

SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY & RESOURCES

Minutes of the proceedings of the **MAY POLICY & RESOURCES**
of the **Council** held following the Monthly meeting in the
Council Offices, Advice & Information Centre,
Sedgefield, on
Monday 11th May 2015.

Present **Cllr. Gloria Wills (Chairman)**
 Cllr. Mel Carr (Vice-Chairman) and
 Cllrs. Allan Blakemore, David Brown, Mark Cant, Lynne Dentith, Chris Lines,
 John Robinson, Maxine Robinson, Ian Sutherland, Alf Walton and Dudley
 Waters

Officer Dr Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

1. Apologies

Cllrs. Vanessa Carmichael, Rebecca Hagan, Tim Jeanes

2. Declaration of interest

Cllr Chris Lines declared an interest in agenda item 8.7.

No other declarations of interest were made.

3. Matters of Information

3.1 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.

3.2 Registering 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.

3.3 PRS:

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

RESOLVED: To receive this information.

3.4 Potential Land For SCA 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.

3.5 SCA Lease:

A meeting has been scheduled between the Clerk, Cllrs Gloria Wills and Mel Carr plus Dr Wendy Gill and Phil Broomhead of the SCA to review the current position of the lease and to agree a way forward to progress this matter to a resolution. The Clerk to keep Cllrs informed.

RESOLVED: TO receive this information.

3.6 Public Participation:

Mr and Mrs Scott have not yet supplied the Clerk with a copy of their evidence file in relation to Station Road Playing Field issues. The Clerk to arrange an Open Spaces Working Group meeting once the evidence file is received from Mr and Mrs Scott.

RESOLVED: To receive this information.

3.7 Station Road Playing Field:

The Clerk has written to DCC informing them the Town Council wishes to hand the lease for Station Road Playing Field back to DCC. A response is yet to be received. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated.

RESOLVED: To receive this information.

3.8 Woodland, Old Durham Road:

A response is still awaited from DCC in response to the Clerk forwarding Mr Ean Parson's concerns in relation to this area. Investigations are on-going to locate a copy of the 5 year management plan for this locality. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated.

RESOLVED: To receive this information.

3.9 Proposed Project to Re-open Public Toilets:

This proposal by Cllr Mark Cant will be put onto the next Estates Working Group meeting agenda. Information regarding the potential formulation of a one-stop shop, which included a public toilet facility, has been located and will also be considered at the next Estates Working Group meeting. The Estates Working Group to bring a recommendation back to a future P&R Committee meeting.

RESOLVED: To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.10 Fairhurst Invoice Update:

The Clerk reported that Mr Dominic Waugh from Fairhurst had confirmed that he did not attend the Sedgefield Plan Steering Group meeting on 11th February 2015. Mr Waugh had also confirmed that despite this error the hours and all other work quoted was correct and the total amount of the invoice was accurate.

Cllr Allan Blakemore questioned if the original quotation from Fairhurst included them translating the Sedgefield Plan into correct Planners jargon with appropriate referencing prior to the document being submitted to an Inspector. Cllr Blakemore stressed the importance of the Plan being in the correct language and suggested that this is a service which should be sought if not already covered. Cllr Gloria Wills stated that Fairhurst in their role as the Council's appointed expert consultant should have been undertaking this work as they have been going through the Plan's development rather than it being left until a separate task at the end of the process. Cllr Blakemore urged the Council to ensure that Plan is read through by an expert prior to submission to ensure correct planning terminology and referencing is included. Cllrs Alf Walton and Gloria Wills voiced their concerns regarding the costs charged to date by Fairhurst and the belief that terminology and referencing should have been an integral part of their work. Cllr Chris Lines recommended that the Clerk be asked to review the wording of the original agreement with Fairhurst to determine if this service had been requested. This recommendation was agreed and the Clerk was asked to circulate the original Fairhurst specification to all for reference.

RESOLVED: To receive this information and the Clerk to circulate the original

Fairhurst specification to all Cllrs.

3.11 Notification of 8 week public consultation for the new dwellings outside of development limits SPD:

The Clerk had forwarded a copy of this document to Mr David Bowles for his and the Steering Group's consideration.

RESOLVED: To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.12 CAB:

Mr John Hannon had confirmed that the Howle Hope Charities have paid a £2,000 donation towards the CAB service in each of the last two financial years.

RESOLVED: To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.13 Final Phase of St Edmund's Church Wall Refurbishment Report:

The Clerk had informed Mr Kearton that he had been awarded this work and requested that he give the Town Council prior notice of his start date in order that the Bloom Group have time to remove/protect any plants. The Clerk to update Cllrs when this work is to be undertaken.

RESOLVED: To receive this information.

4. Public Participation

The Chairman, Cllr Gloria Wills, closed the meeting for the public to give views and comments. There were no members of the public. The meeting was then re-opened.

5. Reports

5.1 Cemetery Lodge Update by Town Clerk

Prior to the meeting copies of a Cemetery Lodge Update report by the Clerk had been circulated to all. This report made Cllrs aware that the Lodge had been rented out on a 6 month lease commencing 24th April 2015 with a fixed termination date of 23rd October 2015.

The Clerk reported that an additional item relating to Cemetery Lodge would need to be considered under agenda item 9.3.

RESOLVED: To receive this information.

5.2 Proposal to Increase Community Chest Donations by Cllr Vanessa Carmichael

Prior to the meeting copies of a Proposal To Increase Community Chest Donations report by Cllr Vanessa Carmichael had been circulated to all. This report, on behalf of the Community Chest, recommended that donations from the Chest be increased from £50 to £100 where felt appropriate.

RESOLVED: To allow Community Chest donations to be increased from £50 to £100 where the Community Chest Committee feel this is appropriate.

5.3 Unauthorised Encampment on Old Stockton Road, Sedgefield Update by Town Clerk

Prior to the meeting an Unauthorised Encampment on Old Stockton Road, Sedgefield Update Report had been circulate to all. This report summarized a meeting which took place between Cllr Gloria Wills, the Town Clerk and Ms Louise Stokoe of DCC's Gypsy Roma Traveller Service.

Cllrs agreed to monitor the situation at Old Stockton Road, and elsewhere in the Town, and to continue to gather evidence of any issues. Cllr Maxine Robinson suggested that photographic evidence would be best, however, this must be done without anyone antagonizing the situation or putting themselves in danger. This was agreed by all.

RESOLVED:

- i) To receive this information.**
- ii) Cllrs to continue to monitor the situation with information then being passed to DCC via Customer Services and copied at the same time to the GRTS.**
- iii) If possible photographic evidence to be gathered.**
- iv) The Estates Working Group to consider land within the Parish of Sedgefield which may comply with the criteria stipulated by DCC's GRTS and, if appropriate, bring a recommendation(s) back to a future P&R Committee meeting.**

Note: Reports related to information exempt from the public are considered under agenda item 9.

6. Financial Matters

6.1 Cheques for approval after 13th April 2015:

Details of cheques for approval after 13th April 2015 until 30th April 2015 had been circulated to all Cllrs prior to the meeting. The Clerk circulated details of cheques for approval from 1st – 11th May 2015. Cllr Wills expressed her concerns regarding the recent spate of boiler repairs, however, she acknowledged that quotes have been sought for potential replacements.

RESOLVED: All cheques were approved for payment and duly signed by Cllrs Wills, Carr and the Clerk at the close of the meeting.

6.2 Annual Return 2014/15 Report by Town Clerk

Prior to the meeting a report by the Clerk entitled Annual Return 2014/15 had been circulated to all. This report contained the key dates for the completion and return of the Council's 2014/15 Annual Return. The Clerk reported that no requests have been received from members of the public to view the Council's accounts. The Annual Return will now be submitted to BDO prior to the deadline date of 3rd June 2015.

RESOLVED: To receive this information.

6.3 2015/16 Income and Expenditure Reporting Report by Town Clerk

Prior to the meeting a report by the Clerk entitled 2015/16 Income and Expenditure Reporting had been circulated to all. This report detailed the work being undertaken to update the income and expenditure reporting systems for the new financial year.

RESOLVED: To receive this information.

7. Training

7.1 “Council Tax Base and Localisation of Council Tax Support Grant” training, 24th June 2015, County Hall, Durham

Prior to the meeting copies of a “Council Tax Base and Localisation of Council Tax Support Grant” training event to be jointly run between CDALC and DCC on 24th June 2015 at 6pm in County Hall had been circulated to all.

RESOLVED:

- i) The Clerk to attend.**
- ii) Any other Cllr wishing to attend to inform the Clerk by no later than 22nd May 2015.**
- iii) The Clerk to bring a report back to a future P&R Committee detailing the content of this training event.**

8. Correspondence

8.1 Durham Association Newsletter April 2015

Prior to the meeting copies of the Durham Association News for April 2015 had been circulated to all.

RESOLVED: To receive this information.

8.2 NALC Meeting Bulletin – National Council 31st March 2015 (email from Mr Jonathan Owen dated 7th April 2015)

Prior to the meeting copies of an email from Mr Steve Ragg dated 7th April 2015 had been circulated to all along with an accompanying NAL Discussion Paper on Devolution attachment.

RESOLVED: TO receive this information.

8.3 Consultation on Introducing the Local Government Ombudsman’s Jurisdiction to Town and Parish Council Sector (email from Mr Steve Ragg dated 7th April 2015 – Note: copies have already been previously circulated to all Cllrs at or immediately after the April 2015 P&R Committee meeting)

Prior to the meeting copies of this paperwork had been circulated to all in order to give enough time for Cllrs to consider this consultation. The Clerk reminded Cllrs that in March 2015 the Government had issued this consultation regarding the possibility of extending the Local Government Ombudsman’s jurisdiction to larger parish and town councils. Cllrs noted the contents of the consultation and acknowledged that, if adopted, this could potentially create significant additional

workload, however, at the same time also acknowledging that it was important to continue to raise the professional standing of this sector. The Clerk informed Cllrs that the new audio equipment for recording future Council meetings had now been received and she proposed that in the first instance this be piloted at staff meetings to ensure there is understanding of its usage. This was agreed as being a good idea. The Clerk also reminded Cllrs that they had previously agreed how this audio recording system would work during Council meetings. Cllr Maxine Robinson suggested that it would be a good idea for Cllrs to review and refamiliarise themselves with this. This was agreed as a good idea and should be included on the June 2015 P&R agenda.

RESOLVED:

- i) To receive this information.**
- ii) The Clerk to pilot the new audio recording equipment.**
- iii) The June 2015 P&R Committee to review the previously agreed recording meetings protocol adopted by the Council.**

8.4 Pedestrians & Road Users Safety Concerns from Residents of Sedgefield (email from Mr Joe McKenna dated 21st April 2015)

Prior to the meeting copies of an email from Mr Joe McKenna dated 21st April 2015 had been circulated to all. This email, and the strands within, provided the latest position with regard to the Neighbourhood Watch Panel's concerns regarding pedestrians and road users safety as per their discussions with Durham County Council. Cllrs noted that they had read the emails contained within.

Cllr Allan Blakemore reported that Mr McKenna is hoping to set up a meeting with DCC Highways on Friday 15th May 2015. Cllr Blakemore will also attend this meeting and will keep the Council updated regarding this matter. Cllr Ian Sutherland expressed his agreement with Mr McKenna's view that something needed to be done in this area of the Town (near Sainsbury's and Bolams). Cllr Blakemore reiterated that DCC have stated the issue is not about the cost of painting yellow (single or double) lines on the road but the associated legal fees in order to put them in place. It is felt that businesses in the area will object citing the implications upon their trade. This issue is on-going. Cllr Gloria Wills asked if the Town Council should be making a representation in support of the Neighbourhood Watch's concern. Cllr Allan Blakemore stated that his presence at meeting is a way in which the Town Council is supporting and he has stated this at meetings. Cllr Blakemore also

informed Cllrs that DCC have clearly stated that there is no option whatsoever for a pedestrian crossing in this area. Cllr Maxine Robinson suggested that as there has been no re-assessment of this area since the opening of the Sainsbury's store it is possible to identify key pinch points in the week, e.g. week day lunchtimes, weekends, bank holidays and Christmas as well as sale events, and the Town Council could write to DCC Highways supporting the work of the Neighbourhood Watch and highlighting the considerable damage to the roadsides in this area.

RESOLVED:

The Clerk to write to Mr Keith Jameson (DCC Highways) expressing the Council's support for the concerns of the Neighbourhood Watch and to highlight the state of the damaged roadsides in this area of the Town.

8.5 Sedgefield Methodist Church letter regarding Community Right To Bid (letter from Ms Katie McGuinness and Mr David Glass dated 29th April 2015)

Prior to the meeting copies of a letter from Ms Katie McGuinness and Mr David Glass of the Sedgefield Methodist Church dated 29th April 2015 had been circulated to all. This letter gave the Methodist Church's permission for the Town Council to register Sedgefield Methodist Church under the Community Right To Bid Scheme in order to protect this community asset.

RESOLVED:

The Clerk to proceed and complete the necessary DCC paperwork in order to request Sedgefield Methodist Church is considered under the Community Right To Bid Scheme.

8.6 Letter from Mrs Julia Bowles dated 6th May 2015 regarding correspondence

The Clerk circulated to all Cllrs a copy of a letter from Mrs Julia Bowles dated 6th May 2015 regarding her concern that correspondence was recently withheld from Cllrs. The content of this letter was noted and Cllrs Lynne Dentith and Maxine Robinson requested the drafting of a response to this letter be put onto the June 2015 P&R agenda.

RESOLVED:

This item to be added to the June 2015 P&R agenda.

8.7 Draft Invitation to a Sedgefield Business Breakfast from Mr Ean Parsons (23rd June 2015):

The Clerk circulate to all copies of a draft invitation to a Sedgefield Business Breakfast event scheduled for 23rd June 2015. The invitation had been prepared by Mr Ean Parsons of the Manor House 1707. Mr Parsons sought the support of the Town Council for this event and asked if he could incorporate the Town Council's logo onto the invitation. Cllr John Robinson commented that business breakfasts events have proved to be very useful within DCC and voiced his support to this event. Other Cllrs also voiced their support.

RESOLVED:

The Clerk to inform Mr Parsons that the Town Council are happy for their logo to be used on publicity material for this event and Mr Parsons to be wished well with this event.

8.8 Livin – Recruitment Invitation for Independent and Tenant Board Members:

The Clerk circulated to all copies of a recruitment advertisement from Livin who are seeking to appoint Independent and Tenant Board Members. Details for obtaining application packs, closing date, applicant support & information workshop plus interview date were all included in the advertisement.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

9. Consideration of Reports Exempt from Public:

Cllr Wills explained that due to the confidential nature of the following items these would be discussed under Exempt Information and as such had any members of the press or public been in attendance at the meeting they would have been requested to leave the meeting (Section 1 Sub Section (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960).

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.20pm.