

TOW LAW TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING - 21ST NOVEMBER 2006

**PRESENT : Councillors A.Blacker, J.Day, J.Flynn, RGrogan, E.A.Morris,
G.S.Stevens & J.Stevens**

**In the absence of the Chairman of the Council, Councillor R.Grogan,
Vice Chairman took the Chair**

Councillor R.Grogan in the Chair

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE :

**Councillors T.Batson, J.Gale, P.Graham, and A.Green
County Councillor T.Carroll**

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST :

Councillor J.Flynn declared a Prejudicial Interest in Agenda Item No.10
and Councillors G & J.Stevens declared Prejudicial Interests in Agenda Item No.13(d)

3. POLICE REPORT :

There was no Police Officer in attendance

4. REPRESENTATIONS BY RESIDENTS :

There were no residents in attendance

5. RECREATION AREA— GYMNASTIC EQUIPMENT :

In the absence of Natalie Drew, Wellness on Wheels Co-ordinator for Wear Valley District Council, the Chairman reported on progress with this project. He advised that the refurbishment of the relevant area was pending, that finance through the District Council's Section 106 fund was in place, and that volunteers had been identified ready for the appropriate training. A constitution had been drawn up by which the scheme would be managed, and it was anticipated that the facility would be ready for use during January 2007. The remaining aspects of the overall scheme would follow over a period in accordance with the consultants' report

Councillor Grogan expressed satisfaction that the centre was about to resume its intended function.

6. DURHAM WILDLIFE TRUST — HEDLEYHOPE FELL/CORNSAY COMMON/FENCING :

Craig Best, Wildlife & Community Officer for the Trust was in attendance to explain the rationale behind the proposal to fence certain areas of the Fell, largely adjoining the perimeter roads. He distributed copies of a map outlining the proposals, and explained that these were intended to safeguard grazing sheep and cattle, to discourage fly tipping and to prevent access for motor bikes and quad bikes. Fencing would be of the post and wire type. Access points would of course be provided for walkers, and one of the routes would be surfaced, while others would remain natural. Neighbouring parishes had been consulted, and over 40 letters had been sent to DEFRA, the majority in support of the fencing. DEFRA had responded to the few objectors by seeking a 10 year fencing life as opposed to a permanent structure. Car parking would be provided opposite the East Hedleyhope junction.



Members expressed concern that the fencing was intended to be of the barbed wire type, and pointed out that this would result in an accumulation of wind-blown litter. Mr.Best responded by advising that this would be dealt with by volunteer teams carrying out regular "litter picks" Councillor Flynn pointed out that 2007 had been designated as a Community Year in Tow Law, during which a series of community activities and events was being planned, and she asked whether these could run in partnership with those to be planned by the Trust Mr.Best acknowledged that this would present an ideal opportunity.

Finally, Mr.Best reported that the Trust now leased the area forming the surface of the former burial site, although the underground installations were still vested in DEFRA.

The Chairman thanked Mr.Best for his presentation, and he left the meeting.

7. MINUTES :

Agreed : That the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 17th October 2006 (a copy of which had been sent previously to each member) be Approved and Signed as a correct record.

8. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT :

County Councillor Carroll was not in attendance due to other commitments, for which his apologies had been submitted.

9. DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS :

a) Councillor C.Hayton

Councillor Hayton reported that the District Council was now considering the implications of the recent Government White Paper, one of whose intentions was to create "strong and prosperous communities." One of the practical effects would be to lift certain restrictions currently enforced by the Standards Board in relation to "dual hatted" members. In due course, the District Council would be required to produce a response to the consultation as to the nature of the future composition of local government and the types of authority to be put in place. He suggested that the present feeling was for an enhanced two-tier system, but that consultation and consideration was ongoing.

Councillor Hayton referred to the omission of Tow Law from the District Council's "Statement of Community Involvement" published in August 2006, and that he was taking steps to have this rectified. At this point, the Clerk advised that he had pointed out this omission at the time of consultation, and had received an assurance that the omission would be corrected.

b) Councillor R.Grogan Councillor Grogan reported that, he had little to add to Councillor Hayton's remarks until more details were known.

10. COMMUNITY FUND APPLICATIONS :

a) Baring Court Tenants' Association

The meeting considered as Appendix 1 an application for a grant towards various activities, although no precise figure had been indicated. Following discussion, it was

Agreed : That the sum of £150 be Approved in principle subject to receipt of more precise details.

At this stage, the Clerk reported receipt of three late applications, which were seasonal in nature, and it was

Agreed : That these applications be considered at this time.

Councillors J.Flynn and J.Stevens declared Prejudicial Interests in Items (i) and (ii) and left the meeting while discussion took place.

i) Tow Law Community Association

This application in the sum of £150 was to cover the cost of production of a play - "Them with Tails" to be held in the Community Centre on Friday 1st December 2006. It had been intended that both primary schools would be in attendance, but due to the inability of the Millennium School to take part, there was a shortfall in income.

Agreed : That payment of the sum of £150 be Approved.

ii) Tow Law Community Association This application in the sum of £250 was to assist with the costs of holding the Pensioners' Christmas Party, which in total amounted to £500.

Agreed : That payment of the sum of £250 be Approved.

iii) Millennium Primary School This application was to assist with the costs of transport and admission to the pantomime at Consett..

Agreed : That payment of the sum of £150 be Approved.

11. FORMER BANK BUILDING – HIGH STREET :

The Clerk reported having been advised by the prospective purchaser of this property that a final offer had been made to the owner, and that a response was awaited. No further information was to hand, and it appeared that the proposed acquisition of the premises was now in some doubt. The report was Noted.

12. CLERK TO THE COUNCIL – VACANCY :

The Clerk reported receipt of a number of applications for this post, closing date for which was 30th November. He reminded members that the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee had been authorised to carry out interviews and recommend an appointment, and that this would take place as appropriate in due course. The Clerk's report was Noted.

13. PLANNING MATTERS : The Clerk submitted details of the

following new applications :

- a) Proposed erection of two storey detached dwelling house with accommodation in roof space and integral garage on land between 2-3 Smith Street for Mr.Stuart Fraser.
- b) Outline planning permission for proposed 1 single storey dwelling (renewal) at Plot 3 Smith Street for Mr.A.P.Faulkner and Miss P.J.Graham.
- c) Proposed loft conversion at 3 Attwood Place for Mr.RLintern -

2006/2007/028 -

Councillors G.C. and J.Stevens declared Prejudicial Interests in the following item and left the meeting while the matter was being discussed

d) Proposed erection of 3 No.bungalows in the grounds of "The Grange" Church Lane.

Agreed : That applications (a) - (d) be Noted without comment

14. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT :

Agreed : **That Approval be given for the payment of Invoices Nos. 030 to 034 in the sum of £1646.30 as listed on the meeting Agenda.**

Further Agreed : **That Approval be given for payment of additional Invoices Nos. 035 to 039 in the sum of £907.15 submitted to the meeting.**

15. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT :

The Chairman had nothing to add to his District Councillor' report at Item 9(b) above.

16. CLERK'S REPORT :

The Clerk reported as follows :

a) Christmas Trees

There had been some difficulty with the Christmas tree order from the usual supplier. Alternative sources were being investigated, and it was expected that the trees would be in place in the community in early December.

b) Audit of Accounts for the 2005/2006 Financial Year

The Audit of the Town Council's Accounts for the 2005/2006 financial year had been completed, with no matters of concern being raised by the External Auditors. The relevant Public Notices had been displayed, and in accordance with statutory requirements, it was

Agreed : That the Report by the Council's External Auditors be Noted with satisfaction, and that it be Accepted and Approved.

17. MEMBERS' REPORTS :

a) Councillor Flynn outlined the various activities which were being planned for the Year of the Community in 2007, and expressed the hope that the Town Council might be able to assist with some funding via the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

b) Councillor G.Stevens questioned the position regarding a public meeting which had been proposed some time ago to discuss the ongoing problems of anti-social behaviour in the community. The intention had been to invite the constituency M.P. and the Police to attend the meeting with their input and advice. The Clerk reported that the meeting had been formally requested, but that an interim meeting between the Police and the M.P. had already been set up, following which the public meeting could be convened. In the event, circumstances had not allowed that meeting to

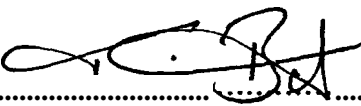
Agreed : That the Police be approached once again with a view to a meeting in early January and that this information be published in the next edition of the Tattler which was due out in early December.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING :

It was Noted that in view of the December recess, the next meeting of the Council would be held on Tuesday 16th January 2007, and it was

Agreed : That in accordance with usual practice, authority be given to the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Clerk to deal with any matters of an urgent nature during the recess period.

In closing the meeting, the Chairman wished those present the Compliments of the Season.

Signed  Chairman

16th January 2007