

**GREATER WILLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting**  
**13<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

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**IN ATTENDANCE**

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

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**1. ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Helen Cogdon, Town Clerk, Councillor Savage, County Councillor Olwyn Gunn, PCSO Chloe Stefanelli.

**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.*

Councillor Jordan declared an interest in item 3.

**3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

**Resident agenda items requested through the Clerk.**

Mr T Sharp was welcomed to the meeting. Mr Sharp proceeded to inform councillors of how the geothermal greenhouse would work, how it will be installed and set up. Councillors asked questions and they were answered in detail. The main questions raised were how the barrels would be stored and secured and how would they be filled. Mr Sharp confirmed the barrels would be filled using collected rainwater.

Councillor D Hales thanked Mr Sharp for coming to the meeting and providing more insight into the proposal. Sometimes it can be hard to visual an idea with limited information. She informed him he will receive a written response from the council regarding his request within the next seven days.

Mr Sharp left the meeting. Councillors agreed to do a site visit of his allotment gardens tomorrow morning to be able to make an informed decision.

**4. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING 12<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2023**

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023, as written, and circulated were agreed as a true record.

Councillor D Hales signed the minutes.

Proposed Councillor Smith

Seconded Councillor Jackson

**MATTERS ARISING (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)**

None.

**5. TO APPROVE THE TOWN MAYOR'S NOMINATION GOING FORWARD TO THE BALLOT FOR THE THREE TOWNS REPRESENTATIVE TO SIT ON THE CDALC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

CDALC currently have a vacancy on the CDALC Executive for the 'Three Towns' geographical area. There are only two parish/town councils in the 'Three Towns' so a

representative needs to be chosen from one of these councils. Councillor Dorothy Hales has expressed an interest in going forward to ballot for this position.

Resolved to nominate Councillor D Hales.

Proposed Councillor Smith

Seconded Councillor Berry

## 6. RECEIVE THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT UPDATE

Councillor D Hales declared an interest as Treasurer of Greater Willington Environmental Improvement Group (GWEIG).

In Councillor Savage's absence a report was provided. It was suggested that starting from April 2024 that GWEIG members, Town Councillors, and members of the public meet on the first Wednesday of each month at 10am for a catch up and carry out work to maintain the flower beds etc.

GWEIG are meeting on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2024 to look at what projects are outstanding, what they are hoping to do with regards to any new project ideas and maintenance of current planting areas. They will then look at an approximate budget for this and begin to look at funding streams. This would then lead into the long-term strategic parish plan.

Discussions are under way to arrange the thank you event for the volunteers which was agreed by council.

Proposed Councillor Berry

Seconded Councillor C Hales

## 7. TO CONSIDER PLANNING APPLICATIONS

### New Planning Applications

- DM/23/03043/DRC - Land to The North Of Hawthorn Drive And West Of Hill Meadows, Willington - Discharge of Condition 3 (Land contamination scheme), Condition 4 (Verification report) and Condition 10 (Means of Enclosure) pursuant to DM/20/01960/VOC

For Information Only - Approved Wed 10 January 2024

- DM/24/00225/TPO - 10 Church View, Willington - 1. Sycamore - crown reduce/reshape the height by 4m balance the sides to shape and crown thin by 15% - (CWUDC-3-1971)

- 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/24/00170/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

Councillor Tinsley explained that the original outline permission was for 200 houses, They have now submitted an application for an additional 20 dwellings making a total of 220.

- DM/24/00241/FPA - 18 Cherry Tree Drive, Sunnybrow - Garage conversion and front extension

### Previous Planning Application Decisions

- DM/23/03429/FPA - The Bays 1 Queensway Willington - Single storey extension (dressing area and en-suite)

Approved Wed 10 January 2024

- DM/19/02002/OUT – Site of Former Kensington Hall Hotel, Kensington Terrace, Willington – Housing development of 9 no. dwellings (Outline – All Matters Reserved Other Than Access) (Amended 21/04/2021)

Approved Subject to Section 106 Mon 22 January 2024

- DM/23/00966/FPA - Land North Of Croft Way, Low Willington Industrial Estate, Willington - Erection of a warehouse (Class B2/B8) with ancillary office space and orangery to be used as a showroom

Approved Thurs 8 February 2024

- DM/23/02787/FPA - Erection of agricultural building | Land South East Of Whitworth Lane Brancepeth

Refused Thurs 01 February 2024

### Previous Planning Applications Waiting Decisions

- 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).

- 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

An application was recently submitted to DCC seeking approval for the allocation of monies presently being held in the Authorities Section 106 account.

The see-saw on the Town Green play park was damaged some months ago and removed. The application is to use some of the Section 106 money (£4,947.36) to replace the equipment.

Monies are available for this proposed scheme within the Electoral Division and as such the proposal is considered to have merit in principle. However, a final decision on the request will only be made when the application has been considered at a forthcoming meeting of the Council's Section 106 Working Group.

DCC would like comments within 21 days.

Councillors asked if the equipment in the play park is insured. If so, who is responsible? Councillors are in support of the equipment being replaced but Emma McCann DTC will contact DCC to ask the question regarding insurance.

Councillor Tinsley said money should be used to provide new facilities instead of replacing broken pieces of equipment as insurances should cover these.

Councillor Smith expressed her concerns regarding youths causing damage, particularly at night. She is aware there are regular maintenance and inspections on the park.

## **8. TO PROVIDE A BRIEF UPDATE ON THE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT PROJECT**

Councillor D Hales, Councillor Smith, Councillor Tinsley, Emma McCann DTC, and County Councillor Gunn had met with PCSO Chloe Stefanelli and Joanne Holloway, Groundwork's Project Manager on Thursday 25th January 2024. PCSO Chloe Stefanelli was going to provide this update but unfortunately, she has submitted her apologies due to being unwell.

Councillor D Hales said the meeting was a success and that it was agreed in principle to use this as a pilot scheme. It was agreed to engage with children in Year 7 and Year 8 initially. It will be for 2 hours on a Monday evening, limited to 20 young people. Joanne and youth workers will be going out prior to April to begin outreach work. We aim to start the sessions in the office after Easter.

It was agreed to use the Town Council office, but discussions have started regarding looking for a larger, more suitable venue to go forward.  
The Projected is funded by the AAP and driven by the Police and Groundworks. Councillors can offer some of their time to attend any of the sessions if they wish. The whole project will be monitored correctly, all paperwork up to date and complete.  
Councillor Tinsley said the cameras are all working so if any issue or situation arose, we can check cameras. He also suggested that all councillors keep a look out for empty local premises that may be of use as a larger venue. They could pass these details on to Emma McCann DTC and Councillor D Hales.

**9. TO APPROVE THE BANK RECONCILIATION (DECEMBER 2023 & JANUARY 2024)**

The Deputy Town Clerk reported,  
The Council entered December 2023 with a starting balance of £29,761.49.  
There was expenditure of £16,099.49 and credits of £0.00, leaving an end balance of £13,662.00.  
The Council entered January 2024 with a starting balance of £13,662.00.  
There was expenditure of £8,294.92 and credits of £43.55, leaving an end balance of £5,410.63.  
Proposed Councillor Berry  
Seconded Councillor C Hales  
Councillor D Hales explained that a lot of costs are related to Transcendit which provides IT support and packages.  
Emma McCann DTC is looking at ways we can reduce these costs for the new financial year. Also, the gas contract is coming up for renewal so she will be looking to source a new deal.

**10. TO RECEIVE THE BUDGET REPORT AND APPROVE FINANCIAL DECISIONS (JANUARY 2024)**

The Deputy Town Clerk reported;  
At the start of this financial year, the budget was set at £121,499.00.  
The meeting held on 14th March 2023 approval was given to allocate £5,000 to Office & Professional Services in July 2023 and £5,000 in September.  
The meeting held on 12th December 2023 gave approval for £3,000 to be allocated to the Allotments.  
This increased the budget to £134,499.00.

Funding that has been approved and allocated into the budget includes,  
£500.00 Warm Spaces (27/03/2023)  
£450.00 FT/OG Small Grants – Disability Access Coach  
£800.00 FT/OG Small Grants – Pantomime  
This increased the budget to £136,249.00

The following information relates to the bottom section of the budget.  
Home & Away £13,593 was approved in previous years but this had some outstanding works to complete. These have now been completed. Once signed off, this will be closed.

At the meeting in October 2022, the Town Clerk said there was £1,569 remaining in the 2021-2022 approved costs and the VAT reclaim returned £14,816. This totalled £16,385.  
The Clerk suggested ring-fencing this as follows;  
£7,000 Building

£6,000 Fun Day (July 2023)  
£3,000 Environmental  
This was agreed.

Additional funding applied for and approved include;  
£1,103.47 Halloween 2023 (Fun & Food)  
£894.00 Summer Fun 2023 (Fun & Food)  
£2,000.00 Fun Day (July 2023) County Durham Community Foundation  
£6,999.00 Autumnus Mabon Feast (£2,000 FT & OG, £4,999 DCC Events Fund)

At the meeting in July 2023, it was discussed that a shortfall of £4203 for the Fun Day could be taken from the Business Account or the Projects budget heading. I have taken this amount from the Projects budget as an expenditure.

I would recommend moving the remaining project budget into Capital and Professional Services to take us to the end of March 2024.  
This was agreed.  
Proposed Councillor C Hales  
Seconded Councillor Jackson

More asbestos has been found on Springfield Allotments, plot 8. A quote has been received for £250 +VAT. There is only £289.10 left in the allotment budget after the last works for removal of asbestos on the same site and maintenance bills. Councillor Tinsley suggested contacting Allotment Officer at DCC to ask how they deal with Asbestos and what the Policy should be when a tenant finds asbestos on their plot. Emma McCann, DTC will contact the tenant of the plot and advise them to leave their plot until we have a resolution. Also, she will contact the Allotment Officer and seek advice and guidance.

Our Civic Carol Service was held in November 2023 at Our Lady & St Thomas RC Church by Father Jim Angus. Councillor Tinsley and Councillor Smith declared an interest as parishioners of the Church. Emma McCann DTC suggested providing a donation of £100 to the Church funds for allowing the Council to use their Church.  
Proposed Councillor D Hales  
Seconded Councillor Elgie

Willington Cricket Club has two upcoming events. One being a Black-Tie Event which Town Mayor Councillor D Hales was invited to. Unfortunately, as Councillor D Hales is unable to attend, it was suggested to provide a raffle prize to their second event which is Ladies Day. Councillor Tinsley declared an interest as a member of Willington Cricket Club. Emma McCann DTC suggested a bottle of Prosecco and a box of chocolates.  
This was agreed.  
Proposed Councillor D Hales  
Seconded Councillor Berry

**11. RECEIVE THE TOWN COUNCILLORS MONTHLY REPORT**

Councillor D Hales thanked Emma McCann DTC for all her hard work and support over recent months.

Councillor Smith also thanked Councillor D Hales for all the effort and support she had put into her role and to the DTC.

Councillor Smith and Councillor D Hales had met with the School Council at Our Lady & St Thomas Catholic Primary School. They had a chat with a group of approximately ten students and asked what they like about the area, what they dislike, what they would like to see. The Head Boy expressed his concern at the amount of rubbish around town. Councillor Smith and Councillor D Hales will keep councillors and staff informed. The School Council are working on a presentation which they would like to present to the Town Council in the future. They are due to visit Willington Primary School on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2024 and hoping to visit the other schools in the coming weeks.

Councillor Jordan said a Men's Mental Health get together is being explored at her business, The Bait Room. She said there has been a lot of sudden deaths and suicides and men's mental health is often overlooked. She has two local men who will be running the group from her café on the High Street where men can come along, have a cuppa and a natter, play cards, dominoes etc. It will be men only and will run for as long as needed. Once posters and leaflets are ready, it will be displayed showing dates and times etc. Councillors agreed this was a great thing to be doing within the community.

Councillor Berry has been in contact with Northumbrian Water regarding the increased water bills. New lights have been installed at the rear of New Row, Oakenshaw and DCC engineers have spotted what looks like a further water leak. It was confirmed that the water supply will need to be shut off for a couple of days. A sign will need to be put up on site informing tenants the water supply will be off for around 48 hours. Also, any tenants who have spurs in their gardens, will need to allow access for GWTC and Northumbrian Water. Councillor Berry will keep councillors and the DTC updated of when this will happen.

Councillor Jackson asked about the hanging baskets for 2024-2025. It was noted that discussions need to be had with regards to projects and funding streams available. He said the Nursery will start taking orders in March 2024.

**12. TO RECEIVE THE COUNTY COUNCILLORS MONTHLY REPORT**

Councillor Tinsley said there had been a budget setting meeting. It will be £50million short next year. £9million in cuts has been proposed. There will be an increase of 5% on the Council Tax which is the maximum. There is a risk that many councils may effectively become insolvent.

**13. TO CONSIDER COMMUNITY FUND APPLICATIONS**

None received.

**14. TO CONSIDER CIVIC FUND APPLICATIONS**

None received.

**15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)**

None.

**16. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

12<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 6pm.