

TOW LAW TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING - 18TH APRIL 2006

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

**Councillors J.Day, J.Flynn, J.Gale, P.Graham, RGrogan, E.Gwynnette, E.A.Morris,
C.Rand & J.Stevens**

County Councillor T.Carroll

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE :

Councillor A. Green District Councillor C.Hayton

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST :

**There were no Declarations to
report.**

**3. WEAR VALLEY DISTRICT COUNCIL – ADF/ MASTER PLANNING FOR
TOW LAW**

At this stage, the Chairman reported that since the preparation of the meeting Agenda and in connection with Item No.15 (Appendix 3) a request had been received to hear a presentation by the planning consultants appointed by the District Council to explain the detail of this matter and to advise members.

Accordingly, the Chairman welcomed John McDonald of the consultants DTZ and James Hudson of the Woodholmes Group and invited them to address the meeting.

Mr.McDonald began by explaining that the Area Development Framework (ADF) Master Planning for Tow Law was part of the initiative by English Partnership to put new life in to the communities of the Former Durham Coalfield. Tow Law had been identified as being eligible for assistance and support, and had been placed in Tranche 2 of the scheme involving Wear Valley District, alongside Coundon. The timescale was short, but full local consultation was essential, and this would now be commenced following which a report would go English Partnership and thence to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for final decision, expected by the end of the year.

Mr.Hudson explained that the process would be based on a "template" already used in Tranche 1_ This was of a standard design, but tailored to the needs of individual communities on a "bottom up" basis.

The Chairman urged members to present a positive input at the appropriate time, and stressed the need for all sections of the community to be consulted_ He had spoken informally to senior officers at Durham County Council, which was also "on board"



A lengthy question and answer session ensued, during which it emerged that the consultation period was short, the report to English Partnership being required by the end of May. Members insisted that the maximum benefit for Tow Law must be sought, though caution would be necessary not to raise the hopes and expectations of the community to an un-attainable extent.

Following further discussion, the Chairman thanked Mr.McDonald and Mr.Hudson for their presentations, and they left the meeting.

4. POLICE REPORT :

Sergeant Steve Donnelly presented his report for March, and circulated a printed summary of crime and incident statistics for the district. He advised members that he was being seconded to take part in a Home Office course, and would be absent from duty with effect from ^{4th} May. In the meantime, the appropriate contact officer would be P.C.Frank Hewison at the Stanhope Police office. Sergeant Donnelly also advised that due to an untimely series of injuries sustained by beat officers, including Tow Law's P.C.Jeff Blair, resources would be thinly spread for a short period, but that street wardens would be utilised to assist where appropriate. He stressed that it was essential to ensure that that the Police were informed at an early stage of incidents requiring attention.

In wishing Seregeant Donnelly success in his temporary role, the Chairman thanked him for his recent services to Tow Law, and at his suggestion, it was

Agreed : That a letter be sent to the Chief Constable expressing appreciation for his services.

5. REPRESENTATIONS BY RESIDENTS :

There were no residents in attendance.

6. MINUTES :

Agreed : That the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 21st March 2006 (a copy of which had been sent previously to each member) be Approved and Signed as a correct record.

7. REPORT OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING — 11^m APRIL 2006 :

Councillor P.Graham, Chairman of the Committee presented the report (copies of which had been sent previously to each member) and it was

Agreed : That the recommendations of the Committee be Approved and Endorsed as follows ;

a) Casual Vacancy)

That the two candidates for this vacancy be interviewed by a sub-committee comprising the Chairman and Vice Chairman together with

- b) Public Seats
- c) Bulb/Tree Planting — 2006/7 Season
- d) **Baths Bus** 3006
- e) Trusteeship of Millennium Green
- f) Community Fund Application
- g) Planning Applications
- h) Local Council Clerks Salary Review 2006/7

8. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT :

County Councillor Carroll gave a brief report, advising that the Durham & Darlington Fire & Rescue Service was awaiting an amalgamation with the Tyne & Wear Service. The headquarters of the new Brigade would be at the Tyne & Wear H.Q. while the local Fire Control Centre would be sited at Belmont.

9. DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS :

a) Councillor RGrogan:

Councillor Grogan responded briefly to the earlier ADF presentation, and expressed concern at the manner in which the matter had been handled by the District Council.

b) Councillor J.Gale:

Councillor Gale reported that by April 2007 the district's refuse collection system would be replaced by a recycling process involving the use of only one bin on a fortnightly cycle of household refuse/recycling material. He further advised that the ALMO housing administration was now in operation under the title of Wear Valley Homes Ltd. following approval by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. Following an Audit Commission examination in October 2005, the District Council had been identified as being one of the top maintenance authorities in Britain. Finally, he reported that as a result of a review of the District Council's administrative structure, the former four departments had been reduced to three, under three directorships.

10. H.J.BANKS — PROPOSED HOUSING DEVELOPMENT :

The Clerk reported that Banks had submitted an application for outline planning permission for this development at its site at Inkerman, and was embarking on a local consultation exercise. Further details were awaited. The report was Noted.

11. DEFRA —CLEAN NEIGHBOURHOODS & ENVIRONMENT ACT 2005 ;

The meeting considered as Appendix 1 details of this legislation, which included reference to the powers of Town/Parish Councils to deal with the problem of dog fouling and the issuing of fixed penalty notices. The Clerk advised on the practical difficulties involved, including the requirement that any person appointed to serve such notices had to undergo a period of training. There were also financial implications. The report was Noted.

12. PARISH/TOWN COUNCILS – SECTION 137 EXPENDITURE – 2006/7 :

The Clerk reported that the limit of expenditure under this legislation had been increased to £5.44 per elector with effect from 1st April 2006.

- 13. WEAR VALLEY DISTRICT COUNCIL – WASTE MATERIAL ON A68 :** The meeting considered as Appendix 2 details of a response from the District Council to the concerns expressed over the tipping of noxious material near the A68 at Inkerman. In noting the information. The Clerk was instructed to seek further re-assurance, especially in connection with the heavy metal content of the material.

14. PLANNING MATTERS :

Details of recent planning applications had been considered in Item No.7(g) above and the Clerk reported that no further applications had been received to date.

15. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT :

Agreed : That Approval be given to the payment of Invoices Nos. 001 to 003 in the sum of £2298.27 as listed in the meeting Agenda.

16. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT :

The chairman had no report to present

17. MEMBERS' REPORTS :

- a) Reference was made to the installation of additional footway lighting at the Millennium green and the Clerk was instructed to expedite the matter.


18. ITEMS OF AN URGENT NATURE :

- a) The Chairman referred to the recent sudden removal of the coin operated toilet unit on the High Street, and sought information as to a replacement. It was noted that the unit had been the subject of a lease between the District Council and the site owner.
- b) The Clerk was instructed to make further representations to Wear Valley District Council's Dog Warden service regarding the ongoing fouling problem, and to seek the provision of the appropriate warning notices.
-) Councillor Gale asked whether consideration might be given to convening future meetings of the Council for 6.30 p.m. rather than the present 7 p.m. This would be looked into.

19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING :

The Clerk reminded members that the May meeting would in fact be the Council's Annual Meeting, and that in accordance with legal requirements and usual practice, it would be preceded by the Annual Meeting of Electors.

Agreed : That the Annual Meeting of Electors would be held on Tuesday 16th May 2006 at 6.30 p.m., to be followed by the Annual Meeting of the Town Council.

Signed  Chairman 16

th May 2006