

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 20TH FEBRUARY, 2018

Present: The Mayor, Councillor
Mrs S Forster (Presiding) and Councillors
Mrs B E Allen, R Arthur, Mrs J A Bell,
Mrs G Bleasdale, Mrs K Brace,
S P Colborn, S Cudlip, Ms R M Gratton,
G N Hepworth, Mrs L Kennedy,
D McKenna, Mrs S Pratt, K Shaw,
T Shepherd, B Taylor, Miss L Willis

Apologies: Councillors E Bell, D Cummings,
Mrs V Cummings.

Prior to commencement of the meeting the Chair advised members of this Committee and members of the public that in line with the amendment to 'the public bodies (admission to meetings) act 1960', which came into force in August, 2014, parts of this meeting may be recorded by photographic, video and audio means.

1. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Members were reminded prior to the start of the meeting of the need to disclose any interests, prejudicial or personal, in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

2. OPEN SESSION

In accordance with established policy the Council provided the opportunity at the beginning of the meeting for a 15 minute session.

Mr Gary Richardson stated he wanted to put forward a proposal to celebrate the centenary of the end of the First World War. The proposal comes in two parts which is to have a memorial for each individual servicemen from Seaham which Seaham doesn't currently have. The visual part of the memorial is to install a poppy which Mr Richardson shared with Members to look at. The poppy is made of bronze resin which isn't valuable to anyone. The poppy will have a military style dog tag with the name of the serviceman and his number. The second part is to involve Seaham High School with a website. Mr Scott from Seaham High School was also in attendance at the meeting. The website will contain the name of the soldier and information about the soldier will be available on the website. The website will have two parts a scroll with the serviceman's name and any details and a photograph of the soldier. There are almost 800 servicemen. Mr Richardson has spoken to David Stewart who led the Tommy project about how this can be funded and he is to hold a meeting with the Friends of Seaham Memorials to see if he can utilise their charitable status.

It is tied in with the Seaham High School as they are carrying out a project this year on the First World War and they are holding site visits. They also want to be involved with the fund raising and to also research some of the soldiers.

Mr Scott stated that the school wants to inform pupils about more of Seaham's history and as part of the First World War unit pupils are being set homework for

fundraising tasks to try and purchase one of the poppy's and researching a soldier. Pupils will receive a certificate to say they sponsored a poppy. There are over 1000 students but not all of them will buy into the project but if a few hundred contribute to the fundraising it will ultimately go to the purchase of the poppies and the website design. The school also wants the pupils to get involved in the research side.

Mr Richardson stated that the price of the poppies which are produced by a sculptor in Washington are £23 each and there is an added cost with the dog tag. The total cost is in the region of £32k. Mr Stewart stated in his meeting that he didn't think it would be a problem to raise this money.

Mr Richardson stated that they want to install the poppies somewhere central which compliments Tommy. Mr Richardson stated that he was in attendance at this meeting tonight as he wanted endorsement from Seaham Town Council and wanted the Town Council's support with Durham County Council as they wish to place the poppies along the fences at North Terrace which is in Durham County Council's ownership. There would be no damage to the fence especially with it being at the top of the cliffs and they wouldn't want the fence to be weakened.

Mr Richardson also stated that he wished to arrange a public meeting and to be able to use one of the rooms in the Town Hall as there are a lot of family members and descendants and once they find out this is happening they would want to be involved. Mr Richardson stated he wished for the people of Seaham to be involved in this project as it is their families.

A Member questioned whether Mr Richardson had considered using the War Memorial in the Town Park. The cenotaph is an empty tomb with names and belongs to Seaham Town Council so Durham's permission would not be required. Mr Richardson stated that the names are only of people from North Seaham which was paid for by the workmen of Seaham. Mr Richardson stated he wanted to get every servicemen's name which is around 800 and wants it to be involved with 'Tommy'. It won't be regimented along the fence it will be made to look like a sea of poppies with a plaque in the middle that will have John McCrae's poem 'In Flanders Fields'. The big problem with 800 is space and as this is being researched they are still coming across further names which would all be needed to added over time and also the website can be updated, so a stone plaque would not be suitable.

A Member stated that he agreed this would be ideal for the seafront as there are a lot of people around there visiting and the people of Seaham can take care of their own whether living or dead and it would always be looked after. The park for all of its good aspects is fairly isolated from the roads. This will also compliment 'Tommy' and the War Memorial already there.

A Member questioned whether a sum of money from the Town Council could be donated towards the fundraising. Mr Richardson stated that he had not as yet sorted out a bank account for this as he still needs to hold the meeting with Friends of Seaham Memorials to try and utilise their charitable status. If a new one is to be set up this will take some time. A Member stated if Mr Richardson completes an application in due course for a donation it can be discussed then with Members.

A Member requested that Mr Richardson invites Members to attend when he organises a public meeting so Members can support this.

RESOLVED that Seaham Town Council will offer their support with regards to contacting Durham County Council and also to offer the use of the Town Hall free of charge to hold a public meeting.

Mr Des Consitt stated that Greenscape had a client of Free the Way helping to do work with fencing etc and Free the Way had asked if they could assist with work in the community and woodlands in the future. Some of the individuals have come from the rehabilitation programme. Mr Consitt wanted to know if the Council would support the idea and that there may be a financial cost as far as materials are concerned but Mr Consitt will pull together a project and bring it back to the Council.

RESOLVED that Mr Consitt will liaise with the Deputy Town Clerk over the project and then bring this back to the Council.

Mr James Smith asked if there had been any answers to the questions which were asked at the last Council meeting with regards to the puppy farm. Mr Smith had asked what, if any evidence was available and was requesting an update.

A Member stated that there had been no further information received from the Police investigation. The Deputy Town Clerk stated that Mr Smith had wanted information on who had made the complaint and the Deputy Town Clerk had stated he wouldn't share this information. Mr Smith stated he didn't ask who he wanted to know what evidence had been provided. The Deputy Town Clerk stated that the Town Council had received an email from a couple of residents near Fishbone Allotments who had complained about this. The Deputy Town Clerk stated he wasn't going to share the emails with the allotment association as this wasn't appropriate. The Police, the RSPCA and Environmental Health have been involved and the Police have been informed and there is no update on the recent situation. A Member stated when the Town Council receive the outcome this will be shared.

A Member questioned if there was a Police and RSPCA investigation ongoing. The Deputy Town Clerk stated that the RSPCA, Environmental Health and the Police had been informed and they are anonymous allegations and the people do not want to be named and that's how it currently stands.

Mr Smith stated this could be different to what the Deputy Town Clerk stated at the last meeting. He had stated that the Police, RSPCA and Environmental Health investigations were ongoing and now he is saying they have been informed what is the truth, have they just been informed or are they investigating. A Member stated that the Police will not update on an investigation whether they are carrying out one or not.

A Member stated that what Mr Smith is asking is whether there is an investigation going on or not. He is not asking for names or anything else. A Member stated that the Police will not confirm if there is an investigation or not. Mr Smith stated surely the RSPCA would say whether they were investigating or not.

The Deputy Town Clerk stated that the RSPCA have stated that they have had various complaints about that particular allotment site and things are ongoing there is nothing more that can be shared.

Mr Smith stated that the association had contacted the RSPCA and the Police and the Police are not at liberty to say but the RSPCA stated that they have no knowledge of any investigation being carried out.

Mr Smith stated the association just want to know if the investigation has even started.

A Member suggested that the Deputy Town Clerk contacts the RSPCA, Police and Environmental Health tomorrow for an update as the questions being asked today cannot be answered as the organisations have not updated the Deputy Town Clerk.

Mr Smith stated that he is annoyed that the Town Council are saying they are going to hand back control of the sites to the associations and yet the association has been totally bypassed on this issue. The association have never been asked about it or asked to investigate it and surely the association committee should be asked to be involved with it or are the association not to be trusted.

The Deputy Town Clerk stated that the association should allow people to do their job and asked Mr Smith if three years ago the association were involved when there was an investigation. Mr Smith stated that they weren't and the Deputy Town Clerk stated that they shouldn't be this time. Mr Smith stated that again the association is being bypassed. The Deputy Town Clerk stated there was a Police issue on a different allotment site and they weren't informed about it before things happened. The association just wants to know whether the RSPCA are going to investigate or not. The Deputy Town Clerk stated that the RSPCA, the Police and the Environmental Health have been in communication with the Town Council and that is all that is needed to be said.

A Member stated that she agreed with the Member who suggested that contact be made with the organisations involved and if there is not an investigation taking place then the allotment association should be told which plot it is and they should sort it out themselves.

RESOLVED that the Deputy Town Clerk will contact the RSPCA, the Police and Environmental Health for an update.

3. TO CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SEAHAM TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON 23rd JANUARY, 2018

RESOLVED the Minutes of this meeting, a copy of which had been previously printed and circulated to each Member, be approved, and they be signed as a correct record by the Mayor subject to page 9475 item 6.1 a Member stated that it should have been a named vote with regards to the Ramside Catering because there are implications for how we are perceived in the community. The Member stated he had voted against this and all votes should be named but specifically this

one because it is an important issue to the Town Council. The Deputy Town Clerk stated that the Member was told on the night that in order for a named vote to take place it has to be asked for prior to the vote. A Member stated that there is nothing in the Councils standing orders to say we have to do that. The Deputy Town Clerk stated this was agreed and voted on when new Members were elected onto the Council. A Member asked for a point of order and stated that the purpose of this meeting is to ratify the minutes and not hold a further meeting about the meeting.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of this meeting, a copy of which had been previously printed and circulated to each Member, be approved, and they be signed as a correct record by the Mayor.

4. REPORTS OF SERVICE COMMITTEES

RESOLVED that the reports of the following Committees, copies of which had been previously printed and circulated to each Member, be approved:

- a) Report of the Parks and Events Committee held on 30th January, 2018, subject to the totality of the minutes on page 9480, 2nd paragraph. It was requested if the recording could be checked by the Deputy Town Clerk and the Committee Clerk with a view to ascertaining whether the full details which were mentioned in that particular issue whether they were properly reflected within the minutes as Members feel there is additional information that ought to be incorporated and brought to a future Parks and Events Committee to clarify the issue in relation to the Seaham Community Party and the potential use of £100k.

Post Meeting Note: On listening to the recording the minute was exactly as per the recording and no further mention was made to this issue.

- b) Report of the Town Promotion and Development Committee held on 30th January, 2018.
- c) Report of the Arts and Information Committee held on 30th January, 2018 subject to page 9486 the word absolved should read absorbed.
- d) Report of Planning and Environmental Committee held on 6th February, 2018, subject to page 9496 a Member stating that he had sent a petition to Durham County Council with regards to the removal of street lights at George Elmy Lifeboat Way. The Member stated that he had received an email from Durham County Council stating that the Deputy Town Clerk had been sent all of the details and he thought the Deputy Town Clerk should have forwarded them on to the Member. The Deputy Town Clerk was unaware that he had been sent anything and would check on this.

Post Meeting Note: the Deputy Town Clerk had not received anything regarding the petition from Durham County Council.

A Member questioned if there was any update on the Seaham Lodge

Junction proposal. The Deputy Town Clerk stated that this is on hold and the situation is being reviewed.

- e) Report of Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 6th February, 2018.
- f) Report of the Twinning Committee held on 6th February, 2018.

5. FOODBANKS

RESOLVED that Members agreed that Seaham Town Council could continue to be used as a drop off point for anyone wanting to donate to the local foodbanks.

6. CREATIVE PLACE SEAHAM

RESOLVED that Members note an invitation to attend the pre-opening event on Friday 2nd March, 2018 between 5.00-7.00pm.

7. RAMSIDE CATERING

RESOLVED that Members agreed to the room hire request for a wedding due to take place on the 11th August, 2018.