



**Minutes of the proceedings of the ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
of the Council held at 7 p.m. in the Parish Hall, Sedgefield,
on Tuesday 3rd May 2022**

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

Cllrs. Allan Blakemore, Kelly Dickerson, John Finlayson, Catherine Hart, Jenny Haworth, Paul Heasman, Dave Jasper, Julie Towler, Mavis Wayman and Stephen Winter

Clerk: Dr Jane Ayre

19 Residents

1 Welcome by the Chairman:

Cllr Mel Carr welcomed everyone to the Council's Annual Town Meeting. He explained this meeting was in three parts, the first being the Annual Town Meeting itself when the Town Council and other organisations would report their activities over the previous financial year, the second part would see the Mayor present financial donations to her chosen charities and the third part would be the announcement of the Awards for Young Citizen of the Year 2021 and the Citizen of the Year 2021. Cllr Mel Carr informed those in attendance that copies of the meeting's agenda, previous minutes and the Council's 2021/22 Annual Report had already been distributed around the room for information. He informed residents in attendance that they would be able to ask questions and make comments under agenda item 7 of the Annual Town Meeting.

2 Apologies:

Cllr Mark Cant.

3 Chairman's Report 2021/22:

Cllr Mel Carr said it had been a difficult year with continuing Covid-19 pandemic-related problems but was pleased to note that life seemed to be getting back to some near normality. The Town Council Offices refurbishment has been completed and have been open to the public via a new reception area for quite some time. Sedgefield Parish Hall is thriving and the tradition of Friday coffee mornings has returned again. A number of on-going village green issues are very near to resolution. Cllr Mel Carr expressed his thanks to the Town Council's gardening staff, Mr Stephen Young and Ben Gray, for their work in maintaining Butterwick Road Cemetery

and, along with the Sedgefield In Bloom group, keeping the Town's floral displays and open areas so beautiful. He went on to report that extensive refurbishment of the Town's festive lights had taken place along with essential work on trees around the central village green area. This had culminated with the Mayor and Santa switching on the Town's festive lights despite coinciding with the arrival of Storm Arwen! The Town Council continues to monitor and push for information from Durham County Council regarding Section 106 monies as it tries to ensure Sedgefield benefits from such. The Town Council's plans for expanding Butterwick Road Cemetery are progressing and this matter is becoming urgent. Cllr Mel Carr concluded his report by thanking his fellow Cllrs for all their support over the last year.

Cllr Allan Blakemore took this opportunity to present a small token of thanks on behalf of the Town Council for Cllr Mel Carr's work over 2021/22 as the Mayor of Sedgefield's Consort.

4 Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held 18th May 2021:

The minutes from the Annual Town Council meeting held on 18th May 2021 were proposed by Cllr Allan Blakemore as being a true record and this was seconded by Cllr Julie Towler. The minutes were then agreed as being a true record of the meeting.

5 Matters Arising:

The Clerk reported that Sedgefield Youth Club had been relaunched in September 2021 and was now thriving with very high attendance figures and lots of plans currently being worked on to deliver a varied programme of school summer holiday activities. Information regarding the Youth Club can be found in the Town Council's 2021/22 Annual Report.

6 Reports:

6.1 Town Council Annual Report 2021/22:

The Clerk reminded all present that copies of the Town Council's Annual Report 2021/22 had already been circulated around the room and would be shared through the residents database, promoted on Twitter and placed on the Council's website from Wednesday 4th May 2022 as well as paper copies available in the Town Council Offices. Cllr Mel Carr informed all in attendance at the meeting that the Annual Report contained a Mayor's Report by Cllr Ann Carr (pages 8-9), Policy & Resources Committee Report by Cllr Allan Blakemore (pages 10-11), Personnel Committee Report by Cllr Allan Blakemore (page 11), Community Development & Engagement Committee Report by Cllr Ann Carr (page 12), Community Chest Report by Cllr Julie Towler (page 13), Sedgefield Youth Club Report by Cllr Julie Towler (page 14), Allotments update (page 15), Sedgefield Extra/Twitter/Website Update (page 16), Review of Past Year by Clerk (pages 17-19) and financial information in the form of income and expenditure account plus consolidated balance sheet (pages 20-21).

6.2 Durham County Council Sedgefield Electoral Ward Councillors:

County Cllr Chris Lines reflected the last 12 months had been one of significant change for DCC, particularly after their Annual Meeting on 26th May 2021 following which every County Cllr had a new role with learn as either being in opposition or in the new Joint Administration. Coming towards the end of the first year in office the new Joint Administration have taken forward three projects which had been key issues in the 2021 local government elections, namely the matter of the DLI Museum and its collection, the recently built building at the Sands in Durham as potential new DCC headquarters and leisure transformation. Looking Countywide work has also been undertaken, and continues, to progress on County Durham's bid for City of Culture 2025, a potential devolution settlement and progressing constituency bids for levelling up funds. County Cllr Lines said DCC Officers have also had to adapt to new ways of working and building new working relationships with Cllrs. Focusing on Sedgefield, over the last 12 months County Cllrs have focused on collaboration work with Sedgefield Town Council (and Fishburn Parish Council) an approach which has been openly welcomed by all. Emphasis has been put on open communications and this has been assisted with County Cllr Brown also being a Town Councillor. Work is progressing well with an active travel project looking at walking, cycling other non-car/sustainable transport options plus sustainable transport in the Sedgefield Ward. With regards to Section 106 monies, the sports allocations have provisionally been made and outstanding applications for such funds were submitted by the end of January 2022 with DCC now assessing those. The community "pot" of such funding is the next matter to be progressed. County Cllr Lines was aware the Town Council had already expressed an interest and initial application in relation to such monies. DCC are currently working on the eligibility criteria for such monies and process for allocating such. DCC will be transparent and open about this process and both local County Cllrs will play a role in promoting these monies and the process for applications. In addition to local electoral ward work County Cllrs also have special responsibilities assigned to them by DCC one of which for County Cllr Lines is Vice Chair of Scrutiny. County Cllr Lines concluded by saying the last year has been challenging but enjoyable.

County Cllr David Brown reminded all that he had been a County Cllr for a long time. He thanked fellow County Cllr Lines for the comprehensive monthly report which he provides to both Sedgefield Town Council and Fishburn Parish Council. County Cllr Brown reiterated the new ways of working which have been adopted by DCC in response to Covid-19 and whilst he personally was not comfortable with the IT and technology this had allowed work to continue through difficult times. County Cllr Brown gave an explanation of his various roles at DCC. He is a member of the South and East Planning Committees. He is heavily involved in licensing

matters including Chairs of Committees overseeing licensing of taxis and alcohol licences. In addition he is also a member of the Crematorium Committee and explained that Durham and Mountsett crematoriums are the only ones in the County run by the County Council with all others being privately operated. County Cllr Brown continues to deal with lots of residents on a daily basis to help progress and resolve a wide variety of issues.

6.3 Sedgefield Charities:

Mrs Anne Gladwin explained she had taken over the role as Clerk to Sedgefield Charities in July 2020. The role of Clerk is one she holds jointly with her husband. Mrs Gladwin deals with the administrative side of the job and her husband the financial side. Mrs Gladwin explained Sedgefield Charities comprises of 3 parts and gave a summary of the Charities activities over the last 12 months. The Relief In Need element of the charity provides support to individuals and local charitable groups. In 2020 and 2021 the Charity had received fewer applications and as a result had issued fewer grants than normal. It was felt the reduced number of applications was most likely due to the impact of covid. In 2021 3 grants had been issued – a grant of £5,000 to the Pop In to cover Hall hire and supervisory costs, a grant of £6,000 to Citizens Advice County Durham and a grant to the Dementia Café to cover the cost of room hire as they had been unable to use the local fire station during its rebuild. The Charities have also provided support to individuals and families who have experienced times of hardship. Funding had been given to Bishop Middleham Church for a new boiler and to Marie Curie for providing cancer support in the local area. The Charities Educational element has received applications from people progressing from A levels for higher education and two grants have been issued to two individuals going to University valuing £600 each. The Educational Fund also provides funding for young people going into further education such as A levels. Allocations are based upon family income. The Charities have given our more grants in the last year for this aspect of education than previously with 12 applications being submitted and 11 grants being issued. Several of these were renewals for young people who were progressing from their first to second years of education. Mrs Gladwin said that in 2022 the Charities would continue to be reactive to all applications which are submitted. Mrs Gladwin said the Charities were looking at new ways in which to promote their existence and work by supplementing previous traditional forms of advertisement with use of social media. Mrs Gladwin urged everyone to spread the word about the Sedgefield Charities and their work.

6.4 Sedgefield Development Trust:

Mr Roger Clubley introduced himself as the Chairman of the Sedgefield Development Trust and was pleased to report that despite the pandemic the work of each of the Trust's projects had continued and were now focusing upon recovery and resuming new routines. Mr Clubley was sad to report that in September 2021 Mr John Fitzpatrick, a long-serving and dedicated Director

and Trustee of the Trust who was involved since the Trust was established, had passed away. The Trust are currently working on making sure all their electronic records are being held in the same Cloud. This is going to be a long process but is underway. The Trust are also undertaking a comprehensive review of their governance policies and procedures and are receiving invaluable help from Durham Community Action in this regard. Mr Clubley gave an overview of the status and work of each of the Trust's various projects – Sedgefield Farmers Market, Energy Switch, Woodland and Wildlife, Homework Help, Repair Café, Bike & Active Travel, Sedgefield News, Bees at Hardwick, DIDO and Sew Easy – and was particularly pleased that many projects were welcoming younger attendees. Mr Clubley reported that whilst he continues in the role of Chairman of the Trust, Mike Ashwell is the Vice Chairman and other trustees are Janette Savage, Mark Darling, Cathryn Gathercote, Melissa Hinton, Tamzin Lafford, Sandy Clubley and Gloria Wills. Mr Clubley said the Trust has a wide range of other supported and noted that Cllr Mel Carr represents the Town Council and attends many of the Trust's meetings. Mr Clubley expressed his thanks to all volunteers connected with the Trust.

6.5 Durham Constabulary:

There was no Durham Constabulary report.

7 Any Other Business:

The Chairman, Cllr Mel Carr, asked members of the public if they had any questions for the Town Council, County Cllrs, Sedgefield Charities and/or Sedgefield Development Trust.

Mrs Julia Bowles said she had noted during the meeting references to Section 106 monies and reminded all that it was now 6 years ago since a group of residents had been given legal status to participate in the public planning inquiry relating to the large scale development at Eden Drive. During the inquiry the group had been promised by the Planning Inspector that whilst Durham County Council would have the final decision but that the community would be consulted. Mrs Bowles said that no such community consultation had taken place and that nothing was known about the actual amounts of various elements of Section 106 monies available. Mrs Bowles said some residents had contacted Durham County Council directly regarding this matter but all had received varying responses and felt it was clear the County Council would spend the money as they wishes which might not be the same as how residents wished it to be spent. Mrs Bowles said this was totally unfair and goes against what was promised at the inquiry. She said what was required were clear figures showing what monies had already been received and allocated, what monies were yet to be received, when and for what purposes. Mrs Bowles said the local AAP had said there would be community consultation but she was concerned there was no decent communication channel across the Town. Mrs Bowles noted that some time ago the Town Council ran the opportunity for member

of the public to meet one to one with Cllrs before meetings but these had not been successful. Mrs Bowles had suggested consideration be given to having some open meetings when members of the public can attend and speak about anything. Mrs Bowles believed linking with the Sedgefield Development Trust to host such could be an option and it was only by getting people together could there be real engagement. Mrs Bowles said there had not been consultation about the allocation of sports Section 106 monies and that the AAP had agreed with her when she challenged them about this. She also said it was unclear the exact amount of monies allocated to sport or why community monies had been used to supplement sport in the first instance. Mrs Bowles asked if the Town Council could do something about this. She understood people were apathetic if not given the right information but believed that sometimes people needed to be “stirred up” in order to take note. Mrs Bowles said it was important not to accept “waffle” from Durham County Council. Cllr Mel Carr said comments made by Mrs Bowles would be noted and considered in due course. Mr Clubleby said the Development Trust would be willing to help in any way if possible. Mrs Bowles commented that there was often litter around the green youth shelter in the Town and suggested that a bin be placed next to it in order to encourage people to put their rubbish there. Cllr Mel Carr pointed out that four bins had been installed at that location over the years, two of which were set on fire, one was damaged by a car and another vandalized and pulled from its base. Cllr Carr also pointed out that litter is not just a problem at that location in the Town but across a much wider area.

The Chairman thanked the public for their participation.

8 Presentations:

The presentations and various awards were during the second part of the Annual Town Meeting beginning at 7.37pm.

a) Presentation of Cheques from the Mayor’s Charity:

The Mayor, Cllr Ann Carr, said she had enjoyed her term of office and was delighted to present cheques to the following charities and local groups: -

- Young Minds
- Alzheimer Research UK
- Sedgefield Players
- SPYS
- Sedgefield Village Veterans
- Sedgefield In Bloom
- Pop In
- Sedgefield Memory Café
- Sedgefield Youth Club

- Sedgefield Rangers
- DIDO
- 1st Sedgefield Scouts/Cubs
- Sedgefield Junior Squash Club
- Sew Easy

b) Young Citizen of the Year 2021 (sponsored by County Cllr Chris Lines, Sedgefield Development Trust, Sedgefield Rotary Club and Sedgefield Town Council):

County Cllr Chris Lines introduced the Young Citizen of the Year Award 2021 and announced joint winners Martha and Maggie Edge for their inspirational work with the Sedgefield Ploggers. Certificate and prizes were presented.

c) Citizen of the Year 2021 (sponsored by Sedgefield Development Trust, Sedgefield Rotary Club and Sedgefield Town Council):

Mr Mel Broadbelt (Sedgefield Rotary) and Mr Roger Clubley (Sedgefield Development Trust) announced that Mr Bobby Workman was the Citizen of the Year 2021. Speeches were then made in recognition of his considerable services to Sedgefield over many years followed by a presentation of certificate and gifts presented by the Mayor Cllr Ann Carr, Mr Mel Broadbelt and Mr Roger Clubley.

The Chairman, Cllr Mel Carr thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.40pm.