

SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT

Minutes of the proceedings of the **MAY ENVIRONMENT** of the **Council** held at **7 pm** in the **Council Offices**, Advice & Information Centre, Sedgefield, on **Monday 18th May 2015**.

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

Officer Dr Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

1. Apologies

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

2. Declaration of interest

None.

Cllr Alf Walton, Chairman, informed Cllrs that it had been agreed at the Monthly Meeting held on 11th May 2015 to seek clarification regarding the exact nature of the planning application recently submitted in relation to The Manor House (DM/15/00636/FPA – Mixed use of the building as offices (Class B1) and part ground floor as Class D2 (Assembly and Leisure), Manor House, Sedgefield). Additional information had been obtained.

RESOLVED:

This additional item would be included after item 5 of this agenda.

3. Matters of Information

3.1 Pizza Castle:

No response has yet been received to the letter sent from the Town Council to Ms Joanne Waller of DCC regarding environmental health concerns in relation to this property as well as other environmental concerns. The Clerk to keep Cllrs informed of progress in this matter and to continue requesting a response.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.2 Cemetery Recycling Bays:

It is hoped the repairs to the vandalized bays will be completed soon. Cllr Alf Walton reported that quotations had been sought for emptying the bays, however, those submitted to date do not relate to the same specification and as such clarification has been sought. As a result of this agenda item 7.1 will need to be deferred. Cllr Dudley Waters proposed that as the bays are already nearly full rather than this matter being brought back to a future Environment Committee meeting the issue be progressed through the Clerk, Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee. This was agreed.

The Chair and Gardening Supervisor are now in discussions to consider options for signage at the recycling bays.

RESOLVED:

- i) To receive this information.**
- ii) The Clerk, Chair and Vice Chair to progress the emptying of the recycling bays.**

3.3 North End Grass Verge:

Mr Stephen Young is continuing to monitor this area, however, his workload is starting to increase now due to the growing season. Mr Young and the Clerk had met with Mr Stuart Best (DCC Highways Inspector) on 7th May 2015. Whilst it is suspected the cause is rats from the NWL sewer Mr Best suggested that as NWL are denying this both DCC and the Town Council request BT lift the concrete lid of their nearby cabling store. Mr Best has submitted such a request to BT and will keep the Town Council informed. Cllr Alf Walton suggested that in the meantime he pack the current holes with chicken wire. This was agreed. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.4 Sedgefield Cemetery:

DCC are continuing to process the Town Council's request regarding the gifting or

asset transfer from DCC to the Town Council of land/footpath running between the cemetery and the allotments which was the former entrance to the College. The letter also requested the same in relation to Butterwick Allotments and the triangular piece of land between the allotments and Butterwick Lane. The Estates Working Group to consider DCC's response when received and to report back to a future Environment Committee meeting.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.5 Noise Complaints re: Parish Hall:

An options report from FloorScan will be considered by the Estates Working Group. Cllr Dudley Waters asked if the Council had received any further noise complaints. The Clerk confirmed that no other complaints had been received.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.6 Parking Outside Hope Inn and Betting Shop:

Investigations are on-going in this matter. Through the Open Spaces Working Group the Clerk has written to a DCC Officer with specialism in village green matters in order to investigate this issue. The Clerk to keep Cllrs informed.

Several Cllrs expressed concern at the length of time being taking in order to get a response from DCC. Cllr Dudley Waters stated that Mr Steve Ragg of CDALC had previously quoted the name of a DCC Officer who can be contacted in such instances who is willing to help speed up lines of communication. The Clerk said she would investigate this with Mr Ragg.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.7 Delivering Differently In Neighbourhoods:

No further information has yet been received from DCC regarding this potential funding opportunity. The Clerk to keep Cllrs informed.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.8 Stump Grinding:

AW Treecare have been informed their quote has been successful and work is now to be scheduled. The Clerk to inform Cllrs when the work has been undertaken.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.9 Cutting back Lime Tree outside 31/33 Front Street:

AW Treecare have been informed their quote has been successful, DCC have given their permission and work is now to be scheduled. Cllr Alf Walton reported that AW Treecare hope to complete this work early one morning before traffic starts to move but to keep noise to a minimum by using electric chainsaws.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.10 Public Participation:

The Clerk confirmed that work is underway to determine the ownership of lanes/paths opposite the Dunn Cow. Cllr David Brown stated that this area will come under joint ownership between DCC (including some elements which belonged to the former Sedgfield Borough Council) and the Town Council. It was important to establish the exact boundaries as if the Town Council are requesting others to keep their areas of the Town in good condition the Council must also abide by this. The Clerk to inform Cllrs of the findings from ownership investigations.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.11 Winter Bedding Request:

Mr Howard Smith has been informed the Bloom can have the Council's previous winter bedding stocks.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.12 Rat Boxes / SCA

The Clerk reported that this service was previously purchased from DCC. In the first instance a request had been made to DCC to determine if the existing boxes at Ceddesfeld were still valid and if so how much the cost of their vermin control service would be. The Clerk to inform Cllrs when costings have been received. Cllr Alf Walton expressed concerns about the type of rat boxes that will be used, how they are to be secured and how to stop access for the public (especially young children). The Clerk confirmed these issues would be considered when information was received.

Cllrs suggested that alternative costings be sought from other providers.

RESOLVED:

- i) To receive this information.**
- ii) The Clerk to obtain alternative costings.**

3.13 4 Hasledon Grove / Overhanging Tree

The Clerk has written to Mr Klime informing him the Council are happy for him to cut branches overhanging his garden.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.14 Spring Lane:

An official Stage 2 complaint has been submitted to DCC and this matter will now revert back to the Monthly meeting agenda for future consideration. Cllr David Brown reported that there is no change on the site.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.15 Planning Application – West of 1A The Lane, Sedgefield:

A further letter of objection has been submitted to DCC in relation to this planning application.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.16 8 Beacon Lane, Sedgefield:

AWTreecare have been informed they have the successful tender. DCC permission is now being sought. Mr Wears has been given a progress update. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

Cllr Ian Sutherland stated that he had heard Mr Rodger Lowe (Tree Officer) had left the employment of DCC. The Clerk had not received any notification of this, however, she will investigate and determine the name of the new Officer.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.17 4 South View, Sedgefield:

The Clerk reported that DCC permission is being sought for this work. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

Cllr Alf Walton reported that a resident from Winterton had complained to him regarding a large monkey puzzle tree which had been cut down in this area. Cllr Walton had investigated and confirmed this tree had been felled as it was in a decayed state and correct procedures had been followed.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

4. Public Participation

The Chairman closed the meeting whilst the public gave their views and comments.

Mr Howard Smith reported that Mr Rodger Lowe had left DCC's employment. Mr Smith praised all the good work currently being undertaken at the allotments. The Northumbria In Bloom have now included allotments in their awards. The Bloom Group would like the NIB

judges to visit the Butterwick Allotments but there is concern regarding the state of the entrance path to this area. It was agreed that Mr Smith would go and visit the site and then liaise directly with Cllr Walton. Mr Smith raised concerns regarding the change of door at the Indian takeaway and the new window and illuminated sign at Youngs shop on the corner of Cross Street both of which are in the Town's Conservation Area. Finally, Mr Smith voiced his objections to the proposals by DCC to restrict parking in the Crispin Court/Rectory Row area of the Town. Mr Smith is aware that to date over 20 letters of objections have been submitted to DCC by businesses and residents. Mr Smith was extremely concerned that DCC have reported that they have contacted all residents at Crispin Court regarding this matter but received no objections from any. Mr Smith was not surprised at this lack of objection as a number of flats are vacant and many are lived in by residents without vehicles. Mr Smith reminded Cllrs that several years ago residents living at Malton Terrace had to park their vehicles part on the pavement and this had resulted in the Police visiting the area and requesting that owners moved their vehicles and parked them outside Crispin Court in order to remove obstructions from the road. Mr Smith had, under the Freedom of Information Act, written to Durham Constabulary requesting they provide details of the number of road traffic accidents recorded over the past 20 years at the junction of Front Street and Rectory Row as well as the number of tickets issued for vehicles that are deemed to have been parked dangerously in the same location. As a result a response had been received from Durham Constabulary which stated they were only able to search their Collision Records system since 2004 and advised that analyzing system found there had been 2 accidents recorded at Front Street/Rectory Row: one in 2004 and one in 2006. With regards to tickets issued Durham Constabulary could only retrieve information from 2007 that at Front Street, Sedgefield there had been 3 tickets issued for Vehicle Stop on a Bus Clearway. In contrast at Rectory Row, Sedgefield there had been 2 tickets issued for Unnecessary Obstruction, 1 ticket for Limited Waiting and 1 ticket for No Waiting. Mr Smith stated that there was strong public opposition to this proposal from DCC and disbelief that double yellow lines were even being contemplated within the Conservation Area. Finally Mr Smith expressed his annoyance that DCC could find funding to go ahead with this proposal but yet not find any funding to put towards the resolution of parking and traffic difficulties identified on numerous occasions in the Salters Lane area of the Town.

The meeting was then re-opened. Cllr Alf Walton thanked Mr Smith for his comments and informed him that DCC's proposals were to be discussed under agenda item 6.1.

5. Reports

5.1 Cemetery Update Report by Town Clerk and Gardening Supervisor

The Clerk circulated to all a Cemetery Update Report prepared by herself and the Gardening Supervisor. This Report related to the Butterwick Road Cemetery and gave Cllrs the latest position with regards to unsafe headstones, the blocked drain and the recently installed hedging. With regards to the new hedging Cllr Alf Walton reported that he and the Gardening Supervisor had that day installed new canes in order to ensure that no-one was able to get through the hedging as a short-cut to the recycling bays.

RESOLVED:

- i) To receive the information contained in this report.**
- ii) An update article to be produced for the next Sedgefield Extra informing the public that unsafe headstones have been laid flat and that such headstones should not be propped back up but instead be professionally repaired.**

5.2 Benches and Litter Bins on the Village Green Update Report by Town Clerk (to be circulated at the meeting)

The Clerk circulated to all a Benches and Litter Bins on the Village Green Update Report. This report detailed the stance taken by the Town Council in 2011 and attached to the Report was a related policy which had last been reviewed in November 2011.

Cllr Gloria Wills commented that when the Hope Inn had been open a number of benches and been placed on the land at the front of the property. Since the Inn has been closed this area has provided a valuable parking space to the Town. Cllr Gloria Wills proposed that as this area belongs to the Town Council no benches and tables be allowed in this area in the future. Cllr David Brown seconded this proposal and all other Cllrs agreed.

Cllr Mel Carr pointed out that the land around the Black Lion is owned by DCC and they allow benches and tables to be located in this area. Cllr Dudley Waters replied that DCC have stated that if there was a misuse of this arrangement then DCC have the right to withdraw this permission. Cllr Ian Sutherland pointed out that the land in front of the Dunn Cow is normally used as a car park with the exception of the Med Fayre day. Cllr Allan Blakemore commented that if pubs are expanding the

boundaries of their licensed areas it is up to the Licensing Authority to take action if there is a problem. All licensed premises should be treated fairly, however, if the Town Council feels these areas are important to parking in Sedgefield then the Town Council needs to have an appropriate discussion on this. The Clerk reminded all Cllrs that the Open Spaces Working Group have already been tasked with discussions and exploring further the issues relating to parking in the Town. This was duly noted by Cllrs.

RESOLVED:

- i) The Estates Working Group to review this Policy and bring a recommendation back to a future Environment Committee meeting.**
- ii) No benches or tables are to be allowed on the area in front of the Hope Inn with immediate effect.**
- iii) The Open Spaces Group to bring a report back to a future Environment Committee regarding problems, issues and potential solutions for parking within the Town.**

ADDITIONAL ITEM: Consideration of Planning Application DM/15/00636/FPA – Mixed use of the building as offices (Class B1) and part ground floor as Class D2 (Assembly and Leisure), Manor House, Sedgefield:

Since the last Monthly Meeting the Clerk reported that Ms Jane Young had sought further clarification regarding this particular application. A report by Ms Young was circulated to all along with a letter from Mr Ean Parsons. Cllrs considered this additional information.

Cllr Gloria Wills raised concerns regarding the proposed timings of events at the Manor House which were stated as 6pm – 12am on weekdays, weekends and bank holidays. Whilst supportive of the Manor House she was concerned about potential noise issues and suggested that the Town Council may only wish to endorse this application if there was an assurance that neighbouring properties would be protected from noise and disturbance. Cllr Ian Sutherland suggested that limiting events to 11pm may be more appropriate. Cllr Lynne Dentith commented that regardless of the finishing time of an event there would be noise from people leaving the function rather than noise from the actual event itself. Cllr Brown commented that properties neighbouring the Manor House have already had letters regarding this application and none of these residents have expressed any concerns but instead are pleased that this important building in the Town is being brought back to life. Cllr Allan Blakemore pointed out that the owners of the building live in the Town and are doing a significant amount of work in order to keep a historic building alive and in use

as a valuable asset to the Town. Whilst all applications must be treated consistently the Town also does not want to see this building fall into dereliction. Cllr Blakemore also commented that the Manor House will have to apply for a number of other appropriate licences and the various bodies overseeing those licences would also be seeking assurance regarding noise, impact upon other properties and alcohol sales.

RESOLVED:

To inform DCC that the Town Council are supportive of the Manor House planning application.

6. Correspondence

6.1 The County Council of Durham Sedgefield (Parking & Waiting Restrictions) Amendment No 1 Order 2015 (letter from Ms Loraine Holding, DCC dated 24th April 2015)

Prior to the meeting a letter from Ms Loraine Holding of DCC dated 24th April 2015 had been circulated to all. This letter detailed proposed parking restrictions by extending the existing No Waiting At Any Time Restriction from Stockton Road to Rectory Row to its junction with Crispin Court and make minor administrative amendments to the Order. Objections to this proposal must be submitted to DCC by no later than 22nd May 2015.

Cllr Alf Walton reminded Cllrs of Mr Howard Smith's comments during public participation earlier in the meeting. Cllrs discussed at length DCC's proposals and it was agreed that a letter of objection be submitted.

RESOLVED:

The Clerk to submit a letter of objection based upon the following: - the exit from Rectory Row onto Stockton Road is 40 metres wide; this area has not been the scene of any accidents; there is not a problem facilitating road traffic (as heavy traffic is prohibited through Sedgefield) or pedestrians as there are clear sight lines all around; the proposals would not preserve or improve the amenities; currently residents and visitors use the area to shop and park off the through road; if restrictions were put in place it would cause greater congestion further round the adjoining roads; due to the large expanse of tarmac area it would be more reasonable to mark out parking bays to help increase parking facilities and preserve the amenities and businesses in the area.

6.2 Brett Landscaping Press Release:

The Clerk circulated to all copies of a press release which had been jointly prepared between Brett Landscaping, Cllr Mel Carr and the Town Clerk. Cllrs agreed this was a

very good press release. Cllr Gloria Wills asked if it was possible to find out where this press release has been circulated to and the Clerk agreed to find this out.

RESOLVED:

- i) To receive this information.**
- ii) The Clerk to obtain details as to where this press release has been circulated.**

6.3 Sedgefield In Bloom (minutes of meeting held 6th May 2015):

The Clerk circulated to all copies of the Sedgefield In Bloom minutes from their meeting held on 6th May 2015.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

7. Tenders

7.1 Emptying recycle bays at Sedgefield Cemetery

This matter was deferred as discussed earlier under agenda item 3.2.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.54pm.