

TOW LAW TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING – 21ST MARCH 2006

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

**Councillors J.Day, J.Flynn, P.Graham, A.Green, E.Gwynnette
E.A.Morris, J.Stevens**

**County Councillor T.Carroll
District Councillor C.Hayton**

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE :

Councillors J.Gale, R.Grogan & C.Rand

At the outset of the meeting, the Chairman referred to the recent bereavement suffered by Councillor and Mrs.Gale. He reported that the Clerk had sent a suitable letter of condolence on behalf of the Town Council.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST :

There were no Declarations to make

3. POLICE REPORT :

There was no Police Officer in attendance, but the Clerk drew members' attention to a forthcoming meeting of the Police Consultative Group which would take place in the Dales Centre in Stanhope on Thursday 30th March at 7 p.m.

4. REPRESENTATIONS BY RESIDENTS :

There were no residents in attendance

5. MINUTES :

Agreed : That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Tuesday 21^d February 2006 (a copy of which had been sent previously to each member) be Approved and Signed as a correct record.

6. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT :

County Councillor Carroll reported that the past month had been relatively quiet apart from discussions centreing around the budget for 2006/7. The County's element of Council Tax to be passed on to the billing authorities had eventually been fixed and
- 2005/2006/040 -

7. DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS : a)

Councillor C.Hayton :

Councillor Hayton reported that the District Council had received funding to finance the forthcoming changes in concessionary bus fares for senior citizens. It had been hoped that free travel would be available across the county, but this had not proved possible, and accordingly the full concession would only apply district wide, travel elsewhere in the county attracting a 50% charge.

(At this point Councillor Flynn requested that because of a prior commitment, she be allowed to speak on Agenda items Nos. 12 and 13 out of turn because of her personal involvement with the Community Partnership). Accordingly, discussion ensued as follows :

8. PROPOSED MEETING WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP :

Councillor Flynn felt that it would be useful to hold a joint meeting with the Partnership with a view to streamlining the present situation whereby the boundaries tended to be blurred, and enabling it and the Town Council to work in tandem especially in matters of mutual concern. Ideally, it might be possible to prepare a joint business plan to help further community development. She suggested that any such meeting be facilitated by 2D in the Community Centre and be open to members of the Town Council, members of the Partnership, primary school heads and others from the Partnership mailing list. In view of the forthcoming Easter school holidays, it was felt that the proposed meeting be held in mid/late May. General discussion ensued, and it was

Agreed : That Approval in principle be given to such a meeting, and that the Clerk make the necessary arrangements.

9. TOW LAW RECREATION GROUND – PROGRESS REPORT :

Councillor Flynn advised the meeting that two tenders had been received for the feasibility study, one in the sum of £4,500 the other for £7,500 (both exclusive of V. A.T.). Having studied the accompanying detail, the preference was for the larger option, and efforts would be made to reduce the figure slightly. Once an agreement was reached, the contract would be awarded and the study could commence. The report was Noted.

(At this point Councillor Flynn left the meeting)

10. LOCAL COUNCIL CLERKS' SALARY REVIEW – 2006/7 :

(At this point the Clerk left the meeting while the item was discussed)

The meeting considered as Appendix 1 the report by the Clerk on the details of this review and the implications for the Town Council if approved. Following discussion it was

Agreed : That this matter be delegated to the Finance & General Purposes

11. CASUAL VACANCY ON TOWN COUNCIL – PROGRESS REPORT :

The Clerk reported that there had been one written application, and one personal approach by a potential candidate. The deadline for applications had been set at 31st March.

Agreed : That the report be Noted, and that after the deadline date, candidates be invited for interview prior to the April meeting.

12. TOW LAW BULL RING :

The meeting considered as Appendix 2 circulated for information purposes only, and advised members that the developers had been notified that the Town Council did not wish to proceed further with this matter. A copy of the correspondence had been passed to the Director of Regeneration at the District Council. The report was Noted.

13. LAND AT TOW LAW :

The Clerk reported that the Council's solicitors had now been paid their fees in connection with this matter, but that the County Council had not at this stage responded to the request for a detailed itemised note of their own costs. The report was Noted.

14. NALC/DURHAM COUNTY ASSOCIATION – QUALITY STATUS SEMINAR

The Chairman and the Clerk reported jointly on this meeting at County Hall on 18th March at which the Chairman and Chief Executive of the National Association gave their assessment of what was widely expected to be a forthcoming review of Local Government, and how this might affect Town and Parish Councils. The belief was that wider powers were likely to be granted to those local Councils which were able to take advantage of them. The meeting was also aimed at encouraging more local Councils in the County to seek Quality Status, which as well as being worthwhile for its own sake, would be a requirement of gaining further responsibilities and the opportunity of widening their scope of influence in their own communities. The Clerk circulated details of the criteria required for Quality Status. The reports were Noted.

15. WEAR VALLEY LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP – LOCAL ENTERPRISE GROWTH INITIATIVE :

The meeting considered as Appendix 3 details of this initiative, and it was

Agreed : That the report be Noted and that the Town Council liaise closely with its three District Councillors in order to oversee its progress and effectiveness.

16. PLANNING MATTERS :

The following new application was Noted without comment :

- a) Proposed 2.5 storey dwelling at 10 Millennium Court for Mr.S.Abley

17. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT :

Agreed : That Approval be given to the payment of Invoices Nos. 057 to 061 in the sum of £770.52

18. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT :

The Chairman had no report to present

19. MEMBERS' REPORTS :

- a) Councillor Hayton responded to members' concerns regarding dog fouling throughout the town and advised on the procedure of seeking the assistance of the District Council's Dog Warden. Problem times were identified as between 7 a. m. and 9 a.m. and between 3.30 p.m. and 6 p.m.

20. CLERK'S ITEMS :

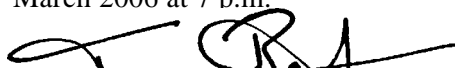
The Clerk reported as follows :

- a) Receipt of letters of appreciation from Blessed John Duckett School, Millennium Toddlers and Baring Court in response to payments made to them from the Community Fund.
- b) Progress on public seating which was expected to be installed in the near future.
- c) Progress on the proposed public footpath to be developed through Durham County Council's Mineral Valleys project. The Tow Law History Group had been asked to become involved in researching the history of the route and in helping to produce a descriptive leaflet.
- d) That the St.Philip & St.James Parochial Church Council had agreed to the suggestion of arranging for a peel of bells on Friday April 21st to mark Her Majesty the Queen's 80th birthday.

21. DATE OF NEXT MEETING :

It was Noted that the next meeting of the Council was scheduled for Tuesday 18th March 2006 at 7 p.m.

Signed



..... Chairman 18

th April 2006