



## SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the proceedings of the **SPECIAL MEETING** of  
the **Council** held at **7 p.m.** in the **Council Offices**,  
Sedgefield, on **Monday 10<sup>th</sup> August 2015.**



- Present**                    **Cllr. Mel Carr (Chairman)**  
**Cllr. Gloria Wills (Vice-Chairman) and**  
Cllrs. Allan Blakemore, Mart Cant, Lynne Dentith, Rebecca Hagan, Tim Jeanes,  
Alf Walton and Dudley Waters
- Officer**                    Dr Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

**1. Apologies**

Cllrs. David Brown, Vanessa Carmichael, Chris Lines and Ian Sutherland

**2. Declaration of interest**

Cllr Mark Cant declared an interest in item 5 relating to the consideration of the Sedgefield Racecourse request to vary their licence.

**3. Public Participation**

The Chairman, Cllr. Mel Carr, closed the meeting for the public to give views and comments.

Mrs Julia Bowles stated that after last year's August Travellers Horse Fair Durham Constabulary had said they would advise where this annual event was to be held in 2015. Mrs Bowles questioned if either DCC or Durham Constabulary had informed the Town Council of this year's location.

The meeting was then re-opened.

The Clerk responded that the Town Council have not been made aware of the location of this year's Fair, however, a request for this information will be submitted to both Durham Constabulary and DCC. Cllr Alf Walton commented that a large number of travellers had recently been staying in the Seaham area, however, Cllr Dudley Waters reported these travellers have now moved following their attendance at a religious event in the area.

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#### 4. Formal Adoption of The Sedgefield Plan

Cllr Mel Carr reported that prior to the meeting copies of The Sedgefield Plan Submission Draft and an accompanying report by himself and the Clerk had been circulated to all. The purpose of this agenda item was to consider the formal adoption of the Plan so that it could progress through to the next phase of its development, i.e. formal submission to DCC. Cllr Carr requested the views of Cllrs.

Cllr Gloria Wills pointed out that “travellers” should be spelt with two ls as per comments she had previously made. Additionally, Cllr Wills asked why policies were not all displayed together in Part One of the Plan as this would make the Plan easier for readers to use. Cllr Wills acknowledged that the Policies have been re-worked and that they now read much better, however, in a couple of instances the terms “as required” and “if required” are used within the Policies. Cllr Wills stated Policy 70 as an example. She felt in such instances “are required” should be used so as to make explicit statements and remove any ambiguity. Cllr Wills recommended this aspect be reconsidered. With the exception of these points Cllr Wills felt the Plan contained some very good work within it.

Cllr Allan Blakemore, as Chair of the Steering Group, responded by stating the Plan being considered by the Town Council is now a finished document. Cllr Mel Carr asked if the current Plan was submitted could these issues relating to wording be adjusted later in the process. Cllr Gloria Wills expressed the view the Town Council should put this working right now and then submit. Cllr Mel Carr asked Cllr Allan Blakemore if this was possible. Cllr Blakemore responded that he would not take this Plan back to the Steering Group as the Group believe this is now a finished document ready to be submitted to DCC, however, if another Councillor wanted to take this back to the Steering Group they could do so but this would not be well received by the Group. Cllr Wills stated she felt this was a threat, however, Cllr Blakemore refuted this and stated the Steering Group have undertaken considerable work in order to now reach the point at which they feel the Plan is a finished document and he re-iterated the Group’s belief that the Plan must now move forward in order to protect the Town.

Cllr Lynne Dentith commented that all Councillors have had time to consider the Plan and its contents and suggested that the Council move to a vote on formal adoption.

Cllr Mark Cant suggested that one final proof reading of the Plan would be prudent. Cllr Gloria Wills stated she was happy for the Plan to move forward to formal submission but pointed out that the wording issues she had mentioned earlier in the meeting could well be picked up by DCC or

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an inspector. Cllr Alf Walton commented that sometimes just a single word can lead to a misinterpretation. Cllr Allan Blakemore sought to reassure Cllrs by giving an example of the Theft Act which does not give within it a clear definition of dishonest but instead allows for the decision to be made by a jury based upon the circumstances in which the Act is being applied. Cllr Mark Cant commented that such situations can also lead to significant legal costs as parties try to argue the case. Cllr Rebecca Hagan confirmed that policies are not always clear and do require the ability to be open to interpretation in order that they can be used in different ways depending upon the circumstances to which they are being applied. Cllr Mark Cant suggested Cllr Gloria Wills identify the words of concern and request the Clerk to make the amendments. Cllr Allan Blakemore reiterated again that the Steering Group have produced the Plan and are confident that it should now proceed to the next stage. He also commented that the Plan has not changed and these Policies had previously been approved by the Town Council, i.e. there is nothing in the Plan which has not already been passed by the Town Council. Cllr Gloria Wills commented that she had stated her concerns throughout the plan writing process and had on several occasions offered to help. Cllr Allan Blakemore reminded all Cllrs that the Town Council works on a democratic basis and the Town Council had already made the resolution to adopt the Plan's contents previously based upon a vote.

Cllr Dudley Waters suggested that the meeting be suspended for a short time in order to allow Cllr Allan Blakemore to speak with Mr Mort Spalding (Vice Chair of the Steering Group) who was present as a member of the public. This was agreed by all. Meeting suspended at 7.14pm.

Cllr Mel Carr re-opened the meeting at 7.20pm.

Cllr Allan Blakemore reported that the Policies are on the Evidence CD to reflect the way in which the document reads. The wording contained within the Policies is taken from planning documentation. Experience from elsewhere in the country has shown that when Neighbourhood Plans have been considered by an independent inspector and they have identified issues with wording the inspector has then stated what the correct wording should be.

Cllr Alf Walton commented that whilst the statements in the Plan could be correct he was concerned regarding the potential for loop holes being created in terms of actual interpretation of meaning.

Cllrs Lynne Dentith and Dudley Waters expressed their support for the Plan and the work of the Steering Group.

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Cllr Tim Jeanes requested clarification from Cllr Gloria Wills as to her position with regards the Plan. Cllr Wills replied that she was happy for the Town Council to adopt the Plan so long as her concerns regarding wording were clearly recorded in the minutes. Cllr Alf Walton stated that he also had the same concerns and wished these to be clearly recorded.

**RESOLVED:**

- i) The Town Council formally adopted The Sedgefield Plan: Submission Draft.**
- ii) The Chair and Town Clerk to sign the letter to Mr Stuart Timmiss (copy previously circulated to all Cllrs as part of the Report for this item) on behalf of the Council.**
- iii) The Clerk to formally submit to DCC The Sedgefield Plan: Submission Draft on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> August 2015.**

**5. Consideration of Sedgefield Racecourse Variation to Licence**

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all additional information which had been supplied by DCC regarding the proposed variation. Following this Cllr Gloria Wills had requested a copy of the actual Licensing Application in order to fully understand the variation being sought. The Clerk had liaised with Ms Karen Robson of DCC Licensing and had been informed that at this moment in time, and until the consultation process closes and a public report is written, the actual application form cannot be freely shared. However, it was possible to make an appointment to go and view the application at Annand House, Meadowfield. When produced the public report will contain all the information relating to this application. Due to legislation such applications will always be determined by a Licensing Committee and never by Delegated Officer. In a similar vein to Planning Committees anyone who has already lodged any comment regarding a licensing matter will be invited to attend and speak at a Licensing Committee but such a person must be registered prior to attending the meeting. The Clerk confirmed that earlier that day notification had been received that the Licensing Committee for this application will meet at 10am on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015 in the DCC Council Chamber at Green Lane, Spennymoor. The Clerk informed Cllrs that a number of decisions are now needed, i.e. does the Town Council will to pursue its earlier objections in-light of the additional information, does the Town Council wish to participate in the Licensing Committee hearing and if so we will attend.

Cllr Mel Carr opened the meeting for Cllrs comments.

Cllr Gloria Wills reminded Cllrs that following a Licensing Committee meeting at Chester le Street in 2011 the current conditions for the Racecourse were put in place because of noise nuisance at that time. Since 2011 the Racecourse licence has allowed them to have a limited number of internal events. The proposed variation seeks to increase the entertainments licence area as well

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move to operating under the outdoor concerts guide rather than the current pubs and clubs guide. Cllr Wills stated she was very concerned that the entertainment area boundary is being increased whilst the guidance appears to be less.

Cllr Allan Blakemore commented that a bar is for the purchase and consumption of alcohol. The variation in licence is looking to extend the bar area within the boundary of the Racecourse and this is the key difference between the current and proposed licence. Residents and the Town Council have previously made objections to the Racecourse. Cllr Blakemore felt the basis for the Town Council's objections to this proposed variation in licence should remain as noise disruption to the village, the traffic impacts upon entry and exiting the site (including those through the Town in the early hours of the morning as well as road safety issues) and the increase in boundary for the bar area. Cllr Blakemore urged the Town Council to continue its objections. Cllr Rebecca Hagan supported Cllr Blakemore and voiced her road safety concerns not only for drivers but also for pedestrians entering and exiting the site as well as the visual impact upon drivers approaching the site from the large lights at the Racecourse. Cllr Hagan also reminded Cllrs of previous problems with sound-proofing of events being held on the site and the ensuing noise nuisance caused to residents. Following the reading of the latest information supplied by DCC Cllr Gloria Wills questioned what noise monitoring is actually already being undertaken in relation to the Racecourse.

Cllr Allan Blakemore commented that the proposed variation in licence would give the Racecourse the potential to hold lots of outside events. Cllr Tim Jeanes commented that similar events at Hardwick Hall are limited in number, however, other Cllrs disputed this due to recent changes in the Licensing Act. Cllr Gloria Wills commented that whilst no-one wanted to see the Racecourse close it was also equally essential to ensure that residents can live in harmony with the Racecourse.

Cllr Mel Carr asked Cllrs if there were any further comments to be made before the Council considered whether it wanted to proceed with the objections already submitted to DCC, to attend the Licensing Committee and if so who would represent the Council. Due to his earlier declaration of interest Cllr Mark Cant left the meeting at this point. Cllr Dudley Waters commented that noise could be heard in the middle of the Meadows Estate during the Racecourse's recent Game Fair. Councillors agreed that the Town Council should pursue their objections to this licence variation and that Cllrs Gloria Wills and Mel Carr should represent the Town Council at DCC's Licensing Committee meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015.

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**RESOLVED:**

- i) The Town Council wishes to pursue its objections to this licence variation.**
- ii) The Town Council wishes to attend the Licensing Committee hearing on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015 with Cllrs Gloria Wills and Mel Carr representing the Town Council.**
- iii) The Clerk to inform DCC Licensing of the above resolutions.**

Cllr Mark Cant returned to the meeting.

**6. Cheques for Approval after 13<sup>th</sup> July 2015**

Details of cheques for approval from 14<sup>th</sup> July 2015 – 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2015 had been circulate to all Cllrs prior to the meeting along with the monthly accounts. The Clerk circulated details of cheques for approval from 4<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> August 2015. Cllr Alf Walton voiced his concerns regarding the number of invoices from CDB Productions in relation to the Parish Hall lighting and sound systems. Cllr Mel Carr and the Clerk informed Cllr Walton that this matter has already been noted and is being progressed through the Estates Working Group, indeed one invoice as detailed on the information circulated was on hold pending further investigation.

**RESOLVED:**

- i) The monthly accounts as had been circulated were approved.**
- ii) All cheques were approved for payment and duly signed by Cllrs Carr and Wills plus the Clerk at the close of the meeting.**

**7. Consideration of 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):

**1. DM/15/01122/FPA – Change of use of existing building to form 1 no dwelling, Spring Lane, Sedgefield:**

Cllrs requested that this planning application be called in for determination by Planning Committee rather than Delegated Officer. Cllrs had the following objections to this application:

- This is building outside the perimeter of Sedgefield;
- There are a lack of services for this site;
- There is a lack of drainage for this site;
- Highways concerns
- All other objections previously stated when an earlier planning application was considered in February 2015.

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2. **DM/15/01917/FPA – Conversion of garage to habitable space including insertion of bay window, 25 St Bede Avenue, Sedgefield:**  
Cllrs did not have any objections to this application.
  3. **DM/15/02030/TCA – Removal of overhanging branches and crown reduction (30% on east side) of 2 no sycamore trees, Ceddesfeld Hall, Sedgefield:**  
Cllrs did not have any objections to this application, however, Cllr Alf Walton believed the work should be required on the west side. The Clerk will investigate this matter.
  4. **DM/15/02050/FPA – Installation of UPVC French doors, landing, steps and railings to the rear, 3 South View, Sedgefield:**  
Cllrs did not have any objections to this application.
  5. **DM/15/02077/FPA – Erection of 3 no detached dwellings, East Well Farm, East End, Sedgefield:**  
Cllrs did not have any objections to this application.
  6. **DM/15/02084/HPN – Prior notification for the erection of a rear conservatory measuring 6 metres in length, 2.7 metres in height to the eaves and 3.6 metres in overall height, 4 Farfield Manor, Sedgefield:**  
Cllrs did not have any objections to this application.
  7. **DM/15/02202/FPA – Erection of two storey side and rear extension, 17 The Lane, Sedgefield:**  
Cllrs did not have any objections to this application.
  8. **DM/15/02216/FPA – Erection of detached buildings for stables and storage and siting of caravan for storage, Harap Road, Fishburn:**  
This application was outside the Town Council's area.
  9. **DM/15/02223/TPO – Crown reduction (30%) and crown lift to 4-5m of 1 no beech tree protected by TPO SCB-20-2004, 11 North Park Road, Sedgefield:**  
Cllrs did not have any objections to this application.

**RESOLVED:**

- i) **The comments on planning applications 1-9 above to be submitted to DCC**

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**Planners.**

- ii) The Clerk request County Councillor John Robinson calls in planning application 1 above relating to Spring Lane.**

**DM/15/01281/FPA – Sedgefield Community College:**

The Clerk reminded Cllrs that on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2015 the Town Council had written to DCC to voice their concerns that some residents near to the Community College had expressed concerns regarding the current levels of noise from the existing bio-mass boiler at the College. The Town Council sought clarification as to whether the proposed additional classroom block would result in more noise and what arrangements would be put in place to reduce such noise levels. The Town Council had also asked what the implications are from this additional build upon the existing infrastructure and sewerage. The Clerk reported that Mr Chris Shields of DCC Planning had emailed on 7<sup>th</sup> August 2015 to report the applicant has carried out a noise assessment which concluded that in the worst case scenario (where the proposed classroom block absorbed no noise at all) there would be up to 1dB increase in noise levels at the noise sensitive properties to the South. However, the Council's Environmental Health Officers have commented that noise level increase would be less than this and in any case it is unlikely that a 1dB increase would be perceptible. Mr Shields confirmed the capacity of the school would not be affected by the proposal as the school has been overcrowded since opening and the proposed classroom block would free up space within the main school building to be used as informal teaching space, as was originally intended. Cllrs noted this information. Cllr Allan Blakemore requested the Clerk seek confirmation that the proposed CHP plant will not be allowed to operate during the night as this stipulation is currently in place for the existing bio-mass boiler in order to reduce noise impact for nearby residents.

**RESOLVED:**

**The Clerk to request further information from Mr Chris Shields as per Cllr Blakemore's request.**

The Chair thanked everyone and closed the meeting at 8.15pm.