

GREATER WILLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting
12th September 2024

IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor D Hales, Councillor Smith
Councillor Berry, Councillor Elgie, Councillor C Hales
Councillor Henfrey, Councillor Jackson, Councillor Jordan
Councillor McArdle, Councillor Tinsley
Emma McCann (DTC) (Minutes)

PRESENTATION OF ALLOTMENT AWARDS

Allotment Award winners were invited to this meeting to be presented with their awards. All winners were congratulated for their efforts.

1. ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Helen Cogdon Town Clerk and Councillor Savage.
Proposed Councillor Elgie
Seconded Councillor Smith

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Members are invited to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interest in matters appearing on the agenda and the nature of their interest.
None declared.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Resident agenda items requested through the Clerk.
None received.

4. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 13TH JUNE 2024

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 13th June 2024, as written, and circulated, were agreed as a true record.
Councillor D Hales signed the minutes.
Proposed Councillor Berry
Seconded Councillor Smith

MATTERS ARISING (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)

None.

5. TO CONSIDER THE ALLOTMENT REPORT

Councillor C Hales reported;
Review Awards
Reviews of Oakenshaw, Springfield and Park Top were conducted by Councillor Berry and I over 2 specified days, 14th and 15th August
Awards were made to the following plot holders:
Oakenshaw
1st Prize and Special Award, Mr R Kitching
Highly Commended, Mr S Allwright

Highly Commended, Ms Y Golding
Park Top
No awards
Springfield
1st Prize, Mr N Cowan
Highly Commended, Mr D Hagar
Highly Commended, Mr D Little

Oakenshaw has seen some new tenancies in recent weeks. There remain a small number of plots which are a cause for concern and appropriate letters have been sent out by GWTC. The vast majority reflect the nature of the weather and early rabbit infestations, consequently tenants are to be congratulated for their determination to cultivate a minimum of 50% on their plots. It is noted that security remains an issue with gates left unlocked despite locks provided. The agreed Geothermal Greenhouse experiment is progressing and GWTC wait in eager anticipation of its completion.

Springfield has numerous issues which are in the process of being addressed. The fencing to the frontage has been funded through DCC Councillors and work has now started. Some plots are in the process of being cleared following evictions. Further letters are being sent to tenants whose plots have failed to realise basic conditions stipulated in GWTC Allotment policies. There are however a high proportion of very good and well cultivated plots on site, these reflect the hard work and commitment to allotmenting. Plot holders are to be congratulated and quite a few letters of commendation have been sent out.

The concerns expressed by a tenant that their plot had potential carcinogens in the soil have been addressed by GWTC. Soil samples were taken from the plot and sent for analysis. The conclusion from the analysis stated 'based on the results all values are below the relevant threshold value for allotments with the exception of lead' the historical presence of which can be mitigated against by a range of strategies as suggested by the company.

Park Top has a growing number of issues. The site is problematic with potential hazards, steep inclines, uneven surfaces and plots which have been cordoned off as dangerous. Plot holders, some of whom are currently infirm, struggle to meet minimum policy standards. A fuller discussion on the future of the site needs to be made and contact for further advice needs to be made to DCC.

Rosedale remains largely outside of GWTC allotment control, although we have had meetings to offer support to the new committee. A light touch has been adopted and greater application of GWTC Allotment policies adopted. Councillors Berry and I visited the site recently and whilst there were some plots which require attention and development, the majority reflect the commitment many tenants have for their plots.

6. TO CONSIDER PLANNING APPLICATIONS

New Planning Applications

- DM/24/01313/FPA - The Bungalow 26 Cumberland Terrace Willington Crook DL15 0PB
 - Retention of static caravan, 4 No. metal containers and metal column for CCTV
- For Information Only – Standard Consultation End Date: 9 July 2024*

- DM/24/01462/HPN - 2 Bulman Walk Willington Prior notification for the erection of single storey rear extension with a projection of 5.345 metres, an eaves height of 2.340 metres and a total height of 3.950 metres

For Information Only – Decided 17 July 2024 – Prior Approval Not Required

- DM/24/01708/NMA - Land Adjacent To (East) Ash Drive Willington - Non-material amendment to the application description pursuant to planning permission DM/21/04140/RM to correct the outline application reference and condition 1 (approved plans) comprising amendments to the plans relating to the Cookridge (Planning Layout Phase 1) and Dalton (side elevation changes resulting in 8 no. units being handed) house types

For Information Only – Approved 22 July 2024

- DM/24/01707/NMA - Land Adjacent To (East) Ash Drive Willington - Non Material Amendment to the wording of conditions 8 (site access) and 19 (travel plan) pursuant to DM/18/03443/OUT to alter the timing of the delivery of the S278 works and remove reference to 'workplace travel plans'

For Information Only – Approved 30 July 2024

- DM/24/01873/DRC - Lowfield Farm Access Road From A690 Durham Road Willington - Discharge of condition 18 (noise mitigation) pursuant to planning permission DM/18/03443/OUT (as amended by DM/23/02103/NMA) in relation to Phase 1 (DM/21/04140/RM as amended by DM/24/01708/NMA)

For Information Only – Approved 5 August 2024

- DM/24/01869/DRC - Lowfield Farm Access Road From A690 Durham Road Willington - Discharge of condition 2 (site levels, FFLs and enclosures) pursuant to DM/21/04140/RM (as amended by DM/24/01708/NMA)

For Information Only – Approved 19 August 2024

- DM/24/01910/TEL - Telecommunications Mast Willington Cricket Club Manor Road Willington - Prior notification for the removal and replacement of the existing 18m monopole supporting 3 no. antennas with a new 20m 5G monopole supporting 6 no. new antennas and ancillary equipment. The installation of 1 no. new 0.3m dish and 1 no. new 0.6m dish. The removal and replacement of 1 no. cabinet with 3 no. new cabinets and associated ancillary equipment within an extended compound and works thereto.

For Information Only – Application Withdrawn 29 August 2024

- DM/24/02147/DRC - Lowfield Farm Access Road From A690 Durham Road Willington - Discharge of Conditions 15 (contaminated land), 17 (archaeology) and 19 (travel plan) pursuant to planning permission DM/18/03443/OUT

DM/24/02150/FPA - 21 Prospect Terrace Willington – First floor and two storey front and side extension including single storey rear extension

- DM/24/02067/FPA - St Aidens House High Street Willington - Change of use of existing building (Use Class E(g)) to a dwellinghouse with ancillary workspace including external alterations

There has been a detailed public comment which has a lot of information.

Previous Planning Application Decisions

- DM/24/00481/FPA – 13 Russell Place, Willington – Dormer style extension to second bedroom

Approved - 14 June 2024

- DM/24/00758/FPA - Unit 1, Brockwell Court. Low Willington Industrial Estate, Willington - Change of use to dog day care and training centre with creation external exercise area and alteration to insert external door

Approved 17 June 2024

- DM/24/01044/FPA – 18 Fleming Way, Willington – Single storey rear extension

Approved - BNG Not Required - Mon 17 Jun 2024

- DM/24/00758/FPA - Unit 1 Brockwell Court, Low Willington Industrial Estate, Willington - Change of use to dog day care and training centre with creation external exercise area and alteration to insert external door

Approved – 17 June 2024

- DRC/22/00261 - Land Adjacent To (East) Ash Drive, Willington - Discharge of Conditions 5 (Construction Management Plan and Method Statement), 6 - (coal mining legacy), 8 (off-site highways), 10 (Arboricultural Impact Assessment), 14 (contaminated land) and 16 (archaeology) pursuant to planning permission DM/18/03443/OUT (erection of up to 200 dwellings).

Approved – 01 August 2024

- DM/24/00170/FPA - Land To The East Of Ashfield Drive Durham Road Willington - Erection of up to 20 dwellings with associated access, car parking, landscaping, engineering and infrastructure

Application Withdrawn – 9 August 2024

- DM/24/00419/FPA – Rose Hall, Lydia Street, Willington – Demolish part of old Church Hall. Convert remaining building into a dwelling. Provide additional pitched roof areas. Provide external parking area, fences and boundary treatment.

Application Withdrawn – 24 July 2024

- DM/24/00787/FPA - Hadrian Lodge 1 North Lane Willington - Two storey extension to rear and replacement cladding to front

Approved – BNG Not Required

- DM/24/01121/FPA – 23 South Acre, Oakenshaw – Bedroom extension above garage

Refused – 19 July 2024

Previous Planning Applications Waiting Decisions

- DM/23/02084/DRC - Land Adjacent To (East) Ash Drive Willington - Discharge of Conditions 7 (drainage) and 9 (pedestrian, cycle and bus infrastructure) pursuant to DM/18/03443/OUT (as amended by DM/23/02103/NMA) in relation to Phase 1

- DM/23/02085/DRC - Land Adjacent To (East) Ash Drive Willington - Discharge of Conditions 3 (internal highway network), 4 (materials), 5 (surface treatments) and 6 (landscaping scheme) pursuant to DM/21/04140/RM

- DM/24/00171/RM - Land To The East Of Ash Drive, Durham Road, Willington - Reserved matters application (appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) within parts of Phases 1 and 2 for the erection of up to 112 No. dwellings with associated landscaping and engineering works pursuant to DM/18/03443/OUT

- DM/24/01391/NMA – 8 Prospect Place, Sunnybrow - Non-material amendment pursuant to planning permission DM/22/01284/FPA. Changing pitched roof over single storey garage to a flat roof, removal of two of the roof lanterns, changing folding door set to window in new extension, blocking up existing window, minor internal layout changes

7. TO APPROVE THE BANK RECONCILIATION (JUNE 2024, JULY 2024 AND AUGUST 2024)

The DTC reported,

The Council began in June 2024 with a starting balance of £107,616.67.

There was expenditure of £27,543.41 and credits of £0, leaving an end balance of £80,073.26.

The Council began in July 2024 with a starting balance of £80,073.26.

There was expenditure of £9,047.60 and credits of £23,080.54, leaving an end balance of £94,106.20.

Credits include income for the 2023 Christmas trees from All In Bloom, DCC Fun & Food Summer Fun Events, DCC UKSPF Community Infrastructure Grant, DCC Neighbourhood Budget for the Little Brass Bash and DCC Neighbourhood Budget for Springfield Fence. The Council began in August 2024 with a starting balance of £96,106.20.

There was expenditure of £10,738.37 and credits of £3,329.04, leaving an end balance of £86,696.87.

Credits include income from the 2023 Christmas trees from The Bait Room and the Queens Head, Dog Bags, ticket sales from the South Shields away day and a refund for two cabinets.

Proposed Councillor Smith

Seconded Councillor Jackson

8. TO RECEIVE THE BUDGET REPORT AND APPROVE FINANCIAL DECISIONS (JULY & AUGUST 2024)

The DTC reported,

The budget for 2024-2025 is £123,642.59. This is made up of Precept, LCTRS and Allotment Rent Income.

There is a Spend to Date as of the 31st August 2024 of £47,790.59. This leaves an Available Resource on Budget of £75,852.00.

There are some headings outside the budget which are agreements made outside of the Annual Budget. This includes approved costs from 2023-2024 that covers bills generated in 2023-2024 and only cleared in this new financial year 2024-2025, Fun & Food Easter Fun 2024, and Welcome Space. These three items are due to be signed off soon.

Other headings outside of the original budget setting is Building Works £15,960.00, Little Brass Bash £1,964.00, Fun & Food Summer Fun 2024 £1096.56 and Away Days £500.

Thank you to County Councillors Fraser Tinsley and Olwyn Gunn for their funding allocations and continued support.

Proposed Councillor Jackson

Seconded Councillor Berry

9. RECEIVE THE TOWN COUNCILLORS MONTHLY REPORT

Councillor Smith informed councillors of the issue of rats at Kensington Terrace/Coronation Terrace. Herself and Councillor D Hales had met with County Councillors Fraser Tinsley and Olwyn Gunn to discuss the difficult circumstances that resulted from the explosion in June 2024.

County Councillor Gunn thanked Councillor Smith for opening the office in the early hours of the morning to accommodate the residents of the affected streets.

The incident was discussed in detail and explained that the police are leading the investigation which is now closed.

The issue of rats was discussed and explained that Pest Control officers can't enter the building as it is unsafe. County Councillor Gunn confirmed herself and Councillor Tinsley would be visiting the residents of the two streets to discuss the issue to see if they would complete a report of the sightings of rats. Councillor Smith said herself and Councillor D Hales would be accompanying them.

They all confirmed that the welfare, health and mental health of everyone affected is highly important to them.

It was explained there is a lot going on behind the scenes and there is a protocol to follow. Also, there is the worrying risk of children/young people getting in the affected home and being seriously injured. These issues have already been reported to the police.

Councillor Elgie had expressed that the Away Day to South Shields had been enjoyed by all who attended, especially the children. She asked when there would be more away

days as she has been approached by residents. It was noted that the Council has a tight budget for 2024-2025 and we couldn't commit any further away days at the moment.

Councillor Jackson reported the hanging baskets have been great this year. There had been an issue of one or two falling but the DTC had arranged for them to be installed back on the columns. They have been well received by residents.

Councillor McArdle had recently attended a Patient Participation Group meeting which one of the items discussed was upcoming flu and covid vaccination schedule.

Councillor Henfrey asked about the new fencing that has been installed around the town.

Councillor Tinsley explained about the project the County Councillors had been working on. Councillor D Hales suggested it might be nice to see if we can have some planters placed near them.

Councillor Berry thanked the County Councillors for the consultation on the new Oakenshaw playground.

Councillor C Hales explained the Allotment Portfolio had been extended to include Rosedale and Victoria Allotments. The association has always ran the site without much involvement from the Town Council but now they are accepting help and support from us. We have been involved in some meetings and get togethers.

Councillor D Hales said the Little Brass Bash was amazing. Many thanks to the County Councillors for their funding. The fridge freezer is being fully utilised for other town council events. Thanks were extended to Councillor Jordan for her extremely busy night serving up food portions to the town.

We have had three summer fun activity days with children from primary schools within the parish. These were well received; however, some families hadn't turned up or notified us to cancel their spaces. In future, we will look at ways of making sure all spaces are filled and attended.

The Family Fun Day is Saturday 28th September 2024 10am till 4pm. Lots of activities for free such as giant inflatables, play bus, cave pod, Runaway Samba, Blackberry Donkeys etc. William Clark Fairground will also be attending but these are to pay for. Food vendors will be attending as part of the fairground. Stalls will be provided by local people. Mary Kelly Foy MP has been invited, along with the Police and Crime Commissioner's office, local police and fire brigade.

10. TO RECEIVE THE COUNTY COUNCILLORS MONTHLY REPORT

Councillor Tinsley explained he and County Councillor Gunn has been working on two projects which was some resurfacing works of North Dene woods and fencing in relevant areas of the town. Both projects to make the area safer. The fencing will try to alleviate the issues of off-road bikes etc.

Councillor Gunn reported that herself and County Cllr Tinsley are continuing to work with DCC Highways on road safety issues in Sunnybrow and Willington.

Cllr Gunn also reported that herself and Cllr Tinsley were in contact with DCC regarding the closure of Spectrum Leisure Centre. The Centre is privately owned which means that the Council has minimal responsibility. As Councillors they had also contacted Spectrum but received no response.

11. TO CONSIDER COMMUNITY FUND APPLICATIONS

Greater Willington Environmental Improvement Group have asked for funding towards their Bulb Planting 2024. They would like to continue with bulb planting at the entrances of the town and for the planters as part of the Parish Plan. They would like the council to fund the narcissus bulbs in the planters, crocus bulbs for the grassed area at the bottom of the town and snowdrops for the grass bank between Dene View and Burnington Drive.

Total project cost is £999.82. They have been successful in their funding application to County Councillors Fraser Tinsley and Olwyn Gunn and gained £500. They would like the council to find the remaining balance of £499.82.

All relevant supporting documents have been submitted.

Councillor D Hales and Councillor Tinsley declared an interest.

Proposed Councillor Henfrey

Seconded Councillor Jackson

12. TO CONSIDER CIVIC FUND APPLICATIONS

None received.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)

None.

14. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 10th October 2024 at 6pm.