

4. POLICE REPORT :

P.C.Jeff Blair having arrived at the meeting submitted the Crime & Incident statistics for September, which covered the usual hot spot areas, but he reported that certain aspects of the figures had shown a marked reduction, some of them to "nil"

He reported that Tow Law had been included in the "Street Safe" initiative, and regular foot patrols were being carried out, both during daylight hours and in the evenings. He referred to the recent "walk-about" during which Railway Street, Alpine Way and the High Street areas had been earmarked, and he advised that the stop/search exercises were proving beneficial. He was pleased to note that in the main, both mobile and foot patrols were being treated politely by the majority of young people, whose main cause of upset was that there was " nowhere to go and nothing to do" and he was pleased to note that these difficulties were now being addressed with some urgency.

P.C.Blair also advised members that two P.S.O's were to commence duties in Weardale before the end of October, with a further one in early November. These officers would have the same powers of arrest as members of the public. He further reported that the Police were to meet with Hilary Armstrong M.P. in the near future, following which the constituency office had confirmed that she would be happy to attend a public meeting in Tow Law if this was still required.

Councillor Flynn asked P.C.Blair whether there was any way in which the Police could arrange indoor activities in the Community Centre for young people, and he undertook to investigate this possibility. She also understood that finance was available though the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund initiative which might be used to fund a youth worker. Councillor Blacker suggested that it might be possible for young people to liaise with the Police to identify locations from which they would not be moved on. P.C.Blair promised to follow up this suggestion.

5 REPRESENTATIONS BY RESIDENTS :

There were no residents in attendance

6. MINUTES:

Agreed : That the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 19th September 2006 (a copy of which had been sent previously to each member) be Approved and Signed as a correct record.

7. COMMITTEE REPORT :

Agreed : That the Report of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on 3rd October 2006 (a copy of which had been sent previously to each member) be Noted, and the recommendations therein be Approved and Adopted as follows :

- a) Item 3 — New **Community Account**
- b) Item 4 — Internal Audit
- c) Item 5 — **Community Fund Application**

Following discussion, it was

Agreed : That this application be treated as two separate requests, and That Approval be given for the payment of £250 to each school



d) Item 6 — Christmas Decorations 2006

e) Item 7 — Floral Tubs

f) Item 8 — Tree Planting

g) Item 9 — Precept 2007/2008

8. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT :

County Councillor Carroll advised members that three of the County's residential homes earmarked for closure had been reprieved_ He reported that the County Council had embarked on a programme of footpath improvements across the county following receipt of £140,000,000 from the Government for this purpose. Members undertook to carry out an inspection of pedestrian paths across the community, and to give publicity to the programme in a forthcoming edition of the Tattler, with particular reference to the County Council's HAL (Highways Action Line) initiative.

9. DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS :

a) Councillor R. Grogan

Councillor Grogan reported briefly on the recent walkabout to inspect the various anti-social behaviour "hot spots" with particular reference to the former bank building. The owner of this building had been identified, and it was suggested that a compulsory purchase order be placed on this building, though it was noted that the Town Council had no powers in this respect.

b) Councillor J.Gale

With further reference to the "walkabout" Councillor Gale informed the meeting that the bus shelter near the junction with Alpine Way was eventually to be demolished and replaced by an "adshel" type shelter. He further reported that Wear Valley District Council had achieved "good" status in Energy Efficiency

10. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR — PROGRESS REPORT :

The Clerk reported briefly on the action which had been taken since the last meeting, culminating in the recent walkabout by the various agencies, which had been documented in previous items. He reported having received confirmation from Hilary Armstrong's constituency office that following her forthcoming meeting with the Police, she would be happy to attend a public meeting in the Community Centre should this be requested. The report was Noted.

11. DURHAM WILDLIFE TRUST — HEDLEYHOPE FELL - FENCING :

The Clerk reported receipt from the Trust of documentation relating to he proposed fencing of the area. Discussion ensued during which concern was expressed at the proposal which members felt was a retrograde step, and it was

Agreed : That the Trust's local Warden, Craig Best be invited to attend the next meeting of the Council to consider members' views in this respect.

12. COUNTY DURHAM ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS — A.G.M :

The Clerk reported that the Annual Meeting of the Association would be held in County Hall on Saturday 28th October at 10.15 a.m. Member Councils were entitled to have two representatives present, and as the Chairman would attend ex officio as Vice Chairman of the Association, it was

Agreed : That Councillors A.Blacker and G.C.Stevens represent the Town Council at this meeting.

13. COUNTY DURHAM VISITOR GUIDE - 2007 :

The Clerk reported receipt of an invitation to have the Beehive Coke Ovens listed in the 2007 visitor guide, and it was

Agreed : That the necessary arrangements be made in this connection.

14. PLANNING MATTERS :

The following new applications were considered :

a) Proposed extension to provide additional preparation/storage space for ground floor hot food takeaway, together with living accommodation above at 1/2 Dan's Castle for Julie Smith.

b) Councillor J.Gale declared a Prejudicial Interest in this application, and left the meeting while the matter was under discussion :

Proposed change of use from cafe/shop to residential, and new window to front elevation at 71 Dan's Castle for Councillor J.Gale.

c) Proposed domestic garage with flat above at 4 High Street for Mr.I.Anderson

d) Proposed removal of existing buildings and erection of industrial unit on land at Butterfly House, North Road for Mr. G. Gibson.

e) Proposed two bedroom dwelling on land east of Campbell Street for Mr.S.Redman.

Agreed : a) That the above applications be supported.

b) That future applications be formally acknowledged irrespective of the decisions taken.

15. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT :

Agreed : That Approval be given to the payment of invoices Nos. 027 to 029 in the sum of £ 696.45 as listed on the meeting agenda together with the sum of £500 in respect of the Community Fund application by Blessed John Duckett R.C./Millennium Primary Schools.

16. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT :

The Chairman reported having met with the Chief Executive of Durham County Council in connection with the forthcoming Government White Paper on the future of local government. Although the contents of the paper were not yet known, it was widely believed that some part of it would deal with the possible devolution of powers from principal authorities to those Parish/Town Councils which wished, and indeed could afford to assume wider responsibilities for the benefit of their communities. Publication of the paper was only weeks away, and he felt that the Town Council should give some consideration to its future aspirations. The report was Noted.

17. CLERK'S REPORT :

The meeting considered as Appendix 1 a letter from the Clerk which had been circulated to each member, submitting his resignation from his post as Clerk to the Town Council as soon as a successor could be found. The reasons for the decision were detailed, and noted. by members. Discussion ensued and it was

Agreed : a) That the resignation of the Clerk be received with regret

b) That steps be taken forthwith to advertise the vacancy and that the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee be appointed to oversee the arrangements.

18. MEMBERS' REPORTS :

a) Councillor Flynn reported the she and the Clerk had met with a lighting engineer from Durham County Council to consider the provision of extra lighting on the Millennium Green footpath. The estimated cost of the provision of three columns and associated cabling was £7,000 and Councillor Flynn advised that on behalf of the Millennium Green Trust, she would investigate possible sources of funding. The report was Noted..

b) Councillor J.Stevens requested information regarding a proposed public meeting to discuss anti-social behaviour in the community as promised to residents at the September meeting. The Clerk explained that he had been in contact with the constituency office of Hilary Armstrong M.P. and that she had agreed to attend such a meeting, following forthcoming discussions with the Police. Further progress was awaited.

19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING :

It was Noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Council would be held on Tuesday 21st November 2006 coiunencing at 6 p.m

Signedr-.....`

...Chairman

21st November 2006