19th April 2021:

These were confirmed as a correct record. (M Cant / SW)

c. Minutes of the P&R committee held Monday 19th April 2021:

These were confirmed as a correct record. (AB / AC)

d. Notes of the Policy & Records Management Working Group meeting held Wednesday 21st April 2021:

These were confirmed as a correct record. (AB / M Carr)

e. Minutes of the Personnel meeting held Monday 26th April 2021:

These were confirmed as a correct record.(AC / AB)

f. Minutes of the Special Town Council Meeting held Monday 26th April 2021:

These were confirmed as a correct record. (M Cant / AC)

g. Minutes of the Extraordinary Town Council Meeting held Tuesday 27th April 2021:

These were confirmed as a correct record. (M Cant / MW)

h. Minutes of the Finance Working Group meeting held Thursday 29th April 2021:

These were confirmed as a correct record. (AB / M Carr)

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

4. Matters of Information:

4.1 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. The Clerk proposed that a request for an update now be sent to County Cllrs Brown and Lines. Cllrs agreed. Cllr Brown said it was his understanding that from the previous DCC that the principle would be such funding would focus upon deprived areas.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

4.2 Local Councils Elections:

Welcome Packs have been issued to all new and returning Town Councillors with clear instruction for information required by the Town Clerk and Returning Officer.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

4.3 Current Planning Applications:

The Clerk has forwarded to DCC Planning Officers the Town Council's comments on planning applications 1-7.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

4.4 Current Planning Application:

No Cllrs submitted to the Clerk any comments regarding planning applications

DM/21/00639/FPA and DM/21/01310/FPA published on 19th April 2021.

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 May 2021 plus civic events until March 2022.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

6. Public Participation:

The Chairman, Cllr Mel Carr closed the meeting for the public gave their views and comments.

County Cllr Chris Lines paid tribute to former local County Cllr John Robinson who had served the community for over four decades in numerous roles during that time. He thanked John for serving with diligence and distinction. County Cllr Lines said that he looked forward to working with Sedgefield Town Council colleagues and fellow County Cllr David Brown and said he was keen to explore ways in which to all could more effectively collaborate in the future.

No other members of the public present wished to speak. The Chairman re-opened the meeting.

7. Internal Reports:

7.1 Chairman's Report:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated electronically to all Cllrs a copy of the Chairman's report which detailed the actions he had undertaken since the Council's last Monthly Meeting.

RESOLVED

To receive this information.

7.2 Mayor's Report:

No Mayor's report had been submitted.

7.3 Future Community Development & Engagement plus Environment Committee Meetings Report by Town Clerk:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Future Community Development & Engagement plus Environment Committee Meetings Report.

RESOLVED:

Community Development & Engagement Committee plus Environment Committee matters continue to be considered as part of the P&R Committee agenda until September 2021 when Community Development & Engagement plus Environment Committee meetings to resume (hopefully in the Town Council Offices).

7.4 Co-option of Councillor Report by Town Clerk:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Co-option of Councillor Report which explained that as a result of the Council having one vacancy at the time of an uncontested election it was now possible to immediately seek to fill this via co-option. Cllrs agreed with vacancy notice and that this be advertised with effect from 18th May 2021 with a closing date for applications on or before Friday 11th June 2021.

RESOLVED:

The Town Council to seek to fill its current vacancy by co-option with the vacancy being advertised from 18th May 2021 for applications being submitted by no later than 11th June 2021.

8. External Reports:

The Clerk reported that no External Reports had been received, however, following the recent local elections the Clerk had liaised with both local County Cllrs and offered them the opportunity to submit County Cllr Reports which would be warmly welcomed by the Town Council. The Clerk confirmed that County Cllr Lines had accepted this offer and a meeting had been scheduled for 27th May 2021 to discuss the format and content of such reports as well as timings of submission to ensure they featured on future Town Council Monthly Meeting agendas.

RESOLVED

To receive this information.

9. Correspondence:

9.1 Neighbour Notification Letter for DM/21/00198/FPA – land to East of Home Farm, Sedgefield (email and attached letter from Ms Hilary Sperring, DCC dated 11th May 2021):

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all an email and letter from Ms Hilary Sperring of DCC dated 11th May 2021 informing the Town Council that amendments had now been received in relation to planning application DM/21/00198/FPA for the

retention and use of existing outbuildings and land for the non-commercial breeding and keeping of dogs at land to the East of Home Farm, Sedgefield. The Clerk reminded all that this original application had been considered at the Council's Monthly Meeting held in March 2021 when it had been resolved to call this application in for determination by DCC's Full Planning Committee.

Cllr Julie Towler questioned when the noise assessment now submitted had taken place as she did not believe there were any dogs on site. Cllr Stephen Winter said there were a number of dogs at the site as he has gone past the site on foot on a number of occasions recently and noise was evident from the site. Cllr Winter said that if dogs were present 24/7 then the noise could have a significant impact upon residents. Cllr Mel Carr said he had looked on DCC's planning portal and noted that a detailed assessment relating to noise was not present which had not been the case when the application had originally been discussed. However, Cllr Mel Carr said the Town Council were not experts in noise and noise related issues and therefore that concern had to be addressed by those who were experts and had appropriate powers and responsibilities. Cllr Allan Blakemore said the original resolution made by the Council in relation to this planning application was as a result of a number of residents who had either submitted their concerns or attended Council meetings to voice those concerns and therefore the resolution made by the Council in March 2021 was in support of the residents and by requesting this application be called in was the only way to ensure that all parties were involved and matters successfully discussed and investigated. Cllr Blakemore noted that the proposed kennels are not to be staffed at all times and therefore noise disturbance could escalate during those times. Cllrs Alf Walton and Mavis Wayman had questions relating to how the kennels would operate. Cllr Mel Carr said such information was not known. The Clerk reminded all that the Town Council's role at this time was to consider the planning application on material planning grounds.

With regards to timings of DCC Planning Committee meetings, Cllr David Brown said that it was his understanding that there would be a delay in the scheduling of such following the recent elections at DCC and the need to appoint Cllrs to various Committees and the training which Cllrs needed to attend in order to commence work.

RESOLVED:

The amendments received in relation to planning application DM/21/00198/FPA do not change the Council's resolution passed in March 2021 for this planning application to be called in for consideration by DCC's Full Planning Committee.

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/21/00639/FPA – kitchen extension, 19 White House Drive, Sedgefield

Cllrs did not have any objection to this application.

10.2 DM/21/00785/FPA – demolish of existing single storey rear extension and erecting of single extension in its place. Alterations to front and side elevation to remove existing hanging tiles and replace with render, 53 The Orchard, Sedgefield:

Cllrs did not have any objection to this application.

10.3 DM/21/01147/FPA – proposed new aircraft hanger, Fishburn Airfield, Bishop Middleham, Sedgefield:

Cllrs did not have any objection to this application.

10.4 DM/21/01291/FPA – rear extension and garage conversion, 45 White House Drive, Sedgefield:

Cllrs did not have any objection to this application.

10.5 DM/21/01310/FPA – first floor side/rear extension and garage conversion to habitable space, 24 The Meadows, Sedgefield:

Cllrs did not have any objection to this application.

10.6 DM/21/01417/FPA – erection of single storey extension to rear, bay window and replacement timber windows to front (resubmission), 25 West End, Sedgefield:

Cllrs did not have any objection to this application.

10.7 DM/21/01558/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.

10.8 DM/21/01523/FPA – erection of detached outbuilding to rear (retrospective), 41 White House Drive, Sedgefield:

Cllrs did not have any objection to this application.

RESOLVED:

The comments on planning applications 1- 8 above to be submitted to DCC Planners.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.53pm.

SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY & RESOURCES



Minutes of the proceedings of the **MAY POLICY & RESOURCES**
of the **Council** held following the **Monthly meeting** on
Monday 17th May 2021
in
Sedgefield Parish Hall.

Present **Cllr. Allan Blakemore (Chairman)**
 Cllr. Mark Cant (Vice Chairman) and
 Cllrs. David Brown, Ann Carr, Mel Carr, John Finlayson, Allan Nicholson, Jimmy
 Seymour, Julie Towler, Alfred Walton, Mavis Wayman and Stephen Winter

Officers Dr Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

1. Apologies:

Cllr Paul Heasman.

2. Declaration of interest:

None.

3. Matters of Information:

3.1 Sedgefield Town Council Corporate Plan:

This matter has also been discussed by the Finance Working Group and Internal Auditor. 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. The Clerk to bring a proposal to the next P&R Committee meeting following successful co-option of final Town Councillor vacancy.

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/residents 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. Note: The Estates Working Group have agreed that their priority work areas for 2021/22 will be village green matters and the re-opening of the Parish Hall. 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 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.

3.6 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 now contact both local County Cllrs following the recent election and seek an update on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.7 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.

3.8 Ash Tree Within Grounds of Ceddesfeld Hall:

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

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.9 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 May 2021 any items for those Committees would feature on the P&R Committee's agenda.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.10 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 ongoing 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.

3.11 Cycle Trail at NETPark:

No further progress has been reported regarding this matter. Former Cllr Chris Lines, to provide the Town Clerk with contact details of DCC Officers dealing with this matter so that communications can in future come to the Town Council direct. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated as and when progress is made.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.12 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.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

3.13 Town Council Offices Refurbishment:

The Estates Working Group continue to oversee this project. Internal and external decoration has now been completed. Flooring has been fitted. Tiling work has been completed. New blinds have been fitted. A considerable amount of additional rubbish

now needs to be removed from the site and furniture returned. The Estates Working Group continue to oversee the delivery of this project within the budget allocated by the Town Council. The Clerk to liaise with the Personnel Committee regarding the re-opening of the offices and return of staff in a covid secure way of working. The Estates Working Group and Personnel Committee to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.14 Gypsy/Traveller Unauthorised Encampments:

The Clerk requested an update from DCC's Gypsy Roma Traveller Section regarding the horse field location and if there are no on-going investigations regarding this site then to close this matter with Cllrs monitoring and raising any concerns in the future should they arise. Ms Clare Hubbard from DCC confirmed that in April 2020 Gypsy Roma Traveller families did arrive at the stables just as the first national lockdown came into effect and stayed there for a number of months. At the time this was investigated and it was established that as the households had been invited there by the owners it was not in fact an Unauthorised Encampment. Cllr Alf Walton said it was important to continue to monitor the site so that it did not become a permanent site. Cllrs agreed to close this matter but to monitor the site and if necessary request the matter be placed on the P&R Committee's agenda for further discussion.

Cllr Julie Towler asked if it was know when the telephone kiosk in the Town centre was to be removed as this is an eyesore. The Clerk confirmed notification had been received the week previously to indicate the kiosk would be removed within the next 3 months. Cllr Towler also requested an update on the colour of The Cornerhouse. The Clerk said she would request such from the local County Cllrs.

RESOLVED:

- i) To receive the information and to close this matter.**
- ii) The Clerk to contact both local County Cllrs to request the latest situation regarding the colour on the exterior of The Cornerhouse.**

3.15 Hardwick Hall Hotel New Premises Licence:

An email was received from Ms Yvonne Raine of DCC on 11th February 2021 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 31st July 2021. The Clerk had shared this information electronically with all Cllrs. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this

matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.16 Cowley House Community Benefit Offer:

The Clerk has written to Mr Turner accepting the Cowley House Community Benefit Offer 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.

3.17 Village Green / The Pickled Parson:

The Town Council's solicitor has issued to The Pickled Parson the Town Council's proposed licence for use of the village green. The Clerk has requested an update. The Clerk to schedule an Estates Working Group to consider the latest position with all village green matters so that a report can be brought back to a future P&R Committee meeting.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.18 Village Green / 26 Front Street:

Following the latest Estates Working Group meeting, the Clerk has submitted to the Town Council's solicitor a further set of questions regarding this matter. The Clerk to schedule an Estates Working Group to consider the latest position with all village green matters so that a report can be brought back to a future P&R Committee meeting.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.19 Village Green / Dun Cow:

Mr Geoff Rayner has supplied the additional information required by the Town Council regarding the village green area at the front of the Dun Cow. The Clerk is now liaising with 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.

3.20 Treeworks In Grounds Of Ceddesfeld Hall:

AW Treecare will inform the Clerk when they are able to schedule the agreed treeworks in the grounds of Ceddesfeld Hall. The Clerk to keep the P&R Committee updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.21 Festive Celebrations:

A recommendation report for 2021 festive celebrations to be brought to the September 2021 P&R Committee meeting regarding actual or virtual events depending upon restrictions at the time.

A letter has been sent to the Rotary Club of Sedgefield asking if they would be willing to support this event in some way rather than providing the Town with a Christmas tree. A response is awaited.

The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.22 Community Event:

The Clerk and Cllr Blakemore to keep monitoring the COVID restrictions/situation so that when appropriate contact be made with local community groups to see if they would be interested in working together to host a community event.

A holding note has been sent to local community groups to flag that the Town Council is thinking ahead and will be ready to take a lead in co-ordinating activity when the time is right. Several groups have said they would welcome the opportunity to be involved in such an event.

The Clerk and Cllr Blakemore to keep the Council updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.23 King Chef Takeaway:

This matter was discussed at length at the last Estates Working Group meeting. The Clerk has submitted to the Town Council's solicitor a further set of questions regarding this matter. The Clerk to schedule an Estates Working Group to consider the latest position with all village green matters so that a report can be brought back to a future P&R Committee meeting.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.24 Footpath – Malton Terrace:

The Clerk has requested from DCC the specification which they use for determining safe footpaths which can then be used as a marker for assessing Town Council owned footpaths. A response is now awaited. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

Members of the Estates Working Group are now reviewing the state of all footpaths on village greens so that this matter can be collectively discussed at their March meeting to progress to seeking quotations. This matter was to have been considered at the last Estates Working Group meeting, however, time did not permit and it was agreed to defer until after the forthcoming elections. The Estates Working Group to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

The Clerk has updated Mr Jacobs and Ms Dows regarding this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.25 Rural/Market Town Group:

The Clerk has informed the Rural Services Network that the Town Council accepts their offer of a free trial membership. Cllr Allan Blakemore has been registered as the Town Council's representative on this Group and has participated in his first session. Cllr Blakemore to provide feedback to the P&R Committee nearer to the expiry of the Council's free trial membership period.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

3.26 Butterwick Road Cemetery Expansion:

Pre-planning advice/feedback is now awaited from the Environment Agency. The Clerk is keeping Ms Hilary Sperring of DCC updated on this matter and upon receipt of feedback the required information will be submitted to DCC in order that the Council's planning application can be determined.

The recycling bays in the new area of the cemetery have been emptied and work to remove them will begin soon.

The Clerk has requested from Mr Stephen Reed of DCC a date by which he will give the Town Council feedback on its Section 106 funding application submitted in relation to this expansion project. No feedback has yet been received. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.27 Public Participation:

The Clerk reported to Durham Constabulary concerns regarding young people congregating at the Showfield. Sgt Clarke confirmed the Police are aware of groups of young people in this area and others in the Town. Quantities of alcohol have been seized and it is clear people are coming in from outside the area. Unfortunately, covid restrictions means the Police are not able to employ an Operation Staysafe. The Police have given a reassurance that youth anti-social behaviour over weekends is a priority focus for them. With regards to police vehicles driving over the village green this is not an activity that is encouraged by the Police, however, in the course of their duties it may be necessary to take the occasional short cut to apprehend criminals or prevent disorder etc. so each occasion would have to be judged on its merits. As long as the officers acting in the course of their duties and are not driving dangerously then there are no offences. Without specific details it is difficult to answer the question, but it may well be linked to youth anti-social behaviour.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

3.28 Proposed Diversion Bridleway 57

The Clerk informed Ms Filomena Solan, DCC of the Town Council's support for the

diversion of this Bridleway.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

3.29 Street Lighting Problem

The Clerk wrote to Mr Ian Hoult of DCC regarding the problems being experienced by two residents at the new Taylor Wimpey estate in relation to lack of street lighting.

Mr Hoult has liaised with his colleagues who have informed the Clerk that DCC have checked the development drawings and the access road leading to this property is private and is a matter between the residents and the developer Taylor Wimpey as to whether it is lit or not. DCC have a lighting design for the main road but wouldn't routinely adopt an access road such as the one that serves this property. Mr Paul Watson, of DCC's Strategic Highways Section, has now written to the residents with a copy to the Town Council for information. The Clerk read out this email which had been received earlier that day. Mr Watson explained that it would be up to the developer to install street lighting on a shared private driveway and suggested the residents consult with Taylor Wimpey to establish whether they would be willing to undertake these works. However, should the developer erect lighting at this location it is unlikely that DCC would seek to formally adopt the infrastructure and take responsibility for any energy charges incurred and its ongoing maintenance and repair.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and close this matter.

4. Public Participation:

The Chairman, Cllr Allan Blakemore, closed the meeting for the public to give views and comments. No members of the public present wished to make any comments. 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.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

5.2 Parish Hall Re-opening Report by Town Clerk:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Parish Hall Re-opening Report which detailed the work that is underway with regular users in order to re-open the Parish Hall from mid-May 2021 in accordance with central government instruction.

RESOLVED:

- i) To receive the information contained in the report.**
- ii) The Clerk to continue to liaise with the Estates Working Group as necessary to progress any issues to facilitate the smooth opening of the Parish Hall.**

5.3 Community Chest Meeting Proposal by Town Clerk:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Community Chest Meeting Proposal Report.

RESOLVED:

A virtual Community Chest meeting to be held at 6.30pm on Monday 24th May 2021 to consider request received as well as any others received in the intervening time.

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 19th April 2021:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all details of cheques for approval after 19th April 2021 numbered 109943 to 109955. The Clerk also recommended two additional cheques be authorized as 109957 (to Mitie to cover the cost of the internal and external decoration at the Town Council's offices) and 109958 (to Factory Carpets & Laminates Ltd to cover the cost of new flooring in the Town Council's offices). The Clerk confirmed that both these additional cheques were in accordance with the quotes accepted by the Town Council. Cllrs confirmed their support for the authorization of all cheques.

The Clerk reported that a further skip is required in order to remove remaining rubbish from the recent refurbishment work and requested that Cllrs gave their approval for this and set a limit of £300 for the hire of such when required. Cllrs confirmed their support for this recommendation and that a cheque should be raised as required.

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 10th May 2021:

RESOLVED:

To receive the Financial Budget Comparison as at 10th May 2021.

Cllr Allan Blakemore made the offer to meet with any new Cllr who wished to learn more about the Council's financial reporting papers contained in the P&R Committee packs.

6.3 Debtors List as at 10th May 2021:

RESOLVED:

To receive the Debtors List as at 10th May 2021.

6.4 Direct Debits and BACS List for 1st – 30th April 2021:

The Clerk circulated to all a Direct Debits and BACS List for 1st – 30th April 2021.

RESOLVED:

To receive Direct Debits and BACS List for 1st – 30th April 2021.

6.5 April 2021 Bank Reconciliations Report by Town Clerk:

The Clerk circulated to all an April 2021 Bank Reconciliations Report.

RESOLVED:

To receive the April 2021 Bank Reconciliations Report.

6.6 Year End 2020/21 Update Report by Town Clerk:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Year End 2020/21 Update Report. The Clerk confirmed the Council's 2020/21-year end accounts and all associated documents and evidence were submitted to Mazars earlier on 17th May 2021 which is well in advance of the deadline of 30th June 2021.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

- 6.7 VAT Reclaim 1st October 2020 – 31st March 2021 Update Report by Town Clerk:**
Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a VAT Reclaim 1st October 2020 – 31st March 2021 Update Report in which it was confirmed that full reimbursement had now been received from HMRC.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

7. Correspondence:

- 7.1 East Durham Community Athletics Track (letter from Mr Ean Parsons dated 19th April 2021 – deferred from Extraordinary Town Council meeting held on 27th April 2021):**

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a letter from Mr Ean Parsons dated 19th April 2021 entitled East Durham Community Athletics Track. The Clerk reminded all Cllrs that this item of correspondence had been deferred from the Extraordinary Town Council meeting held on 27th April 2021.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

- 7.2 Outside Seating (email from Mr Philip Toshach dated 6th May 2021):**

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all an email from Mr Philip Toshach dated 6th May 2021 in which he requested a licence with the Town Council for use of the grassed village green or on the pavement near his business in order to place tables and chairs. The Clerk confirmed that subsequently Mr Toshach had provided confirmation of days and times for such facilities.

Cllr Stephen Winter reminded everyone of his proposal submitted to the Town Council earlier in the year prior to the initial relaxing of lockdown restrictions when he suggested the Town Council went around all businesses who fronted the village greens and offered a licence for a period of 6 months free of charge. Cllr Winter said he felt it looked like the Town Council had done nothing to support businesses and made the Council look “terrible”. Cllr Allan Blakemore said he took exception to those comments and said that the Town Council has been working tirelessly on many village green issues across the Town and said the Town has lots of businesses within it and those fronting the village green areas should not be treated differently. Cllr Blakemore said that numerous articles have featured in the Sedgefield Extra regarding village greens and the onus should be on businesses within to use those to approach the Town Council. Cllr Mavis Wayman said she understood that all businesses had been

through, and continue to go through, a very hard time and that it was important that businesses know they can contact the Town Council for licences. Cllr Alf Walton said he supported Cllr Winter and pointed out that covid restrictions are now being relaxed. Cllr Walton said that lots of people were drinking on the village green (grassed) areas. The Clerk reminded all Cllrs that their role as custodians of the village green brings responsibility with it which they need to be mindful of. Cllr Winter expressed his disappointment at the length of time taken to receive responses from the Town Council's solicitor regarding these matters. Cllr Ann Carr said that unfortunately solicitors were slow in issuing responses. The Clerk confirmed that an update regarding village green matter was on the agenda of the next Estates Working Group meeting on 24th May 2021 and proposed that an update be brought as quickly as possible to a future P&R Committee meeting.

With regards to the request from Toshachs, Cllr Mel Carr noted that when an initial approach had been made to DCC they had stated that use of the pavement was not permitted due to close proximity of the road. It was agreed that consideration would only be given to the grassed village green area. Cllr David Brown requested a condition be included that tables and chairs needed to be removed to allow the Council's grass cutting contractor to undertake their work and to ensure all village green areas are tidy and maintained.

RESOLVED:

The Clerk to liaise with Mr Toshach to make him aware that a licence can be prepared by the Town Council for such of the grassed village green (not the pavement) and that the cost of such a licence would need to be met by him. Providing Mr Toshach is happy with that offer the Clerk to instruct the Town Council's solicitor to prepare a draft licence.

The Chair, Cllr Allan Blakemore, 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).

8. Consideration of Reports Exempt from the Public:

8.1 Pest Control Report by Town Clerk and Cllr Alf Walton:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated a Pest Control Report by Cllr Alf Walton and herself detailing the current situation with holes and rat activity on the church bank. This matter was discussed and a way forward agreed.

8.2 Councillor Catherine Hart Verbal Update From Town Clerk:

The Clerk reported actions that had been undertaken to established contact with Councillor Catherine Hart.

8.3 Cemetery Lodge Verbal Update From Town Clerk:

The Clerk read out an email she had received earlier that afternoon from Ms Caroline Ryan of Dowens in which she informed the Town Council that the tenant at Cemetery Lodge would soon be vacating the property. This matter was discussed and a way forward agreed.

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

DRAFT