

GREATER WILLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting
14th June 2022

IN ATTENDANCE

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

1. ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were apologies from Councillor Savage and Tinsley.

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.

None received

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Residents agenda items requested through the Clerk

None received.

**4. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 24th May 2022
MATTERS ARISING (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)**

Matters Arising

None

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 24th May 2022 as written and circulated were approved as a true record.

Proposed Councillor Jordan

Seconded Councillor Jackson

5. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING 14th May 2022

Matters arising (for information only)

None

The minutes of the Annual Meeting held on the 17th May 2022 as written and circulated were approved as a true record.

Proposed Councillor Smith

Seconded Councillor Elgie

6. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING 12th APRIL 2022

Matters Arising (for information only)

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on the 14th April 2022 as written and circulated were approved as a true record.

Proposed Councillor Berry

Seconded Councillor Elgie

7. CONSIDER PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND UPDATE ON PLANNING DECISIONS

New Planning Applications

- DM/22/01232/TPO - 16 Church View, Willington - Crown reduce and reshape by 2.5m, remove epicormic growth on lower stem, remove major deadwood to 1 No. Sycamore tree

Standard Consultation Expiry Date - Thu 19 May 2022

- DM/22/01284/FPA - 8 Prospect Place, Sunnybrow - Proposed first floor extension to side and two-story rear extension with roof terrace and single-story living room extension.

Standard Consultation Expiry Date – Fri 27 May 2022

- DM/22/01153/FPA - Unit 9, Brockwell Court, Low Willington Industrial Estate, Willington - Change of use from industrial use to dog grooming (sui generis use)

Standard Consultation Expiry Date - Wed 25 May 2022

Previous Planning Application Decisions

- DM/22/00885/FPA - Stockley View, Stockley Lane, Oakenshaw - Conversion of lambing shed to single dwelling and engineering works to create lower ground floor, new access road, install ground source heat pumps and klargester package sewage treatment plant, and create 3 ponds (part retrospective)

Application Withdrawn

- DM/22/00889/FPA - 15 Abbey Gardens, Willington - Garage conversion into 2 habitable rooms

Approved

- DM/22/00047/FPA - Oak House, 21A Acorn Drive, Oakenshaw - Single storey rear extension

Approved

- DM/21/03906/FPA - The Barn, 3 Stockley Lane, Oakenshaw - Erection of a log cabin and general-purpose storage shed

Approved

- DM/22/00094/FPA - Spar Stores, Low Willington - Change of use from domestic curtilage to part of petrol station forecourt with car parking, ancillary equipment, fencing and landscaping

Approved

8. TO RECEIVE OUTSTANDING PLANNING APPLICATION DECISIONS

- DM/20/01960/VOC – Land at Hawthorn Drive/Hill Meadows, Low Willington – Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) of planning permission 3/2013/0257 and DM/15/02380/VOC substitution of house types for 41 plots to northern part of site
- 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)

- DM/22/00101/FPA - Willington Library, 46A High Street, Willington - Replacement roof and cladding
- DM/21/04140/RM - Land Adjacent To (East) Ash Drive, Willington - Reserved matters application (appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) for the erection of 88 no. dwellings pursuant to outline planning permission DM/17/00244/OUT (up to 200 dwellings with all matters reserved except access)

Standard Consultation Expiry Date - Fri 11 Mar 2022

9. TO RECEIVE THE ALLOTMENT REPORT

Allotment Report

Councillor Charles Hales with support from Councillor Emma Berry and Deputy Town Clerk Emma McCann.

Councillor Hales said;

Springfield.

In the last month five plots have been relet along with four additional plots, one being a half plot, offered to those on the waiting list.

The condition of some of the plots has led to some new tenants to enquire about the provision of a skip. Whilst there was a skip provided in April this naturally did not benefit the new tenants. A recommendation was proposed to provide a small skip, the mayor maintained that the provision of a large skip was appropriate with funding. This was agreed after a vote with a date towards the end of July or August.

Park Top.

The two plots which were extensively fire damaged are still blocked off. Notices have been put on the gates denying access and alerting to the unsafe nature of the area. Two further plots are vacant the tenant being deceased.

There is considerable rubbish, timber and unsafe structures to clear before the plots can be re let. These are currently also blocked off for health and safety reasons

There remains some uncertainty over the future of the whole site and the nature of the topography. Yet there are a number of long- standing tenants who maximise the nature of their plots. Further serious and sympathetic consideration needs to be undertaken.

There is a long -standing legal issue with one tenant and remains ongoing. Currently there is no resolution. The tenant was served with a solicitor's letter around the 9th May 2022 giving them two weeks to vacate, remove all belongings, live stock and return of keys. The fourteen days have now legally lapsed. The tenant has not complied. There has been no subsequent communication with either the council or the solicitors, Smith Roddam.

(NB: The solicitor dealing with the case has left the firm and their replacement has yet to fully familiarise with the case. The deputy Town Clark has assured council that this will be followed up next week. They have considered progression to Legal Action to take the tenant to court for a Possession Order).

Oakenshaw.

One tenant will be vacating their plot. After some remedial work this plot can be offered to the next prospective tenant on the waiting list.

The majority of the plots demonstrate clear evidence of cultivation with the majority offering at least 50% cultivation, variously, with a combination of green house cultivation. Vegetable, fruit and flowers, including wild flower beds. Buildings in the main appear sound and well maintained, nevertheless there are some plots which need substantial improvement, though this is early in the year and no letters are for consideration at this stage.

There followed a discussion on the inspection and judging: These were addressed and will follow the pattern of previous years. There was further discussion on the calculation of the minimum 50% guide for cultivation as set out in Council regulations and the National Allotment Association. Access to the allotments was discussed and the need to see the whole allotment was considered essential.

There was a call for a Matrix, fundamentally a tick chart to check criteria for the 50% cultivation was being adhered to. There was some discussion that this should not be too strict.

All three sites have had bi-annual grass cut on the access paths. This will be done again before the allotment inspections next month.

There was an invitation to all councillors to accompany/participate in the three site inspections in addition to the council officials.

Annual inspections will take place on: Thursday 14th July 2022.

The report was approved.

10. TO RECEIVE THE TOWN COUNCILLORS MONTHLY REPORT

Councillor Henfrey thanked members and staff for attending the jubilee event at St Stephens Church.

Councillor Berry thanked everyone who attended the Open Door Church jubilee event.

Councillor Jackson said thank you to Helen Cogdon and Emma McCann for organising the Council Jubilee activities.

Helen Cogdon thanked everyone who had worked on the project and worked hard on the day. An enjoyable and exhausting team effort.

Councillor Jackson said he had visited Cornforth recently and been impressed with their hanging basket displays.

Subsequently he visited the nursery who supply the baskets. They can provide the baskets for £30.00 each and water them at a further charge. He suggested adding the baskets to the lighting columns subject to the columns being stress tested.

Councillor Henfrey said he didn't think this would be safe.

Agreed to explore the options further.

Councillor Jordan said a lot of her customers are over 60 years and this is an age group that would benefit from Council support. She suggested organising an Away Day for this age group. This was agreed.

- **Remembrance Day Wreath GBM Memorial**

The Council have been approached to put token of remembrance at the GBM Memorial. Agreed to provide a wreath on the 11th November at 11am each year.

- **Key Holders**

Councillor Henfrey said he needs to know how many office keys there are for insurance purposes and agree who will have keys.

Agreed Helen Cogdon, Emma McCann, Angela Smith, Fraser Tinsley.

Noted that the electrician still has a key.

- **Project Updates**

The Deputy Town Clerk said

Home & Away

The Away Day to Northumberland Country Zoo in April was a huge success. First bus filled within 10 minutes so another bus and another load of tickets were purchased after discussing and approval from Councillors. Only criticism we have received from the public was that 2 buses were not enough.

Second away day is booked. Stockeld Park on Saturday 30th July 2022. Leaving Willington at 9am and leaving the Park at 5pm. Funding from the AAP and DCC County Councillors only fund one bus and one set of tickets. I previously emailed councillors about putting an extra bus and park tickets on. Councillors were in agreement. 2 buses which will allow 106 people to have a day out. Tickets will be £5 per person and will be advertised on this week. Posters will be given to local shops, churches and public spaces. I will also advertise it on the Town Council Facebook Page. All children 12 years and under will receive a snack pack. As detailed in the email, all income generated from ticket sales etc, will be used towards the snack packs and possibly additional buses for the final two away days.

Scarborough Saturday 21st August 2022. Leaving Willington at 9.30am. Leaving Scarborough at 6pm. This is just a day trip and no tickets into any parks etc are necessary. These can be £3 per person. Using the extra income, it would be advisable to allow one extra bus for this trip also as funding only allows for one bus.

Final away day is to the Metro centre on Saturday 19th November 2022. Leaving Willington at 9.30am. Leaving the Metro at 6pm. Again, this would only be a bus trip and no other tickets required. This would be £3 per person. Possibility of an extra bus for this trip using income generated from previous trips.

The new fence to cover part of the Railway Line to help deter fly tipping and improve public safety has been ordered. This will be installed in August 2022.

Letters to the businesses on the High Street and Commercial Street will go out next week asking if they would like a hanging basket to go on the front of their building. We hope this will brighten up the street.

Planting sessions at the local primary schools went ahead. The children all had a great time getting involved. The Clerk led the sessions. Thank you to Cllr Hales, Cllr Tinsley, Cllr Berry, Cllr Henfrey for assisting at the schools.

Building Works

Outstanding jobs to complete include the maglock system to the entrance door. Door closer has only just been installed on Monday (13th June 2022). Electrician is aware and will schedule time soon to complete the door entry system. One final emergency light to be installed in the back office and legends required in a few locations.

Joiner has provided quotes to install fire door and frame to the rear, thumb turn lock, also thumb turn locks on the back-office doors. Fire rated door to be installed in the large conference room on the first floor. The four small rooms upstairs (two archiving rooms and 2 small meeting rooms) will have new locks fitted to each door. Joiner is scheduling an appointment to complete.

Electrical condition report has been completed for the ground floor and first floor electrics. Emergency lighting and fire detection tests have been carried out. All passed.

PAT Testing has been completed. No issues. Certificates cover two years.

Plumbing works are now complete.

New telephone system is fully installed and working. No issues so far. Boxing in of the cables etc is being investigated by the installation company.

Other relevant checks are still being looked into.

CCTV quotes received

CDS Security & Fire £2,562.00 plus VAT (£512.40) = £3,074.40

EDE Electrics £2780

Agreed to stay with EDE Electrics

The Clerk said

Jubilee

Feedback from the Picnic In the Park and Family Fun Day has been positive. The main comments being that residents want more community days organised.

There are now more volunteers who are willing to form an events team or similar to work with the Council.

The concept of volunteering maybe something the council may like to explore as an area for development. Wear Valley Volunteer Agency has been reasonably successful in the past.

Cemetery Lodge

The with regard to Cemetery Lodge the last structural report was conducted in 2015. At which time the assessment was that the building is structurally sound but is deteriorating due to lack of maintenance. The settlement cracking is possibly due to foundation problems caused by the overgrown self seeded trees/ shrubs.

The next stage if members want to proceed with acquisition will be to determine costs associated with making the building good.

Working with Vicky Prendergast, Community Enterprise Officer to plan a site visit after 11th July 2022 date to be agreed.

Willing To Bloom

The Council are project partners in Willing To Bloom. Work will be starting soon to replant the Town Green Flower Beds with Lavender and Herbs and another winter fire bed. Also plant 6 more birch trees in the wildlife area through a successful It Your Neighbourhood Grant award.

These projects together with D.C.C Shutterblight ,Find and Fix and Safe as Houses had been planned to provide a concentrated and co ordinated range of measures to improve the A690 from Low Willington Roundabout to West End, Willington.

11. TO RECEIVE THE COUNTY COUNCILLORS MONTHLY REPORT

Councillor Gunn said congratulations to the Council for delivering three very successful Jubilee events including the Picnic in The Park Fun Day, Beacon Lighting and Flag Raising.

Regarding the former miners welfare hall. A resident is keeping Cllr Gun informed about the security of the barriers. Demolition is on hold due to the insurance company wanting to do further investigations.

Councillor Gunn and Tinsley will be allocating £2750 Neighbourhood budget funding to the Little Brass Bash which will be held in Willington on the 12th July 2022 at 6.00pm.

The Levelling Up Bid for the 3 Towns Partnership goes to cabinet tomorrow. The bid has to be signed off by the MP. Councillor Gunn and Tinsley have met with Richard Holden to discuss this.

The bid for Willington is disappointing but does have some good things in it.

The Masterplan Focus Group has held 2 meetings. There are complications involved in using the library. Therefore can the group meet with Councillors at the office on Thursday 23 June 2022 at 6.30 pm. Agreed.

There are 185 sponsors homes for Ukrainian families.

475 guest families. Some of these have had to be rematched.
Durham University are helping with English language training 62 people have signed up.
Children have had school places offered to them.
28 Ukrainians have found work.

Discussion continues regarding the relocation of the County Hall site.
DLI Museum is opening as art centre and café.
The DLI Exhibition will be in the new History Centre.

12. TO APPROVE THE BANK RECONCILIATION (APRIL & MAY 2022)

The Clerk said.

The Council entered into April 2022 with a starting balance of £29,337.01
There was £17,605.29 spent and £116,219.88 received leaving an end balance of £127,951.60

The Council entered into May 2022 with a starting balance of £127,951.60
There was £24,458.55 spent and £1,376.00 received leaving an end balance of £104,869.05

Proposed Councillor Jackson
Seconded Councillor Jordan

13. TO APPROVE THE BUDGET REPORT

The Clerk said that during 2021 /22 there was expenditure £116,820 leaving an available resource on budget or underspend of £11,982.05.

£ 3883 was approved for Jubilee

£ 2220 for Home and Away

This allows for a further £5929 that can be made available to fund any additional project costs.

The budget heading ending 31May 2022. Should read 2022/23 and show an annual budget of £117,996.

There has been 23,413.44 expended.

£95.00 committed which leaves an available resource on budget of £94,487.56.

Spending costs for Building Works, Home & Away, Willing To Bloom, and Jubilee are summarised below the main budget report.

Proposed Councillor Smith
Seconded Councillor Berry

14. TO CONSIDER COMMUNITY FUND APPLICATIONS

None received

15. TO CONSIDER CIVIC FUND APPLICATIONS

None received

16. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING.

To be confirmed.