

TOW LAW TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Tow Law Town Council held on Tuesday 21st November 2023, commencing at 6.30pm in the Community Centre, Tow Law.

PRESENT: Councillors F. Nicol (Chair), C. Batson, K. Duffy, J. Fowler, E. Mather, P. Stokes and D. Willock.

ALSO PRESENT: County Councillor R. Manchester, G. F. Smith (Clerk).

251/23 APOLOGIES

Apologies received from Councillors T. Bland, M. Craggs, M. Dyer, P. Eastwood and J. Gale.

252/23 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor Stokes declared an interest in agenda item no. 10 Tow Law Community Association.

Councillors Craggs and Nicol declared an interest in agenda items no.10 Tow Law Community Association and agenda item no. 11 Tow Law Food Bank.

Councillor Craggs also declared an interest in agenda item no.8 Allotments.

Councillor D. Willock declared an interest in agenda items no. 8 Allotments, No. 11 Tow Law Food Bank and agenda item No. 19 – Road Safety.

Councillor C. Batson declared an interest in agenda item no. 29 Christmas Activities.

253/23 MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 19th September 2023

The minutes were agreed and signed by the Chair , subject to the following amendment:- Minute 219/23 Members reports Councillor Nichol should read "Remembrance service – The Chair asked the Clerk to contact the local British Legion Poppy Appeal Organiser regarding the wreath and poppies and the local Church for the service details on 12th November 2023 and report to the Chair".

254/23 MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 17th OCTOBER 2023

Amendment to minute 227/23 Land rear of High Street, Tow Law paragraph 2 should read "Councillor Stokes requested that the Clerk contact the Council's Insurance Company regarding claiming for slips, trips and accidents on the site and report to the next Town Council meeting".

The amended minutes were agreed and signed by the Chair.

Signed.....Chair

255/23 ACTION LISTS

The Action Lists were circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting, they were agreed.

256/23 COMMUNITY FUND

Mr Kieron Young, Operations Manager, The Walk and Talk Group presented a very interesting talk on the Heritage 100 Route for Tow Law.

Members agreed to support this project but note that County Councillor Manchester had pledged to secure the short fall of £1000.

(Since the meeting Mr Young has sent all Councillors a link to the website and facebook page so they can follow progress).

Members agree to donate towards this project, when or if required, from the Community Fund for £250.00

The Clerk read out an application from Tow Law Dog Club for a donation of £250 towards the running costs of the club, 2 tables and special training nights and rosettes.

Members agreed to donate £250.00 towards this project.

The Clerk read out a letter from the Great North Air Ambulance for a donation of £250.00 towards the running costs of this organisation.

Members agreed to donate £250.00 from the Community Fund towards this project.

256/23 JOINT REPORT BY THE CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

- High Hill House – Ongoing problems, change of Landlord, 25 year lease, 2 ladies to be rehoused.
- Dog Poo Bags – The Chair reported on unacceptable behaviour from visitors to the Community Centre towards volunteers (who were issuing dog bags to the public). This behaviour is not acceptable and Members agreed stop supplying future bags when the present supplies run out.
- Councillor Stokes has spent some time in Hospital recovering from illness, but is at tonight's meeting.

257/23 ALLOTMENTS

Allotment Tenancy Agreements

The Clerk was to obtain legal advice from a local solicitor (Mr Shuttleworth, Hodgson and Angus, Stanhope) before issuing the agreement in January 2024, confirmation to the next meeting of the Town Council (16th January 2024).

Signed.....Chair

258/23 LAND REAR OF HIGH STREET, TOW LAW

Councillor C. Batson reported that the contractor was having difficulties (weather) in laying the fillings to the potholes but would carry out the work as soon as possible.

The Clerk reported that he had contacted the Council's Insurance Company and they confirmed that any claims for trips, slips and accidents on the site would be investigated under the Council's Public Liability Insurance Policy.

259/23 TOW LAW COMMUNITY CENTRE

Councillor Stokes updated the meeting that the Centre was still very busy. Front door was damaged and in need of repair (ongoing).

260/23 TOW LAW FOOD BANK

Councillor Nicol updated the meeting that the Food Bank was still very busy.

261/23 POLICE /PACT/SPEEDWATCH - Councillor Mather provided speedwatch figures for v15th February 2023, as follows:-

Bridge Street 120 vehicles 4 speeding (van); Wolsingham to Tow Law 18 vehicles 0 speeding (matrix);

Dan's Castle to Tow Law 54 vehicles 5 speeding (matrix); Tow Law to Darlington 82 vehicles 0 speeding (van); Smith Street to Satley 28 vehicles 7 speeding (matrix); Satley to Tow Law 33 vehicles 1 speeding (van).

262/23 FACEBOOK – No update.

263/23 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

County Councillor R. Manchester reported on the following:-

- Turbines (High Hedley Hope), meeting with Planning Applicants.
- Car Park sign(outstanding)
- Road Closure in Tow Law – Resurfacing – work completed.

264/23 REPRESENTATION BY RESIDENTS – None received.

265/23 BANK ACCOUNT (on-line banking) – Application form completed and sent to Co-op Bank awaiting response, thanks to Councillor Craggs in assisting the Clerk with forms etc.

266/23 PLANNING MATTERS – None received.

Signed.....Chair

267/23 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Cheque book received. Letter from Co-op Bank regarding alterations to Bank signatories.

Accounts 36 to 66 ; value £14606.82 approved for payment.

268/23 ROAD SAFETY- COUNCILLOR WILLOCK

Councillor Willock updated the meeting, the following were still outstanding:-

- Police survey to be completed.
- Agreement has been reached on repainting the road with a sign “dangerous corner”.

269/23 CCTV IN TOW LAW – Clerk was awaiting response from Durham Police.

270/23 TOW LAW MILLENNIUM GREEN - Deferred to the next Town Council meeting.

Declaration of Trust Document, Clerk to check with a local Solicitor (Ian Shuttleworth, Hodgson & Angus of Stanhope) regarding legal status and report to the next Town Council meeting in January 2024.

Charity Commission Document

The Clerk had submitted a request for charitable status to the Commission and was awaiting a response, to be discussed at the next Town Council meeting in January 2024.

Barclay’s Bank Account

The Clerk was awaiting details from the Charity Commission regarding registration status, and will contact the Bank. To be discussed at the next Town Council meeting in January 2024.

271/23 BEEHIVE COKE OVENS

Councillor Gale was absent from the meeting, update at the next Town Council meeting. National Lottery Grant for Heritage form to complete, report to the next Town Council meeting (January 2024).

272/23 FIND & FIX PROJECT FOR TOW LAW – Remove from Agenda, works completed.

273/23 LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME – Remove from Agenda, update reports only.

274/23 COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP FUND - Outstanding

Awaiting details of the next round of bids (consider The Mart site and/or Millennium Green Site).

275/23 NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH COMMUNITY SAFETY CHARTER

Remove from Agenda, update reports only.

Signed.....Chair

276/23 FUNDING OPPERTUNITIES – None this month.

277/23 REMBERANCE DAY SERVICE

The Chair reported a very good turnout by the organisations and general public.

278/23 CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES

The" Switch on lights" ceremony on Friday 1st December 2023, for refreshments and gifts for the children from funds from the Community Fund (£250) and Council Reserves (£250). Councillor Bland to arrange and pass over receipts to the Clerk.

279/23 THE SKILL MILL – COUNTY DURHAM YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE

The Clerk/Councillor Stokes to contact the supervisor to obtain the costs for clearing the ditches on Millennium Green.

280/23 D DAY 80 6th JUNE 2024

Clerk had circulated details from CDALC regarding the event. Councillor Willock agreed to provide an update report to the next Town Council meeting (January 2024).

281/23 CLERK'S REPORT – No report

282/23 MEMBERS REPORTS

Councillor Stokes:-

- He will be attending the next Smaller Councils Forum meeting in May 2024.
- He reminded all Councillors of the need to set the Precept at the next Town Council meeting (January 2024).

Councillor Mather:-

- Updated the meeting on a training session she had attended on "Play Area Inspections (CDALC) on 22nd October 2023.

283/23 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 16th January 2024 in the Community Centre, commencing at 6.30pm.

Signed.....Chair

284/23 IN PRIVATE: CLERK'S SALARY (backdated to 1st April 2023)

Members were informed that the National Salary pay award for the Clerk as from the 1st April 2023, the increase would be 6.2%. (Monthly increase of £91.04 per month). Payable in December's pay.

Members agreed to the National Award.

The meeting finished at 8.00 pm.

SIGNED.....Chair