

GREATER WILLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting
11th July 2023

IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor D Hales, Councillor Smith, Councillor Berry, Councillor Tinsley
Councillor C Hales, Councillor McArdle, Councillor Savage, Councillor Jackson,
Councillor Henfrey, Councillor Elgie
Emma McCann (DTC)
Helen Cogdon, Town Clerk (TC) (minutes)

1. ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Jordan, 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.
None received.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Resident agenda items requested through the Clerk.

None received.

The Clerk said The Black Horse Inn have expressed a complaint that they were not given hanging baskets.

However below Commercial Street was not included in the initial bids.

Councillor Tinsley said the Town Council need new meeting furniture. He and County Councillor Gunn have capital reserves available.

4. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING 11th APRIL 2023

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting as written and circulated were signed and taken as a true record.

Proposed Councillor Jackson

Seconded Councillor Smith

5. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 16 MAY 2023

The minutes of the Annual Parish meeting as written and circulated were signed and taken as a true record.

Proposed Councillor Smith

Seconded Councillor Berry

6. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING 16 MAY 2023

The minutes of the Annual Meeting as written and circulated were signed and taken as a true record.

Proposed Councillor Berry

Seconded Councillor C Hales

7. TO CONSIDER PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND UPDATE ON PLANNING DECISIONS

New Planning Applications

- 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

For Information Only: Standard Consultation End Date - 17 May 2023

<https://publicaccess.durham.gov.uk/online-applications/simpleSearchResults.do?action=firstPage>

- DM/23/00995/FPA - St Aidens House, High Street, Willington - Change of use of existing building from St John's Ambulance centre to a mixed-use comprising office and first floor 3 bed residential flat, replacement of first floor raised platform with two storey rear extension and external staircase, and retention of windows and rooflights to the front and rear

For Information Only: Standard Consultation Expiry Date - 30 May 2023

<https://publicaccess.durham.gov.uk/online-applications/simpleSearchResults.do?action=firstPage>

- DM/23/01500/FPA - 46 Armstrong Drive, Willington - Proposed single storey side and rear extension

For Information Only: Standard Consultation End Date – 26 June 2023

<https://publicaccess.durham.gov.uk/online-applications/simpleSearchResults.do?action=firstPage>

- DM/23/01555/FPA - 45 High Street, Willington - Development of retail store with associated car parking and servicing on land adjacent to 45 High Street Willington DL15 0PF

For Information Only: Standard Consultation Expiry Date - 30 Jun 2023

<https://publicaccess.durham.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=RVJ69GGDKGO00>

Previous Planning Application Decisions

- 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)

Approved – 26 May 2023

- DM/22/03106/FPA - Plots 1-3 Oakenshaw Allotments, New Row, Oakenshaw - Erection of pigeon loft, raised lawn area with steps, roof over log shed and pergola (retrospective)

Approved – 05 June 2023

- DM/22/03708/NMA - Land Adjacent To (East) Ash Drive, Willington - Non-material amendment to condition 16 (archaeology) pursuant to DM/18/03443/OUT

Approved – 19 May 2023

- DM/23/00585/FPA - 3 Woodlands Close, Oakenshaw - Single storey side and rear extension

Approved – 26 April 2023

- DM/23/00437/FPA - 82A High Street, Willington - Change of use of first and second floor residential flat to hair and beauty salon (Sui Generis)

Approved – 4 May 2023

- DM/23/00674/PA - Land South East of Whitworth Lane Brancepeth - Prior approval application for the erection of 1 No. agricultural building

Refused – 10 May 2023

Previous Planning Applications Waiting Decisions

- 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)
- 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/22/03678/VOC - 52 Armstrong Drive, Willington - Variation of Condition 2 (Plans) in relation to planning permission DM/21/01808/FPA for resize first floor side window, reduce number of first floor rear windows, additional ground floor side windows and alterations to bi-fold door
- DM/23/00295/DRC - Land to The North of Hawthorn Drive and West of Hill Meadows, Willington - Discharge of condition 10 (Ball Stop Fencing) pursuant to permission DM/20/01960/VOC
- DM/23/00443/FPA - Oak House, 21A Acorn Drive, Oakenshaw - Conversion of outbuilding to home office

Councillor Tinsley said he was pleased to hear that Moorview Windows are moving from Howden to the Industrial estate. This will be good for the area.

There has only been one objection to the proposed Supermarket at 45 High Steet, Willington. This will create 20 jobs and is expected to be completed early next year.

8. TO RECEIVE THE ALLOTMENT REPORT

Councillor Hales said;

Allotment Report. July 2023.

10th August has been designated judging day for the Growing Awards for 2023.

Notices have been posted on all gates across the sites. The times are: Oakenshaw 9.45, Park Top 11.00, Springfield 11.30. Slightly later than in previous years this was to coincide with the National Allotment Society Allotment Week. It also gives tenants an opportunity to consider the extension of the growing season and the sowing/growing of greater successional cropping. Extending this period allows for more produce over a longer time frame. This will especially benefit Open Door Church Food Bank.

It is hoped that there will be a wider group of councillors who will take part as judges.

Springfield.

There has been a major development at Springfield where the tenants have, with GWTC support adopted a policy of self- government by forming an allotment association. This is supported by the joint portfolio holders for allotments Councillors E Berry and C Hales and Council officers. This was initiated with a published open event at Springfield on Saturday 3rd June. This was attended by at least 18 tenants and by representatives from Rosedale and Councillors Berry, Henfrey, D. Hales & C. Hales. Subsequently the tenants asked if they could consider their options and return with their decision. This was discussed at the Council Offices on the 14th June. A full meeting took place with the Chair, Andrew Smith Treasurer, Sean Miller and Secretary, Vicky Hall. Andrew forwarded a detailed e-mail outlining the key decisions and way forward on the 3rd July. Emma McCann has a copy of this for the council archive.

There will be a walk round opportunity to further outline and discuss issues on the 22nd of July.

We are grateful to the combined efforts of the new Association committee for their commitment and their immediate and long- term vision. Springfield will be part of the Awards judging on the 10th August at 11.30.

They have acquired with council approval the vacant plot 6 which they will utilise as a community hub within Springfield.

The proposed Community Garden is to be further discussed at a date to be mutually arranged.

Oakenshaw.

There remain some vacant plots at Oakenshaw. These will need to be cleared in order to make them more attractive to potential tenants. Some of these have been vacant for over a year. The majority of plots are appropriately cultivated with a mixture of flowers and vegetables. This is good to see and a reflection of the dedication and commitment of tenants.

There has been some discussion that cockerels are present on some plots and whilst there has been some reporting of their presence, they never-the-less remain physically elusive. GWTC rules do not allow for the keeping of cockerels.

Empty beds have been cleared and allocated for produce for Open Door Church.

Park Top.

Park Top yet again reflects the hard work of its tenants in their commitment to allotment growing and they are again to be congratulated. The site has its challenges which are understood. There remain some vacant plots which it is hoped can be let.

Councillor Hales said there would be an Allotment walk around on the 22nd July 2023 that members are welcome to attend.

The Allotment inspections are on the 10th August 2023. Volunteer judges are requested.

Proposed Councillor Berry

Seconded Councillor D Hales

9. TO APPROVE THE PARISH PLAN

The Clerk said she intends to reintroduce the Parish Plan as a method of sharing outputs and achievements and identifying deadlines.

This will help members update their diaries and provide a summary of information to inform the Annual Report.

She tabled the first report.

This was agreed.

Proposed Councillor D Hales

Seconded Councillor Smith

10. TO APPROVE THE BANK RECONCILIATION (April, May, June 2023)

The Clerk said;

The Council entered into April with a starting balance of £14,166.98.

There was expenditure of £11,827.01 and £121,068.79 received leaving an end balance of £123,408.76.

The Council entered into May with a starting balance of £123,408.76.

There was expenditure of £6,817.76 and £294.73 received leaving an end balance of £116,885.73.

The Council entered into June with a starting balance of £116,885.73.

There was expenditure of £17,351.08 There were also credits of £1,866.66 received leaving an end balance of £101,400.31.

Proposed Councillor Berry

Seconded Councillor Jackson

11. TO RECEIVE THE BUDGET REPORT AND APPROVE FINANCIAL DECISIONS

The Clerk said in the new financial year there has been expenditure £33,666.38 leaving an available resource on budget of £93,812.62.

As discussed in the 14 March 2023 meeting the Office & Professional Services budget is under resourced. She will transfer the first 5k in July and 5k in September from the deposit account as agreed.

With regard to the Electric supply the intention is to combine both supplies into one payment. To renew the accounts in August.

Hyem Fest the final 2k payment is due this month.

With regard to Transcendit. The Gold Contact offered unlimited support. Costs will reduce by down grading to Silver Cover which provides support for listed items for up to one hour. Any time after one hour is charged. Silver Cover is £1080.

The Scribe Accounts package costs Initial Set Up Fee £479.00, Annual Subscription £600.

The software should make the organisation of financial information more efficient and will result in receipts and payments, vat reclaim and the AGAR reports being updated with each transaction so that this information is always up to date and time sensitive and more importantly complete at the end of the financial year.

Commencing 1st August 2023 with unlimited users. A bank of local authority finance training is also available to tap into at any time or by attending the weekly zoom training. Any topic can be revisited as many times as needed.

Fun Day potentially there is £4203 shortfall which hopefully will be met by the lottery application the outcome of which we should know soon. However, if this is not successful, we may have to transfer out of deposit account. This can be met under the project budget if necessary.

At this time the two-day Festival is expected to be £20,143 for a basic package of activities.

This was agreed.

Proposed Councillor Berry

Seconded Councillor Elgie

12. TO RECEIVE THE TOWN COUNCILLORS MONTHLY REPORT

Councillor Smith said residents like the flowers.

Councillor Berry said there had also been some positive comments regarding the planting from Oakenshaw residents.

Councillor Savage said the Northumbria in Bloom judging will be on the 26th July 2023.

Everyone welcome to meet in the office then judges will be transported around route.

She said thank you to Poplar Tree Nursery who she contacted about the Wildlife area. They kindly gave a Bug House and some Bulbs.

Follow up work is to be started following the initial meeting regarding the installation of Low Willington Christmas Tree.

Councillor Jackson said The Hanging Baskets have made an impact on the High Street and look good. Residents appear to like them.

Next year there needs to be more work done on a few brackets and some of the column brackets need to change their position on the lighting column. The Council will need to consider if they want to move or increase the number of baskets. He thanked the Clerk for supporting his work on the project with the nursery, water service, contractor and talking to businesses.

Councillor McArdle said thank you to Councillor Savage for the new flowers in the Sunnybrow planter. Which following her request was dealt with straight away.

Councillor McArdle said she has joined Willington Surgeries Patient Participation Group. There are four meeting a year.

The surgery hasn't had a Practice Manager for a while and they now have a proactive one. There is also a Nurse Practitioner and a Social Prescribing service, self-referral is available via Facebook under Willington Medical.

Councillor McArdle has attended the CDALC New Councillor training. She has also been invited to view Sunnyside Community Kitchen.

Councillor Hales said she attended Sunnybrow Primary and Our Lady and St Thomas School to present the prizes for the Coronation Drawing competition. Councillor Hales wants to speak with Schools to see how with can work together with pupils.

Councillor Hales hosted a retirement tea for Father David giving him and Father Murphy who is in a retirement home gifts from the Council.

Councillor Hales attended her first Civic Event at Bishop Auckland Town Council. She found it was a lovely opportunity to talk about what Willington does as a Council.

She made links with The Angel Trust and was impressed with the work they do.

13.TO RECEIVE THE COUNTY COUNCILLORS MONTHLY REPORT

County Councillor Tinsley said;

D.C.C Cabinet are to dissolve AAP's.

There has been consultation about the Town Green MUGA to look at people's needs. This has been delayed by the Levelling Up Bid.

Councillor Jackson said residents want a play facility at Low Willington.

Councillor Tinsley said this has been discussed in the past and the issue was always where to put it. The opportunity for Low Willington comes from the 200 houses with Avant. D.C.C have got Avant to upgrade their 106 agreement. So, there may be an opportunity of developing a recreation area on The Croft.

Councillor Berry suggested that Youth Groups should be engaged in the consultation.

Councillor Smith said there had been more damage to the town green soft pour play surface.

The new division boundaries for this area include Willington, Hunwick and up to Wheatbottom, Crook.

He congratulated Councillor Jackson on the Hanging Basket project saying he had received some very positive feedback.

14. TO CONSIDER COMMUNITY FUND APPLICATIONS

Willington Spiritualist Church

Total project cost £1079.80

They have a hole in the Church roof which is seeping into the main hall.

Evidence provided;

- ✗ Governing Document/Constitution
- ✓ Audited Accounts
- ✓ Project Budget

Decision: More information required on repairs and Insurance.

Charity Shop 4 U

Total project cost £30,427

Recently purchased a larger premises and require some support to fund improvements and adaptations and also to purchase various items of shop equipment.

Would like the Town Council to fund the cost of new shop signage and some of the additional equipment required.

Evidence provided;

- ✓ Governing Document/Constitution
- ✓ Audited Accounts
- ✓ Project Budget

Decision: Approved

Willington WMC FC

Total project cost £3,000

Football team has been established since 1968. The present season has seen the club reach 4 cup finals which is a massive achievement for the town. Team consists mainly of players and coaches from Willington.

Would like the council to contribute towards pitch fees, referee fees, training equipment, player kits and first aid equipment.

Evidence provided;

- ✓ Governing Document/Constitution
- ✓ Audited Accounts
- ✓ Project Budget

Bank account is not in the name of the group – it's a personal account. Spoken to Secretary of the group and he will action that the group has their own bank account. He is going to forward the relevant documentation.

Decision; Approved.

Willington & District Angling Club

Total project cost £2200

The club restocks the river with 500 farm reared Brown Trout on an annual basis.

Restocking is done in two parts April/May 2023 and June 2023.

Evidence provided;

- ✗ Governing Document/Constitution - unsigned

✘ Audited Accounts – Financial information does not align with the requirements of the governing document

✓ Project Budget

Decision; Completed supporting documents and clarification required.

St Stephens Church

Total project cost £594.80 (75% £446.10)

The Church would like to develop their education and communication capacity in relation to both community and church information and events. They would like to purchase display boards to facilitate exhibitions both within the Church environment and at various locations such as schools, libraries.

Evidence provided;

✓ Governing Document/Constitution

✓ Audited Accounts

✓ Project Budget

Decision; Approved.

The Black Horse Inn has asked for £500 towards the cost of purchasing and installing a defibrillator and cabinet on the external wall so that it is available for the people of Low Willington. The total project cost is in the region of £1500. The remaining balance will be covered through donations and fundraising.

Decision; to approve £500 sponsorship.

15. TO CONSIDER CIVIC FUND APPLICATIONS

None received.

16. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING.

12th September 2023 at 6pm