

TOW LAW TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Tow Law Town Council held on Tuesday 17th March 2009 in the Community Centre commencing at 6.30pm.

Present: Councillors P. Graham (Chairman), T. Batson, A. Blacker, J. Day, J. Gale, A. Green, R. Grogan, H. Hail, L. Rowland and L. Taylor

Also Present: District Councillor C. Hayton, Rachael Wearmouth (Northern Echo), Pc Dave Turner (Durham Police) and GF Smith (Town Clerk)

Apologies: Councillors L. Brown, G. Stevens, County Councillors J. Bailey, P. Jopling and Louis Hodkinson (WVDC)

Concerns were raised by Councillor Grogan regarding non attendance at Town Council meetings by certain Councillors (Batson, Brown and Stevens). The Chairman had discussed this with individual Councillors and reminded them about apologies for non attendance at meetings and the rules regarding the number of meeting requirements.

041/09 Declaration of Interest

Councillor Gale declared an interest in item 12- Tow Law Community Association. Councillor Rowland declared an interest in item 21- Staffing Matters.

042/09 Police Report

PC Dave Turner reported on the Crime and Incident report for February 2009 (copy attached to the Minutes), followed by a question and answer session.

043/09 Representation by Residents

No Residents present.

044/09 Report of the County Councillors

No Reports received

045/09 Minutes of the meeting held on 17th February 2009

Agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman

046/09 Matters Arising

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012/09 N-Power Community Fund

All outstanding Applications are to be discussed at the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, Clerk to make arrangements with the Chairman (Councillor Rowland) for a meeting date in April 2009.

022/09 Members Reports

d) Salt bins for path gritting

Clerk/Chairman reported on a meeting with DCC Officer (Steve Foster, Area Engineer) on 16th March 2009. The New Unitary Authority is to review the snow clearing/gritting works carried out throughout the County and will be meeting with Town/Parish Councils to agree a service level agreement for each area. Clerk to report any future developments to the next appropriate Town Council meeting.

e) Allotments – meeting of the sub-committee

The Clerk had met with Councillor Blacker (Chairman) and had agreed to write to each allotment holder regarding the setting-up of an allotment association. Also the next meeting of the Sub-Committee should be held in early May (date and time to be decided).

f) War Memorial (Bayonet)

Councillor Blacker to discuss/report on progress under agenda item no 19 – Members Report.

030/09 Matters Arising

Staffing Matter

Agenda item no. 21

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037/09 Clerk’s Report

e) Groundwork West Durham & Darlington Blooming Families Project

The Clerk reported that Groundwork were unsuccessful with their bid for Big Lottery Funding for the Project. However they would continue to look for other funding streams and would keep the Town Council informed of any future developments.

Millennium Green Area

Councillor Gale, Rowland and the Clerk met with staff from Groundwork Trust regarding suggested schemes to improve the area around the Millennium Green. Funding had been received for a general tidy up of the site and it was to be organised by the Trustees of the Millennium Green prior to the hand over to the Town Council. Clerk to contact Groundwork Trust regarding proposed future uses of the area. Clerk to also contact the owners of the adjoining field regarding possible purchase/lease of the field to the Town Council (for Community Garden and allotments). Clerk to report to the next Town Council meeting.

f) Durham Rural Community Council
Capacity Building Funded Initiative

The DRCC had been unsuccessful with the funding application for the project. However they would continue to look for other funding streams and would keep the Town Council informed of any future developments.

i) Great North Air Ambulance – Application for funding financial details of the organisation (balance sheet as at 31st March 2007) was copied for all the Councillors. Members agreed to donate £250 towards the running costs of the Great North Air Ambulance (under powers of the Local Government Act 1972 section 137).

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047/09 Report of the Councillors Surgery on Friday 13th March 2009

The Surgery was cancelled. The next scheduled surgery is Friday 17th April 2009 (Councillors Green and Grogan).

048/09 District Councillors Reports

Councillor Gale reported:-

- a) Winding down process at WVDC (staffing issues).
- b) Roof work at the Community Centre, to be discussed at a Special meeting of WVDC (24th March 2009).
- c) West Durham Liaison Committee (Banks Developments), next meeting Thursday 19th March 2009.

Councillor Grogan reported:-

- a) Opening of Wow Gym extension on Monday 23rd March at 11am.
- b) Old library premises at High Street.
- c) Discussions with schools regarding transporting of pupils to nature reserve
- d) Future funding (re 106 agreements) currently with WVDC for Tow Law being “ring fenced” when transferred to the New Unitary Authority on the 1st April 2009.

Councillor Hayton reported:-

- a) Attending last Council Meeting (WVDC) Wednesday 25th March 2009.
- b) 106 agreement at WVDC (Ring-fenced)
- c) Hilltop Villages Partnership, continue as Treasurer

Members wished to place on record their thanks to the three District Councillors for their service to the Community.

049/09 Planning Matters

Councillor Gale and Grogan had received the Planning Application list for week ending 13th March 2009 which included an application for the Tow Law area (3/2009/0101) for a residential dwelling at the rear of 2-4 North Road. Clerk to check with WVDC and send details to all Council Members.

050/09 Accounts for payment

That approval be given for the payment of vouchers 85 to 89 in the sum of £1141.91

051/09 Area Action Partnerships (AAP)

Members had been circulated with some Correspondence regarding updates and future meetings of the AAP.

Members noted the following meeting dates:-

Saturday 21st March 2009 at the Resource Centre, Willington (10am to 12 noon)

Thursday 16th April 2009 at the Spectrum Leisure Centre (5.30 to 8.00pm)

Members also noted the e-mail from CDALC regarding the AAP Cabinet report (65 pages) to be discussed on Thursday 19th March 2009. The document covered areas such as:-

Draft Terms of Reference

Draft Code of Conduct

Draft Recruitment arrangements for AAP Board Public Representatives

Draft Area Budgets 2009/10 Guidance Notes

Draft Neighbourhood / MIF and highway budgets guidance notes 2009/10

Draft Training and Development pack

Details of the above are available from the Town Clerk.

Concerns were raised regarding the map of the AAP for Crook, Tow Law and Willington area around the exclusion of parts of Stanley, Crook. The Clerk to discuss with the relevant Officers of CDALC (Steve Ragg) and DCC (Gordon Elliott) and report to the next Town Council meeting.

052/09 Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit

Members agreed to accept the report of the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer dated 17th March 2009 and for copies to be sent to the Council's Internal and External Auditors.

053/09 Risk Assessment Statement 2008/09 (review)

Members agreed to accept the report of the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer dated 17th March 2009 and for copies to be sent to the Council's Internal and External Auditors.

054/09 Policies

Members agreed to accept the following Policies

- a) Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy
- b) Risk Management Policy Statement
- c) Protocol for Member/Officer Relations
- d) Management of Records Policy

It was also agreed to copy the Policies to the Internal and External Audit, include the documents within the Audit Plan (under development) and for the Clerk to arrange for the documents to be placed on the Council's Web Site.

055/09 Chairman Report

No Report

056/09 Clerk's Report

Items for discussion:-

a)Samaritans of Central Durham – Application for Funding (Financial information included)

Members agreed to donate £100 towards the running costs of the Samaritans of Central Durham (under powers of the Local Government Act 1972 section 137).

b)CDALC – Power of Well Being

Members agreed to:-

a)Resolve to adopt the Power of Well Being

b)For the Clerk to obtain necessary additional Qualification in the Power of Well Being (200 word resume) with the Society of Local Council Clerks at a cost of £15.

c)Arrange with the CDALC a training session (2hour) on the Power of Well Being for all Councillors. The two preferred dates are Tuesday 28th April or Tuesday 26th May.

d)Publish a Statement of Community Engagement. The Clerk to prepare a report for the next Town Council meeting.

c)ADT-UK-Ltd-Quotation for the service and maintenance of the CCTV system installed in the Community Centre, at a cost of £1200.00 + vat as from 1st April 2009 for 12months.

Members agreed to accept the quotation from ADT and for the Chairman to sign necessary contract.

d)CDALC-Special General Meeting on Saturday 4th April 2009 at County Hall, Durham starting at 10.30am.

Members noted that Councillor Batson, Day and Graham and the Town Clerk would be attending the Meeting.

e)Peter Irving-Joint Working with the Hilltop Villages.

Members agreed:-

i)For the Clerk to research for a Protocol/Procedure to develop Joint Working Arrangements between the Hilltop Villages Partnership and the Town Council.

ii)For the Chairman/Clerk to arrange a meeting of the Hilltop Villages sub-committee prior to the next meeting of the Hilltop Villages Partnership (which is Monday 27th April 2009)

f)Durham County Council- Parish Paths Partnership Applications 2009. It was agreed for Councillors Hail and Rowland to meet with the Town Clerk and Elaine Field (PPP Officer) Durham County Council, to develop two projects suitable for this funding.

Items for Information:-

g) Link County Durham-District event at Durham Dales Centre, Stanhope on Tuesday 12th May 2009 from 10.00am – 12.30pm.

h)Durham Rural Community Council – Unsuccessful bid for Parish Partnership project.

i) Banks Developments- West Durham Liaison Committee-Minutes of previous meeting and notice of next meeting Thursday 19th March 2009 at East Hedleyhope Village Hall (Councillor Gale to attend).

- j)The Boundary Committee for England-Unitary Electoral Review of County Durham. Council size of 126 Elected Members for the new County Durham Council.
- k)2D magazine
- l)Town and Parish Standard Newsletter; February 2009; Issue No 4.
- m)Local Council Review magazine; March 2009 volume 60, Issue No 6.
- n)Clerk & Councils Direct Magazine; March 2009; Issue No 62.
- o)Groundwork West Durham & Darlington - Family Learning unsuccessful application.
- p)CDALC National Pay Award for Local Council Clerks – award of arbitration; 2.75% from 1st April 2008 to 31st March 2009 (interim payment already agreed and paid of 2.45%).
Members agreed for the necessary payment to be made to the Town Clerk.

057/09 Members Reports

a)Councillor Blacker- that the cost of replacing the bayonet at the War Memorial was £400 (contractor was Murray Memorials).
Members agreed to donate £250 from the 2008/09 N-Power Community Fund to commence with the manufacturing of the bayonet and £150 from the 2009/10 N-Power Community Fund for the fixing the bayonet to the statue.

b)Councillor Hail- attending the PACE meeting on Thursday 19th March 2009.
Concerns regarding dog fouling in Tow Law.
Quad bikes.
Locking of gates at the gymnasium.
Fly tipping (rear of doctor’s surgery).

c)Councillor Rowland – rubbish at/on BMX track.

058/09 Date and Time of the next meeting

Next meeting of the Town Council will be Tuesday 21st April 2009 in the Community Centre, commencing at 6.30pm

**THAT PURSUAT TO SECTION 100A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972
THAT THE PUBLIC BE EXCLUDED FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE MEETING
DURING CONSIDERATION OF THE ITEMS LISTED BELOW ON THE GROUNDS
THAT IF THEY ARE PRESENT DURING DISCUSSION OF THOSE ITEMS THERE
COULD BE DISCLOURESE OF THEM OF EXEMPT INFORMATION AS DEFINED IN
SECTION 100.**

Confidential Items

059/09 Tow Law Community Centre

All Members had received a copy of a letter from Mrs Jenny Flynn dated 26th February 2009. Members agreed:-

- a) To reluctantly accept the return of the cheque for £670 and to also accept the withdrawal of the request for a further £2,000 grant
- b) That the Town Council continue to discuss with the AAP to be located in Tow Law.
- c) That the Town Council continue to use the small room and accepts that occasionally it may be used by organisations and is used weekly (Monday) by a local Solicitor.
- d) That the Town Council monthly meetings should be held in the dedicated meeting room (presently used as a Computer Training room).
- e) That the Clerk look at other possible locations for an office for the Town Clerk and a meeting room for the Town Council under “value for money” and to report to the next meeting of the Town Council. Members recommended two possible properties (Ex Barclays Bank in the High Street and Ex Library premises also in the High Street)
- f) That the Town Council still continue to rent accommodation from the Community Association and review the rental charges on a regular basis (“Best value”).
- g) That the Town Council would like to take responsibility (at some later date ie more than 12 months) for the building and to work with the Community Association for the provision of activities within the Community Centre. The building could be known as the Town Hall.
- h) That the Town Council appoints an assistant to the Town Clerk to work on Town Council business only (Agenda item 21).
- i) That the Clerk make arrangements with the Community Association/British Telecommunications for a private Business line to be connected in the Town Clerk’s Office within the Community Centre.

060/09 Appointment of Assistant to the Town Clerk

Members agreed to accept the report of the Town Clerk and also agreed to the following:-

- a) That the Town Council appoint an assistant to the Town Clerk (10 hours per week, Monday to Friday 1.00 to 3.00pm) as a temporary measure to allow some flexibility in preparing for working with the New Unitary Authority for delivering services by the Town Council. Also the Assistant will carry out research for any funding streams that may be available under the New Powers of Well-Being. Also to assist the Town Clerk as and when required.
- b) To appoint Councillor Lynne Rowland as assistant to the Town Clerk as an unpaid voluntary assistant and pay the registration fee of £150 to the Society of Local Council Clerk for her to study for and obtain the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CILCA).

Item

- c)For the Town Clerk to change his working hours from 18 to 22 per week, as follows:-
Monday to Thursday 1.00pm to 5.00pm and Friday 1.00pm to 4.30pm, total office hours
19.5 plus home/meeting hours of 2.5 total 22 hours per week
- d)The additional financial costs of 4 hours per week = £50.73 equals to £219.83 per
month which equates to £2637.96 per annum.
- e)That the post of assistant to the Town Clerk be unpaid (classed as a training post only)
and reviewed within the next twelve months (before the 31st March 2010).
- f)That the Town Council contribute £150.00 towards the cost of Councillor Rowland
enrolling on the course to obtain the CILCA Qualification. Clerk to raise the cheque as
soon as possible.

Meeting finished at 8.45pm.

Signed by the Chairman.....Page 8