

**GREATER WILLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting**  
**18<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

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**IN ATTENDANCE**

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

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**1. ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were apologies from Councillor Henfrey.

**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**

Katherine Ward Durham County Council's Anti Social Behaviour Officer said that she works in problem areas and has a wide ranging role. She is an ex Police Officer. She has been investigating problems with the Miners Welfare Hall. She visited recently with the Beat Officer and the PCSO to do a walk about and see what can be done. The building is dangerous however the youths have not been dealt with for burglary. They used saws to break in. She has been told the building has 8 foot of water and a gas pipe but she has been unable to gain access.

The Fire Brigade will no longer respond.

The problems have been raised with the DCC Commercial Building Officer. Who suggested raising a section108 order.

The short term solution is fencing and boarding of access points and painting with anti vandalism paint.

Ian Hirst has asked DCC Building Control to do the work.

There is still some hope to regenerate and Groundwork have been out to asses.

Councillor Smith asked Kate to investigate a nearby yard full of tyres. Kate agreed to organise to take Officers out to inspect.

**4. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING 9 NOVEMBER 2021 MATTERS ARISING (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)**

**Matters Arising**

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on the 9<sup>th</sup> November 2021 as written and circulated were approved as a true record.

Proposed Councillor Elgie

Seconded Councillor Berry

## 5. TO APPROVE THE ALLOTMENT REPORT

Councillor Berry said the improvements to the water supply to gardens at Oakenshaw have been completed.

The felled trees at Oakenshaw and Park Top are not providing any further problems. A tap on plot 8 Park Top is to be repaired.

There has been a site meeting with the contractor at Springfield to look at the water supply and other issues.

The Clerk asked if we can draw up an annual schedule of works.

Members have been unable to access the burnt out site at Park Top. The Clerk asked members to consider if they wished to invest more money into the site due to its condition.

Councillor Tinsley suggested drawing up a Management Plan.

Discussions are ongoing re Oakenshaw Allotment track local knowledge has advised that the previous gully needs reinstating.

Patching with dolomite maybe a short term solution.

DCC have quoted 21k to upgrade the track.

## 6. TO CONSIDER PROJECT ACTIVITY IN THE PARISH PLAN

### • Home and Away

The Deputy Town Clerk said funding of £9,000 was approved by the AAP for the different elements of this project. She would like to thank Councillor Gunn and Tinsley for the 2k NB allocation.

The pantomime went ahead on 27th November 2021 with a great turn out.

Cornerstone made a great Santa's Grotto where we were able to have children visit Santa and his elf and receive a Christmas gift. The Bait Room provided food pack for all children 12 years and under. A generous donation of £100 was also received from an anonymous resident which was used towards food and sweets for the children.

The planters for each of the four primary schools have been ordered through Cornerstone. They will be delivered to the schools week commencing 4th April 2022. Plants will be delivered week commencing 25th April 2022. Planting sessions will be arranged with the schools and it would be great if a councillor or two would be able to assist at any of these sessions.

The coaches have been booked for the four away days during 2022. The first event will be advertised in the coming weeks.

The fence for on the Railway Line near Moorland Close will be erected once permission has been provided by DCC. It has been passed to different departments but hopefully we get confirmation soon.

Letters will be going out shortly asking local businesses if they would like a hanging basket on the front of their businesses. Also, we will seek approval to put some on the columns around the Town Green.

- **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. This has also been match funded by the Town Council and Councillor Gunn and Tinsley.

There are site visits tomorrow with D.C.C

The following workshops with schools are planned for;

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

The Clerk also secured 2500 free crocus bulbs from Civic Pride and two large bags of daffodil bulbs and narcissus bulbs from Clean and Green.

A crocus cloud was planted at Low Willington also daffodils around St Stephens Church trees and around Low Willington Gateway planter.

A narcissus bed was created between the two planters on Commercial Street.

Next steps are planting Lavender and Herb Beds on the Town Green. And the autumn flame fire bed.

Also wildflower planting around the Town Green Fence line, paths and hedgerows and verges.

The group are submitting an Its Your Neighbourhood application to extend the silver birch tree planting in the wildflower area on the town green.

- **Cemetery Chapel**

A teams meeting was convened with Vicky Prendagast, Community Assets, Councillor Henfrey and the Clerk.

DCC have asked more information on the background to the project and future works.

D.C.C have requested a copy of the Parish Plan which the Clerk has drafted.

The Clerk has requested a site visit.

D.C.C Community Assets and 3 Towns have already met on site to discuss the transfer.

## 6. CONSIDER PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND UPDATE ON PLANNING DECISIONS

### New Planning Applications

- DM/21/03666/FPA – 15 Surtees Drive, Willington – Removal of first floor dormer windows and installation of balcony on south east elevation

*For Information Only – Decided 22.12.2021 - Approved*

- DM/21/03352/FPA – The Old Rectory, Low Willington – Replace shed/greenhouse with single storey rear extension

*For Information Only – Decided 29.11.2021 - Approved*

- DM/21/03421/FPA - Equestrian Lodge, Saxby Drive, Sunnybrow - Proposed garage conversion and pitch roof extension; construction of stable block (personal use); proposed all weather riding arena (personal use); associated hard standing; alterations to existing boundary wall

*For Information Only – Decided 18.11.2021 - Approved*

- DM/21/03817/TPO - Site Of Former Willington Health Centre, Chapel Street, Willington - Felling of 1 No. Ash tree (T3) protected by a TPO

*For Information Only – Decided 10.12.2021 - Approved*

- DRC/21/00389 - Our Lady And St Thomas RC Primary School, Cumberland Terrace, Willington - Discharge of conditions 3 and 4 from planning application DM/21/02575/FPA

*For Information Only - Standard Consultation Expiry Date – 29.12.2021*

- DM/21/03944/AD - 110 Commercial Street, Willington - Illuminated fascia sign

*For Information Only - Standard Consultation Expiry Date – 06.01.2022*

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

*For Information Only - Standard Consultation Expiry Date – 06.01.2022*

- DM/21/03483/FPA - Land North West Of Unit 12, St Stephens Court, Willington - Erection of 250sqm industrial unit (use class E(g)II).

*Standard Consultation Expiry Date – 07.02.2022*

#### Previous Planning Application Decisions

- DM/21/03421/FPA - Equestrian Lodge, Saxby Drive, Sunnybrow - Proposed garage conversion and pitch roof extension; construction of stable block (personal use); proposed all weather riding arena (personal use); associated hard standing; alterations to existing boundary wall.

*Approved*

- DM/21/01613/FPA - Black Horse Inn, 42 Low Willington - Conversion and refurbishment of existing out building to form 4 letting rooms and construction of porch, part demolition of out building to improve access and external alterations. (Amended description and plans.)

*Approved*

- DM/21/03084/FPA – 55 Armstrong Drive, Willington - Two storey rear extension (Resubmission)

*Approved*

#### Previous Planning Applications Waiting 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)

## **8. TO APPROVE THE BANK RECONCILIATION**

The Clerk said;

The Council entered into November 2021 with a starting balance of £97,187.5  
There was £24,115.94 spent and £300.00 received leaving an available resource on budget of £73,371.11.

The Council entered into December 2021 with a starting balance of £73,371.11  
There was £22,784.18 spent and £762.00 received leaving an available resource on budget of £51,348.93.

Proposed Councillor Elgie  
Seconded Councillor Smith

## 9. TO APPROVE THE BUDGET REPORT

The Clerk said the budget for 2021/22 is £117453.00. Expenditure to date is £78,753.02 leaving an available resource on budget of £38,066.98.

There has been an overspend on Office and Professional Services of £734.51.  
Virement of £2000 at £500 each from Communication, Training, Civic Fund and Community Fund to cover this till the start of the next financial year is requested.  
This was agreed.

With regard to project funding £9,214.70 is available which includes an underspend on the Christmas Pantomime £1000 and CAB £1000. The Clerk requested this money is distributed as follows;

- **Northern Heartlands Match Funding £2000**

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. Following circulation this has been supported by all members with the exception of Councillor Read.

A vote was taken to allocate an additional 2k.

For: 5 votes

Against: 2 votes

**Resolved 1.** To allocate Northern Heartlands Heritage and Wellbeing Programme 10k over three financial years.

- **Office Refurbishment / Phone System**

The Building Regulations application was submitted mid-November. This has been approved. A Building Inspector has been out to assess the works undertaken so far and is happy with the progress and plans for future works.

Work has commenced on the new disability toilet which includes the removal of two internal walls, the doorframe being widened and old toilets and sink units removed.

The tiler is in this week and the new wet floor will be installed next week.

The electrician has also been in to continue with fire safety measures and installation of new lights/sockets etc throughout the ground floor.

The joiner is coming back next week to install the fire corridor to the First Floor. He will also be boarding the back office and removing the old coolers from the rear of the building.

The new windows and doors have been booked in for 16th February 2022.

The Building Inspector will visit the office again once the Disability Toilet is almost complete.

Three quotes were received regarding the installation of a new telephone system throughout the whole building.

Transcendit Ltd – One off payment of £1,183 to cover the costs of the equipment and cabling. Monthly Cost of £70 for 7 Licences to cover the 7 telephones.

TalkTalk Business – Monthly cost of £92.85 to cover the costs of equipment. We would be responsible for having the cabling done prior to installation.

Document Solutions – Monthly cost of £71.77 to cover the costs of equipment and all cabling is included. Two SIP trunks will be provided to allow two concurrent calls on the main number.

Councillor Read said use of a VOIP with a wall connection plug would mean if you loose power you loose the phone system.

The Council needs to have power at all times in case of civil emergency.

Councillor Tinsley suggested taking advice from the Civic Resilience Officer.

He also requested that the acquisition of a generator is explored.

This was agreed.

**Resolved 1.** The report is approved.

**2.** Further information is to be requested on the telephone back up system available to the Council following power failure.

**3.** Subject to satisfactory information the telephone system with Document Solutions is approved.

- **Safe as Houses Match Funding**

Following the first multi agency Community Safety meeting and the second meeting to include a walk about with Joy Allen, Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Clerk was asked to develop a Community Safety project. In consultation with DPCC she has applied for a Community Investment Grant with Believe Housing Activities included in the application are;

A Leaflet Drop with information about the Safe As Houses project.

Home Safety Plans (one to ones with elderly and vulnerable as requested)

Bike Marking Session

Dog Micro Chipping Sessions

Encourage Community Caretaking.

Introduce street environmental improvements

Provide personal / household security equipment.

The feedback from Believe was;

Having viewed the application, I would advise that it is unlikely to be eligible for this funding call as, unless the home safety devices are hard wired they would not be classed as capital expenditure and would count as revenue. As there are no other capital costs or targets included in the application we could not consider it for our capital grant.

The type of equipment to use was discussed with Durham Constabulary who advised that if we connected the equipment this created a liability which was better to avoid.

Draft Costs £22,000

Income

Believe £10,000

DPCC £1,000

TC £4,000

CDF £5,000

Other £

The Clerk will submit the Believe Revenue Application in the next four weeks.

**Resolved 1.** To allocate 4k to the Safe As Houses project.

- **Its Your Neighbourhood Grant**

The Clerk has been working with the Environment Group to look at areas to extend Silver Birch planting around the parish to compliment those at Low Willington.

The Group has suggested planting six new Birch trees in the wildflower area on the Town Green.

The costs are

Six Silver Birch £510.00.

Delivery £90.00

Tree Stakes & Planting £110.00

The Town Council are requested to match fund £200

**Resolved 1.** To allocate £200.00 to the tree planting.

## **10. TO CONSIDER THE 2022/23 BUDGET AND PRECEPT REQUEST**

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 where it is now.

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

The Clerk was tasked with providing three scenarios increase, decrease or stay the same.

As the Tax Base has increased from 1,768.8 to 1,797.4

Allotment income remains the same.

The Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme Grant has fallen from £5,105 to £3,912 leaving a net position of being £542.73 better off.

Also as residents have been adversely affected by lock down and the Council has not taken on any extra responsibilities.

The Clerk recommended keeping the Council Tax Band D the same at £60.69 and request a precept of £109,084.

A vote was taken;

Councillor Read proposed that the Council tax is reduced;

For:1 vote

Against: 6 votes

Councillor Tinsley proposed that the Council tax remains the same;

For; 6 votes  
Against: 0  
Abstain 1

**Resolved 1.** To submit a 2022/23 precept request for £109.084 and grant payment of £3,912. Giving a Band D charge of £60.69

#### **11. TO CONSIDER CIVIC FUND APPLICATIONS**

None received.

#### **12. TO CONSIDER COMMUNITY FUND APPLICATIONS**

The Chyrelle Adams Cancer Support Trust  
Would like to provide two new televisions for their Holiday Home in Stanhope.  
Total Cost £600.00  
Grant Requested £450.00  
Last grant was July 2020 so they are eligible to apply.  
The application is incomplete. This was agreed in principle subject to additional information.  
Proposed Councillor Tinsley  
Seconded Councillor Smith

**Resolved 1.** To award £450 subject to receiving the additional information required.

#### **13. TO RECEIVE THE COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT**

County Councillor Gunn said herself and Councillor Tinsley had been in touch about the Miners Welfare issues and held teams meetings. She thanked Kate Ward for attending the meeting from D.C.C Community Protection and for her report.  
She said Neighbourhood Budget Funding had been invested in;  
Home & Away  
Willing To Bloom  
Parking Cones For Schools  
Rivers Trust Trees  
Jack Drum  
Willington Disabled Group  
Willington Amateur Football Club

Councillor Gunn and Tinsley have paid regular visits to the Open Door Church who are now providing many layers of support.

The Mens group has been very successful and now needs more sessions.

The County Councillors are looking to extend the Town Green Play Area provision and develop a Youth Hub.

DCC Officers continue to work from home until 26 January 2022.

The 126 County Councillors are meeting at Spennymoor Leisure Centre.

Licencing Committee continues to meet at County Hall with social distancing.

DCC have proposed a 3% increase in Council Tax.

There has been a massive increase in child poverty and the take up of free school meals.

It is hoped to reintroduce Neighbourhood Forums and Pact meetings.



Kate Ward said all Pact meeting are currently cancelled unless they are held on teams.

- Willington Masterplan  
Councillor Tinsley said their has been further Masterplan consultation online. Most of the comments were about the Miners Welfare and the majority of people who commented were residents from Willington.

Councillor Tinsley is Working with Building Control regarding the refurbishment of Stephenson's old Butchers.

There has been a large increase in casework.

Councillor Read said he would like his thanks recorded for the DDC staff who gave an extremely good presentation on the Willington Masterplan.

Councillor Gunn said she would like to thank Helen and Emma for the work they do and the support they give to County Councillors with resident's issues.  
She would like to thank Helen for her work on the Shutterblight project which secured an additional 10 shop fronts.

#### **14. TO RECEIVE THE TOWN COUNCILLORS REPORT**

##### **Communications**

Councillor Read tabled a report with his suggestions on how the website and general communication could be improved.

Councillor Tinsley said this showed a lot of work.  
The report was noted.

#### **15. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING.**

8<sup>th</sup> February 2022 at 6pm