

The present task was to improve access and links to other communities, such as Cornsay Colliery, and a number of people had come forward to become involved in this. There were currently around 15 people "patrolling" the area, to guard against vandalism and anti-social behaviour, and this was proving to be very effective. There was a proposal to fence the site along the side of the road, and to provide a car park for 20 cars and a coach, so as to prevent damage to the Fell itself. It might also be possible to fence the road into East Hedleyhope so as to prevent access to quad bikes. 4x4 vehicles and to minimise the opportunities for fly tipping.

The second year of his contract would be taken up by the provision of footpaths and information panels, school visits, volunteer development and ecological surveys, while year three would see further surveys and onward development.

Members were very impressed with the work which had been carried out so far, and the interest which had been shown by the public. The Chairman emphasised the need for continuing consultation, and for vigilance in safeguarding vegetation and tree management. It was acknowledged that given the history of the area, it would take a long time to recover, but an excellent start had been made. He hoped that guided walks would become a feature, and that a formal nature reserve might be established rather than merely a recreational area.

The Chairman thanked Craig for his attendance, and he left the meeting.

6. MINUTES :

Agreed : That the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 19th July (a copy of which had been sent previously to each member) be Approved and Signed as a correct record.

7. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT :

County Councillor Carroll was not in attendance.

(At this point, Councillor J.Gale joined the meeting)

8. DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS :

a) Councillor C.Havton

Councillor Hayton reported that an early meeting was to be held in Sunnyside to consider the formation of an informal "village council" and to explore the possibility of establishing a community partnership with Stanley, Billy Row and Roddy Moor. The meeting could also "sound out" possible common objectives with Tow Law, and with this in mind, he would invite representatives from the town to attend the meeting. He felt that the importance of the A68 trunk road, and its relevance to the regeneration of the immediate area was being ignored, and while certain communities were experiencing growth, the former coalfield communities were losing out.

b) Councillor J.Gale

Councillor Gale echoed Councillor Havton's words_ and he confirmed that he would support the meetings which Councillor Hayton was convening. He pointed out that the District Council was still awaiting the two star status which would achieve the necessary funding to facilitate the ALMO initiative.

9. QUALITY OF LIFE SURVEY :

Continuing dis-satisfaction was expressed at the quality of the report, it being felt that the survey had not revealed anything which was not previously known about the community, nor did it suggest any course of action which might be taken to address the shortcomings which it revealed. Members felt that an opportunity had been missed, and accordingly, it was

Agreed : That the Council convene a meeting with the Community Association, Community Partnership and the Football Club in order to address the various concerns, and to seek a way forward.

10. TOW LAW TATTLER :

The Clerk sought guidance as to members' wishes for the frequency of publication of the Tattler, which had recently been produced on a bi-monthly basis, and it was

Agreed : That the present bi-monthly publication frequency be retained.

11. BATHS BUS 2005 :

The meeting considered as Appendix 1 the report by the Clerk on two incidents which had occurred during the operation of this service, and the action which had been taken. The Clerk further advised that the procedure for issuing tickets and parental control forms would be reviewed for the 2006 season.

Agreed : That the Clerk's report be Noted and the action taken be Approved,

12. RENEWAL OF WATER MAINS :

The Chairman gave a detailed report on the series of meetings which had been held with the parties involved during the progress of this project. He acknowledged that the nature and extent of the work inevitably led to delays and frustrations, but he felt that the regular contact with the workforce had been very worthwhile and successful in keeping inconvenience to a minimum.

Agreed : That the Chairman's report be Noted and Approved

13. DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL – URBAN & RURAL RENAISSANCE INITIATIVE :

The Chairman and Clerk reminded members of the meeting which had been held at County Hall some time ago, to take issue over what was perceived to be the shortcomings of the County Council in providing Tow Law with the wider degree of regeneration which had been promised both by itself and Government during the Foot & Mouth outbreak. The meeting had been inconclusive, except to suggest a further approach to the Leader and Chief Executive setting out the town's aspirations in this respect, but the Chairman explained that because of his recent illness. This had not yet been done.

The Clerk informed members that the issue had been complicated somewhat by a number of consultation documents which had been received from the District Council, Local

Strategic Partnership and the North Regional Assembly in connection with its Regional Spatial Strategy, each of which was seeking views on regeneration in the area.

Agreed : That the reports by the Chairman and Clerk be Noted.

**14. WEAR VALLEY DISTRICT COUNCIL – LOCAL DEVELOPMENT
FRAMEWORK :**

The meeting considered as Appendix 2 the report by the Clerk on the Draft Statement of Community Involvement produced as part of the new statutory consultation process, a copy of which was incorporated in the Appendix.

Agreed : That the report be Noted.

15. DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL – "BUILDING SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE"

The Clerk reported receipt of an explanatory document, which was available for inspection by interested members.

**16. LOCAL WORKS – CAMPAIGN FOR THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES
BILL :**

The meeting considered as Appendix 3 the report by the Clerk on his attendance at a public meeting in Bishop Auckland seeking support from this organisation for its work to achieve all party support for the Bill which is designed to reverse what is termed "Ghost Town Britain".

Agreed : That further consideration be given to this matter at the October meeting

17. FLORAL TUBS – HIGH STREET : Following further

complaints regarding these tubs, it was

Agreed : That Durham County Council be requested to arrange for the removal of the tubs as a matter of some urgency.

18. LAND AT THORNLEY ROAD :

The Clerk reported receipt of correspondence from the District Council regarding the various land ownerships at this location, which indicated that some enforcement action may be necessary to reverse cases of encroachment which had occurred.

Agreed : That the reported be Noted and that the Clerk ascertain whether the appropriate action has yet been taken.

19. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS – QUALITY STATUS :

The Clerk reported on correspondence received via the Durham County Association indicating that of over 100 Parish/Town Councils in the county, only 7 had yet achieved



Agreed : That it remained the Town Council's wish to secure this status at the earliest opportunity.

20. THE MINERAL VALLEYS PROJECT :

The Clerk reported receipt of the Project's latest newsletter, a copy of which was available for members' inspection if requested.

21. DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL — ENVIRONMENTAL OPERATIONAL PLAN :

The Clerk reported receipt of a copy of this document for the period 2005/6, a copy of which was available for members' inspection if required.

22. LAND AT TOW LAW :

The Clerk reported receipt of correspondence from the Council's solicitors indicating that the footpaths adjacent to this land, one in the ownership of the County Council, the other in the ownership of Wear Valley District Council, were both deemed to have the status of "Rights of Way". The County Council had again pointed out the lack of an environmental survey in respect of this land.

Agreed : That the contents of the correspondence be Noted, and that in view of the land's proximity to the Millennium Green. on which such a survey had been undertaken, no further action be taken in this respect, and that the solicitors be instructed to proceed with the purchase.

23. DURHAM ASSOCIATION OF PARISH & TOWN COUNCILS — CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER :

The Clerk reported that the Association had now appointed a full-time paid officer to replace the previous part-time Honorary Secretary. Mr. Steve Ragg had taken up the appointment on 1st September, and was based at County Hall..

At this point, Councillor P.Graham left the Meeting)

24. PLANNING MATTERS : The following

new applications were noted :

Proposed renovation of Chapel and utility extension at 123a Dan's Castle
Proposed erection of boundary fence at 130 Dan's Castle
Proposed fully glazed UPVC conservatory at 73 Deemess Estate
Proposed 4 bedroom detached dwelling at Plot 2 Naismith Mews
Proposed extension and garage at 45 Dan's Castle
Proposed new convenience store at 47a High Street
Proposed provision of 63 (from 65) dwellings at Tow Law Auction Mart
Proposed detached dwelling house on land adjacent to Northside Court
Proposed new house at Plot 5 Naismith Mews



Agreed : a) That the applications be Noted without comment

b) That in connection with application (g) concern be expressed that a condition attached to an approval regarding the auction ring, might dilute the amount of finance which would be forthcoming under the relevant Section 106 agreement.

(At this stage, Councillor J.Dav left the Meeting)

25. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT :

Agreed : That Approval be given to the payment of Invoices Nos. 025 to 030 in the sum of f 3204.53 as listed on the Agenda

26. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT :

The Chairman indicated that he had no further reports to make other than those in items Nos. 12 and 13 above

27. CLERK'S REPORTS :

The Clerk reported as follows :

a) Having received an application under the Community Fund from the Community Association's Under 18's Boxing Club for financial assistance towards the cost of acquiring some apparatus. No amount had been specified in the application.

Agreed : That Approval be agreed in principle, and that the matter be delegated to the Finance Committee for further consideration.

b) Having made enquiries regarding public liability insurance cover for the Christmas tree lights and that the response of the Council's insurers was awaited.

Agreed : That this matter be delegated to the Finance Committee for consideration.

c) Having received from Derwentside District Council a courtesy copy of the planning application in connection with the proposed erection of 13 wind turbines, control room and associated access on land between Wardean Wood and Hedleyhope Fell, Satley. The plan was available for inspection if requested.

28. MEMBERS' REPORTS :

There were no reports from members.

29. DATE OF NEXT MEETING :

It was Noted that the next meeting of the Council would be held on Tuesday 1 e October 2005 at 7 p.m

Signed ...' Chairman

18th October 2005