

GREATER WILLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of Ordinary Meeting
2nd April 2014

IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor Tinsley, Councillor Cogdon, Councillor Henfrey,
Councillor Graham, Councillor Bennett,
County Councillor Gunn
Helen Cogdon, Town Clerk
Emma Mennouni, Community Services Officer

Councillor Tinsley welcomed everyone to the meeting. He outlined housekeeping rules and asked that everyone present turns off mobile phones and electronic equipment during the conduct of council business.

1. ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received by Councillor Carr, Councillor Smith, Councillor Etherington and Councillor Todd.

Councillor Gunn said that Councillor Buckham had forwarded his apologies. Councillor Graham said apologies should be made through the Town Clerk.

Acceptance of apologies were proposed by Councillor Tinsley and seconded by Councillor Henfrey.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Any previous declarations made by Councillors continue to stand.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Resident's agenda items requested through the Clerk.

Councillor Tinsley welcomed Janet and Peter Sloodweg (Residents). Janet had asked to address the meeting.

She said she would like something doing about South Dene. She had circulated photographs of the problems she had identified, i.e. paths not paths, damaged bridge, cans of alcohol and anti social behaviour. She has a number of ideas on how the Dene can be improved.

She understood that it is difficult to get money but it is possible through forming a working group. She has experience of doing a Lottery Application.

Councillor Henfrey agreed that it was in a terrible state.

Councillor Gunn has had discussions with Janet, whom she supports and the Town Clerk.

The Town Clerk said D.C.C had cleaned up the area on two occasions the area around the bridge is better than sixteen months ago but still suffers from repeated fly tipping which is now a bad habit that needs to be addressed.

Clearance work on the banksides have been risk assessed and require ropes and harness.

Councillor Tinsley thanked Janet Slootweg for her comments he said that part of the problem with littering was the connectivity to two housing estates which may also be the source of fly tipping.

It is important that the relevant organisations fulfil their responsibilities. A starting point is to ensure that everything is in place to maintain the Dene provided by the statutory agencies and D.C.C.

Also to have combating anti social behaviour as a PACT priority.

Councillor Graham said people look after the North Dene now and it is the best it has been for a while.

Councillor Tinsley said that it was a good example of an area where neighbouring properties have local ownership having invested their time and energy into it. This approach would benefit the South Dene.

Resolved 1. To arrange meeting with statutory agencies and stakeholders.

4. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS ORDINARY MEETING

5th MARCH 2014

The minutes of the 5th March 2014 as printed and circulated were approved and taken as a true record.

Proposed Councillor Tinsley

Seconded Councillor Henfrey

Matters arising (for information only)

Councillor Cogdon asked Councillor Graham for a progress report on the safety improvements he requested to the Armoury Fields garages.

Councillor Graham said he would not be pursuing the matter any further as having spoken to the tenants the good people were frightened that raising the matter would result in them being asked to leave.

Councillor Cogdon said he would like to thank Councillor Etherington for the excellent work he had delivered in designing the first Allotment Newsletter. He said considerable work was involved to produce such was a quality document and also credit to the staff who had written it.

Nicola Parker has informed the D.C.C Community Engagement Office that Oakenshaw Community Association will attend the fixed play area consultation

5. TO CONSIDER THE ALLOTMENT REPORT

Councillor Graham said this is the start of the new allotment year for tenants. The rent letters have gone out and payments are being made. There are three plots to let on the Oakenshaw site. The Springfield site has two plots to let and all tenants have been renewed on the Park Top site. Skips have been provided on all sites to assist with garden clearance at the start of the growing season. However a skip could not be delivered to through the bottom gate at Springfield.

Staff have arranged for the non approved play structure on plot14 Oakenshaw to be removed by a contractor and to invoice the former tenant for this cost and the cost of a skip at £420.00. The former tenant has agreed to pay monthly until this is cleared.

Councillor Graham said having discussed with the Town Clerk, they recommend that in situations whereby tenants have failed to clear the site so that it is suitable for cultivation by the next tenant. A list should be kept and these people will not be able to apply again on the waiting list for another allotment. This was **AGREED**.

Councillor Tinsley asked how the council involvement with the annual show was progressing with Rosedale and Victoria Allotment Association. The Town Clerk said agreement has been reached in principle this needs to be confirmed in writing by the association committee.

6. TO CONSIDER THE RESOURCE REPORT

Councillor Henfrey said;

Finance

The Expenditure report and Cheque Reconciliation as presented by the Clerk is considered to be a true record.

Total spend to date £88,254.80

Committed costs this financial year is £744.62

As approved in the Reserves Policy the end of year funds have been transferred to earmarked and general fund reserves.

The precept request of £76,554 has not yet been received but it is anticipated this week.

The statement of accounts records the current account balance as £9,172.14

Resolved 1. Approval of the financial report

Civic Fund Applications

There have been no new Civic Fund requests.

A letter of thanks has been received from The Toma Fund "Some Time On Our Own Appeal" for the £25.00 donation

A thank you email has been received from the Durham County Brass Band Association founded in that promotes the North East Brass Band Heritage and camaraderie of Durham's Brass Bands for the £25.00 donation.

A request has been received from Oakenshaw Community Association to match fund the cost of upgrading the footpath, installing disabled access and benches in the Nature Reserve.

The request is for £498.00. The council's contribution will assist in the releasing of funds from the Banks Foundation as project partners.

Members recommend in principle approval under s137 powers.

7. TO RECEIVE TOWN COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Councillor Bennett said she was working with County Councillor Gunn to look at the best way to produce a local history book about the three pits in Hunwick.

Councillor Gunn said Hunwick Community Association's building was not fit for purpose however the Association was still going strong.

Also despite Hunwick not being part of the GWTC area of representation she appreciated the support from Town Councillors. She thought it would be good to promote a local history society for Willington and Hunwick and would need volunteers to run it. If volunteers from Willington were happy to link with people from Hunwick she will pass their details on.

Councillor Tinsley said he thought it was important to keep memories of mining heritage and what happened in this area over the years alive. He suggested we promote this in the next Newsletter and ask people to provide information on things that are important to them as memorable moments.

Councillor Henfrey said he wanted everyone to know that we now have an excellent school at Parkside. They now have their own transport for activities away from school. Following improvements they are now top of the value added list.

The school is investing in advertising their success through the Northern Echo.

Councillor Cogdon said;

Regarding Brancepeth Colliery Miners Memorial Plaque the Town Clerk has informed SLAM of the letter of approval received on the 7th February 2014 from Vernon Jones, Chief Executive, CISWO to put the plaque on public display. This proposal also has the in principle support from D.C.C.

Mr Hirst has been asked to arrange access to the Welfare Hall to organise

removal of the plaque.

Mr Hirst replied on the 24th March 2014 that he will respond formally after this has been discussed at the next SLAM board meeting on the 6th May 2014.

Mr Hirst also on the 24th March 2014 asked for an urgent meeting with the Town Mayor. Councillor Tinsley offered to meet Mr Hirst on the 26th March 2014 but Mr Hirst was unavailable.

The stonemason has been informed of the delay.

Responsible Dog Ownership

Staff have been working with Clare Hubbard, D.C.C to develop the project. The Responsible Dog Ownership Scheme will include educational work in schools with Scoop the Green Dog Walker mascot. Work will start in St

Thomas School, Willington and Sunnybrow Primary schools on the 19th May 2014 for two weeks.

There will be fine notices and increased patrols by Neighbourhood Wardens in problem areas or hotspots we identify.

The wardens will also be giving out Golden Tickets to enter into the £25.00 prize draw to people they see picking up after their dogs.

Residents will be invited to sign the Green Dog Walkers Pledge and asked to wear the badge and encourage other residents to clean up by offering them free dog bags.

A free dog micro chipping event will be held at the Phoenix Christian Centre, Watling Tce on Saturday 31st May 2014, 9.30 till 2.00pm.

Due to popular demand GWTC have increased the number of dog bags ordered this year. They will continue to be on sale from the office at 50p for a pack of 50 bags.

The World War One Centenary 4th August 1914 – 11th October 1918

An event in Willington is under consideration. Work is ongoing until an appropriate decision is made.

Green Waste Collections

Staff have responded to a number of enquiries regarding collection times.

Residents received their timetables in the Durham News magazine. The collections start on the 26th March 2014 and will continue fortnightly.

The collection service is free this year.

Walk Leaflets

The final design for the Walk Leaflets have now been agreed. The Black Path Leaflet is ready to print. Thanks once again to Councillor Etherington for his professional input and design work.

The remaining leaflets will be printed following the production of the Annual Report and the Council Newsletter.

Health and Safety

Councillor Cogdon has carried out an office risk assessment with staff. This has resulted in the purchase of better signage for the public and new fire extinguishers.

Residents complaints

High Street / Burn Place / Mill Street

Staff have been working with Stephen Jones D.C.C Area Traffic Engineer to survey households.

The results are now back from the Burn Place consultation regarding fixing a bollard opposite the archway to the rear of Burn Place.

46 properties were consulted and 7 responses received.

The emergency services have also been consulted and are in support of the scheme.

There are two objections that D.C.C will attempt to resolve.

York and Raby Terrace

The potholes reported have been repaired.

Dirt Bike Track at Old Hall Farm

Residents have complained about tyres used to create a Dirt Bike Track on private land at Old Hall Farm

Following investigation we have found that. There is provision for temporary use which includes motor sports for 14 to 28 days in a calendar year. However, if a track is permanently created and objects placed on the land or works undertaken to create a track then the use is no longer temporary and the development requires planning permission.

A site visit to establish the level of development is to be completed by Neighbourhood Wardens and D.C.C Enforcement Officers.

Councillor Cogdon said Councillor Carr had asked him to pass on his report in his absence.

Park View

Progress has been made with the Park View resident's enquiry regarding land to the rear of his property.

D.C.C have determined that the land is in D.C.C ownership.

Spooky Story Book

Work is ongoing with schools.

Pupils are doing classroom work on their competition entries around proof

reading and editing.

They are also producing additional artwork for the book.

All materials together with quotes from the head teachers and the winning entries which will be included in the book will be returned to the council at the end of term.

Play

Councillor Tinsley said D.C.C Fixed Play Area Consultation findings could present a potential threat to the Armoury Fields Play Area. It would not be unexpected if the outcome of the consultation results in parish councils being asked to maintain play space.

The survey relates to Fixed Play space not Mugas.

Annual Report

Councillor Tinsley is working with staff to produce the Annual Report ready for the Annual General and Annual Parish meetings.

Christmas

Work on Christmas is ongoing. Staff have been working with the Environment Group to discuss the best way to proceed with planting a permanent Christmas Tree. Councillor Graham said the Environment Group were happy to leave the decision with the council.

New Lighting column Motifs were being ordered. Quotes were being gained to look at extending the Deciduous Tree Lighting decorations on the Town Green.

Newsletter

Work has started on the Newsletter.

8. TO RECEIVE COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Councillor Gunn said no decision on fixed play provision had been made. Councillor Tinsley is correct in so far as the review does not include MUGA's

Durham County Council have received the Council of the Year Award. The competitions involved 480 councils. D.C.C had come second last year but this time had scored particularly well for work on energy efficiency. They had also performed well in the Local Business Partnership. This involved looking at the Community Asset Transfer process. Mr John Spencer, Oakenshaw had delivered an excellent presentation and many thanks are extended for that. Well done to Durham staff.

Simon Henig, D.C.C Leader, had attended the A.A.P meeting and stressed the importance of Community Engagement. He said that the A.A.P model had proved to be a success.

The Housing Stock Transfer is now at the next stage. The parent board is established and resident consultation is ongoing.

Success had also been achieved by Durham's Tourist attractions at Auckland Castle and Beamish who have been given support from The Arts Council and Going Ahead Support.

Seven local authorities are getting together to form a Combined Authority. Issues to be discussed will include transport and economic inclusion amongst others.

The committee structure is now agreed, the Authority will be chaired by Simon Henig and the admin costs shared between the authorities.

The County Durham Plan is going in front to inspectors a response is expected mid July 2014.

The A.A.P Children and Young People awards are this Friday. Wca have made a nomination.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (for information only)

Councillor Todd said St John's Ambulance are holding a Youth Awards Ceremony in Shildon on Sunday. He extended an invitation to the Town Councillors. Councillor Henfrey said he would attend.

Councillor Gunn said The Woodland Trust have trees available to plant for the ww1 centenary. The aim being to plant National Commemoration Woods.

10. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

Annual Parish Meeting, Wednesday 7th May 2014 at 6.00 pm

Annual General Meeting, Wednesday 7th May 2014 at 6.30 pm

Signed by the Chairman

4th June 2014