

SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT

Minutes of the proceedings of the **JANUARY ENVIRONMENT** of the **Council** held following the Community Development and Engagement committee in the **Council Offices**, Advice & Information Centre, Sedgefield, on **Monday 19th January 2015**.

Present **Cllr. Mel Carr (Chairman) and**
Cllrs. Allan Blakemore, David Brown, Lynne Dentith, Tim Jeanes, Ian Sutherland, Alf Walton and Dudley Waters

Officer Dr. Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

1. Apologies

Cllrs Mark Cant, Vanessa Carmichael, Chris Lines, John Robinson, Maxine Robinson and Gloria Wills

2. Declaration of interest

Cllr Mel Carr declared an interest in relation to item 9 as a share holder in one of the company's who had submitted a tender.

3. Matters of Information

3.1. Pizza Castle:

DCC own this land. The Clerk has written to DCC requesting this area be kept tidy and highlighted Environmental Health concerns. No response has yet been received from DCC. The Clerk will now chase this matter and keep Cllrs informed.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.2. Cemetery Recycling Bays:

Following a site visit by the Estates Working Group and Gardening Supervisor it has been agreed to delay the repairing of the vandalised bays until the weather improves. Consideration will now also be given to slightly adjusting the bays so that they are sited nearer to the new fence. The Clerk to keep Cllrs informed.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.3. Cemetery Hedge:

This work has now been completed. Cllr Mel Carr reported that to-date four nearby residents have praised this work and the positive impact the removal of this hedge has had upon the light into their properties.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.4. Eden Drive: Drainage Problems:

The Clerk has written to Mr and Mrs Steward to ascertain if the properties identified have actually experienced interior flooding in order that this query can be categorised appropriately for investigation. As yet no response has been received from Mr and Mrs Steward.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter until further information is supplied by Mr and Mrs Steward.

3.5. Electricity Supplies – Village Green and Lychgate:

The Clerk reported that following a recent Estates Working Group meeting Council Officers will prepare a detailed Options Report listing all the possible options for having an electrical supply at the Lychgate as well as to the new living Christmas Tree for consideration at a future Estates Working Group meeting. At this point a proposal will be taken to a future P&R Committee meeting.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.6. Northumbrian Water / North End Grass Verge:

There has been no change to that reported previously, i.e. a summary of the history has been sent to County Cllr John Robinson for further investigation with DCC. Mr Stephen Young continues to monitor this area on a weekly basis. Cllr Mel Carr reported that the similar holes near Number 2 Church View have recently been filled in by NWL.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and the Open Spaces Working Group to consider Mr Young's monitoring findings plus seek clarification from NWL regarding the area outside Number 2 Church View.

3.7. Sedgefield Cemetery:

No response has yet been received to the letter of enquiry submitted to Mr Gerard Darby regarding the gifting or asset transfer of land/footpath running between the cemetery and allotments plus the actual Butterwick Allotments and triangular piece of land nearby. The Estates Working Group to consider Mr Darby's response when received and to report back to a future Environment Committee meeting.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.8. Eden Drive Play Area – Deep Water Sign:

An approach has been made to DCC to obtain a quote for installing the recently purchased Deep Water Sign near to the pond in Ceddesfeld grounds. It is hoped that DCC would install this without charge instead of making a financial donation towards the cost of the sign. DCC are not in a position to consider this request until current work on the nearby Duck Pond is completed.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.9. Request for Memorial Bench:

To be considered as part of item 3.13.

3.10. Crown Lifting at Mitford Court:

The Clerk reported that DCC have now given their approval for crown lifting work to trees near to Mitford Court. The Clerk has spoken to the contractor undertaking this work and once a timescale is known for this work letters will be sent to nearby residents. The Clerk to keep Cllrs informed regarding this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.11. Footpaths From Church Turning Circle:

Cllr Mel Carr and Mrs Angela Simpson have worked on preparing a funding bid, however, they found this would have required the delay of the Church Turning Circle refurbishment until April 2015 at the earliest by which time the current contractor and quote would not be available. It is felt that there is no alternative to the current Yorkshire Stone flags, however, regular maintenance including re-pointing should help the situation.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.12. Trees outside 19 North End:

Work is on-going to prepare an appropriate specification in relation to the large Sycamore outside the property plus the nearby Lime and London Plane from the garage up to number 19 North End in order that quotations can be sought along with approval from DCC. The Clerk to keep Cllrs informed regarding this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.13. Seating on Wykes Close:

The Clerk reported that a site meeting at Wykes Close has now taken place between Cllr Mel Carr, Mr Stephen Young, Mr Howard Smith and Mr Paul Todd of Livin as well as herself in order to consider all recent correspondence in relation to the seating in this area. The seating was installed as the result of an extensive community consultation between Livin and the Town Council. The Clerk will draft a letter to Mr and Mrs Barron detailing the support they can access at Livin as well as the Police in relation to anti-social behaviour problems. The current concrete framed wooden bench at the top of this area requires extensive refurbishment (along with the nearby concrete bin). Bishop Auckland College have already approached Sedgfield In Bloom with a potential design for a new bench plus an alternative bin. Before the new bench is installed the existing concrete base will be removed and replaced with red shale as per the nearby path. The Clerk will write to Mr Quinn to arrange a site visit to see if he would be interested in this location for his daughter's memorial bench. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.14. Noise Complaints re: Parish Hall:

Health checks relating to heating, plumbing, electrical supplies, lighting, sound and general building status have been requested in order to determine what work should/can be done at the Parish Hall. The deadline for such reports is 31st January 2015. Cllr Tim Jeanes reported that he has had discussions with the original sound-proofing experts used on the Hall. The Estates Working Group will meet to consider health check findings in early February 2015 and Cllr Tim Jeanes will be invited to this meeting.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.15. Tenders – Coppicing of Willows, Station Road:

This work has now been completed. During the course of this work the contractor also removed 2 dead sycamore trees at no extra charge to the Council. In addition, the contractor's original intention had been to remove the willows from site and chip,

however, instead the willows were chipped on-site and there will be a reduction in his final invoice accordingly. Cllr Alf Walton reported that several nearby residents had praised this work.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and close this matter.

3.16. Letter from Mrs Dawson:

The Clerk has written to Mrs Dawson thanking her for her letter and reassuring her the Town Council is doing all it can to maintain the integrity of the Town.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and close this matter.

3.17. Letters from Mrs Williams and Mrs Paling:

The Clerk has written to both Mrs Williams and Mrs Paling thanking them for their letters and informing them that their concerns will be discussed under agenda item 6.

3.18. Letter from Sedgefield In Bloom:

The Clerk has written to Mrs Norma Neal acknowledging receipt of her letter and informing her that a site meeting will be taking place with Livin to discuss this matter. Now the meeting has taken place, and Mr Howard Smith was present, Mrs Neal will be notified of the outcome.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.19. Planning: Spring Lane: Mobile Homes and Caravans Update:

A planning application has now been received and will be considered later at this meeting.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

4. Public Participation

The Chairman, Cllr Mel Carr closed the meeting for the public to give their views and comments. No members of the public were present. The meeting was then re-opened.

Emergency Additional Item: Consideration of Planning Applications:

The Clerk reminded Cllrs that at the end of the January 2015 Monthly Meeting details of planning applications had been circulated for discussion this Environment Committee meeting in order that appropriate responses could be submitted to DCC Planners within the stipulated consultation timescales.

Spring Lane: DM/14/03813/FPA:

The Clerk circulated to all Cllrs comments which had been given by Cllrs Wills and Cant regarding this application. In addition, the Clerk also circulated to all copies of correspondence received from Mr Clifford Swinbank and Mr Howard Allenson regarding this site. Cllrs discussed this application and reiterated their long-standing concerns regarding this site and DCC's apparent lack of action when being informed by the Town Council of its concerns. Cllrs expressed discontent that this situation has now resulted in a planning application being submitted rather than DCC undertaking enforcement action. It was agreed by all Cllrs that there are 2 issues to be dealt with. Firstly, the need to submit to DCC a formal complaint regarding the disregard for the Town Council's concerns over many years in relation to this site and secondly the need to comment on the planning application now submitted. All Cllrs expressed objection to this application based upon a number material planning considerations and requested the application be called in.

RESOLVED:

- i) The Clerk to prepare a formal letter of complaint to DCC regarding the disregard for the Town Council's concerns regarding this site over several years and apparent lack of action by DCC in response to this.**
- ii) The Clerk to contact Mr Swinbank and Mr Allenson to request they submit their concerns regarding this planning application direct to DCC Planners but to assure them their comments have been discussed by the Town Council and will form part of the Town Council's own response to DCC Planners.**
- iii) The Clerk to prepare a draft letter of objection to this planning application and to circulate electronically to all Cllrs for their comment prior to submission to DCC.**
- iv) The Clerk to prepare leaflets/advisory letter informing residents along Spring Lane of this planning application (to be delivered by Cllrs Dentith and Waters).**

Site of Former Thurlow Grange: DM/14/03870/FPA:

Cllrs did not have any objections to this application.

RESOLVED:

These comments to be forwarded to DCC Planners.

(Cllr Lynne Dentith left the meeting at this point).

5. Reports

5.1 DCC Eden Drive Play Area Inspection Report (December 2014)

Prior to the meeting a copy of DCC's Eden Drive Play Area Inspection Report for December 2014 had been circulated to all Cllrs.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

5.2 Church Turning Circle Refurbishment Update – Verbal Report by Cllr Mel Carr

Cllr Mel Carr reported that up until the end of the week commencing 12th January 2015 work had been progressing on schedule at the Church Turning Circle. Unfortunately work has currently had to stop because of the change in weather, however, looking at the longer-term weather forecast a return to milder weather is predicted which will see work resume.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

5.3 Headstone Safety Testing Report by Clerk and Gardening Supervisor

Prior to the meeting a Headstone Safety Testing Report by the Clerk and Gardening Supervisor had been circulated to all.

RESOLVED:

To approve the recommendations contained in this report.

6. Consideration of letters from Mrs Williams and Mrs Paling regarding parking outside The Hope Inn and Betting Shop:

Cllr Mel Carr reminded Cllrs that letters from Mrs Williams and Mrs Paling had been circulated for consideration at the last Environment Committee meeting. These letters expressed concerns regarding the parking between the Hope Inn and the Betting Shop which often sees the access through road to the Doctors and Town Council Offices being blocked. Cllr Carr showed Cllrs a map which detailed some of the land ownership in this area, however, it was by no means complete. Cllrs Dudley Waters and Ian Sutherland commented that a significant amount of work identifying ownership in these areas had been done some 7-8 years previously by a former employee of Sedgefield Borough Council.

RESOLVED:

- i) To obtain from comparable quotes to install two 'Keep Clear' signs similar to those at the entrance to the Parish Hall Car Park area.**
- ii) To investigate the cost of extending the existing double yellow lines further to deter parking.**
- iii) To continue to investigate the ownership of the right of way through this area.**
- iv) The Clerk to try to locate formerly produced documentation regarding land ownership in this area.**

7. Correspondence

7.1. Letter from Ms Sue Dobson (dated 3rd December 2014)

The Clerk circulated to all copies of a letter from Ms Sue Dobson of 31 Front Street, Sedgefield. Ms Dobson raised two issues. The first, to request the 'Keep Clear' signs on the land in front of the Parish Hall is repainted. Cllrs commented that this has been done at the side, however, this has never been painted on land at the front of the Parish Hall as this is classified as village green. Secondly, to request that the tree on the grass verge between numbers 31 and 33 Front Street has grown so tall that one branch is over property number 31 and requires cutting.

RESOLVED:

- i) The Clerk to seek specialist advice regarding the tree outside numbers 31 and 33 Front Street.**
- ii) The Clerk to write to Ms Dobson informing her that the 'Keep Clear' sign has been repainted at the entrance to the car park but we do not believe it has ever been done at the front of the Parish Hall, however, further investigation will be undertaken. This letter will also advise Ms Dobson that advice is being sought regarding the tree.**

7.2. Sedgefield In Bloom – Plaque Request:

Mrs Norma Neal, on behalf of Sedgefield in Bloom, had asked the Town Council if it was possible for another plaque to be placed on the front of the Parish Council. This plaque would be of exactly the same size and style as that of last year and would state Sedgefield In Bloom, Britain in Bloom Gold, plus the years of winning the award. The Bloom would purchase this sign and pay for it to be installed.

RESOLVED

The Bloom Group be given permission to place a plaque on the front of the Parish Hall. The Clerk to inform Mrs Norma Neal.

8. Financial Position: Environment committee

RESOLVED:

To approve the Environment Committee Financial Position.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.55p.m.

