

TOW LAW TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING - 18TH OCTOBER 2005

PRESENT : **Councillor T.Batson** **(Chairman)**

Councillors J.Day, P.Graham, A.Green,
R.Grogan, E.Gwynnette, E.Morris, & C.Rand

Councillor C.Hayton – Wear Valley District Council

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE :

Councillors J.Flynn, J.Gale & J.Stevens

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST :

There were no Declarations to report

3. POLICE REPORT :

Sergeant Steve Donnelly introduced his colleague, Sergeant Frank Hewison who was to take over his duties temporarily during a period of absence. Crime and Incident figures for the month of September revealed 58 calls affecting Tow Law, 8 of which were youth related_ while 7 were of a miscellaneous nature. There had been 15 crimes in and around the town, 1 burglary of a dwelling, 4 cases of assault. 4 cases involving damage, 4 of theft and 2 of theft from motor vehicles. During general discussion, Sergeant Donnelly reported that the Weardale Community Partnership had acquired material to mark bicycles, buildings etc.. and that John Raw of the Neighbourhood Watch team could assist with this operation. He also reported that Tow Law's Beat Officer Geoff Moore was moving on to other duties with effect from 1^st November, and that he would be replaced as soon as possible. In view of this, it was agreed that the Clerk write a letter to the Chief Constable expressing the appreciation of the whole community for the excellent work which P.C.Moore had done in and around the town during his period of service.

Sergeant Donnelly made brief reference to the forthcoming mergers of Police Forces across the country in an effort to standardise the level of manpower, and his feeling was that locally, it was likely that the Northumbria, Durham and Cleveland forces would become one unit.

4. REPRESENTATIONS BY RESIDENTS:

There were no residents present at the meeting.

5. MINUTES :

Agreed : That the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 20th September 2005 (a copy of which had been sent previously to each member) be Approved and Signed as a correct record.

6. REPORT OF FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING – C^{ll} OCTOBER 2005 :

Councillor P.Graham, Chairman of the Committee reported on the items which had been considered at the meeting, and it was

Agreed : That the report of the Committee (a copy of which had been sent previously to each member) be Noted and the recommendations contained therein be Approved.

7. COUNTY COUNCILLORS' REPORT :

County Councillor Carroll was not in attendance.

8. DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS :

a) Councillor RGrogan Councillor Grogan had no report at this stage of the meeting.

b) Councillor C.Havton

Councillor Hayton reported that the District Council now had a new Leader and Deputy Leader. He confirmed that the three ward councillors would continue to fight Tow Law's corner in all matters, and reported that while the ALMO initiative affected Tow Law only marginally, the town and Coundon had been earmarked for new housing under the Coalfields Housing Initiative, though Coundon was to receive priority. The intention was to expand housing in Tow Law, and he suggested that the Town Council should follow this up with the District Council. Councillor Hayton also reported that a representative body had been formed for Sunniside, and that further developments were awaited. A meeting was to be held in Stanley in November, with the possibility of forming a Community Partnership.

9. PRECEPT – 2006/2007 :

The Clerk advised that it would be necessary to approve a Precept at the November meeting of the Council, and it was

Agreed : That a meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee be convened for Tuesday 1^s November to give preliminary consideration to the Budget for the new financial year and to report accordingly.

10. QUALITY OF LIFE SURVEY :

The Clerk reminded members that at the last meeting of the Council, it had been agreed that a meeting be arranged with the Community Association, the Community Partnership and the Football Club, to seek a way forward following the disappointing results of the survey. It was noted that a meeting had been held the previous day with the Director of Regeneration and the Acting Director of Community Services at the District Council, together with representatives of the football club in connection with the forthcoming feasibility study on the refurbishment of the recreation area, for which a grant of £7500

Councillor Grogan outlined his suggestions for enhanced recreation facilities for the town, and he distributed sketch plans to augment his verbal submission. These included the possible re-location of the football club to an area of land below the Millennium Green. Lengthy discussion ensued_ during which a letter was considered from a potential developer (copied as Appendix 1 to all members) seeking the opportunity to address the Council on this matter, and as there was no positive outcome, it was

Agreed : That this matter be deferred to future meetings for further consideration. (

At this stage, Councillor A.Green left the meeting)

11. TOW LAW FOOTBALL CLUB – POTENTIAL RE-LOCATION :

Agreed : That as this subject had been discussed at length during the previous item, no further consideration be given at this stage.

12. CAMPAIGN FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES :

The Clerk reminded members that this item had been considered at the previous meeting, and he sought members' wishes.

Agreed : That Approval be given to supporting this initiative by the organisation "Local Works" to seek widespread support for the Sustainable Communities Bill to encourage the reversal of what it referred to as " Ghost Town Britain"

13. WEAR VALLEY DISTRICT COUN CIL – PROPOSED TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL FORUM :

The meeting considered as Appendix 2 details of this initiative, which sought to act as a formal consultative focus point between the two tiers. The District Council had approved the proposal, and it was Noted that meetings would be held quarterly commencing in January 2006. The Chair and Clerk of each Town/Parish Council would be invited to participate, together with one member (other than a member of the District Council). Wear Valley would be represented by four members (2 labour. 1 liberal democrat and 1 independent), none of whom would be members of Town or Parish Councils.

Agreed : That the initiative be Noted and Approved, and that Councillors Day and Rand be nominated as alternate representatives of the Town Council.

14. DURHAM ASSOCIATION OF PARISH/TOWN COUNCILS – A.G.M. :

The Clerk reported that the Association's Annual Meeting would be held at County Hall on Saturday 26th November, and it was

Agreed : That the Chairman (ex officio), Councillor Day and the Clerk attend.

15. WEAR VALLEY DISTRICT COUNCIL – REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY :

The meeting considered as Appendix 3 the report by the Clerk on this item. An invitation had been extended to the Town Council to submit representations to the North Regional Assembly, and in view of the very short response period (3 days) the Clerk reported having taken the initiative of supporting the recommended response of the Director of Regeneration at the District Council, tailored to Tow Law's circumstances, a copy of which had been circulated to all members.

Agreed : That the report be Noted and that the action of the Clerk in this matter be Approved and Endorsed.

16. PLANNING MATTERS :

The following new application was Noted without comment :

- a) Proposed garden room, conservatory and decking /balcony at 4 High Street

The following planning refusals were Noted :

- a) Proposed detached dwelling house on land adjacent to Northside Court
- b) Proposed change of use from commercial to domestic at 32 High Street

In connection with item (b) above. it was

Agreed : That an explanation of this refusal be sought

17. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT :

Agreed : That Approval be given to the payment of invoices Nos.031 to 034 in the sum of £1240.90

18. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT :

- a) The Chairman reported that in connection with the Annual Meeting of the Durham Association, he had agreed as a member of the Executive Committee, to approve the election of Helen Goodman, M.P. for Bishop Auckland as President of the Association in succession to Derek Foster M.P. who had stood down at the last election. This decision would be confirmed at the Annual Meeting.
- b) The Chairman reported that during his attendance at the Annual Conference of the National Association of Local Councils, he had been advised by a representative of the Standards Board that applicants for planning permission should be allowed to speak at the meeting of the Planning Authority at which the application was being considered. His understanding was that this was not allowed by Wear Valley District

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19. CLERK'S REPORTS :

The Clerk reported as follows :

- a) Receipt of the sum of £700 from the District Council in respect of the second instalment of Precept for the 2005/2006 financial year.
- b) Receipt of a letter from the District Council setting out the arrangements for payment of the Section 106 contribution in connection with the housing development at the Auction Mart.

20. DATE OF NEXT MEETING :

It was Noted that the next meeting of the Council would be held on Tuesday 15th November 2005.

Signed

15th November 2005

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