

SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY & RESOURCES

Minutes of the proceedings of the **JANUARY POLICY & RESOURCES**
of the **Council** held following the Monthly meeting in the
Council Offices, Advice & Information Centre, Sedgefield, on
Monday 12th January 2015.

Present **Cllr Gloria Wills (Chairman)**

Cllr Lynne Dentith (Vice Chairman) and

Cllrs Allan Blakemore, David Brown, Mark Cant, Mel Carr, Time Jeanes, Chris Lines, Ian Sutherland and Alf Walton

Officer **Dr Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)**

1. Apologies

Cllrs. Vanessa Carmichael, John Robinson, Maxine Robinson and Dudley Waters

2. Declaration of interest

None.

3. Matters of Information

3.1 Community Right To Bid

DCC have acknowledged receipt of the Town Council's expression of interest in the Parish Hall Car Park and are now considering this.

RESOLVED:

Estates Working Group to keep P&R Committee informed of developments.

3.2 Recycling Policy

No further action has been undertaken with regard to this Policy. This will be progressed by Cllr Allan Blakemore and the Clerk when time allows.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.3 Registered STC Land

Work is on-going in this area to draft a report for consideration by the Estates Working Group.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.4 Barclays Bank – Debit Card

Barclays have now provided the Town Council with a compensation offer of £75 for the delay in issuing the Town Council with a debit card.

RESOLVED:

The Clerk to accept this offer of compensation and to close this matter.

3.5 PRS

Discussions regarding this matter are on-going with the Estates Working Group.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.6 Potential Land for STC to Register

Work is on-going in this area to draft a report for consideration by the Estates Working Group.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.7 SCA Lease

Following discussions with Cllrs Gloria Wills and Lynne Dentith the Clerk had requested additional information from Ms Sonia Hunter of BHP Law in November 2014. Follow-up requests for this information have been sent in order to progress this matter as urgent, however, no information has been forthcoming. Both the Town Council and the SCA are keen to get this matter resolved.

RESOLVED:

The Clerk to continue telephoning BHP Law for the remainder of the week and then update Cllrs at the Community Development and Engagement Committee meeting on 19th January 2015.

3.8 Public Participation

Mr and Mrs Scott are continuing to compile a copy of their evidence file in relation to Station Road Playing field issues.

RESOLVED:

The Clerk to arrange an Open Spaces Working Group meeting once the evidence file is received from Mr and Mrs Scott.

3.9 Recording Meetings

Work is still underway to purchase appropriate audio recording equipment from the recently awarded grant for improvement works to the Town Council Offices and the Parish Hall.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and for the Clerk to keep Cllrs updated.

3.10 Review of Expenditure Payment and Financial Reporting

The Clerk and the Finance Working Group have now prepared Draft Financial Regulations which have been sent to the Council's new Internal Auditor for comment.

RESOLVED:

The draft Financial Regulations to be presented to the P&R Committee in February 2015.

3.11 Community Right to Bid – Consideration of Methodist Church Building

The Clerk has written to the Methodist Church Council explaining the Community Right to Bid Scheme and why the Town Council would be interested in expressing an interest. The Methodist Council have been asked to notify the Town Council of any objections.

RESOLVED:

Estates Working Group to keep P&R Committee informed of developments.

3.12 Precept

To be considered under agenda item 6.4

3.13 Local Council Award Scheme

To be considered under agenda item 5.1

3.14 Internal Auditor

Mr Gordon Fletcher met with members of the Personnel Committee on 16th December 2014. Following this he met with the Clerk and Chair of the P&R Committee on 7th January 2015 to consider a proposed work plan from which costings can be determined.

RESOLVED:

The Clerk and Chair of P&R Committee to keep the Personnel Committee informed and agree terms, conditions and workload for the Internal Auditor. An appropriate update report to be brought to a future P&R Committee.

3.15 Town Clerk's End of Probationary Review

Cllr Chris Lines, as Chair of the Council, has written to Dr Jane Ayre confirming her permanent appointment as Town Clerk.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.16 Town Council Office Staffing

Town Council staff have been given written offers to change their contracts of employment as agreed at the December 2014 P&R Committee meeting. Both staff concerned have accepted these offers.

An article has been submitted to the Sedgefield Extra to promote the new office opening hours as from 1st January 2015.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.17 Appointment of IT Support Contractor

InnovTech have been notified of their appointment as the Town Council's new IT Support Contractor. Work has begun on securing the Council's IT infrastructure.

Mr Brian Whitehead has been notified of this appointment and thanked for his work over several years. Mr Whitehead will continue in the interim to update the Council's website.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

4. Public Participation

The Chairman, Cllr Gloria Wills, closed the meeting for the public to give views and comments. The public present did not have any comments to make. The meeting was then re-opened.

5. Reports

5.1 Local Council Awards Scheme (Report by Town Clerk)

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a report detailing the new Local Council Awards Scheme which will replace the current Quality Status Scheme. Since the production of this report CDALC have now circulated "A Guide To The Local Council Award Scheme" which gives more detail about the criteria underpinning this new Scheme. CDALC have indicated that an official launch event is likely to be held on 28th March 2015 at which representatives from NALC will be present to explain in more detail this new Scheme and the revised CiLCA.

RESOLVED:

- i) To receive the information in this report.**
- ii) As an existing Quality Council, to register and take up the free year as a Foundation Award Council.**
- iii) When the Local Council Awards Scheme is officially launched and detailed criteria is understood for each level, the Clerk to consider this with the newly appointed Internal Auditor to prepare an appropriate Action Plan and report back to a future P&R Committee.**

5.2 Royal Garden Party Nominations (Report by Town Clerk)

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a report detailing the opportunity to nominate Councillors to go into the CDALC draw to potentially attend the Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace on Tuesday 12th May 2015.

RESOLVED:

- i) To nominate Cllr Dudley Waters.**
- ii) The Clerk to forward Cllr Waters details to CDALC for inclusion in the draw by Friday 6th February 2015.**

5.3 Church Turning Circle Update – Report by Cllr Mel Carr

Cllr Mel Carr circulated copies of a "Church Turning Circle Update Report" which detailed that work commenced on this refurbishment project on Monday 5th January 2015. The contractor has now removed the existing cobbles which has revealed that it is not necessary to remove the existing formation/sub-base as it is already compact and durable enough to withstand almost all heavy trafficking scenarios. Prior to new surfacing being laid there is now the limited opportunity for the Town Council to install

two retractable bollards which can be used in addition to cones to deter parking when events are planned on the Village Green or at St Edmund's. The contractor is also willing to extend their maintenance period of 12 months to 3 years. The placing of such bollards along with time/materials saved due to sub-base findings will result in an overall saving of approximately £1000 on the quotation approved by Council.

RESOLVED:

- i) To receive the information in this report.**
- ii) To request two retractable bollards are installed with the associated extended maintenance period.**
- iii) A update article on the Church Turning Circle's refurbishment be included in the next edition of the Sedgefield Extra.**

Cllr Gloria Wills explained that another report to be considered by the Committee related to information exempt from the public and will be considered under agenda item 10.

6. Financial Matters

6.1 Monthly Accounts: Income (as at 5th January 2015) / Expenditure (as at 5th January 2015 minus unapproved cheques after 8th December 2014)

RESOLVED:

The monthly accounts as had been circulated were approved for payment.

6.2 Cheques for approval after 8th December 2014

In addition to the details of cheques requiring approval for payment since 8th December 2014, the Clerk circulated a list of those invoices which had been received in the interim period since the circulation of Committee papers that also required approval for payment.

The Clerk highlighted in December 2014 it had been incorrectly reported that cheque number 108151 has been approved for Mr B Whitehead. This was incorrect and the cheque which was approved for Mr B Whitehead at the December 2014 meeting should have read 108152.

Cllr Ian Sutherland asked for clarification regarding Mr G Smith's invoice relating to the erecting and repairing of Christmas lights. The Clerk read out the itemized detail

on the invoice.

RESOLVED:

All cheques were approved for payment and duly signed by Cllrs Wills and Dentith in addition to the Town Clerk.

6.3 Itemized Income Presented To Bank (period 2nd December 2014 – 5th January 2015)

The itemized income presented to the bank as at 5th January 2015 had been circulated to all prior to the meeting.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

6.4 Precept 2015/16 (Report by Finance Working Group)

Prior to the meeting a report by the Finance Working Group had been circulated to all proposing that in light of the reduction in LCTRS Grant from DCC coupled with work that is known to be required at the Parish Hall the Town Council should make a 2% increase in precept for 2015/16.

RESOLVED:

- i) Sedgefield Town Council increases its precept for 2015/16 by 2% thereby requesting from DCC £236,083.10 (i.e. an increase of £4,629.08). This means in 2015/16 the Town Council would receive £248,352.10 from DCC (i.e. precept of £236,083.10 and LCTRS Grant of £12,269.00).**
- ii) The Clerk and Council Chair to complete DCC's precept request paperwork and submit to DCC by Friday 30th January 2015.**
- iii) An explanatory article to be included in the next edition of the Sedgefield Extra detailing the 2015/16 precept and explaining the increase.**

7. Training

7.1 Community Right To Build Workshops (28th January 2015, London or 18th February 2015, York)

Prior to the meeting details had been circulated to all regarding two free workshops focusing upon the Community Right To Build initiative. The Clerk highlighted that the correct date of the York event was 17th February 2015 as shown in the attached publicity material and not 18th February as stated in the CDALC covering email. Several Cllrs expressed an interest to attend the York event.

RESOLVED:

Those Cllrs wishing to attend one of these events should inform the Clerk who will in turn book places as appropriate.

8. Correspondence

- 8.1 Email from Mrs June Kneafsey, Development Worker (dated 17th December 2014) regarding Fletcher Room usage**
- 8.2 Email from Mr Aaron Chaudhary, New Generation Church (dated 5th January 2015) regarding Parish Hall usage**

Prior to the meeting copies of emails from Mrs June Kneafsey and Mr Aaron Chaudhary had been circulated to all. As the nature of both items of correspondence were related it was agreed to consider these matters together. The Parish Hall is a community facility and it is essential that all those who hire the facility find it fit for purpose.

RESOLVED:

- i) The Clerk to request a meeting with a representative of the Players to talk through the matters which have been highlighted by other Parish Hall users.**
- ii) The Clerk to keep the Estates Working Group informed and if necessary to bring a report to a future P&R Committee meeting.**
- iii) The Estates Working Group to review the Parish Hall User Policy.**

Cllr Ian Sutherland left the meeting at this point.

8.3 Renewing Classified Listing in The Phone Book from BT

The Clerk reported that a letter had been received from BT in which it was stated the Council would continue to have one free line entry in the A-Z Section of the local BT Phone Book but would need to pay a charge of £30.72 (excluding VAT) per quarter for any listing in the classified section of the book. Currently the Town Council does

have such a listing in the classified section of the book.

RESOLVED:

To cancel the current listing in the classified section of The Phone Book from BT.

9. Station Road Playing Field

9.1 Consideration of Lease - Proposal by Cllr Mark Cant

At the December 2014 P&R Committee meeting Cllr Mark had requested the Council review the existing lease with DCC in relation to the Station Road Playing field and consider whether this lease should continue in the future or ownership should revert back to DCC.

Several Cllrs expressed concerns that this could appear to the public as if the Town Council sees the field as too problematic to deal with. Cllr Cant expressed the view that even if the field did revert back to DCC's ownership the Town Council would not renege on its duty to help the residents of the Town and this would include those on Station Road and Ivy Row currently experiencing issues in relation to the field. Cllr Mel Carr commented that DCC would have more resources than the Town Council to progress this matter. Cllr Gloria Wills stated that the field poses a risk to the Town Council for many reasons including restricted vehicular access with Cllr Alf Walton keen to highlight encroachment as another example. Cllr Lynne Dentith agreed with Cllr Mark Cant that if the field did revert back to DCC ownership the Town Council would still undertake its duty to assist those nearby residents. Cllrs Allan Blakemore and Tim Jeanes expressed the view that to return this field to DCC would be short-sighted and felt that the field should be retained and the current issues resolved. Cllr David Brown gave Cllrs the historical background to this field and its various transitions of ownership. It was agreed that before any decision could be made the Town Council needed to determine what DCC were doing in relation to previously submitted concerns regarding restricted vehicular access from Station Road.

RESOLVED:

The Clerk to write to DCC to determine what they are doing about the Town Council's previously reported encroachment to access to this field.

10. Consideration of Reports Exempt From Public

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.08p.m.