

TOW LAW TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING - 16<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2006

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

**Councillors J.Day, J.Flynn, J.Gale, P.Graham. A.Green,  
E.A.Morris, C.Rand and J.Stevens**

**Councillor C.Hayton — Wear Valley District Council  
County Councillor T.Carroll**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE :**

**Councillors R.Grogan & E.Gwynette**

**2. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE ENSUING YEAR :**

Councillor T.Batson was Nominated and Seconded, and there being no further nominations, it was

**Agreed : That Councillor T.Batson be and is hereby elected to serve as Chairman of the Town Council for the ensuing year.**

**3. DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE :**

Councillor Batson duly signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office which was countersigned by the Clerk as Proper Officer.

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST :**

Councillors Stevens and Green declared Prejudicial Interests in connection with Agenda items Nos. 13 and 19 respectively.

**5. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN FOR THE ENSUING YEAR :**

Councillor R.Grogan having signified his wish to stand for re-election was Nominated and Seconded, and there being no further nominations, it was

**Agreed : That Councillor R.Grogan be and is hereby elected to serve as Vice Chairman of the Town Council for the ensuing year.**

**6. POLICE REPORT :**

Sergeant Frank Hewison confirmed that Sergeant Steve Donnelly had now been seconded to other duties, and proceeded to present the report for the month of April. The report included a disturbing increase in the number of calls made to the Police in the Tow Law area, largely relating to instances of nuisance and anti-social behaviour. This information was in line with the perception of members and residents generally, and was not helped by the acknowledged shortage of Police resources.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'G. P. Jones' or similar, is written in a cursive style over the bottom right of the page.

Discussion centred around the growing level of wanton and malicious damage, and it was felt that the Town Council should now take a lead in engaging in consultation with the young people in the community, community workers, residents groups, Police and other relevant agencies.

There was now a need to formulate a policy to address the growing problem. Sergeant Hewison advised that Tow Law was policed by a core response team from Crook, but admitted that resources were stretched. He confirmed that a recent letter from the Town Clerk was being dealt with, and that warning letters had been issued to the parents of the young people named in the complaints. Sergeant Hewison was thanked for his attendance and he left the meeting.

**7. APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES :**

**Agreed : That members be appointed to appropriate bodies as follows :**

**a) Tow Law Community Partnership Councillors J.Day, J.Flynn, J. Gale, A.Green, R.Grogan, J.Stevens**

**b) County Durham Association of Local Councils :  
Councillor T.Batson**

**c) Police Community Liaison Committee  
Councillor T.Batson**

**d) WVDC Parish/Town Council Forum  
Councillor T.Batson & Clerk**

**8. REPRESENTATIONS BY RESIDENTS :**

**There were no residents in attendance**

**9. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT :**

County Councillor Carroll had little to report, it being the start of the new civic year, but he advised members that he had been appointed as Champion of the new Fire & Rescue control centre being established at Belmont.

**10. DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS :**

a) Councillor C.Hayton :

Councillor Hayton reported that remedial work to the surface of the Millennium Green footpath had been completed, and members expressed satisfaction at the outcome. He further advised that the new round of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding was to be administered by the Local Strategic Partnership, the criteria being to address worklessness and to reduce crime and the fear of crime. More funding would be provided via the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative. Councillor Flynn intervened to indicate that she would pursue this avenue with the 2D Community Network body.

b) Councillor J.Gale :

Councillor Gale made brief reference to the forthcoming Lyons Report, which was expected to announce another round of local government reform, and explained the possible impact on Wear Valley District Council. He also touched on the "Respect" agenda, but questioned how this would be policed, and whether existing benefits might be stopped.

#### **11. MINUTES :**

**Agreed : That the Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2006 (a copy of which had been circulated previously to each member) be Approved and Signed as a correct record, subject to the reference in Minute No.18 to a possible starting time for meetings as 6.30 p.m. be amended to 6 p.m.**

#### **12. ADOPTION OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2006 :**

Members considered as Appendix 1 the report of the Clerk setting out the Statement of Account for the 2005/2006 financial year, and it was

**Agreed : That the Statement of Account for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006 be Noted, Confirmed and Adopted.**

#### **13. CASUAL VACANCY :**

Councillor J.Stevens having declared a prejudicial interest in this item left the meeting while the matter was being considered..

Members considered the report by the Clerk on the proceedings of the interview committee which had been set up to make a recommendation to Council in this respect, and following discussion, it was

**Agreed : That Mr. Adrian Blacker of 36 Deerness Estate be appointed to fill the casual vacancy on the Town Council caused by the resignation of former Councillor Andrew Lawton.**

(Councillor Stevens rejoined the meeting)

#### **14. ADF/MASTER PLANNING FOR TOW LAW :**

The Chairman reported on the initial meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> April of the steering group set up to discuss this initiative. Planning Consultants Llewellyn Davies Yeang in partnership with Wear Valley District Council and Wood Holmes Group Ltd. had been appointed to prepare an Area Development Framework (ADF) which would aim to guide regeneration and investment to Tow Law in future years.

The meeting was exploratory, and members present submitted suggestions which they would wish to see in the community, and which would form the basis of the consultants' report to English Partnerships at the end of May. The second and final meeting of the group would be held on 18<sup>th</sup> May after which a further report would be made to the Town Council. The Chairman's report was Noted.



**15. H.J.BANKS – PROPOSED HOUSING DEVELOPMENT – PROGRESS REPORT :**

The Clerk reported that an outline planning application had been received for the provision of 20 dwellings and a 40 bed nursing home, and would be considered as Agenda item No. 19 – Planning Matters.

**16. WEAR VALLEY DISTRICT COUNCIL – VACANCY ON STANDARDS COMMITTEE :**

The Chairman reported that as a matter of urgency he had nominated Councillor J. Day to serve as a Parish Council representative on the Standards Committee. A parish representative on the committee was a requirement whenever matters relating to parish/town councils were being considered. At his request it was

**Agreed : That the action of the Chairman in this connection be Approved and Endorsed.**

**17. PUBLIC SEATING – PROPOSED LOCATIONS FOR SECOND PHASE :**

The Clerk sought instructions for the location of a further four public seats in the community, and it was

**Agreed : That the location of the additional seats and the nature of the dedications be delegated to the Finance & General Purposes Committee.**

**18. WEAR VALLEY DISTRICT COUNCIL – TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL FORUM :**

The Clerk reported briefly on his attendance at the Forum meeting, at which he had suggested that in an attempt to tackle the dog fouling problem, the "diary" system used in reporting cases of anti-social behaviour might be similarly be used. This had been agreed. In noting the report, the Chairman emphasised that it was essential that the District Council take on board the concerns of Parish/Town Councils across the district and that the Form was an ideal opportunity to facilitate this.

**19. PLANNING MATTERS :** The following new

applications were Noted :

- a) Outline application for 20 dwellings and a 40 bed nursing home at Inkerman for H. J.Banks
- b) 3 storey town house at 2 Millennium Court for Mr.S.T.Wilkie
- c) Erection of 1 dwelling at 3 Millennium Court for Anne Marie Walton -



Councillor A.Green having declared a prejudicial interest in the next item, left the meeting while the matter was considered :

d) Change of use to residential at 79a High Street for Mr.J.L.Green

Discussion ensued in connection with item (a) and it was

**Agreed : That the Town Council make an observation to the Planning Authority that rather than the nursing home, the community might be better served by additional social housing, preferably including a number of bungalows.**

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

**20. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT :**

**Agreed : That Approval be given to the payment of Invoices Nos. 4 — 6 in the sum of £ 813.22**

**21. MEETING STARTING TIMES :**

Further to the suggestion made at the April meeting, it was

**Agreed : That with effect from June, meetings of the Council commence at 6 p.m.**

**22. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT :**

The Chairman indicated that he had nothing further to report.

**23. CLERK'S REPORT :**

The Clerk reported as follows :

- a) Receipt of the first half year Precept from the District Council in the sum of £8250.
- b) Receipt from Beaufort/n-power of the sum of £2597 in respect of the Community Fund for the financial year 2006/7.
- c) Durham Wildlife Trust had indicated that it had been granted a lease from DEFRA of the surface area of the former burial site and that the official Signing ceremony would be held in the Community Centre on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> May at 12 noon.

**24. MEMBERS' REPORTS :**

- a) Councillor Flynn reported that a year long community celebration was being arranged for 2007 to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Community Centre, and she suggested that the Town Council might participate by sponsoring a Garden and Window dressing competition. The report was Noted.

b) Councillor Flynn further reported that Groundwork West Durham had now ceased to operate in its present form, and accordingly would be unable to maintain the Millennium Green as hitherto. Ken McGurk had been asked to provide a costing for the work, for which funding would have to be found The report was Noted.

**25. DATE OF NEXT MEETING :**

It was Noted that the next meeting of the Council was scheduled for Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> June at the new starting time of 6 p.m.

Signed ..                      Y.....Chairman 20

**<sup>th</sup> June 2006**