

SEDFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT

Minutes of the proceedings of the **DECEMBER ENVIRONMENT** of the **Council** held following the Community Development and Engagement committee in the **Council Offices**, Advice & Information Centre, Sedgfield, on **Monday 15 December 2014**.

Present **Cllr. Mel Carr (Chairman)**
 Cllr. Mark Cant (Vice-Chairman) and
 Cllrs. David Brown, Lynne Dentith, Tim Jeanes, Chris Lines, Ian Sutherland, Alf Walton

Officer Dr. Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

1. Apologies

Cllrs. Vanessa Carmichael, Dudley Waters and Gloria Wills

2. Declaration of interest

None.

3. Matters of Information

3.1 Pizza Castle

It has now been confirmed that DCC own this land. The Clerk has written to DCC requesting this area be kept tidy and highlighted Environmental Health concerns. The Clerk to keep Cllrs informed regarding this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.2 DCC Response To Proposed Parking Restrictions

Mr Michael Turnbull, DCC Senior Committee Services Officer, has reported that

following the Highway Committee's view that restricting parking to 30 minutes in this area would not be sufficient the Committee asked if the proposed restriction could be made to 1 hour rather than 30 minutes. The Committee received confirmation on 21st November 2014 that it was legally possible to introduce the revised time, without the need to re-advertise the scheme and consult again and incur further costs. Therefore the waiting restrictions will come into effect at some time in the future under the revised time of 1 hour.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.3 Cemetery Recycling Bays – Repair of Vandalism:

This repair work is scheduled to take place in mid-late January 2015 slightly delayed to the originally envisaged timescale due to difficulties in coinciding the nearby fencing work, hedging work and vandalism repair work. The Clerk will inform Cllrs when this work has been completed.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.4 Cemetery Hedge:

This work is scheduled to take place in mid-late January 2015 slightly delayed to the originally envisaged timescale due to difficulties in coinciding the nearby fencing work, hedging work and vandalism repair work. The Clerk will inform Cllrs when this work has been completed.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.5 Eden Drive: Drainage Problem

The Clerk has written to Mr & Mrs Steward to ascertain if the properties identified have actually experienced interior flooding in order that this query can be categorized appropriately for investigation by DCC. The Clerk to keep Cllrs informed regarding

this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.6 Repairs to St Edmund's Church Wall

On 18th November 2014 the Council received notification that this funding application had been declined by CDCF as the application "supports the advancement of religion/faith". The Estates Working Group at its meeting on 25th November 2014 agreed this proposal did not relate to religious advancement but instead related to health and safety plus historic preservation of an important building. This matter had been discussed at length in the earlier Community Development & Engagement Committee on 15th December 2015 (item 5.1).

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.7 Electricity Supplies – Village Green, Lychgate

The Diocese have now detailed the work they would allow in order to install a new power supply to the Lychgate. Mr Peter Hannant is now preparing a finalized specification. Once completed three quotations will be sought for consideration by the Environment Committee.

In addition to this, and as an alternative option, Mrs Angela Simpson is liaising with DCC to look at the option for linking into DCC supplies on the Village Green.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.8 Northumbrian Water Response To North End Grass Verge

A summary of the history of this issue has previously been sent to County Cllr John Robinson for further investigation with DCC. Mr Stephen Young has been tasked

with monitoring this matter on a weekly basis and recording on an evidence sheet.

Cllr Mel Carr reported that Northumbrian Water employees had been working on 19th November 2014 flushing drains in Church View and found a similar big hole outside 2 Church View. In passing by this work he had taken the opportunity to show the Northumbrian Water employees the similar hole of North End and they confirmed they would report it once again to their supervisor.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and County Cllr John Robinson to investigate and report back to the Environment Committee.

3.9 Sedgefield Cemetery

A letter of enquiry has been submitted to Mr Gerard Darby 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. This letter also requests the same in relation to Butterwick Allotments and the triangle piece of land between the Allotments and Butterwick Lane. The Estates Working Group to consider feedback received and to bring an appropriate report to a future Environment Committee.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.10 Eden Drive Play Area – Deep Water Sign

Via Mr Craig Fowler, DCC Playground Inspector, a request has been made by the Town Council for DCC to make a financial contribution towards this signage. As yet no response has been received. In addition, DCC have been approached to provide a quotation for installing the new sign, however, this work could not be undertaken until clear-up work on the nearby Duck Pond at Wykes Close is completed. The Clerk to keep Cllrs informed of progress.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.11 Request for Memorial Bench

The Clerk has written to Mr Quinn acknowledging receipt of his letter and informing him that work is underway to propose a suitable bench for refurbishment. Mr Stephen Young is currently recording on a map the location of all existing benches along with their status and composition. The Clerk to keep Cllrs informed.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.12 Tree at 1 Claremont Grove, Sedgefield

This area of land has now been identified as belonging to DCC. DCC have attended, however, the tree in question is on the land of 1 Claremont Grove and is the responsibility of the homeowner to resolve.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.13 Crown Lifting at Mitford Court

Following consultation between AW Treecare and Mr Rodger Lowe, the Town Council have now lodged an application with DCC to undertake work on trees covered by TPOs. The Clerk has written to residents informing them of the situation. The Clerk to keep Cllrs informed regarding this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.14 War Memorial

The Clerk has written to Ms Sandra Stephenson requesting how much money County Cllrs John Robinson and Rachel Lumsdon have in their 2014/15 Neighbourhood Budgets. Ms Stephenson has confirmed that for this financial year

both County Cllrs Robinson and Lumsdon have projects identified to utilize their remaining budgets, which would utilize all of their remaining allocation.

Cllr Alf Walton reiterated that he had asked County Cllr John Robinson if he could be present when DCC Officers undertake their assessment of the War Memorial's condition.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.15 Footpaths from Church Turning Circle:

It was agreed at the Estates Working Group meeting on 25th November 2014 that Cllr Mel Carr would assist Mrs Angela Simpson in organizing a specification and potential costings for this project so that work can begin on exploring grant funding. The Clerk will keep Cllrs informed regarding this matter. Cllr Alf Walton commented that the overhanging trees to these paths cause the slipping hazards and the best way to address this is to ensure regular spraying and cleaning of the paths.

Cllr Mel Carr informed Cllrs that Church Turning Circle refurbishment work is expected to commence on 12th January 2015 (weather dependant) and that letters will be sent to nearby residents.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.16 Independent Tree Report:

This report had been considered by the Estates Working Group at its meeting on 25th November 2014 and tenders are now being sought for work that is required at 8 Beacon Avenue, 4 South View and St Edmund's Churchyard. These tenders will be brought back to a future Environment Committee meeting for consideration. 20 Hornby Avenue and the Squash Club will be informed that no work is to be undertaken on their previously identified concerns as this is deemed unnecessary by independent tree specialist advice.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.17 Northumbria in Bloom 2015:

This entry application has now been processed and submitted by Sedgfield Town Council. A cheque had been authorized for payment at the P&R Committee meeting on 8th December 2014.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.18 Tree outside 19 North End:

The state of the large sycamore plus the nearby lime and London Plane from the garage up to number 19 North End had been considered by the Estates Working Group at its meeting on 25th November 2014. Quotations are being sought along with approval from DCC to perform any necessary work. The Clerk to keep Cllrs informed regarding this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.19 Seat on Wykes Close:

The Town Council has spoken with Mr and Mrs Barron to explain that a site visit is to be arranged with Livin in the early New Year to consider this seat. The Clerk has identified Mr Paul Todd at Livin as having been involved in the seat's original placing in this area. Mr Todd has agreed to attend a site meeting as it is important to understand all the issues in relation to this area.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.20 Noise Complaints – Parish Hall:

The Estates Working Group are overseeing a series of health checks relating to heating, plumbing, electrical supplies, lighting, sound and general building status in order to determine what work should/can be done at the Hall. All Parish Hall users have been reminded to use the side door from the stage to the car park to take equipment into and out of the Parish Hall. The Clerk has written to Ms Cook and Mrs Neal explaining the investigative work being undertaken. The Clerk to keep Cllrs informed regarding this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.21 Tenders – Coppicing of Willows, Station Road:

AW Treecare have been informed they are the successful tender and have been issued with a Purchase Order number. A date for undertaking the work is now to be scheduled. The Clerk to inform Cllrs when this work has been completed.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.22 Planning Applications:

Comments made on planning applications considered during the November Environment meeting have been submitted to DCC Planning Officers and Mr Andrew Kitchen of Livin.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

4. Proposed Planning Development at The Hope Inn, Sedgfield – Mr John Adamson

Cllr Mel Carr welcomed Mr John Adamson to the meeting. Mr John Adamson thanked Cllrs

for the opportunity to attend a Council Meeting and explained that he had been advised by DCC Planners to meet with the Town Council to present his proposed future development plans for the Hope Inn. He circulated copies of his proposed plans for both the exterior and interior of the property (which at this stage have not been formally submitted to DCC). His proposal is to demolish a significant part of the rear of the Hope Inn and to build new kitchens and eating areas with a glass linked area. The proposed redevelopment work will be undertaken to a high standard. It is Mr Adamson's intention to re-open the Hope (albeit with a new name) as a continental café in a wine bar style with a strong food orientation not as a traditional pub. It is anticipated that this work will cost in the region of £400,000. To raise the funds for this work Mr Adamson explained that his proposed plans also included the building of two 3-bedroomed semi-detached properties at the rear of the Hope Inn. Mr Adamson acknowledged that concerns regarding previously submitted plans had related predominantly to parking. Cllrs agreed that concerns had previously been voiced regarding the impact upon parking in the local area as well as the potential impact upon historic long gardens as a feature in the Town within the Conservation Area albeit these are predominantly linked to domestic dwellings and not businesses. Mr Adamson explained that DCC Planners had expressed concerns regarding the elevations in the original plans and this matter had been adjusted in the new plans. With regards to parking Mr Adamson envisaged that a significant number of customers would arrive/leave by taxi and that whilst the property would be open all day it was considered that the peak time for customers would be 6pm-8pm. It is predicted that this proposed redevelopment would create 30 jobs and Mr Adamson believed that it would be a good asset to the Town and fill a market which is currently not catered for.

Cllr Mel Carr thanked Mr Adamson for his attendance and explained that once his plans have been submitted to DCC and published on their planning applications weekly list they will be considered in detail by the Town Council.

5. 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 in attendance. The meeting was then re-opened.

6. Reports

6.1 DCC Eden Drive Play Area Inspection Report (November 2014)

Prior to the meeting copies of the November 2014 Play Area Inspection Report for the

Eden Drive Play area had been circulated to all. The Clerk reported that the wet pour around the multi-play toddler area continues to be monitored by DCC, however, no action is required at this point in time.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

6.2 Headstone Safety Testing Follow-up Work Recommendations Report by Estates Working Group

Prior to the meeting a report entitled “Headstone Safety Testing Follow-up Work Recommendations” produced by the Estates Working Group had been circulated to all. Cllr Mark Cant asked whether people were given clear specifications from which to abide when erecting a headstone. Cllr Ian Sutherland responded that the public are given very detailed specifications which over recent years have been improved considerably to reflect the importance of headstone stability. The Clerk reported that Headstone Safety Testing is now well underway with Mr Stephen Young and Mr John Doyle expecting to complete this work by the end of December 2014. In early New Year the findings of this testing will be considered and in the first instance shared with the Estates Working Group for an appropriate report to be brought back to a future Environment Committee meeting. Consideration was then given to the recommendations detailed in the report which had been circulated to Cllrs.

RESOLVED:

- i) People are to be given 6 weeks from the date of their letter informing them of the necessity to make safe a headstone and undertaking the work. If no action has been taken after 6 weeks the Council will lay the headstone and recharge for this work.**
- ii) If a headstone is to be laid flat it will be shuffled forward and laid face up over the actual grave.**

7. Correspondence

7.1 Letter from Mrs J Dawson (dated 7th November 2014) – Conservation Area Rules/Regulations

Prior to the meeting copies of a letter from Mrs J Dawson had been circulated to all Cllrs. Mrs Dawson was expressing her concerns regarding the importance of

rules/regulations being maintained within a Conservation Area.

RESOLVED:

- i) **To receive this information.**
- ii) **The Clerk to write to Mrs Dawson thanking her for her letter which had been discussed and considered by Cllrs who are keen to reassure her that the Conservation Area is important and that the Town Council is doing all it can to maintain the integrity of the Town.**

7.2 Sedgefield Civic Trust Annual Flora Competition

The Clerk reported that at the recent Sedgefield Civic Trust Annual Floral Competition Awards held at Ceddesfeld Hall on Monday 8th December 2014, the following Awards had been won by the Town Council:

- The Parish Hall – 2nd Prize in the Best Public Building;
- Mr Stephen Young – Civic Trust Gold Medal in recognition of his sustained and significant contribution to the environmental enhancement of Sedgefield;
- The Police Station – Best Public Building and the President's Trophy

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

7.3 Letter from Mrs E A Williams (dated 10th December 2014) – Parking next to Hope Inn and Betting Shop

The Clerk circulated to all Cllrs a copy of a letter received from Mrs Williams expressing her concerns regarding parking next to the Hope Inn and the Betting Shop. It was agreed that time was needed to consider Mrs Williams' letter. Cllr Ian Sutherland also suggested that clarification be sought regarding the ownership of the right of way in this area.

RESOLVED:

- i) **Cllrs to consider this letter and its contents for discussion at the January 2015 Environment Committee meeting.**
- ii) **The Clerk to write to Mrs Williams thanking her for her letter and confirming that it has been shared with Cllrs and will be discussed at the**

January 2015 Environment Committee meeting.

- iii) The Clerk to investigate ownership of the right of way in this area.**

7.4 Letter from Mrs H Paling (dated 7th December 2014) – Parking adjacent to Hope Inn and Betting Shop

The Clerk circulated to all Cllrs a copy of a letter received from Mrs Paling expressing her concerns regarding parking adjacent to the Hope Inn and the Betting Shop. As per Item 7.3 it was agreed that time was needed to consider Mrs Paling's letter.

RESOLVED:

- i) Cllrs to consider this letter and its contents for discussion at the January 2015 Environment Committee meeting.**
- ii) The Clerk to write to Mrs Paling thanking her for her letter and confirming that it has been shared with Cllrs and will be discussed at the January 2015 Environment Committee meeting.**

7.5 Letter from Sedgefield In Bloom (dated 8th December 2014) – seating area at Wykes Close

The Clerk circulated to all Cllrs a copy of a letter received from Mrs Normal Neal on behalf of Sedgefield In Bloom expressing concerns regarding the possible removal of the seating at Wykes Close (referring to Item 3.19 earlier in this meeting).

RESOLVED:

- i) The Clerk to write to Mrs Neal acknowledging receipt of her letter and the information it contained. The letter should also provide reassurance that before any decision is made a site meeting will take place between the Council and a representative from Livin to determine the full history to this area, the rationale for this siting of this area and the current issues having being raised by the Bloom Group as well as other nearby residents.**

7.6 Planning: Spring Lane: Mobile Homes and Caravans Update:

The Clerk reported that following the last Monthly Committee meeting, and due to the forthcoming Christmas break when the Town Council offices are closed to the public, she wished to share with Cllrs the latest update received from Ms Susan Porter (DCC Senior Planning Enforcement Officer – South West Area) regarding Spring Lane Mobile Homes and Caravans. Ms Porter confirmed that a meeting had taken place with the occupier of the site and the occupier had requested the opportunity to submit a full planning application for consideration. The deadline DCC provided for such a submission has expired and DCC advised the occupier of the site that his application must be submitted the week commencing 8th December 2014 or DCC would proceed with formal action in the New Year. The occupier of the site's planning agent has informed Ms Porter that an application will be submitted, however, at the time of Ms Porter's update to the Clerk (10th December 2014) no such application had yet arrived. Ms Porter has promised to provide an update to the Town Council when more information is known.

RESOLVED:

- i) The Clerk to contact Ms Susan Porter upon return to work in the New Year to obtain the latest information prior to the January 2015 Monthly meeting.**
- ii) The Clerk to ensure Ms Susan Porter is aware of the Town Council's disappointment regarding the length of time being taken to finalise this matter.**

8. Financial Position: Environment committee

RESOLVED:

To approve the Environment Committee Financial position.

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