

SEDFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the proceedings of the ANNUAL TOWN MEETING of the Council held at 7 p.m. in the Parish Hall, Sedgefield, on Tuesday 18th May 2021

Cllr Mel Carr (Chair of the Town Council), Cllr Ann Carr (Mayor),

Cllrs. Allan Blakemore, Mark Cant, John Finlayson, Allan Nicholson, Jimmy Seymour, Julie Towler, Mavis Wayman and Stephen Winter

Clerk: Dr Jane Ayre

2 Residents

1 Welcome by the Chairman:

Cllr Mel Carr welcomed everyone to the Council's Annual Town Meeting. The Clerk explained that due to the on-going covid restrictions the format of this year's meeting was different to that of previous years as public attendance was limited in accordance with capacity permitted but the Council's Annual Report for 2020/21 had been published earlier that day on the Council's website and share through the residents database and promoted via Twitter. In addition, rather than asking representatives from the Sedgefield Charities, Sedgefield Development Trust, Durham Constabulary and Durham County Council to attend they had been given the opportunity to instead submit written reports which had been published with the agenda for the meeting making them widely available for the public to access. Finally, the Clerk reminded all that there would not be any presentation of Mayoral donations nor presentation of the Citizen of the Year Award, both of which would have traditionally been part of this meeting. It is hoped that the Annual Town Meeting in May 2022 will be more like its traditional and well attended format.

2 Apologies

Cllrs David Brown, Paul Heasman and Alf Walton.

3 Chairman's Report 2020/21

Cllr Mel Carr said it was over a year since the Covid 19 pandemic started in the UK and had changed everyone's way of life but at last the situation now appears to be improving. Due to government restrictions, measures were taken to ensure that our Clerk and all Council staff complied with them and have been able to work remotely or in a covid secure way. This has

enabled Councillors to receive secure and swift information from government, Durham County Council, and other sources as it is issued. Cllr Mel Carr expressed his thanks to all Town Councillors and Town Council staff who continue to work together during this difficult situation. While the Town Council Offices were closed to the public the decision was made to update the improve the building. Despite difficulties at times with supply of materials and labour this refurbishment should be completed this month. The Parish Hall had to close and many groups have been unable to meet as well as various Town Council events having to be cancelled or curtailed. The fireworks event was cancelled, however, the virtual Halloween Howler was well supported. The excellent Christmas window display by the local businesses helped to add some cheer to the festive season, as did the arrival of Santa Claus to switch on the tree lights. The Citizen of the Year went ahead and was awarded to Howard Smith who is well known for his work with the Sedgefield In Bloom. Town Council gardeners continued to work at the cemetery and throughout the Town ensuring that, despite very different circumstances to other years, the Town once again looked its stunning best allowing us all to enjoy the floral displays as we were forced to stay near to home. The village greens are the responsibility of the Town Council and during 2020/21 a number of issues have developed. While not always obvious, a great deal of discussion and legal work has been carried out and in some cases continues so that we can seek a satisfactory conclusion for all concerned. Section 106 money (developer's contribution paid to Durham County Council to mitigate the impact of their development on the community) is still being monitored to ensure that Sedgefield benefits from it. Our project to expand Butterwick Road Cemetery is progressing well with a planning application having been submitted to Durham County Council. It's good to see that volunteers and organisations have all been supporting the Town over the last difficult 12 months. Cllr Mel Carr concluded by thanking those Town Councillors who had not returned to the Town Council following the recent uncontested election and for the part they had played in the Council's many achievements over the last term of office including notably financial stability, refurbishment work in the Parish Hall and Town Council Offices as well as development of plans for cemetery expansion and progression of village green matters. Cllr Mel Carr welcomed new Councillors to the Town Council and looked forward to working with them and continuing the Town Council's good work over the coming term of office.

4 Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held 7th May 2019:

The minutes from the Annual Town Council meeting held on 7th May 2019 were proposed by Cllr Allan Blakemore as being a true record and this was seconded by Cllr Mavis Wayman. The minutes were then agreed as being a true record of the meeting.

5 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 7th May 2019.

6 Reports

6.1 Town Council Annual Report 2020/21

The Clerk reminded all present that copies of the Town Council's Annual Report 2020/21 had been circulated through the residents database, promoted on Twitter and placed on the Council's website all for the public's ease of access. The Report contained a Mayor's Report by Cllr Leo McCormack (pages 8), Policy & Resources Committee Report by Cllr Gloria Wills (pages 9-11), Community Development & Engagement Committee Report by Cllr Allan Blakemore (pages 12-13), Personnel Committee Report by Cllr Gloria Wills (page 13), Community Chest Report by Cllr Vanessa Carmichael (page 14), Sedgefield Youth Club Management Committee Report by Cllr Julie Towler (page 14), Sedgefield Extra Committee Report by Cllr Chris Lines (page 15), Town Clerk's Review of the Year (pages 16 - 18), Councillor attendance information (page 19) and financial information (pages 20-21).

6.2 Sedgefield Charities:

Mrs Anne Gladwin had provided a report from Sedgefield Charities which the Clerk confirmed had been published on the Council's website along with agenda for this meeting.

6.3 Sedgefield Development Trust:

Mr Roger Clubley, Chairman of the Sedgefield Development Trust had provided a report which the Clerk confirmed had been published on the Council's website along with agenda for this meeting.

6.4 Durham Constabulary:

Sgt Alex Clarke had provided a report on behalf of Durham Constabulary and again the Clerk confirmed this had been published on the Council's website along with agenda for this meeting.

7 Any Other Business:

The Chairman, Cllr Mel Carr, asked members of the public if they had any questions for the Town Council.

Mr Tim Dredge asked what was happening regarding the re-opening of Sedgefield Parish Hall and also Sedgefield Youth Club. The Clerk reported that whilst the doors of the Parish Hall have remained closed due to the various covid restrictions the Town Council has continued to

maintain an active dialogue with its regular users. As a result of a phased plan is now in place for the return of many of those groups commencing on 19th May 2021 with Sedgefield Players, Sew Easy and Fishburn Dance with many others having planned their return between now and December 2021. It is positive that we are now hopefully on the start of a journey to see the Parish Hall returning to being a well used community hub. With regards to the Youth Club, the Clerk reported that the Town Council remains fully committed to the Club and is in discussions with the Youth Worker in order to make arrangements for the Club to restart as soon as possible.

County Cllr Chris Lines noted Cllr Carr's comments regarding the presentation of the 2019-2020 Citizen of the Year Award to Mr Howard Smith. County Cllr Lines suggested that there was now an opportunity for the Town Council, in conjunction with the Rotary Club and Sedgefield Development Trust, to reset the Citizen Of The Year Award plus Young Citizen of the Year Award so that it was presented at the end of the calendar year rather than the civic year thereby ensuring it reflected the work of the previous 12 months. Presentation of such Awards could be tied into existing events scheduled for December such as the Mayor's Carol Service/Snow Party/volunteers event organized by the Village Games. Cllr Mel Carr agreed this was a good idea and well worth exploring with the Rotary and Development Trust. Cllr Allan Blakemore agreed and said that a similar approach had been undertaken many years ago but with an event that had perhaps been too elaborate and expensive for what was required. Cllrs agreed the presentation of such Awards needed to be about the people receiving the accolades rather than being tied in with the presentation of Mayoral cheques. The Clerk was asked to liaise with the Rotary Club and Development Trust and bring feedback to a future P&R Committee meeting.

The Chairman thanked the public for their participation.

Cllr Stephen Winter expressed his thanks to the outgoing Cllrs and for all their work over the Council's last term of office. He also wished to welcome new DCC County Cllrs and looked forward to building a relationship between the Town Council and DCC.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.20pm.