

TOW LAW TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING – 17<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2006, PRESENT :

**Councillor T.Batson**

**(Chairman)**

**Councillors J.Day, J.Flynn, P.Graham, A.Green, R.Grogan,  
E.Gwynnette, E.A. Morris, C.Rand, J.Stevens**

**Also in attendance : County Councillor T.Carroll**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE :**

**Councillor J.Gale**

**Councillor C.Hayton – Wear Valley District Council**

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST :**

There were no Declarations to report

**3. PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY :**

The Chairman introduced Elaine Field, the County Council's Rights of Way Officer who had asked to be allowed to address the meeting in connection with the proposal to create a new Right of Way from Tow Law to the Weardale Way as part of the Mineral Valleys project. Ms Field explained that the proposed new path would be almost exclusively outside the Town Council's boundary and would proceed via Thomley, Colliers Wood, Elm Park and Harperly. The route would be a linear one, and new infrastructure such as gates and stiles would be incorporated and could link in with the existing bus service between Tow Law and Crook, and with the new footpaths being planned for the Fell. A leaflet would be designed for the route, with prominence being given to Tow Law, and it was hoped that the Town Council would play a major part in the development of the project by encouraging local people and groups to participate in researching the route and providing material for the leaflet. Discussion ensued and it was

**Agreed : That the Town Council supports and participates in this project as indicated and in consultation with interested local residents and groups, provides information for a proposed descriptive leaflet.**

**4. POLICE REPORT :**

There was no Police *officer* in attendance.

**5. REPRESENTATION BY RESIDENTS :**  
**- 2005/2006/030 -**

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**6. MINUTES :**

**Agreed : That the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2005 (a copy of which had been circulated previously to each member) be Approved and Signed as a correct record.**

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

**Resolved : That in view of the confidential nature of County Councillor Carroll's report *any* members of the press and/or public present be excluded from the meeting.**

**8. DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS :**

a) Councillor R.Grogan

Councillor Grogan reported that a full ALMO "shadow" board was now in place in connection with the transfer of the Council's housing stock, and that funding was now in place for the necessary housing improvements. Ratification by the full Council was awaited. He reported details of the reasons given by the Government Inspector in overturning the refusal by the District Council of planning permission for a change of use at 23 High Street. The report was Noted.

**9. URBAN & RURAL RENAISSANCE/SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES/QUALITY OF LIFE SURVEY**

The meeting considered as Appendix 1 the report by the Clerk on the background to these items and how they might be addressed. In the discussion which ensued, Councillor Flynn suggested that there might be merit in delaying consideration until after a meeting of the Community Partnership at which possible joint working with the Town Council could be considered.

**Agreed : That this matter be deferred pending further discussions.**

**10. FLORAL PLANTERS – HIGH STREET :**

The Clerk reminded members that the County Council had indicated that the suggested removal of these planters could only be carried out at the Town Council's expense, for which no budget was currently available. Councillor Rand advised members that she had carried out a survey of residents' views with regard to the future of the units, and it had been established that a reduction in their height would be an acceptable alternative. Councillor Grogan advised that the District Council had undertaken to carry out a replanting, and accordingly, it was

**Agreed : That enquiries be made as to the feasibility of lowering the height of the planters in conjunction with the replanting programme, and that the matter be referred to the Finance & General Purposes Committee for further consideration.**

#### **11. TOW LAW AUCTION MART – AUCTION RING :**

The meeting considered as Appendix 2 the report of the Clerk on the action which had been taken to further a feasibility study into possible future uses for the auction ring, details of which had been circulated previously to all members. It was noted that the deadline for responses from interested architects was 27<sup>th</sup> January and that a further report would be given at the next meeting into the preliminary findings.

**Agreed : That the report be Noted and that further details be awaited.**

#### **12. PUBLIC SEATING :**

In accordance with the decision taken at the Council meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2005, it was

**Agreed : That this matter be delegated to the Finance & General Purposes Committee for detailed consideration and report.**

#### **13. BULB/TREE PLANTING :**

In accordance with the decision taken at the Council meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2005, it was

**Agreed : That this matter be delegated to the Finance & General Purposes Committee for detailed consideration and report.**

#### **14. GROUNDWORK WEST DURHAM :**

The meeting considered as Appendix 3 the report of the Clerk on the current difficulties being experienced by this organisation and the efforts which were being made to address them.

Agreed : **That** the report **be** Noted.

#### **15. PLANNING MATTERS :**

At the outset of this item, the Chairman declared a Personal Interest in Item (a)

The following new applications were Noted without comment :

- a) Proposed erection of potting shed at 3 Feliside Close for Mr.B.Batson
- b) Proposed siting of pouch box on open space adjoining 90 Dan's Castle
- c) Proposed lowering of existing warehouse, retaining stone finial crosses and diverting footpath at 1 Smith Street
- d) Proposed one bedroom flat & garage at 3 Railway Street

The Clerk reported that following an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate, the decision by Wear Valley District Council to refuse planning permission for a change of use from commercial to domestic in respect of 32 High Street had been overturned. The

**16. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT & FINANCIAL REPORT : Agreed : That**

**Approval be given for payment of Invoices Nos. 040 – 050 in the**

**sum of £2627.11**

Discussion ensued as to the additional charges for erecting the Christmas trees, caused by the delivery of 5ft trees instead of the 4ft size which had been ordered. and it was

**Further Agreed : a) That in future years, the contract for erecting and disposing of the trees be subject to a tendering process**

**b) That a similar procedure be adopted for the maintenance of the floral tubs throughout the town, and for the hiring of transport for the swimming baths trips during the school summer holidays.**

A copy of the Financial Report for the period from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2005 was circulated to members at the meeting.

**17. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS – QUALITY STATUS :**

The Clerk reported that the Durham Association of Local Councils was to host a Seminar in County Hall on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> March to discuss with member councils the advantages to be gained by achieving Quality Status.

**(At this point Councillor Green left the meeting)**

**18. ROAD SAFETY CONCERNS -TRAFFIC SPEED - VISUAL SPEED CHECKS :**

The Clerk reported that following the support given to this measure by the Police, confirmation and further details were awaited from County Highways who operate the equipment. The report was Noted.

**19. NOTICE OF MOTION – LIGHTING – MILLENNIUM GREEN :**

Councillor Rand spoke to her Notice of Motion as follows :

"That the Town Council consider the provision of public lighting at the Millennium Green"

Councillor Rand felt that some additional lighting was necessary both at the top of the green and by the gate at the bottom entrance, and following discussion it was



**20. COUNCILLOR A LAWTON – LETTER OF RESIGNATION :**

The Clerk reported receipt of a letter from Councillor Lawton indicating his wish to resign his membership of the Town Council, and outlined the procedure for filling the vacancy.


**Agreed : That a Casual Vacancy on the Council be declared and that Wear Valley District Council be requested to instigate the necessary procedure for filling the vacancy.**

**21. MEMBERS' REPORTS :**

- a) Councillor Flynn reported that the Community Association was to hold a 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration in 2007 under the banner "The Year of the Community" and she suggested that in conjunction with the Town Council an approach be made at the appropriate time to the Northern Echo to publicise the event to maximum effect. The report was Noted and Approved.

**22. DATE OF NEXT MEETING :**

It was Noted that the next meeting of the Council would be held on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2006 at 7 p.m.

Signed  ~ C h a i r m a n  
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21<sup>st</sup> February 2006