

MINUTES OF THE ARTS AND INFORMATION COMMITTEE HELD ON 20TH MAY, 2014

Present: Councillors B Allen, Mrs B E Allen, E Bell, Mrs J A Bell, B Burn Snr, B Burn Jnr, Mrs S Forster, R Meir, Miss S Morrison, I Paul, K Shaw, G A Shepherd, C Snowball, R Whitehead, K Younger

Apologies: Councillors R Arthur, Mrs G Bleasdale, Mrs H Cahill, S Cudlip

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. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR OF ARTS AND INFORMATION COMMITTEE FOR THE ENSUING YEAR

RECOMMENDED Councillor C Snowball be appointed Chair of this Committee for the ensuing year.

(Councillor Snowball in the Chair)

3. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR OF ARTS AND INFORMATION COMMITTEE FOR THE ENSUING YEAR

RECOMMENDED Councillor I Paul be appointed Vice-Chair of this Committee for the ensuing year.

4. DALTON HEIGHTS DEVELOPMENT

Mr Neil Westwick, Associate Director of NLP Planning.Com acting on behalf of Bellway Homes Limited was welcomed to the meeting. Mr Westwick was present to outline the proposed development at Dalton Heights. Also in attendance were representatives from Bellway Homes.

Mr Westwick began by outlining the benefits of the proposed development and the findings from the consultation event held recently. Details of the development were displayed on posters. The proposal was for the creation of a new residential estate of approximately 145 dwellings to the north of the proposed site including affordable housing provision together with 4.2 hectares of public parkland area to the south of the site to link into the existing network of footpaths. Asked why this development was proposed for Seaham Mr Westwick stated that there were a number of allocations within Seaham but they had viability issues, the Colliery site for example had not been progressed and would not be progressed in the short term. This development could go ahead in the short term and it would deliver £1.3m of new homes bonus. In terms of consultation there had been over 100 people through the

door and there was a great deal of support for the proposal and bit of opposition. The concerns in the main had been in relation to the traffic along the B1285 and access into the site. This had since been reviewed in great detail. At this point the representative from the Highways department elaborated on the work undertaken in researching the problem and reported that a decision had been taken to site the access junction further down the road. It would have a priority give-way junction with a right turn lane so traffic could wait safely in the middle of the road. In addition a couple of traffic islands would be sited either side to prevent overtaking. He stated he would anticipate the site would generate about 60 cars coming out of the estate, two thirds of which would head south to pick up the A19 and head into Seaham with approximately 23 cars turning into the development during the same period. There was still some work to do with regard to the impact on other junctions along that road. Improvements could be made in terms of spacing of speed limit signage and maintenance in the area.

At this point feedback was invited from Members and below is a summary of the comments made:

- (i) It was pointed out that this was not part of Seaham Town Council's remit as it came within Dalton le Dale, however it was very close to Seaham and in this respect the Town Council had an interest. Mr Westwick confirmed that they would be having a similar meeting with Dalton le Dale Parish Council.
- (ii) This development had not been included within the Durham Plan and the Town Council had fought against building more houses within Seaham as the town had been plagued by housing developments taking place on some of the greenbelt surrounding the town in recent times. Mr Westwick stated that the Durham Plan was looking for 31,400 houses over the planned period. Some of the sites in Durham would not be delivered in the short term, however this one could be.
- (iii) The road which provided access to the development is widely known as being a dangerous road which has a history of accidents. With the increase in traffic this problem would be exacerbated.
- (iv) A Member stated that the roundabout at the top of that road into Dalton Heights was not fit for purpose at the moment in terms of capacity, there had been a couple of accidents over the last three years and a number of near-misses. Additional traffic passing over this roundabout was very concerning.
- (v) A Member asked whether, in respect of the additional 'turn left' lane already proposed, it was the intention to widen the road and it was confirmed that this would be the case, however the road up the bank to the roundabout would not be widened but improved traffic management measures would be put in place.
- (vi) It was felt that 60 cars egressing from this development may not be accurate as many households have 2 or 3 cars.

- (vii) Despite the town's request for two-bedroomed bungalows, it was confirmed that this type of property was not included in the proposed development.
- (viii) It was stated that this development would impact on residents in Overdene Estate, as there would be traffic coming from four different directions which could be a very hazardous situation in the winter months. Members were advised that this would be one of the main gritting routes between Seaham and the A19
- (ix) As this development was not included in the Durham Plan Mr Westwick was asked why was this green field site selected? Members were advised that this site had been promoted by Bellway throughout.
- (x) A Member asked when the decision was made about the number of houses to be built, was any consideration given to the number of empty houses already in Seaham? Mr Westwick agreed the number was slightly above national average but Bellway Homes considered that houses in this area would sell and that there was a market for this type of housing.
- (xi) Asked what sort of price Bellway Homes considered to be 'affordable'. Members were advised that Bellway Homes develop the houses and then they are sold off to a registered Provider who house people from a registered list.

At this stage Mr Westwick and other representatives were thanked for their informative address and they then left the meeting.

In discussion it was the general feeling that other consultees such as Dalton le Dale Parish and Durham County Council and Durham Police should be contacted in an effort to ascertain their views on this proposal so that the Town Council can formulate whether to add its weight to what Dalton le Dale may wish to do.

RECOMMENDED the Town Council make contact with Dalton le Dale Parish Council, Durham Constabulary and Durham County Council in an effort to ascertain their views on this proposal with a report being brought back to an early meeting for further discussion by Elected Members.

5. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 29TH APRIL, 2014

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

6. CONFERENCE APPOINTMENTS

RECOMMENDED the list of conference appointments a copy of which had been previously circulated, be approved.

7. **CONFERENCES, COURSES AND SEMINARS**

a) **Say No – Mean No – Assertiveness that Works Workshop for Members and Officers**

The Committee considered details of a half day Workshop arranged by the North East Regional Employers' Organisation to be held at a venue still to be confirmed on Wednesday, 16th July, 2014. Two members of staff had requested they be permitted to attend the Workshop and the Town Clerk also recommended a third member of staff to attend.

RECOMMENDED authority be granted for the three members of staff to attend the Assertiveness Workshop on Wednesday, 16th July 2014.

b) **Paper Chase – Who Can Do What and How**

The Committee considered details of a one day training session organised by the County Durham and Cleveland County Training Partnership aimed at Clerks and Councillors.

RECOMMENDED Seaham Town Council not be represented at this training session.

8. **NALC/CDALC ISSUES**

a) **E-Bulletins for County Associations and National Council**

RECOMMENDED the latest E-Bulletins published by the National Association of Local Councils dated 25th April and 9th May 2014, be noted.

b) **Bulletin from Larger Councils' Committee**

RECOMMENDED the bulletin issued by NALC dated 29th April with regard to the meeting of the Larger Councils' Committee, be noted.

c) **What Next for Localism?**

RECOMMENDED the Council accept the report from CDALC on the 'What Next for Localism' event held on 26th March, 2014.

d) **Community Right to Bid – Non-Statutory Advice Note for Local Authorities**

The Committee considered a communication from CDALC on the Community Right to Bid.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported.

9. DESTINATION SEAHAM

The Committee considered the minutes of the April meeting of Destination Seaham and in relation to item 9.7 a Member queried which artefacts the Town Council had agreed to loan to the East Durham Heritage Group in relation to the George Elmy Lifeboat. Members were advised that these were still in the Town Council's possession but would be transferred later this week prior to which a formal agreement would be drawn up and signed. The agreement would cover the appropriate insurance of the objects by the Group and the fact that a sign indicating that the artefacts were on loan from Seaham Town Council be displayed.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported and accept the minutes of the April meeting of the Destination Seaham.

10. LAND ADJACENT TO 1 LAUREL AVENUE, SEAHAM

Prior to the consideration of this item, Councillors E Bell and Mrs J A Bell declared an interest and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

The Committee considered a communication from Durham County Council which detailed a request they had received for the purchase of land adjacent to 1 Laurel Avenue, Seaham. Comments and objections were to be submitted prior to Friday, 23rd May.

RECOMMENDED the Town Council do not submit any objection to the sale of land adjacent to 1 Laurel Avenue Seaham.

11. NEW PREMISES LICENCE

Prior to the consideration of this item, Councillor E Bell declared an interest and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

The Committee considered the additional information that had been provided in relation to the new premises license application for Gills Fry Fry raised at the last meeting of the Planning and Environmental Committee. The timescale for representations to this application had been extended to 27th May, 2014. In discussion

RECOMMENDED the Council confirm its initial objection to this application should remain in place.

12. INVITATION TO COUNCIL

The Committee considered an invitation to the Mayor and Members of the Town Council to attend a special service on Sunday 3rd August to commemorate the 100th anniversary of World War One. In discussion it was felt that Councillors make their individual decision on whether to attend this event.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported.

13. LOCALISATION OF COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT

The Committee considered a communication with regard to the localisation of council tax support, a copy of which was circulated.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported.

14. AAP PRIORITIES

The Committee considered a communication from Steve Ragg which detailed the priorities chosen by the AAP for 2014/15.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported.

15. NORTHERN GAS NETWORKS LTD

The Committee considered a communication from Northern Gas Networks, a copy of which was circulated, which detailed works to take place in the Adelaide Row area during week commencing 26th May, 2014.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported.

16. THE BITTER TASTE OF COAL

The Committee considered an e-mail from the Vane Tempest Theatre Group, a copy of which was circulated, with regard to their production of The Bitter Taste of Coal in the new Town Hall in July. Elected Members had been offered complimentary tickets to watch the opening performance on Tuesday, 15th July.

RECOMMENDED Elected Members notify the Civic Offices if they wished to attend this event so that the relevant number of complimentary tickets could be obtained.

17. FORMER SIGNAL BOX – SEAHAM RAILWAY STATION

Members were advised that the old signal box from Seaham Railway station had been demolished and as it had been in place for 140 years a request had been made for the sign to be handed over to Seaham Archives for the town. Network Rail were, however, reluctant to hand it over as they were concerned it could be subject to an on-line sale. In discussion it was felt that some form guarantee could be given to Network Rail that the item would be retained in the town.

RECOMMENDED the Town Council provide a letter of support to Network Rail from Seaham Town Council to help facilitate the loan of the sign from the former signal box for retention in the town.

18. FEEDBACK FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUP

The Committee considered an e-mail communication from a local Community Group who had recently taken the opportunity to look around the new Town Hall

and Community Facility.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the positive comments received.

19. DIGITAL DURHAM UNCONFERENCE EVENT

The Committee was advised of Durham County Council's digital inclusion 'unconference' event to be held on 10th June, 2014 at Spennymoor.

RECOMMENDED the Town Council is not represented at the digital inclusion 'unconference' event on 10th June, 2014.

20. MENTAL HEALTH ROADSHOW

The Committee was advised of a Mental Health Roadshow planned to take place on the morning of Wednesday, 11th June, 2014 at Seaham Leisure Centre. In discussion it was felt that details of these events should be circulated to all Councillors to enable them to make their own choice with regard to attendance.

RECOMMENDED a copy of the details of the Mental Health Roadshow events scheduled to take place across the County be circulated to all Councillors.

21. TERRACE GREEN

A Member expressed concern about the number of shows taking place on the Terrace Green at weekends. This particular piece of land presently comes under the jurisdiction of Durham County Council as the landowners which entitled them to make the decision as to what takes place at this location. It was also questioned whether the Safety Advisory Group had been involved in any discussions with the fairground operators prior to their presence on the Terrace Green. In discussion it was considered that as this particular asset is shortly to be transferred to the Town Council, the County Council should be made aware of these concerns.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) A letter be sent to Durham County Council to convey the Town Council's concerns about the continuing presence of fairground rides on the Terrace Green.
- (ii) Durham County Council be requested to send a representative to a future meeting to enable Members to discuss their concerns.

22. PRESS OPPORTUNITIES

RECOMMENDED the Council note that no press opportunities existed from this meeting.