

SEDFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT

Minutes of the proceedings of the **OCTOBER ENVIRONMENT** of the **Council** held following the Community Development and Engagement committee in the **Council Offices**, Advice & Information Centre, Sedgefield, on **Monday 13th October 2014**.

Present

Cllr. Mel Carr (Chairman)

Cllr. Mark Cant (Vice-Chairman) and

Cllrs. Allan Blakemore, David Brown, Lynne Dentith, Tim Jeanes, Chris Lines, John Robinson, Maxine Robinson, Ian Sutherland, Alf Walton, Dudley Waters.

Officer

Dr. Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

1. Apologies

Cllrs. Rebecca Hagan, Gloria Wills and Vanessa Carmichael.

2. Declaration of interest

None.

3. Matters of Information

3.1 Pizza Castle

Work is continuing to determine ownership of land around Pizza Castle. A landownership report is being prepared by the Clerk and Ms Jane Young for the Estates Working Group.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.2 DCC Response To Proposed Parking Restrictions:

Since the issuing of Cllr's Committee packs, the Clerk reported that notification had been received from Mr Michael Turnbull, Senior Committee Services Officer of DCC, on 8th October 2014 that the proposal to introduce parking Monday – Saturday 9am-

6pm 30 with 30 minutes no return with 30 minutes restrictions outside numbers 58-62 Front Street would be considered at a meeting of DCC's Highways Committee on Thursday 16th October 2014 in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham at 9.30am. The Clerk circulated copies of the Highways Committee agenda along with the report specifically relating to this issue in Sedgfield which included the Town Council's submitted objections.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.3 Cemetery Recycling Bays:

No further information has been received from Zurich regarding the ongoing insurance claim relating to the vandalism to the recently installed additional recycle bays in the cemetery. The Clerk will keep Cllrs informed regarding this claim.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.4 Cemetery Hedge:

Cllr Mel Carr reported that this work will take place within the next 4-5 weeks when work by AW Treecare on the hedge is scheduled to coincide with work scheduled to be undertaken by Mr Brian Hull on the fencing.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.5 Eden Drive: Drainage Problem:

The Clerk has requested Mr Paul Armin from DCC investigate this matter and provide feedback to the Town Council. To date no feedback has been received from Mr Armin despite two follow-up requests. The Clerk will continue to chase this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.6 Repairs to St Edmund's Church Wall:

Mrs Angela Simpson has confirmed that Part B of a funding application to complete the final phase of the Church Wall's repair was submitted on 25th July 2014. The

fundes have requested the latest accounts of the Friends of St Edmund's as this application cannot be considered further without it. Mrs Angela Simpson has requested this information as a matter of urgency from the Group. Cllrs to be kept informed regarding this funding application's progress.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.7 Trees:

The Clerk reported that a letter had been written to Mr Alex Walker requesting that he inspects the following trees and provides the Town Council with a written report detailing his independent advice – 8 Beacon Avenue, 4 South View, grounds of Ceddesfeld Hall, 20 Hornby Avenue, St Edmund's Churchyard and the Squash Club. Cllr Alf Walton confirmed that he had accompanied Mr Walker on his inspection of each of the above, which also included the Willows on Station Road Playing Field, and that Mr Walker would be submitting his report to the Council very soon.

The Town Council have also sought 3 quotes for the cost of crown lifting trees at the rear of Mitford Court and these will be considered under agenda item 8.1 of this meeting.

The Clerk has also written to Mr Rodger Lowe seeking his advice regarding the large tree on the green outside number 19 North End. As yet no response has been received from Mr Lowe despite a follow-up request for information.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.8 RoSPA Play Area Inspection Reports – Station Road Playing Field:

The Clerk had written to RoSPA instructing them to cease the annual inspection of the play equipment on Station Road Playing Field as it has been confirmed that this is the responsibility of DCC.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.9 Electricity Supplies – Village Green, Lychgate and Parish Hall:

Cllr Mel Carr reported that Mr Peter Hannant had tested the electricity supply and confirmed that it was safe to use for this year's Christmas Tree only. A partial quote for the cost of installing a new electrical supply at the Lychgate has been received, however, a full quote cannot be obtained until the Diocese provide a map showing the location of cables from the Church to the Lychgate and also confirm in writing that they give permission for a channel to be dug. Once the location of the current cabling is known and permission given for digging then an exact quote can be obtained which will be brought back to Council for consideration. Mrs Angela Simpson has already been informed that this supply will not be available for this year's Snow Party. Mrs Angela Simpson has been requested to liaise with Mr George Smith in order to arrange for Christmas lights to be checked and installed on the other trees on the village green. Finally, Mr George Smith undertook installation testing in the Parish Hall earlier in the year. A copy of his report has now been obtained and is being looked through by Mr Peter Hannant to determine what, if any, work is required within the Parish Hall.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.10 St Edmund's Churchyard Footpaths:

Cllr Mel Carr reported that Mr Stephen Young has already cleaned the footpath leading from the Lychgate to Ceddesfeld Hall. Mr Young has now been asked to prune tree branches overhanging the footpaths in the Churchyard and then to clean the footpaths to remove the slip hazard. Cllr John Robinson reported that the Town Council took over responsibility for this closed Churchyard in 1976 when Mr Keith Wells was Town Clerk.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.11 DCC Consultation: Cessation of Smoking in Playgrounds:

The Open Spaces Working Group have submitted a completed questionnaire on behalf of the Town Council to DCC as part of their consultation on the cessation of smoking in playgrounds. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated regarding any developments from this public consultation.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.12 Northumbrian Water Response to North End Grass Verge (9th September 2014):

On the advice of NWL, this matter has been reported to DCC requesting investigation and highlighting safety concerns. To date there has been no response from DCC. Cllr John Robinson requested the background to this issue in order to liaise with DCC.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.13 Trees Overhanging Community College Tennis Courts:

Mr Ian Fenwick from Carillion has been informed that he has the Town Council's permission to prune the tree branches overhanging the Community College's Tennis Courts.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.14 Trees and Hedges in Butterwick Allotments:

At its meeting on 23rd September 2014 the Open Spaces Working Group agreed that trees and hedges in Butterwick Allotments do not require pruning.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.15 Sedgefield In Bloom Hanging Baskets:

The Clerk had informed Mr Stephen Young and Mr Howard Smith of the Council's decision to allow Bloom hanging baskets to be purchased by the Council and re-charged.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.16 Potholes at The Square and Hardwick Arms, North End:

Cllr Mel Carr reported that Mr Stephen Young has now marked all of the potholes with marker spray as agreed at the last Environment Committee meeting. Cllr Carr

and the Clerk had approached 6 contractors to obtain a comparable quote to the one received from DCC. 4 contractors were not interested in this work whilst 2 contractors stated that they were and this will be considered under agenda item 8.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

4. Public Participation

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

Mr Howard Smith expressed his concerns regarding the recent month long stay of Travellers on land at the other side of the dual carriageway in the Town. DCC's Travellers Liaison Officer was unaware of this situation for the first two weeks of the Travellers stay. Town residents felt intimidated when walking near this area. The fly tipping that took place during this period was considerable with the area having been left in an unacceptable state. The clean-up costs associated will be considerable and Mr Smith hoped that the Police would be using vehicle registration identification methods in order to trace those responsible. Finally, Mr Smith stated that Travellers had been present near to Eden Drive from Friday 10th October – Sunday 12th October 2014 and has been informed that the Police were aware of this.

Mrs Jean Easson commented that several Landlords within the Town have indicated that they would be willing to make a financial donation towards the cost of the New Year's Eve fireworks.

Mrs Helen Clifford-Brown expressed her concerns regarding the lack of lighting in the alley way from the Council Offices to White House Drive and asked if another street light could be installed.

The meeting was then re-opened.

Cllr Mel Carr thanked the public for their comments. He informed Mrs Clifford-Brown that street lighting is the responsibility of DCC and this matter should be raised with them.

5. Reports

5.1 Allotment Challenge 2014 Presentation To Winners: Verbal Update (Cllr Alf Walton)

Cllr Alf Walton reported that trophies and prizes will be presented to the winners of the recent Allotment Challenge on Saturday 25th October 2014 at 9.30am. This presentation will take place at the Winterton Allotment Shed offering an opportunity for both Winterton and Butterwick allotment holders to meet and consider how this shed may be used more in the future. It is also an opportunity to gauge whether there is any interest in forming a Winterton Allotment Society which could then be used as a forum for submitting grant funding for initiatives such as improving the fencing.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

5.2 Sedgefield Cemetery Current Issues Status Report (Clerk)

Prior to the meeting a report had been circulated by the Clerk detailing the status of current Sedgefield Cemetery issues. This report contained three recommendations as follows:

- i) To receive the information contained in the report.
- ii) For those headstones which are found to be unsafe following annual safety testing, letters are sent to the interred's family/next of kin and when no efforts are taken to make the headstone safe the Town Council lay headstones flat. If the headstone is too large for the Gardening Staff to lay down then specialist assistance will be brought in so as to ensure the health and safety of Town Council staff.
- iii) To approve the recommendation to submit an Asset Transfer request to DCC in relation to the land/footpath running between the Cemetery and the allotments which was the former entrance to Sedgefield Community College.

RESOLVED:

- i) **To receive this information.**
- ii) **To approve all the recommendations contained in this report.**

5.3 Eden Drive Play Area: Deep Water Sign:

The Clerk reminded Cllrs that at her recent meeting with Mr Craig Fowler (DCC Play Area Inspector) to consider the findings of the most recent RoSPA inspection report for Eden Drive Play Area the recommendation had been made to obtain and install a deep water sign in the area between the play area and the large pond at Ceddesfeld. Costings had been supplied by GB Sport & Leisure UK Ltd (a company recommended by DCC) using the nationally recommended wording and sizing for such a sign. A

copy of this proposal and costings were circulated.

RESOLVED:

- i) To purchase and install a deep water sign.**
- ii) The Clerk to write to Livin to see if they would be prepared to make a financial donation towards the cost of this sign.**

6. Correspondence

6.1 September 2014 DCC Eden Drive Play Area Safety Report

Prior to the meeting copies of the September 2014 Eden Drive Play Area Safety Report undertaken on behalf of the Town Council by DCC had been circulated to all. The Clerk informed Cllrs that the pole in the Toddler Unit has now been replaced.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

6.2 Formal Letter of Complaint – Station Road Playing Field:

The Clerk circulated to all Cllrs present (and will forward to those not present at the meeting) a copy of a letter received on 13th October 2014 from Mrs C A Scott which is a formal letter of complaint regarding drainage, flooding and untreated sewage issues pertaining to Station Road Playing Field. It was agreed that the content of this letter and its attachments require careful consideration by Cllrs prior to any discussions regarding the issues raised.

RESOLVED:

- i) This matter will be put onto the next Environment Committee agenda (17th November 2014).**
- ii) The Clerk to write to Mr and Mrs Scott acknowledging receipt of this letter and informing them of when this matter will be discussed.**

6.3 Request for Memorial Bench:

The Clerk circulated to all a letter from Mr Ian Quinn received 6th October 2014 requesting the allocation of a park bench in Sedgefield in memory of his daughter who was born, christened, lived in and attended school in the Town. Cllrs reiterated the Council's current Memorial Bench Policy which stipulates that existing unmaintained benches can be refurbished with a memorial plaque being installed.

RESOLVED:

The Clerk to write to Mr Quinn.

6.4 Trees at 1 Claremont Grove, Sedgefield:

A letter from Cllr John Robinson was received on 23rd September 2014 stating Mrs Gommersal of 1 Claremont Grove, Sedgefield is concerned regarding trees at the bottom her garden. She believes they require trimming, if not taking down. The Clerk reported that she is looking into the ownership of these trees.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

6.5 Eden Drive Ponds:

A letter from Cllr John Robinson was received 8th October 2014 with regard to the state and ownership of the small pond near to Ceddesfeld Hall in Wykes Close. The Clerk reported that investigations are underway to ascertain if this belongs to DCC or to Livin as it is not within the ownership of the Town Council. The Clerk will inform Cllr John Robinson of the outcome of her investigation.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

6.6 Planning Applications

Cllr Mel Carr made Cllrs aware of two planning applications which he has found on the DCC website but which the Town Council have now been made aware of via the weekly planning applications list as follows:

- Retrospective application for replacement of PVC windows to the front elevation of 6 North End, Sedgefield
- The installation of proposed artwork sculpture at Caden Court, Sedgefield to reflect the area is a historic mining community that hosts a horse racing course and is famous for it's Shrove Tuesday Football.

The Clerk reported that an urgent request has been submitted to Diane Bowron of DCC Planning asking why the Town Council have not been informed of these applications.

RESOLVED:

- i) **The Clerk to keep Cllrs informed regarding why DCC have not notified**

the Town Council of these particular applications.

- ii) Cllrs to forward to the Clerk as a matter of urgency any objections regarding 6 North End.
- iii) The Clerk to request that the application relating to Caden Court be called in for consideration by the Planning Committee as the exact location of this proposed artwork is unknown and incorrectly states that Sedgefield has a strong mining community history.

7. Financial Position

RESOLVED:

To approve the Environment Committee Financial Position.

Members of the public were asked to leave the meeting at this point as tenders were to be discussed.

8. Tenders

8.1 Crown lifting at Mitford Court

Three quotations had been sought for crown lifting of trees running alongside the residential properties in Mitford Court plus the removal of a decayed stem outside Number 30 Mitford Court. Two quotations had been received from A and B. Cllrs agreed to accept the quote from A W Treecare.

RESOLVED

- i. **To appoint A W Treecare as the contractor to undertake this work.**
- ii. **The Clerk to write and inform A W Treecare of their appointment and to issue a Purchase Order Number.**
- iii. **The Clerk to write to the unsuccessful contractor and thank them for their quotes.**

8.2 Potholes at The Square and Hardwick Arms, North End

Cllr Carr and the Clerk had approached six contractors to obtain a comparable quote to the one received from DCC considered at the last Environment Committee meeting. Four contractors were not interested in this work whilst two contractors stated that they were. Cllrs agreed to accept the quote from Brian Pike.

RESOLVED

- i. **To appoint Brian Pike as the contractor to undertake this work.**

- ii. The Clerk to write and inform Brian Pike of their appointment and to issue a Purchase Order Number.**
- iii. The Clerk to write to the unsuccessful contractor and thank them for their quotes.**

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.05p.m.