

GREATER WILLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting
9th November 2021

IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor Henfrey, Councillor Berry, Councillor Elgie
Councillor Hales, Councillor Jordan, Councillor Read,
Councillor Smith,
Emma McCann, Deputy Town Clerk (DTC)
Helen Cogdon, Town Clerk (TC) (minutes)

1. ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were apologies from Councillor Tinsley and County Councillor Gunn.

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.

Members are reminded to update their Declaration of personal and prejudicial interest register as and when required, and as soon as is reasonably possible.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Residents agenda items requested through the Clerk

None Received

**4. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING 12 OCTOBER 2021
MATTERS ARISING (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)**

Matters Arising

Page 4. The Clerk said

- The walkabout with Joy Allen, Police and Crime Commissioner was undertaken today. The Importance of taking responsibility for the street where you live and looking after your neighbours was stressed through door knocking to promote In The Know. It was thought that this would be complimented by street level environmental improvements. The use of Community Payback teams was also suggested to target grot spots / flytipping.
Joy Allen will contact the Clerk to discuss PCC funding for the Crime project.
- The feasibility of achieving Green Flag status on the Town Green has been discussed with Jeff Barton, D.C.C.
Applications involve the submission of a five year management plan that describes how the 27 prescribed management standards will be achieved together with costings and investors. Details must also be provided on how the standards will be improved on each year.
This is the judged by Keep Britain Tidy under licence from the Department for Communities and Local Government. The fee is £400.
There are the costs of the buying the flagpole, installation and planning permission if successful.
The first year is face to face judging. Then mystery shop judged which can be at any time, unannounced. If the site fails it reverts back to face to face visits and feedback is given.

In 2010/11 it had been DCCs intention to submit 2 green flags each year. One north ,one south. Due to government cut backs they only achieved one at Annfield Plain and one at Bishop Auckland. Therefore they no longer submit new applications and concentrate on maintaining existing ones.

The other four green flag parks that D.C.C manage have conditions associated with Heritage Lottery funding awards. These Include requirements and are at
Riverside Chester le Street
Wharton Park Durham City
Hardwick Park Sedgefield
Blackhall & Consett Park

As an alternative to Green Flag status DCC has looked to see if the Town Green could qualify for Northumbria in Bloom however it does not meet the criteria.

Councillor Read tabled a paper saying that the Town Council needs a vision and milestones for all green spaces i.e Town Green, Sunnybrow Green, War Memorial and Riverside .

He provided members with a list of installations he would like to see. He said that this work should be undertaken by a registered charity independent of GWTC and D.C.C.

GWTC could be a trustee.

- The Halloween event on the 28th November 2021 was very popular and well attended. Thank you to Councillor Henfrey, Smith and Berry who attended to help and Margaret.
- The Human Resource policies were not Agreed.

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on the 12th October 2021 as written and circulated were approved as a true record.

Proposed Councillor Henfrey
Seconded Councillor Smith

5. TO APPROVE THE ALLOTMENT REPORT

Councillor Berry said;

Eviction notices are in place and no access should be possible to the evicted tenants since the 4th October 2021.

Site inspection will take place on Thursday 11th November.

Park Top

High waiting list.

Plot 1 claims not to have received any details re evictions.

Oakenshaw

One tenant has constructed a large metal fence after planning permission was denied on town previous occasions. Night will need to be checked.

Work in progress

The list of previously agreed works are in hand to be completed by Gordon Proctor over the next coming weeks, some may be spring.

Need an update from Helen regarding the progress of the allotment gates at Oakenshaw and the new locks and keys.

Due to aggressive response from some allotment holders regarding letters and notices, I suggest no council member or individual staff attends on their own.

OCA

Some queries have arisen regarding some points of improvement needed on GWTC allotment properties.

The OCA are working hard to secure the funds towards the fencing around the green and anticipate work to start very soon.

They have again requested that action is taken regarding improving the allotment lane, access is very difficult with any rainfall, but terrible in autumn/ winter. A temporary fix would be to put a small amount of hard core in the mid section previously identified and agreed work is needed.

(Meeting previously with Sally Corbett and council members and staff).

It is essential that the lane is resolved before the fencing can be completed so this is very time sensitive.

OCA members do not feel that the financial liability for the council lane should be the responsibility of the residents. Funding may be required.

I have details of the extended work the OCA are working towards and am happy to supply.

The Clerk said the OCA quote from DCC for the Oakenshaw allotment track is £22,420.

6. TO CONSIDER PROJECT ACTIVITY IN THE PARISH PLAN

The Clerk said,

- **Remembrance Sunday, Sculpture and Poppy Net**

The wreathes and poppies have been delivered to the office. Public representatives will be able to collect wreathes from the 1st November 2021. The Service will be on the 14 November 2021 at 3.00pm, Willington Cenotaph.

Road Closure from 2.30 pm till the parade is completed.

The Poppy Net has been collected from Judith Guthrie. The Town Council presented Judith with flowers as a thank you for all her hard work. The Council needs to agree how to display the poppy net.

Graham Hopper has created a Tommy which he would like to gift to the town.

This was approved

- **Home and Away**

The Town Council has submitted a Covid Recovery AAP Application for £9,000. This has included the cost of the Christmas Pantomime.

An anonymous donation has also been made.

This was approved

- **Willing To Bloom**

Greater Willington Environmental Improvement Group has submitted a Covid Recovery AAP Application for £12,213. This has been approved by D.C.C.

There are site visits tomorrow with D.C.C

23 Nov 2021 at 10.30 Snowdrop and Bluebell Path with Willington Primary and Sunnybrow Primary Schools.

25 Nov 2021. Crocus Rainbow 10.30 Our Lady and St Thomas Primary School.

11.15 St Stephens Primary School

This was approved.

- **Covid Memorial**

Following advice from DCC. This project has changed its emphasis from a Covid commemoration space to a wider Heritage / Willington Gateway Building.

Vicky Prendergast D.C.C has spoken to a senior colleague in Corporate Property and Land (CPAL) about the Expression of Interest from the Town Council for Cemetery Chapel. She is not averse to this request but has also referred it to another colleague in CPAL who has been on leave. Vicky will follow it up later this week.

She has also spoken to Graham Harrison, our Bereavement Services Manager who again is happy to explore the Council's request.

D.C.C need to check title deeds etc and determine whether the building will need to be deconsecrated, and a few other considerations but in principle are happy for this to proceed and the service are happy to support it.

D.C.C will need some written evidence of the Council's action plan to describe what the Council wants to do with the building, and evidence that the Council are able to maintain it. This is in line with the requirements that D.C.C have for their Durham Ask projects.

There are bats in the building and any work will need to be sensitive to their presence.

Vicky will arrange to meet with the Clerk to progress this.

This was approved.

- **Christmas**

The Christmas Pantomime is Jack and the Beanstalk. Performed at Willington Working Men's Club on the 27th November 2021. The council received a £100 anonymous donation towards the pantomime and sweet cones for the children.

The Club provide the room free of charge.

The Bait Room will provide snack packs for Children under 12s.

The town council provide children with a gift from Santa in his new Willington grotto constructed by Cornerstone.

- The 2021 High Street Christmas Illuminations will be switched on 28th November 2021.

- Last years Christmas Baubles designed by Sarah Anderson and containing family members names can be collected from the town council office from 29th November 2021
- The Towns Carol service is on 2nd December 2021 at 6pm, venue to be agreed. The Council will be using the spruce tree in the stone planter on the Town Green. The tree is not strong enough to support the star.

7. **CONSIDER PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND UPDATE ON PLANNING DECISIONS**

Deferred due to internet access issues.

8. **TO APPROVE THE BANK RECONCILIATION**

The Clerk said;

The Council entered into October 2021 with a starting balance of £101,921.89

There was £13,852.91 spent and £118.07 received leaving an available resource on budget of £97,187.05.

Proposed Councillor Henfrey

Seconded Councillor Smith

9. **TO APPROVE THE BUDGET REPORT**

The Clerk said the budget for 2021/22 is £117453.00. Expenditure to date is £51,602.94. Leaving an available resource on budget of £65,850.06.

There has been £12,928 spent on office refurbishment costs from its stand alone budget.

Northern Heartlands Match Funding

The Clerk said Northern Heartlands have been successful with their bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and have secured £174,386 for the project focussed on heritage and wellbeing in Willington.

The project is for 18 months starting January 2022 and will span 3 financial years.

Members have already agreed 8k match funding. However, Northern Heartlands have requested a further 2k and a letter of confirmation from the Council.

The majority of members agreed to the additional 2k in principle subject to the Clerk circulating further information.

Low Willington Christmas Lights

The Clerk is often asked by residents why Low Willington dont have Christmas Motifs. This is because the Council cant use the old NPG lighting columns.

She has been asked if the Council would provide tree lights around the war memorial. It was agreed that the Clerk should progress this and start feasibility work.

Precept

There is a 28p increase in the 2021/22 tax base. However, the 2021/22 LCTSG has decreased from £5,105.00 to £3,912.00.

Leaving a net position of £542.73 increase in income from last year.

Therefore the council is in a position to keep the Current Band D council Tax the same

A budget for 2022/23 will be presented to members for their consideration at the December meeting so that the precept request can be submitted by 21 January 2021 deadline.

10. TO CONSIDER CIVIC FUND APPLICATIONS

- **North of England Brass Band Championship**

Event held in in the Gala Theatre in March each year which the Town Council supports on an annual basis.

A thank you has been received from GNEAS for the £200.00 sponsorship.

11. TO CONSIDER COMMUNITY FUND APPLICATIONS

None received.

A thank you has been received from Dovedale Community Centre for their award.

12. TO RECEIVE THE COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT

None received

13. TO RECEIVE THE TOWN COUNCILLORS REPORT

None received

14. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING.

14th December 2021 at 6pm