

TOW LAW TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Tow Law Town Council held on Tuesday 18th September 2012 in the Community Centre, commencing at 6:30pm.

Present: Councillors J. Gale (chairman), T. Batson, A. Blacker, P. Graham, C. Hayton and M. Hird.

Also Present: G. F. Smith (Clerk)

Apologies: Councillors L. Brown, A. Green, R. Grogan and L. Rowland PC Rutherford and PCSO Blackett (Durham Police).

- 138/12** Declaration of interest
Councillor Hayton declared an interest in agenda item 9-accounts for payment (voucher 50 for Stanley Crook Primary School) Councillor Gale declared an interest in agenda item 16 – Clerk report (A – Tow law Community Association)
- 139/12** Minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 17th July 2012 agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.
- 140/12** Matters arising
None
- 141/12** Police Report
Incidents and Crime figures for the months of June, July and August were circulated at the meeting.
Members agreed for the Clerk to write to the Chief Constable thanking his staff for producing the reports for the Town Council.
- 142/12** County Councillors Report
No Reports
- 143/12** Representation by residents
None present
- 144/12** Planning matters
A) Application 3/2012/0299 by Mr A Baines for erection of extraction flue (retrospective) at 1-2 Dan's Castle, Tow Law
Decision – No objection
B) Application 3/2012/0328 by Mr M Lough for retention of polytunnel at 2 North Road, Tow Law.
Decision – No objections
C) Application 3/2012/0281 by Mrs W Grundy for ramped access to the front at 69 Deerness Estate, Tow Law
D) Application CMA/1/67 by Mr W Drennan for anaerobic digestion plant at High Hedley farm, East Hedlyhope
Decision – Members agreed to object to this proposed development due to:-
i) Amount of heavy goods vehicles passing through Tow law to the site
ii) Amount of water being used from the mains supply that may effect the water pressure in Tow Law (Combi-Boilers)
iii) The production of electricity should be for the use of the farm only and not for the national grid
E) Application 3/2012/0324 by Mr D Gains for erection of 4 dwellings at plots 1 and 2 rear of North Road, Tow law
Decision – No objections
- 145/12** Accounts for payment
That approval be given for the payment of vouchers 38 to 51 on the sum of £7959.42, copy of report attached to these minutes.

Signed by the Chairman.....page 1

- 146/12** Code of conduct for Parish Councillors (Revised)
Members agreed to accept the revised Code of Conduct (additions to appendix A) and for completed Declaration of Interest Forms to be sent to the County's Monitoring Officer.
- 147/12** Tow Law Town Plan
Meeting had taken place with Bonds Foundry and a map had been received with the amount of Land required by the firm for operational purposes, further details of fencing etc were required.
Further meeting to be arranged with representatives of Bond's Foundry. Chair and Clerk had met an Officer from DCC to agree the position of the Notice Board on the footpath opposite the Co-op, still awaiting written permission before the installation can take place.
- 148/12** Trex Gymnasium
Costs for the Maintenance of the building, staff costs, grass cutting of the football field and BMX field and rates totalled £16470 for one financial year. The Clerk was trying to arrange a further meeting with Nigel Dodds to further explore the costs.
Some concerns were raised regarding the use of the gym by the local schools (Peases West and Stanley Primary Schools), It was agreed for the Clerk to arrange a meeting with the Trex Committee and staff from Trex and to report the findings to the next Town Council meeting.
- 149/12** Area Action Partnership
Next meeting of the AAP Forum 8th November 2012 at Crook (6pm)
Concerns were raised regarding recent funding application approved for 3 projects (Slam, Community Centre at Sunnisde and Willington Community Centre), Members agreed to inform the AAP Co-ordinator of their disappointment in approving these applications.
Members raised concerns on the allocation of the £500,000 fund originally for the upgrading of the Elite Hall, Crook which would be shared amongst Community Groups in the Crook area including Howden le Wear, They felt this was unfair and Tow Law was being excluded for applying from the Three Towns AAP.
- 150/12** Millennium Green Trust
Committee meeting to be arranged as a matter of urgency.
- 151/12** Chairman's Report
Resignation of Councillor Railton
A) The Chair read out a letter received from Councillor Railton wishing to resign with immediate effect, including a number of reasons for the resignation. Members agreed to accept the resignation and for the Clerk to write to Councillor Railton thanking him for his service as a Councillor to Tow Law Community. Clerk to also write to the County Council's Returning Officer informing her of the resulting vacancy and arrange for the necessary notice to be placed on the Council's Notice board.
B) Lack of response from County Council
The Chair was most concerned that some Council Officers are failing to respond to requests by the Town Council. He had asked the Clerk to check response times with other Town/Parish Clerks and report to the next Town Council meeting.
C) Staff at the Trex Gym
The Chair had received a number of phone calls from Staff of the Trex gym regarding concerns.
D) Appointments to Standards Committee
The Chair was concerned with the procedure for appointing representatives (2) onto the Standards Committee by CDALC, the process should have been open to any Parish/Town Councillor to apply. Councillor Batson explained the situation to the meeting (time limits imposed by the County Council)

Community Governance

The Chair raised concerns that residents of the Hill Top Communities were not given the option to choose Tow Law Town Council as an option when selecting their preferred form of Community Governance for the unparished areas shown as Crook North.

Members agreed for the Clerk to write to Collette Longbottom, Durham County Council expressing the Council's disappointment in this process with particular reference to the above omission.

152/12

Clerk's Report

1. Annual return for year ended 31st March 2012

The documents have not been returned from the External Auditor and the Council needs to approve them by 30th September 2012.

Members agreed to hold a Special meeting on Thursday 27th September 2012 in the Community Centre, commencing at 6.30pm

2. Increase of Office Rent by the Community Association

Following the move of the Clerk/Assistant to a larger office the Community Association has requested an increase in charges from £825 to £875 per quarter. Members agreed with this request and for payment to commence from 1st October 2012.

3. Funding application – N-Power Community Fund

An application has been received from the Community Association for a donation of £250 towards the cost of buses to go to Blackpool on 13th October.

Members agreed with this request.

4. Anonymous complaint from a resident regarding the Tillyfeast held on 24/26th August 2012.

5. Complaint from Haydon Luke (via email) regarding the poor state of the Beehive Coke Ovens.

Members agreed for the Clerk to contact Probation Service to carry out the works under the Community Pay Back Scheme.

6. Request from Sunnyside Community Association to extend the service of the Youth Worker using the balance from the original AAP Participatory Budget Scheme 2011. Members agreed to the request and for the Clerk to contact the AAP Co-ordinator with this decision.

7. Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (Letter from DCC dated 8th August)

8. Clerks and Councils Direct Magazine, September 2012

9. Local Councils Review Magazine; autumn.

10. County Durham Link – Annual report March 2012

11. DCC County Durham Plan – Consultation dates

12. CDALC – nominations for Executive Committee representations

Members supported Councillor Batson for Vice President (Nominations had closed)

13. Audit Commission – Appointment of BDO LLP as External Auditor for the Town Council from 2012/13 for 5 years

14. Standards Information Session (11th October)

15. Purdah Period – 18th March 2013 to 2nd May 2013

16. CDALC:-

i) Localising of Council Tax support Scheme – further consultation

ii) Double Taxation Grants – ending?

iii) Nominations to non voting representatives on new standards committee (DCC)

Executive Board recommended Councillor T Batson and Councillor T Cooke to represent the Association on this new Committee.

17. Bulb planting Challenge 2012, free bulbs available from DCC as from 1st October.

153/12

Members Reports

Wolsingham Road – badly eroded in some parts. Councillor Hayton has reported this to the Highways Department, Durham County Council on 13th August 2012.

Junction of Campbell Street and rear of St Albans Street – spreading of Fir trees across the road leading to traffic danger when vehicles are turning left at this point.

Councillor Hayton has reported this to Highways Department, (DCC) on 13th August 2012.

Poor state of access road into rear of North Point Hotel – raised by Councillor Batson
Dangerous safety camera sign (position at eye level) on Wolsingham Road – raised by Councillor Batson.

154/12

Date of next meeting

The next ordinary meeting of Tow Law Town Council will be held on Tuesday 16th October commencing at 6:30pm in the Community Centre.

The meeting finished at 8.15pm.