

**GREATER WILLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of Ordinary Meeting**  
**5<sup>th</sup> March 2014**

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**IN ATTENDANCE**

Councillor Tinsley, Councillor Cogdon, Councillor Carr,  
Councillor Henfrey, Councillor Graham, Councillor Smith,  
Councillor Etherington, Councillor Todd  
County Councillor Olwyn Gunn  
Helen Cogdon, Town Clerk  
Emma Mennouni, Community Services Officer

Councillor Tinsley welcomed everyone to the meeting.  
He outlined housekeeping rules and asked that everyone present turns off mobile phones and electronic equipment during the conduct of council business.

**1. ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received by Councillor Greensmith and Councillor Bennett.

Councillor Henfrey submitted Councillor Buckham's apologies. Councillor Graham asked that apologies were submitted to the Clerk. This was **AGREED.**

Acceptance of apologies were proposed by Councillor Tinsley and seconded by Councillor Carr.

**2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

None received

**3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Resident's agenda items requested through the Clerk.  
None Received.

**4. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS ORDINARY MEETING**  
**5<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2014**

Ref: Item 7 line 7 to 8. The draft minutes were amended to read 'the former Parkside Community Association has now dissolved. Its assets are now dissolved. Letting management of community sports facilities has transferred to Mr Ian Hirst, SLAM.

The minutes of the meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup> February 2014 as printed and circulated were then approved and taken as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

Proposed Councillor Carr

Seconded Councillor Cogdon

**Matters arising (for information only)**

Councillor Graham asked if the Armoury Fields garages had been inspected. The Clerk confirmed that an email had been received from D.C.C Building Control saying that they can't take measures under the dangerous structure legislation.

D.C.C Planning has considered that they do not adversely affect the amenity of the area and would need ownership information to act on individual garages.

Councillor Graham disagreed with the Officers findings. The Clerk said she would provide Councillor Graham with the information to assist him in arranging a meeting.

Councillor Graham asked for an update on the former Cold Storage site. Councillor Carr said he was pleased to report progress. Following a site visit with the Clerk, Darren Hunt D.C.C Neighbourhoods, discussions with neighbouring residents and a report sent to D.C.C Highways. The overgrown boundary has now been cut back and the D.C.C Neighbourhood Wardens are monitoring the site for fly tipping. Planning permission on the site has now expired.

Councillor Graham asked Councillor Henfrey about Parkside Academy Minibus. Councillor Henfrey said the Academy has leased the vehicle.

**5. TO CONSIDER THE ALLOTMENT REPORT**

Councillor Graham said the hedges at Oakenshaw and Springfield had not been cut back as promised and we were now at the end of the permitted period. He felt that if a skip company could deliver to the site the wet weather should not prevent a tractor using the allotment lane. The Clerk said this was the advice from McClurgs who had agreed this with Oakenshaw tenants. The hedge will be cut in August. The Springfield hedge was to be cut by Mr Headley.

Councillor Graham said that Emma Mennouni, Community Services Officer had sent out the allotment invoices. The rent should be paid by the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014. Those tenants who do not pay by that date will be off the plot.

An Allotment Inspection date had been set for the 15<sup>th</sup> July 2014 starting at Oakenshaw 10am. All Councillors are welcome to attend. Oakenshaw plot 49 had been planted as a Community Orchard. Well done to all who were involved.

Oakenshaw plot14 has been left in a mess by the former tenant with a large wooden play structure.

He asked members how they wanted to tackle it. Councillor Tinsley said

he was happy to leave the decisions on procedure with Councillor Graham.

Councillor Graham said thanks in part to the allotment tenants who had worked with the council the allotments had run on 50% of the budget. The Clerk said subject to expenditure up to the end of the financial year not yet accounted for she would recommend transferring approx £1000 to earmarked reserves to match fund development work on Springfield allotment. This was **AGREED**.

Councillor Graham thanked Councillor Etherington for producing the first Allotment Newsletter.

## **6. TO CONSIDER THE RESOURCE REPORT**

### **APPROVAL OF EXPENDITURE AND CHEQUE RECONCILIATION**

Councillor Henfrey said that Expenditure and Cheque Reconciliation as presented by the Clerk is considered to be a true record.

Total spend to date £84,159

Committed costs £532.00

Available resource on budget £17,392

The precept 2014/15 request has been submitted at £76,554

**Resolved** 1. Approval of the report

### **STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

The statement of accounts records the current account balance as £5,934

**Resolved** 1. This is a true record

### **CONSIDERATION OF CIVIC FUND APPLICATIONS**

The council has received two applications for funding there is £50.00 remaining in the Civic Fund budget.

Firstly The Toma Fund "Some Time On Our Own Appeal" aims to build lasting family memories.

The appeal, based in Gateshead have requested a donation to support children affected by childhood cancer treatment and bereavement.

They wish to raise £66,763 to buy a caravan to provide respite breaks and meet running costs for the next five years.

This registered charity has been running for two years and given out £32,800 in grants to families referred via RVI and Freeman Hospital Social Workers.

Councillor Smith has confirmed that she aware of families from St John's School who had benefitted from this Charity so support was being offered in the GWTC area.

Secondly the Durham County Brass Band Association founded in 1940

promotes the North East Brass Band Heritage and camaraderie of Durham's Brass Bands.

They also provide regional representation at a Federation level for our area.

The Festival of Brass is held each February which results in October competitions involving entries from musicians aged six years old to veterans from all the Durham Bands.

A donation is requested either this or next financial year.

Councillor Todd suggested the money is divided between the two organisations.

**Recommend1.** To give a donation of £25.00 to each applicant

Proposed Councillor Todd

Seconded Councillor Tinsley

Natural High have sent a thank you card for the council's £50.00 Civic Fund award. The donation will be used for guitar lessons.

County Durham School Benevolent Fund have sent a letter of thanks for the council's £50.00 Civic Fund award. The donation will be used towards the purchase of shoes and winter coats for vulnerable pupils whose guardians are in receipt of benefits.

## **7. TO RECEIVE TOWN COUNCILLOR REPORTS**

Councillor Smith said she had organised to have the potholes repaired at Kensington Terrace.

Councillor Graham said he was organising having the potholes repaired at Watling Terrace.

He was concerned about the headstones at St Stephens Church.

Also family wreaths had been removed from the cemetery on the 8<sup>th</sup> February rather than the end of February which was earlier than anticipated however Councillor Gunn had asked the Bereavement Officer to contact him and the Officer had responded promptly and promised to refund the cost of the wreath. He thanked Councillor Gunn for her help.

Councillor Graham is to have the footpath improved, next to the bus stop, before the entrance into Cherry Tree Drive, Sunnybrow.

He said D.C.C are accepting advertising boards on roundabouts around the county. They have appeared on the Willington roundabout and he said D.C.C. have no authority to do this. The Environment group have asked them to be removed and D.C.C have agreed.

Councillor Gun said she understood D.C.C were considering removal of the sign at Willington and that Greater Willington Environment Group wanted to sponsor the roundabout.

Councillor Graham said the all the animals from Milk Up Bank Farm had

been removed.

Councillor Henfrey said he had dealt with a complaint about a caravan at Rosedale and had it moved.

Councillor Carr said he had met with Claire Young and the Clerk on 04/03/14 to discuss progress on the Spooky Story Book. The meeting decided to involve more schools in the books content and to produce more artwork.

The team should have everything pulled together by the end of March ready for the design stage when they will be asking for advice from Councillor Etherington.

Next meeting will be Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2014 at 9.15am in the Town Council office. All welcome.

He has worked with staff to have the local history pictures framed and displayed for the office heritage wall. Work will be ongoing. He has assisted with the improved office storage facilities, with the delivery of new cupboards in the store room and washroom.

He has responded to a resident complaint regarding the overgrown boundary at the car park opposite the Chemists. The landowner (Assura Group), have been contacted and arrangements made for maintenance work to be carried out.

Following residents complaints, he has talked to adjoining neighbours and the hedge at the former Cold Storage area has now been trimmed. Wardens are monitoring for fly tipping.

He has followed up a complaint from a Railway Tce resident that the Fitness Club using the former Scout Hut are dragging tyres over the grassed area and causing damage.

He inspected the area on the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2014 but couldn't see damage. This matter was also inspected by Dave Gillette D.C.C who could not find anything to report.

The complaint from a resident at Northrop Close regarding cars driving over the grass has been rectified.

Dave Gillett has issued a works order to have 2-3 posts sited. Stephen Jones is to look at providing birdsmouth fencing in the new financial year. The resident confirmed she was happy with these measures following Councillor Carr's home visit.

A land ownership enquiry has been made regarding the gardens to the rear of Park View. DCC have been requested to contact the resident with

the relevant information.

A resident has reported Neighbourhood Parking issues at Denewood Close. Councillor Carr has visited the area and the problems are under investigation with Durham Constabulary.

Councillor Cogdon said the council will be starting a new project that will look at the resiting of the Brancepeth Colliery Miners Memorial Plaque from the now disused former Miners Welfare Hall. The intention is to put the Memorial on public view so that the local miners who lost their lives in the pit disaster can be remembered.

The council has received a letter of approval from The Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation CISWO to employ a stonemason to remove the plaque. CISWO share the council concerns about the future of the plaque. Councillor Tinsley said that quotes were to be gained for the work however it would help the stonemason if he could actually use the real plaque as part of the design work. The council is considering a position on the Town Green at this stage.

Councillor Graham supported the project and asked if the council knew the families.

The Clerk was requested to contact Ian Hirst SLAM to arrange access to the Welfare Hall to organise removal of the plaque and store it securely until it is repositioned.

Councillor Cogdon said he has been working with staff to develop the Responsible Dog Ownership Scheme.

Clare Hubbard D.C.C has agreed to run the scheme in the G.W.T.C area.

A planning meeting will be held 10<sup>th</sup> March 2014, 9.30am to look at project materials

The programme will include work in schools with the Green Dog Walker mascot, Scoop, a dog micro chipping event at a local venue, increased patrols, hotspots and golden tickets to win a £25.00 voucher.

GWTC will need to meet the costs for room hire and any extra printing that is altered to include our logo.

He asked if members would like to organise an event to commemorate the World War 1 Centenary (4<sup>th</sup> August 1914 – 11<sup>th</sup> October 1918)

For example hold a service at the Cenotaph – Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2014 at 11am.

Members considered the Town Green as an alternative venue and agreed to inform the Clerk of their preferences.

Councillor Cogdon said the claim form for the tree grant the council secured as part of National Tree week has been received this will be submitted tomorrow.

There has been complaints from St Thomas Close residents about cars parking over the keep clear sign at the Co op.  
D.C.C have said that this land is not adopted public highway and therefore is not land that D.C.C can apply highway legislation. However the land is likely to have accrued highway rights due to historic usage. The land is owned by D.C.C.  
The police have confirmed that they can issue tickets under a 'Parking Causing Unnecessary Obstruction' offence.  
The resident will be informed.

Regarding High Street/ Burn Place/ Mill Street

A resident has complained that flat bed trucks driving past his house are damaging his property. He has requested a bollard opposite the arch next door to the council office.

D.C.C Highways Steve Jones has carried out local consultation with door to door leafleting and we are waiting for the results from the return cards to see what residents would prefer.

At the Brown Trout, Sunnybrow horses have been tethered to the interpretation board at the Colliery site. They are damaging the new car park and cars.

This is being matter is being dealt with by D.C.C.

Councillor Etherington has been working with staff to produce the Allotment Newsletter, Black Path Walk Leaflet and updating the Website.

## **8. TO RECEIVE COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS**

County Councillor Gunn said D.C.C have finalised their financial plan. There has been a rise in Council Tax. This had not been an easy decision, but a decision had to be taken. The decision followed public consultation where 68% of respondents said they would support an increase of under 2%.

The financial strategy is to save 30 million in 2014/15 and 40 million in 2015/16. Savings have been made since 2011 however 23 million is still required.

There is a planned 7.5% spending reduction. In contrast Surrey has had a 3% increase in spend and there would appear to be no equality nationally.

The garden waste consultation has been completed the majority of respondents were agreeable to a £20 per bin per year for collection. If implemented, this will start 2015.

The Licensing Committee have extended powers. Now all scrap collectors have to be licensed.

There is a review of Customer Access services in the county.

A Sustainable Communities Strategy has been developed to access Environment Agency Funding. 50K is now available for projects over three years. The funding is to assist areas affected by flooding. D.C.C staff are to make contact with the worst affected areas. Councillor Gunn will also pass on information as it becomes available.

There is to be a review of fixed play provision. Consultation is planned. This will affect both Willington and Oakenshaw. The level of play provision provided by the county council is to be based on child population. The Town Council will be receiving more details soon. Nicola Parker, Oakenshaw Community Association said she would like to take part in the consultation. The Clerk said she would find out how community groups were going to be involved and keep Nicola informed.

Councillor Gunn thanked Councillor Graham for his comments regarding the D.C.C Bereavement Officer saying that it was nice to know that the Officer contact was so good.

#### **9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (for information only)**

Councillor Cogdon supported Councillor Gunn's views saying that he was also concerned about the level of service budget cuts particularly where it affects the employment of local people in the GWTC area. Many jobs are not being filled as they become vacant and existing staff are being forced to cover an increasingly broader area of work for the same salary.

He said he also forgot to mention that the garden waste collection is to go live on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2014 and residents will receive leaflets with collection dates for their postcode areas.

Councillor Henfrey asked if the LED lighting roll out is complete. Councillor Gunn confirmed this to be the case.

#### **10. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2014 at 7.00pm



Signed by the Chairman .....

2<sup>nd</sup> April 2014