

TOW LAW TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Tow Law Town Council held on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2023, commencing at 6.30pm in the Community Centre, Tow Law.

PRESENT: Councillors F. Nicol (Chair), M. Craggs, M. Dyer, P. Eastwood, J. Gale, E. Mather, P. Stokes and D. Willock.

ALSO PRESENT: G. F. Smith (Clerk).

079/23 APOLOGIES

Apologies received from Councillors C. Batson, J. Fowler and County Councillor R. Manchester.

080/23 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor Stokes declared an interest in agenda item no. 11 Tow Law Community Association.

Councillors Craggs and Nicol declared an interest in agenda items no. 11 Tow Law Community Centre and agenda item no. 12 Tow Law Food Bank.

Councillor Craggs also declared an interest in agenda item no.9 Allotments.

Councillor D. Willock declared an interest in agenda item No. 12 Tow Law Food Bank and Agenda item No. 23 Road Safety.

081/23 MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 21<sup>st</sup> March 2023

The minutes were agreed and signed by the Chair.

082/23 ACTION LIST

The Action List was circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting. Responses received from:-

The Clerk - Grass Cutting Contract contacted an additional quotation from local contractor.

The Chair chased up response from :-

- Home Group and informed the meeting of the discussions.

Signed.....Chair

083/23 Councillor Vacancy

Notice of Vacancy – has expired, Council agreed to co-opt. Two applicants received for the one vacancy. Members agreed to interview both candidates on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2023 at 6.15pm in the Community Centre, Tow Law. Clerk to contact the applicants.

084/23 COMMUNITY FUND

The Clerk read out a letter received from Linda Cook, Founder of Hedgehogs R Us. Members agreed to donate £150.00 from the N-Power Community Fund to purchase 50 Hedgehog Highway Surrounds and 50 Information Leaflets to distribute to residents , groups etc.

085/23 JOINT REPORT BY THE CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

- Ongoing discussions with Home Group, write to Home Group/MP/ Crime Commissioner/MySpace/Local Press.
- High Hill House – Ongoing problems.

086/23 HONOUR TO COUNCILLOR TERRY BATSON (TREE & PLAQUE)

Members discussed this matter but came to no conclusion. It was agreed to publish an item on Face book asking for comments to honour past councillors etc.

087/23 ALLOTMENTS

The Clerk reported that the contractor had finished digging the trench and laying the water pipe including fittings and tap and backfilled the area. Northumbrian Water had inspected the site and passed the works to connect to the water supply, this should be completed within the next two weeks.

Councillors Mather and Craggs had developed a draft letter to be sent to all allotment holders (Clerk to arrange) and all plots will be accurately measured and given a new suggested annual fee , to be discussed at the next Town Council meeting in May 2023.

088/23 LAND REAR OF HIGH STREET, TOW LAW

Councillor Stokes updated the meeting: –

A quotation had been received from RJC Landscape and Building Maintenance, Stanhope for £14,200.00 to dig out the area, remove soil, landscape the area, road base coat suitable for driving/parking on, bird mesh fence, pin kerb down the road side. Members agreed to accept this quotation.

Members noted that £10,000.00 had been received from the Three Towns AAP. Members wished to place on record the work carried out by Councillor Stokes on this project.

Signed.....Chair

089/23 TOW LAW COMMUNITY CENTRE

Councillor Stokes informed the meeting that lots of activities continue in the Centre. King's Coronation event being planned for 8<sup>th</sup> May 2023. Big Help Out event being arranged (treat for children) to be agreed. Play area at rear of Community Centre to be refurbished. Family activities well supported during the recent Easter School Holidays.

090/23 TOW LAW FOOD BANK

Councillor Nicol updated the meeting – still very busy, soup and food sessions, numbers expanding.

091/23 POLICE /PACT/SPEEDWATCH REPORTS

Councillor Mather updated the meeting with recent Speed Watch surveys (Clerk to send figures to all Councillors by e-mail).

Police Pact meeting on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2023 at 6.30pm in the Community Centre, Tow Law.

092/23 FACEBOOK

Councillor Craggs to produce a first edition as soon as possible.

093/23 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – No report

County Councillor R. Manchester absent.

094/23 REPRESENTATION BY RESIDENTS – No Report.

095/23 BANK ACCOUNT (on-line banking) – response from Co-op Bank. Still Awaiting details of confirmation of Authorised signatories and authorisation of on-line banking arrangements. Clerk to consider changing Bank arrangements, to report to the next Town Council meeting in May 2023.

096/23 PLANNING MATTERS - No report.

097/23 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Vouchers 01 to 07 amounting to £9738.46; to be paid.

098/23 CCTV IN TOW LAW – response received from DCC. Clerk to further discuss with DCC regarding updating of cameras and number plate recognition system.

Signed.....Chair

#### 099/23 TOW LAW MILLENNIUM GREEN

Councillor Gale raised concerns on the state of the site including Health and Safety issues state of wooden landing. Members agreed to form a group to look into these matters and arrange a site visit and also report back to the next Town Council meeting in May 2023.

Councillor Stokes again updated the meeting on:- Ditches/Drainage (quotations required); One dangerous tree(removed); Toplary of Hedges; Decking in need of repairs, pond is full, more rubbish bins required, meadow/woodland meadow requires attention (awaiting quotation).

#### 100/23 BEEHIVE COKE OVENS

Councillor Stokes updated the meeting – works are still outstanding on the information board (details to be sent to the Clerk) and gorse bushes (contract should be drawn up). The Clerk read out a quotation for grass cutting at Bee Hive Coke Ovens, allotment site rear of Dan’s Castle and footpath edging on Millennium Green on a fortnight basis at £165.00 each visit from Cut and Strim Garden Services of Tow Law. Members agreed to accept the quotation and for Mr Urwin to commence on the sites as soon as possible. Clerk confirmed that he has received a copy of the Public Liability Insurance Certificate, Clerk to contact Mr Urwin.

#### 101/23 ROAD SAFETY

Councillors Craggs and Willock raised residents concerns around motor vehicle accidents near the crossroads on the A68. Request was raised through Councillor Mather for the Speedwatch vehicle to visit the site to use/record speed camera (and inform the Police/Crime Commissioner of these concerns and ask for action), and request DCC Highway Engineers to visit the area for solutions to the problem (inform County Councillor Manchester).

#### 102/23 CLERK’S REPORT

The Clerk reported receipt of the Precept for 2023/2024 of £43,752.09 and LCTSS Grant £1994.00 from DCC on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023.

#### 103/23 MEMBERS REPORTS

Councillor Craggs:-

- Date of Big Clean Day ??

Councillor Nicol

- Home Group – Empty houses (inform MP of the situation)
- Deerness Estate – two dogs roaming “wild”, reported to the Neighbourhood Warden

Signed.....Chair

103/23 (continued) MEMBERS REPORTS

Councillor Eastwood

- State of roads in Tow Law (Councillor Mather had previously reported this on the Highways Action Line and would chase this up again).

Councillor Willock

- Area of land off the A68 (concerns)

Councillor Stokes

- Puddles of water on road near Co-op Supermarket on High Street (previously recorted to County Councillor Manchester)

104/23 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2023 in the Community Centre, commencing with a Special Meeting at 6.15pm, followed by The Meeting of Electors, followed by The Annual General Meeting followed by the monthly Ordinary Meeting.

The meeting finished at 7.53pm.

SIGNED.....Chair