

SEDFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the proceedings of the **MARCH**
MONTHLY MEETING of the **Council** held at **7pm**

on

Monday 14th March 2022

in

Sedgefield Parish Hall

Present

Cllr. Mel Carr (Chairman)

Cllr. Allan Blakemore (Vice Chairman) and

Cllrs. David Brown, Ann Carr, John Finlayson, Catherine Hart, Paul Heasman, David Jasper, Jim Seymour and Mavis Wayman.

Officers

Dr Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

1. Apologies:

Cllrs. Mark Cant, Julie Towler and Stephen Winter.

2. Declaration of interest:

None.

3. STC Minutes / Committee Reports:

a. Minutes of the Monthly meeting held Monday 14th February 2022:

Cllr David Brown requested that under agenda item 9.2 of the minutes the sentence "Cllr Brown believed there was a contradiction between the Town Council's previous objection and Policy C6 in The Sedgefield Plan in which it was stated the Town would support any development without the Town's build up area boundary" to "Cllr Brown believed there was a contradiction between the Town Council's previous objection and Policy C6 in The Sedgefield Plan in which it was stated the Town would support any development within the Town's build up area boundary". With the inclusion of this correction these were confirmed as a correct record. (AC / AB)

- b. Minutes of the P&R committee held Monday 14th February 2022:**
These were confirmed as a correct record. (AB / AC)
- c. Minutes of the Environment committee held Monday 21st February 2022:**
These were confirmed as a correct record. (PH / MW)
- d. Minutes of the Community Development & Engagement Committee held Monday 21st February 2022:**
These were confirmed as a correct record. (JF / AC)
- e. Minutes of the Personnel Committee held Monday 28th February 2022:**
These were confirmed as a correct record. (AB / MW)

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

4. Matters of Information:

4.1. Crime Statistics Sedgefield:

The Clerk had thanked PC John Seymour for providing this information and requested an update on the current PC vacancy within the Sedgefield Policing Team. PC Seymour duly replied and his response had been shared electronically with all Cllrs, i.e. there is a PC vacancy but at this moment there is no timeframe for this vacancy being filled.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

4.2. Current Planning Applications:

The Clerk submitted to DCC Planners comments agreed in relation to planning applications 1 – 6.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

4.3. Planning Applications:

Planning applications DM/21/03340/FPA, DM/21/03805/VOC, DM/21/04077/AD, DM/22/00267/AD and DM/22/00292/FPA were considered at the Environment Committee on 21st February 2022.

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 March 2022 plus civic events until November 2022. The Clerk reported that the Mayor of Sedgefield has now organized a fund raising coffee morning in the Parish Hall on 22nd April 2022 from 9am until 12 noon.

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 reported that earlier that day there had been a further Active Travel meeting and positive progress was being made with this work. Notes from this meeting will be presented to the Town Council in County Cllr Lines next monthly report.

The Chairman thanked the member of the public for their comments and re-opened the meeting.

7. Internal Reports:

7.1 Chairman's Report:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a copy of the Chairman's report which detailed the actions he had undertaken since the Council's last Monthly Meeting. The Chairman, Cllr Mel Carr, verbally reported that since the production of the report circulated he had also attended the following:

- Along with members of Sedgefield In Bloom, the Northumbria In Bloom Spring Judging Meeting on 9th March 2022 at Gateshead;
- Along with the Mayor of Sedgefield, the dedication of a new bench in memory of past members of Sedgefield In Bloom;
- Along with the Mayor of Sedgefield, the Great Aycliffe Town Council's Mayor's Charity dinner.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

7.2 Mayor's Report:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a copy of the Mayor of Sedgefield's report which detailed the actions undertaken by Cllr Ann Carr since the Council's last Monthly Meeting. The date for the Mayor's forthcoming fund raising coffee morning is 22nd April 2022 and not 22nd September 2022 as stated in her report.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

7.3 Councillor Vacancies Update Report by Town Clerk:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Councillor Vacancies Update Report which confirmed that vacancies left by former Cllrs Alf Walton and Allan Nicholson could be filled by co-option and three applicants had applied.

RESOLVED:

- i) To receive the information contained in this report.**
- ii) A Special Town Council meeting to be held on Monday 28th March 2022 at 6.30pm in Sedgefield Parish Hall and applicants to be invited to attend.**

8. External Reports:

8.1 Report From Durham County Councilor Chris Lines, Sedgefield Division:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a report from Durham County Cllr Chris Lines who represents the Sedgefield Division.

Cllr Paul Heasman noted there was to be a £1.4million investment at Hardwick Park and asked if it was known what this investment was to include. He commented this was a significant amount of money and questioned if there were plans for parking charges at the Park to be reduced. The Clerk said she understood County Cllr Lines was lobbying to find out the full scope of the planned investment and would keep the Town Council updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

- i) To receive this information.**
- ii) The Clerk to request from County Cllr Lines an update on the proposed Hardwick Park investment programme.**

8.2 Crime Statistics Sedgefield:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all Crime Statistics for Sedgefield between 4th February 2022 – 6th March 2022 as provided by PC John Seymour.

Cllr Allan Blakemore asked if the Police would be invited to attend the Town Council's forthcoming Annual Meeting. The Clerk confirmed that such an invitation would be extended.

Cllr Catherine Hart asked what boundary was used for reporting these figures, i.e. Sedgefield Parish Boundary, the Town only or other. The Clerk believed this would be the Police's Sedgefield defined boundary but offered to liaise with PC Seymour to confirm and then update Cllrs.

RESOLVED:

- i) To receive the information.**
- ii) The Clerk to liaise with PC Seymour to confirm the area which they describe as Sedgefield when compiling crime statistics.**

9. Correspondence:

9.1. Chief Planner Update (email from CDALC dated 25th February 2022):

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all an email from CDALC dated 25th February 2022 entitled Chief Planner Update. This email detailed information from the Chief Planner of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and had been shared with all Chief Planning Officers across the country. Information contained provided updates on Strategic Environmental Assessments for neighbourhood plans, the Levelling Up White Paper and biodiversity net gain.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

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/21/03913/AD – erection and display of non-illuminated di-bond sign with face size 9 x 3m, land South of Rosalind Franklin, NETPark, Sedgefield:

Cllrs did not have any objection to this application.

10.2 DM/22/00442/FPA – replacement garage block (12 no garages), Garage Block, Elm Avenue, Sedgefield:

Cllrs did not have any objection to this application but do want to know what provision is to be made for electric charging points at this new facility and question why a further 2 garages could not be built on the vacant land at the side of this plot which would mean that 14 new garages could replace the 14 existing garages that will be lost.

10.3 DM/22/00486/FPA – single storey side extension, 21 Queens Drive, 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.

ADDITIONAL PLANNING APPLICATIONS:

The Clerk reported the latest list of planning applications published by DCC earlier that day did not contain any planning applications within the Parish of Sedgefield. However, the Clerk proposed that should the Town Council be made aware of any planning matters in the coming week the Committee delegate powers to the forthcoming Environment Committee so as to allow the Town Council to discuss. This was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED:

To delegate the consideration of planning matters to the Environment Committee meeting on Monday 21st March 2022.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.20pm.

SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY & RESOURCES



Minutes of the proceedings of the **MARCH**
POLICY & RESOURCES of the Council

held following the **Monthly meeting**

on

Monday 14th March 2022

in

Sedgefield Parish Hall.

Present

Cllr. Allan Blakemore (Chairman) and

Cllrs. David Brown, Ann Carr, Mel Carr, John Finlayson, Catherine Hart, Paul Heasman, Dave Jasper, Jim Seymour and Mavis Wayman.

Officers

Dr Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

1. Apologies:

Cllrs Mark Cant, Julie Towler and Stephen Winter.

2. Declaration of interest:

None.

3. Matters of Information:

3.1 Cowley House Community Benefit Offer:

The Clerk had, quite some time ago, written to Mr Turner accepting the Cowley House Community Benefit Offer and requested he prepares and submits to the Town Council, when possible, a formal Community Benefit Deed of Offer and associated documents for counter signing. The Clerk had been contacted earlier that day by Ms Charlotte Kitchin who has taken over from Mr Turner. Ms Kitchin has confirmed that she will be preparing the necessary documentation and aims to send this to the Clerk by 4th April 2022 so that it can be considered by the Town Council at the April 2022 P&R Committee meeting.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.2 Footpath – Malton Terrace:

The Chair of the Estates Working Group had met with a contractor to obtain quotes for patching areas of footpaths on village green. This will include Malton Terrace. This is to be considered under agenda item 8.5.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.3 Butterwick Road Cemetery Expansion:

Feedback has now been received from DCC and the Clerk has scheduled a meeting with CDS and the Butterwick Road Cemetery Working Group on 16th March 2022 in order to consider the feedback. The Butterwick Road Cemetery Working Group to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.4 Tree Inspections:

Quotations for recommended tree works to those trees on Town Council owned land are now being sought. A deadline for submitted quotes is 31st March 2022. The Estates Working Group will consider tenders and bring a recommendation to a future P&R Committee meeting. The Finance Working Group to factor into the Town Council's future budget planning process the future programme of treeworks.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.5 Section 106 Funding:

No further information has been received regarding this matter.

The Clerk has requested a meeting between the Estates Working Group and County Cllr Chris Lines to commence discussions regarding possible review of play provision across the Town.

Upon determination of the Town Council's planning application to expand Butterwick Road Cemetery the Clerk to organize a joint Butterwick Road Cemetery Working Group and Finance Working Group meeting in order that funding and options can be considered with a recommendation report brought to a future P&R Committee meeting for consideration.

The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on any developments relating to Section 106 monies.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.6 Strategic Priorities:

Time is now needed to allow the Clerk to commence drafting action plans for each strategic priority plus scheduling meetings with both local County Cllrs and Police. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.7 Refurbishment of Cemetery Compound:

The Town Council's appointed contractor for building the new recycling bays in the Council's cemetery compound, remove and dispose of green waste and dismantle and remove the existing recycling bays at the top area of the cemetery has now said they hope to start this work on 15th March 2022. It is hoped this work will be completed very soon before green waste starts to gather. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.8 Parish Hall CCTV:

The Estates Working Group are to prepare a CCTV Policy. When done a recommendation will be presented to a future P&PR Committee for approval. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.9 Eden Drive Play Area:

As reported at the October 2021 meeting, the work to replace wetpour shrinkage areas at the play area has now been expedited with a request that this be carried out as soon as possible. No confirmation date has been received as yet. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.10 Adaptations To Town Council Tractor and Winter Gritting Equipment

The Clerk has notified the contractor of their successful quotation and issued a purchase order number along with request this work be done as soon as possible. Parts are now on order and the adaptation work will be done as soon as they arrive and be done on-site at the Cemetery compound. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.11 Draft Village Green Policy:

The Clerk is now liaising with DCC regarding a map to accompany this policy. Upon receipt the policy will be published on the Town Council's website, Twitter and next edition of the Sedgefield Extra as well as letters to those businesses and residential properties that border village green. Letter and policies will also be sent to all estates agents operating in the Town. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.12 Updated Parish Hall User Policy:

The updated Policy had been published. The Estates Working Group will progress the issue of equipment instructions for items in the Parish Hall in either the form of separate "leaflets" or inclusion in future version of the Policy.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.13 Double Taxation Proposal:

The Clerk has informed CDALC that the Town Council will not participate in the double taxation exercise proposed by DCC>

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.14 Corporate Risk Management Schedule:

The new Corporate Risk Management Schedule has now been published (and considered during the most recent internal audit work).

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.15 Hedge Maintenance:

The successful contractor has been informed and they will schedule this work as soon as possible. The Town Council will obtain a quote for all hedge cutting work prior to the 2022/23 hedge cutting season for consideration by a future P&R Committee meeting. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.15 DCC HR SLA:

The Chair of the Council has now signed the new SLA on behalf of the Town Council and this has been returned to DCC.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.16 Grass Cutting 2022/23 and 2023/24:

The successful contractor has been informed of their appointment for the 2022/23 and 2023/24 grass cutting seasons. The Clerk had made the grass cutting contractor aware that this work no longer included St Edmund's Churchyard (see agenda item 7.3).

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

4. Public Participation:

The Chairman, Cllr Allan Blakemore, closed the meeting. No members of the public were present. The Chairman re-opened the meeting.

5. Reports:

5.1 Revised Butterwick Road Cemetery, Sedgefield – Rules and Regulations Recommendation Report by Town Clerk and Head Gardener & Cemetery Superintendent:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Revised Butterwick Road Cemetery, Sedgefield – Rules and Regulations Recommendation Report by herself and the Head Gardener & Cemetery Superintendent which was duly considered.

RESOLVED:

The reviewed Butterwick Road Cemetery, Sedgefield – Rules and Regulations to be adopted with immediate effect and reviewed in a further 12 months.

5.2 Review of Disciplinary Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Review of Disciplinary Policy Recommendation Report by the Personnel Committee which was duly considered.

RESOLVED:

The reviewed Disciplinary Policy be adopted with immediate effect and reviewed in a further 12 months.

5.3 Review of Resolution Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Review of Resolution Policy Recommendation Report by the Personnel Committee which was duly considered.

RESOLVED:

The reviewed Resolution Policy be adopted with immediate effect and reviewed in a further 12 months.

5.4 Review of Welfare Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Review of Welfare Policy Recommendation Report by the Personnel Committee which was duly considered.

RESOLVED:

The reviewed Welfare Policy be adopted with immediate effect and reviewed in a further 12 months.

6. Financial Matters:

6.1 Invoices for payment by cheques for approval after 14th February 2022:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all details of cheques for approval after 14th February 2022 numbered 110164 to 110177. The Clerk circulated to all an updated list which includes cheques numbered 110178 and 110184. 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 Cllr Allan Blakemore plus the Town Clerk to duly sign the cheques.

6.2 Financial Budget Comparison as at 4th March 2022:

With reference to the Town Council's forthcoming 2022/23 budget, Cllr David Brown reminded all Cllrs that we are living in very uncertain financial times and it is entirely possible that the Town Council's forecasted budget will require revision. The Clerk reminded all of the Finance Working Group's remit to closely scrutinize the budget and flag with the P&R Committee any necessary budget alterations. The Clerk also updated all Cllrs on the discussions which had taken place at the last Finance Working Group meeting held earlier in March 2022 when this same matter had been raised. The Town Council has in place financial reporting and monitoring systems which are as robust as possible and under constant review. The Town Council's Internal Auditor regularly uses Sedgefield Town Council as an example of how others should operate. The Clerk advised all Cllrs to read those minutes when issued in the April 2022 Committee packs which also included a presentation by CCLA as an annual review of the Town Council's Public Sector Deposit Fund.

RESOLVED:

To receive the Financial Budget Comparison as at 4th March 2022.

6.3 Debtors List as at 4th March 2022:

RESOLVED:

To receive the Debtors List as at 4th March 2022.

6.4 Direct Debits and BACS List for 1st – 28th February 2022:

RESOLVED:

To receive Direct Debits and BACS List for 1st – 28th February 2022.

6.5 February 2022 Bank Reconciliations plus January 2022 Public Sector Deposit Fund Reconciliations Plus Imprest Account Reconciliation for February 2022 Report by Town Clerk:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a February 2022 Bank Reconciliations plus January 2022 Public Sector Deposit Fund Reconciliations and Imprest Account Reconciliation for February 2022 Report.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

6.6 Internal Audit Update Report by Finance Working Group:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all an Internal Audit Update Report which was accompanied by the Internal Auditor's inspection reports covering the Town Council's Budgets, Main Accounting, Risk Management, Corporate Governance plus Income Collection and Banking systems. The highest level of assurance, Full Assurance, had been received for each audit inspection with no recommendations at this time for improvement.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information in the report and accompanying internal audit inspection reports.

6.7 2021/22 Year End Accounts Planning Work Report by Finance Working Group:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a 2021/22 Year End Accounts Planning Work Report by the Finance Working Group. This report detailed the key dates for the production of the Council's 2021/22 year end accounts. The Clerk confirmed the date of the Finance Working Group meeting outlined in this report has

been rescheduled from 13th April 2022 to 19th April 2022. The Clerk confirmed that at this time no information has been received from External Auditors, Mazars, regarding the 2021/22 year end nor the Council's Exercise of Public Rights dates.

RESOLVED:

- i) To receive the information contained in this report.**
- ii) To hold a Special Town Council Meeting on Monday 25th April 2022 at 6pm in Sedgefield Parish Hall to approve the Council's 2021/22 year end accounts.**

7. Correspondence:

7.1 Levelling Up White Paper (email and attachment from CDALC dated 22nd February 2022):

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Levelling Up White Paper email and attachment from CDALC dated 22nd February 2022. The Clerk reported that she had attended the Local Council Working Group the previous week which was also attended by senior DCC County Cllr Cabinet members plus DCC treasury officer who had all confirmed that at this moment in time there is not sufficient information known about central government's levelling up proposals other than there will not be any significant cash windfalls. Those attendees at the meeting representing the Town and Parish Council sector had said they wished to be kept updated and involved in this matter. The Clerk will keep Cllrs updated but suspected it could still be some time before specific details are known.

Cllr Paul Heasman commented that the information shared to date was of a very high level and he expressed his concerns that this exercise may result in a risk of further bureaucracy and dumbing down rather than levelling up. Cllr John Finlayson agreed. Cllr Catherine Hart said that no further bureaucracy was needed. Cllr Allan Blakemore confirmed that any additional monies would come with conditions/expectations and would not in any way recompense for the monies lost from local authority budgets over the last ten years.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

7.2 Sedgefield Hardwick Consultation (email and attachments from Ms Sally Newton, Hardwick Primary School dated 4th March 2022):

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all an email and attachments from Ms Sally Newton, Head Teacher of Hardwick Primary School dated 4th March 2022. The Board of Governors at Hardwick Primary School are consulting with all stakeholders about the prospect of them joining the Laidlaw Schools Trust. A letter detailing the reasons for this proposal, co-signed by Ms Newton and Ms Nicki Clark, Chair of Governors, had been shared along with supporting information. Stakeholders were being asked to complete and return a Consultation Response form which asked two questions – “Please let us know your views regarding Sedgefield Hardwick Primary School joining Laidlaw Schools Trust” and “Are there any questions that you would like to raise that are not covered in our Supporting Information?”.

This matter was considered by Cllrs and it was recognized that there are advantages and disadvantages to such a proposal but that overall the Town Council did not have sufficient expertise in this area to make a decision either supporting or opposing.

RESOLVED:

The Clerk to write to Ms Newton thanking her for giving the Town Council the opportunity to participate in this consultation exercise and inform her the matter has been fully discussed by the Town Council who are open minded about this matter with no definitive views either for or against.

7.3 St Edmund’s Churchyard (letter and attachments from Ms Michele MacCallam, Parish of the Upper Skerne dated 7th March 2022):

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a letter and attachments from Ms Michele MacCallam of the Parish of the Upper Skerne dated 7th March 2022. The letter was an new Order with correct churchyard plan plus documentation confirming the closure of the graveyard in 1880. As resolved previously within the last six months, Sedgefield Town Council does not wish to accept the responsibility for the maintenance of St Edmund’s Churchyard and instead this responsibility should be transferred to the County Council. The Clerk highlighted Ms MacCallam’s request that the Town Council reconsider resuming grass cutting at St Edmund’s churchyard for the three month period until maintenance responsibility passes to DCC. Cllr Ann Carr proposed the Town Council undertake this grass cutting as a gesture of goodwill and Cllr Catherine Hart seconded this with other Cllrs agreeing unanimously.

RESOLVED:

- i) Under the Local Government Act 1972 s.215 Sedgefield Town Council to opt out of the provision for the Town Council by which maintenance should be transferred to Durham County Council using sub-section (3).
- ii) The Clerk to instruct the Town Council's solicitor to serve Durham County Council with the resolution in i) above and that the County Council will take on maintenance responsibility within three months.
- iii) A similar instruction to ii) also be served on the Parochial Church Council.
- iv) The Town Council will continue to cut the grass in St Edmund's Churchyard for a period of 3 months until Durham County Council assume such responsibility.

7.4 Request For Support For AAP Application (email from Mr Mike Ashwell, SDT Vice Chair and Treasurer dated 11th March 2022):

The Clerk read out an email received from Mr Mike Ashwell, SDT Vice Chair and Treasurer, received on 11th March 2022 in which he outlined a funding application for £1500 being sought on behalf of the DIDO group from the local AAP. This bid was for funding to support the reinvigoration of the group which had needed to be suspended during the pandemic. If successful the funding would be used for items such as room hire, coach hire, entertainment and refreshments. The SDT were asking if the Town Council would write a letter of support for this application. Cllrs agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED:

The Clerk to write a letter of support for DIDO's funding application.

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

8. Consideration of Reports Exempt from the Public:

8.1 Village Greens Update Report by Town Clerk:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Village Greens Update Report which was duly considered and a way forward agreed.

8.2 Potential Recognition Award Update Report by Town Clerk:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Potential Recognition Award Update Report which was duly considered.

8.3 Annual Increment to Town Clerk Update by Personnel Committee:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all an Annual Increment To Town Clerk Update Report by the Personnel Committee which was duly considered and a way forward agreed.

8.4 National Pay Award 2021/22 Recommendation by Finance Working Group:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a National Pay Award 2021/22 Recommendation Report by the Finance Working Group which was duly considered and a way forward agreed.

8.5 Refurbishment of Footpaths on Village Greens Recommendation Report by Finance Working Group:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Refurbishment of Footpaths on Village Greens Recommendation Report by the Finance Working Group which was duly considered and a way forward agreed.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.19pm.

SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & ENGAGEMENT

Minutes of the proceedings of the **MARCH COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE** of the **Council** held at **7pm** in the **Parish Hall**, Sedgefield, on **Monday 21st March 2022**.

Present

Cllr. Ann Carr (Chairman) and

Cllrs. Allan Blakemore, David Brown, Mel Carr, Catherine Hart, Paul Heasman, Dave Jasper, Julie Towler and Stephen Winter

Officer

Dr Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

1. **Apologies:**

Cllrs Mark Cant and Mavis Wayman.

2. **Declaration of interest:**

None.

3. **Matters of Information:**

None.

4. **Public Participation:**

The Chairman, Cllr Ann Carr, closed the meeting for the public to give their views and comments. The members of the public present did not wish to make any comments. The Chairman re-opened the meeting.

5. **Reports:**

5.1 Community Event/Platinum Jubilee Celebrations Report by Cllr Allan Blakemore and Town Clerk:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Community Event/Platinum Jubilee Celebrations Report by Cllr Allan Blakemore and herself which provided the latest information regarding the Town's community event on Saturday 4th June 2022 to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Publicity for this event is now in circulation and will be updated as the musical programme for the afternoon is

finalised. The Clerk reminded all the next planning meeting is to take place in Sedgefield Parish Hall at 11am on Wednesday 30th March 2022 and all Cllrs are welcome to attend.

RECOMMENDED:

To receive this information.

5.2 Citizen of the Year / Young Citizen of the Year Awards 2021 Update Report by Town Clerk:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Citizen of the Year / Young Citizen of the Year Awards 2021 Update Report giving Cllrs the latest position regarding these Awards which will be presented at the conclusion of the Annual Town meeting on Tuesday 3rd May 2022. Since the production of this report the Clerk confirmed a Selection Panel meeting had been scheduled for 10am on 20th April 2022 to consider applications. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RECOMMENDED:

To receive this information.

5.3 Town Council Summer Coach Trip Update Report by Projects & Media Co-ordinator:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Town Council Summer Coach Trip Update Report by the Projects & Media Co-ordinator. The Clerk reported that since the production of that report the trip has very nearly sold out. As soon as payment has been received from those who have booked tickets then consideration will be given to hiring a second, smaller coach for this trip. There are already several names on a waiting list which is pleasing and shows that residents have welcomed the return of these popular trips.

RECOMMENDED:

To receive this information.

5.4 Sedgefield Youth Club Update Report by Town Clerk:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Sedgefield Youth Club Update Report which made Cllrs aware of the success of the Club since re-opening following the pandemic. Recent school holiday activities have been warmly welcomed and enjoyed by members. Whilst the juniors session which runs from 6pm-7pm for those

in school years 3 to 6 is exceeding capacity there is not any take up for the seniors sessions running from 7pm – 8.30pm aimed at those in school years 7 to 11. For this reason the Youth Workers are going to revise the sessions so the later session will be for those in year 6, of which there are currently 10 members. Cllrs were pleased to hear of the success of the Youth Club.

RECOMMENDED:

To receive this information.

6. Correspondence:

None.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.07pm.

APPROVED

SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT

Minutes of the proceedings of the **MARCH ENVIRONMENT** of the **Council** held following the Community Development & Engagement committee in the **Parish Hall**, Sedgefield, on **Monday 21st March 2022.**

- Present** **Cllr. Stephen Winter (Chairman) and**
Cllrs. Allan Blakemore, David Brown, Ann Carr, Mel Carr, Catherine Hart, Paul Heasman, Dave Jasper and Julie Towler.
- Officer** Dr Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

1. Apologies:

Cllrs Mark Cant and Mavis Wayman.

The Clerk reminded all that powers to consider planning matters had been delegated from the previous week's Monthly Meeting to this Committee meeting and such would be considered at the end of the meeting's agenda which included a letter that had been received from the Sedgefield Development Trust on 16th March 2022 in relation to the EDCAT planning application for an athletics track in the Town.

2. Declaration of interest:

Cllr Paul Heasman declared a non-pecuniary interest in the Sedgefield Development Trust. No other Cllrs made any declaration of interest.

3. Matters of Information:

3.1 Request for consideration of Environment Committee:

The Estates Working Group are considering the current usage and potential future usage of Station Road Playing field and when ready will bring a recommendation back to Council. The Estates Working Group to keep Cllrs updated on these matters.

RECOMMENDED:

To receive the information.

3.2 Garden of Remembrance:

The Clerk and Head Gardener & Cemetery Superintendent have investigated this area of the cemetery and confirm that a footpath could be permitted without encroaching upon burial land (such a path would connect the existing main burial area to the Garden of Remembrance). This matter to now be included into the work of the Butterwick Road Cemetery Working Group when designing groundworks for the new area of the cemetery.

RECOMMENDED:

To receive the information.

3.3 Village Green at front of Impeccable Pig:

As requested, the Clerk has spoken with the Town Council's solicitor regarding the proposals presented by DCC for making bays at this location to try to overcome the parking difficulties in this area. Our solicitor has in turn considered this proposal from the view of the Town Council as landowner. He sees no reasons why the Town Council could not consent to the County Council proposals in its capacity as the registered proprietor of the Village Green. We are aware there are no legal rights to park or drive on the Village Green unless it is with the consent of the Town Council, however, this has clearly been used for many years notwithstanding the fact that a prescriptive right is not capable of arising. The Clerk has confirmed to our solicitor that the parking bays would not be specifically for The Impeccable Pig and as such there is no need for any specific licence, however, the consent of the Town Council will need to be given to the County Council by way of a simple letter. The Clerk has asked our solicitor to prepare such a letter and send to Mr Daniel Morgan at DCC as quickly as possible. On 6th October 2021 Mr Daniel Morgan of DCC confirmed receipt of the Town Council's solicitor's correspondence granting DCC permission to install the proposed works in front of the Impeccable Pig. Mr Morgan will keep the Town Council updated on progress. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RECOMMENDED:

To receive the information.

3.4 Parking Outside Julia and Sofia's:

This area continues to be monitored for signs of damage to the grassed village green

area. Cllrs to monitor this area of the Town.

The next Towns and Villages project meeting, organized by County Cllr Chris Lines took place on 14th March 2022 at which the wider issues of parking and safer travel will be considered further. Notes from this meeting will be shared with Cllrs via County Cllr Lines' next Monthly Report.

RECOMMENDED:

To receive the information.

3.5 Current Planning Applications:

The Clerk submitted to DCC Planners comments agreed in relation to planning applications DM/21/03340/FPA, DM/21/03805/VOC, DM/21/04077/AD, DM/22/00267/AD and DM/22/00292/FPA.

RECOMMENDED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

3.6 Planning Matters:

The Clerk has forwarded to DCC Planning Officers the Town Council's comments in relation to planning application DM/21/03756/FPA.

RECOMMENDED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

4. Public Participation:

The Chairman, Cllr Stephen Winter, closed the meeting for the public to give their views and comments.

Mr Roger Clubley spoke on behalf of the Sedgefield Development Trust and explained the Trust had only found out "very late in the day" about the EDCAT planning application proposing to build an athletics track on land near to NETPark. At that time the Trust submitted to DCC a holding statement but have now had time to submit a more considered view after careful consideration of the application. A copy of this latest view has been shared with the Town Council for information. Mr Clubley reported the Trust have developed a relationship with DCC at NETPark over the last five years through the development of a community woodland, 36% of which would be lost if the track was to be built. Mr Clubley

outlined the wetland areas and biodiverse rich areas at this location and the wildlife which walk across the boundaries to both areas integrating both together. Mr Clubley said this planning application was against the approved development plan and believed that an allocation of land for a track should have been put forward as part of that plan before approval. Mr Clubley said the Trust were concerned that EDCAT have dismissed other sites in the Town and state the land at NETPark is the only one that can be used. Mr Clubley said the Trust were not opposed to an athletics track but do not believe the site now being proposed is the right one. The land being proposed is used by woodland groups and is rich in biodiversity. The area has attracted charitable grant funding from many sources as well as funding from the public all of which has been used to enhance the area further. Mr Clubley said there is an International Treaty to reduce CO2 gasses and this planning application contravenes that by destroying wetlands and peat lands. Mr Clubley said the Trust have gathered reliable records of the numerous species that live in this area, some of which are special of international conservation importance, as well as some further possible species including Great Crested Newts as well as evidence of otters and badgers hunting in this area. Mr Clubley said the Trust believe Winterton Play Area is a much more appropriate location for an athletics track and he had hoped to have been able to take the plans for the track and re-draw them on the Winterton Play Area, however, the underlying features in the Ordnance Survey maps had been removed from the plans within the planning application making this impossible. Mr Clubley believed the size of the 400m track in relation to the existing playing field at Winterton would probably fit but he acknowledged the scales were not absolute. Mr Clubley said EDCAT have not explained why they have not considered the site at Winterton. Mr Clubley said that he was happy to answer any questions which Cllrs might have if that was allowed.

No other members of the public present wished to speak.

The Chairman, Cllr Winter, re-opened the meeting and asked other Cllrs if they had any questions regarding Mr Clubley's comments and if they were happy for Mr Clubley to be given the opportunity to answer those. Cllrs agreed.

Cllr Catherine Hart noted Mr Clubley's comment that 36% of the land for the track would overlap onto the Trust's woodland area and asked if the Development Trust owned the site? Mr Clubley confirmed that DCC are the landowner and the Trust have worked closely with various sections of DCC over the last few years in order to progress the community woodland project and get the involvement of hundreds of volunteers. Mr Clubley said he believed this was an example of DCC Departments not communicating with each other and undermining

the work of each other. Cllr Hart asked if the Trust have a licence with DCC for this land and if such would allow DCC to encroach onto the land or would the licence need to be revoked? Mr Clubley said the Trust had a licence with DCC for the land which was not limited in terms of time as it was a long-term interest. Cllr Hart acknowledged that once a feature is lost then it is lost and that some of the species identified by the Trust as being present on the site were protected.

Cllr Paul Heasman asked what number of trees would need to be planted in order to offset any potential disturbance. Mr Clubley said the amount of carbon absorbed at the location per annum is a lot and whilst he did not have exact figures to hand that he believed the number of trees that would need to be planted would far exceed the capacity of the site. Mr Clubley said that compensation elsewhere in the form of tree planting would not preserve the ecology on the location now being discussed.

Cllr Hart said she would prefer another site to be used. Cllr Heasman said that finding another site would potentially kill the project.

The Clerk sought clarification from Mr Clubley that the Trust's latest correspondence, to be considered later in this agenda, had been formally submitted to DCC as the Local Planning Authority, the Authority with the power to determine the application. Mr Clubley confirmed that it had and official confirmation of receipt had been received from DCC. The Clerk said this meant the Trust's views would now be part of the official planning process which is lead by the Local Planning Authority. The Clerk reminded all of the Town Council's previous decision in relation to this application that it needed to be determined by DCC's Full Planning Committee in order that all parties, both for and against, had the opportunity to present their views before a decision was made. Mr Clubley said the Trust would have welcomed a Public Inquiry into this planning application but that has not been offered by the Local Planning Authority.

A female member of the public, said that the planning application and its issues cannot be addressed without visiting the site in order to appreciate those. She said that she did not understand how this proposal had got to a planning application stage. Cllr David Brown said there could well be a site visit to the location prior to the Planning Committee meeting.

Cllr Winter thanked Mr Clubley for answering Cllrs questions.

5. Reports:

5.1 Northumbria In Bloom Spring Judging Meeting Report by Cllr Mel Carr:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Northumbria In Bloom Spring Judging Meeting Report by Cllr Mel Carr making all aware of his intention, as the Council's Bloom Champion, to attend the Spring Meeting with members of the Northumbria and Sedgefield In Bloom Groups on 9th March 2022. The Clerk reported that since that meeting it has been confirmed that Spring Judging in Sedgefield will take place on 27th April 2022 and Summer Judging on 27th July 2022. The Clerk also reported the latest Joint Sedgefield In Bloom Group and Town Council meeting had taken place on 17th March 2022. This had been a very good meeting and sees the return to such meetings twice a year on a face to face basis. The notes from that meeting will be shared with all at the April 2022 Monthly Meeting.

RECOMMENDED:

To receive this information.

5.2. Replanting Snowdrops Request From Sedgefield In Bloom Verbal Report by Town Clerk:

The Clerk reported that during the recent Joint Sedgefield In Bloom Group and Town Council meeting the Bloom representatives asked if it was possible for them to be given permission to thin out some of the snowdrops at Beacon Lane cemetery and replant elsewhere in the Town. This project would be the same as they undertook last year when they thinned out daffodils in the centre of the Town and replanted across a wider area to ensure maximum enjoyment of those floral displays. This work will be done sympathetically and with minimal disruption to the area. Cllrs agreed to this request.

RECOMMENDED:

i) To receive this information.

ii) The Clerk to inform the Chair of the Sedgefield In Bloom Group of the Council's decision to allow snowdrops at Beacon Lane Cemetery to be thinned and some replanted in other areas of the Town.

6. Correspondence:

6.1 Sedgefield In Bloom Group (minutes of meeting held 23rd February 2022):

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated the Sedgefield in Bloom minutes of the

meeting held on 23rd February 2022 for information.

RECOMMENDED:

To receive this information.

ADDITIONAL ITEM:

As reported at the start of this meeting, powers were delegated to this meeting to consider planning matters.

Objections To The Proposed Athletics Track (email and attached letter from Mr Roger Clubley, Chairman, Sedgefield Development Trust dated 15th March 2022):

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had shared electronically with all Cllrs an email with attached letter from Mr Clubley, Chairman of Sedgefield Development Trust dated 15th March 2022. This was a copy of the letter the Development Trust have submitted to DCC detailing their concerns about the EDCAT planning application for an athletics track. Mr Clubley had referenced this letter during his earlier comments in Public Participation. Cllrs agreed that whilst this did not change the Town Council's earlier decision that the EDCAT planning application needs to be determined by DCC's Full Planning Committee giving all those for and against the application the opportunity to express their views before determination is made, the Town Council should write to this application's case officer at DCC and make them aware that the Development Trust have shared their concerns with the Town Council and we seek an assurance those concerns will be considered by DCC and all necessary wildlife and ecology reports have been prepared as part of this application.

RESOLVED:

The Clerk to write to Mr Henry Jones, DCC Planning Officer in accordance with the Town Council's wishes in relation to the EDCAT planning application.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.37pm.

SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

SPECIAL MEETING

Minutes of the proceedings of the **SPECIAL MEETING** of the **Council**
to Appoint Co-opted Councillors held at 6.30pm in the **Parish Hall**,
Sedgefield, on
Monday 28th March 2022.

Present **Cllr. Mel Carr (Chairman) and**

Cllrs. Allan Blakemore, David Brown, Ann Carr, John Finlayson,
Catherine Hart, Dave Jasper, Jim Seymour, Julie Towler,
Mavis Wayman and Stephen Winter

Officer Dr Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

1. Apologies:

Cllrs Mark Cant and Paul Heasman.

2. Declaration of interest:

Cllr John Finlayson declared an interest in the second candidate who he knew as a member of the Sedgefield Players. Cllr Dave Jasper declared an interest in the second candidate who he knew as a member of Sedgefield Players and the third candidate who he knew through the Lyrics. Cllr Julie Towler declared an interest in the first candidate. Cllr David Brown declared an interest in the second candidate who he knew through a long-standing family friendship and said that he would leave the meeting when that candidate was being considered. No other Cllrs made any declarations of interest.

3. Appointment of 2 x Co-opted Councillors:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all copies of the three application forms received from local residents who wished to be considered for the two casual vacancies on the Town Council. The Clerk confirmed each applicant had been offered the opportunity to attend the meeting for a designated ten minute timeslot in order to introduce themselves to Councillors. Two candidates had accepted this invitation but one was unable to as they were away on holiday and the Clerk had assured that candidate that this would not stop their application from being considered.

Cllr Jim Seymour asked for clarification regarding the number of Cllrs who make the Council quorate. The Clerk explained that to be quorate the Committee/Working Group required one third of its membership, i.e. for Full Council meetings this equates to 5 Cllrs. Cllr Seymour asked if the Council should consider filling one vacancy and then retaining one vacancy to fill in the future. The Clerk replied there was no rationale for adopting this approach as all the candidates to be considered met the criteria to be a Cllr and therefore the Council should undertake all actions to run with a full compliment of Cllrs. Cllr David Brown requested clarification regarding how voting would take place, i.e. by secret ballot, by named vote or by show of hands. The Clerk replied that voting would take place in accordance with the Town Council's Standing Orders, i.e. voting by secret ballot is not permitted and unless a named vote is requested then voting will be by a show of hands.

Each of the two attending in-person candidates was individually welcomed to the meeting by Cllr Mel Carr. Each candidate was given the opportunity to introduce themselves, make any supporting statements in relation to their application and to answer any questions which Cllrs had. Prior to leaving the meeting all candidates were informed as to when they would be informed of the outcome of this recruitment process. Cllr Mel Carr confirmed that candidates would be notified by no later than Friday 1st April 2022.

Cllrs considered in detail each of the three applications and it was agreed that the standard of applicants was very high with each having a skill set that would be enhance the Town Council. A vote by show of hands.

Note: Cllr Brown left the meeting while the second candidate was in attendance and abstained from all voting.

RESOLVED:

- i) Ms Kelly Dickerson and Ms Jenny Haworth be Co-opted as Councillors.**
- ii) The Clerk to inform Ms Dickerson and Ms Haworth of their appointments and to make the necessary arrangements for them to join the Town Council as soon as possible upon completion of all necessary paperwork.**
- iii) The Clerk to inform the unsuccessful candidate and thank them for their interest, provide feedback, to make them aware of how any future Cllr vacancies would be advertised and explain that they would be welcome to apply to the Town Council again.**

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.09pm.