

**MINUTES OF THE ARTS AND INFORMATION COMMITTEE HELD ON 25TH JUNE, 2014**

Present: Councillor C Snowball (Chair) and Councillors B Allen, Mrs B E Allen, R Arthur, Mrs M R Baird, E Bell, Mrs J A Bell, Mrs G Bleasdale, B Burn Snr, B Burn Jnr, Mrs H J Cahill, S Cudlip, Mrs S Forster, R Meir, Miss S Morrison, N R Page, I Paul, R Whitehead

Apologies: Councillors K Shaw, K Younger

**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. DALTON HEIGHTS DEVELOPMENT**

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

The Chair welcomed to the meeting 5 delegates from Dalton-le-Dale Parish Council together with 11 residents who were present to discuss the Bellway development proposed for Dalton Heights. Representatives from Bellway Homes had attended the last meeting of this Committee to present their proposal to the Town Council. Subsequent to that meeting the Town Council had felt it appropriate to consult with Dalton-le-Dale Parish Council about the proposal and the way forward and in this respect had extended an invitation to the Parish Clerk for a delegation to attend a future meeting. No response had been received to this invitation and the Town Council had only recently been made aware of the attendees intending to be present this evening. A delegate from the Parish Council stated that they had approached Bellway to request they attend an open meeting with residents to outline their proposal and to date had not received any response. They had been given to understand that Bellway representatives would be present at this meeting.

A Member stated that Seaham Town Council did not support the proposal and had raised concerns about various issues during the presentation including the potential road traffic problems, however, they considered it important that the two Councils worked in partnership to express dissatisfaction about the development at that location.

A delegate from the Parish Council stated they were concerned, not just about the traffic situation, but also other issues such as the possibility of flooding and noise levels among other things. It was commented that Bellway were assessing opposition to developments in many areas of the County wherever green plots of land were available.

The Parish Council had contacted the Planning Department who confirmed that the only communication received from Bellway to date was to ask whether they could submit plans. It was commented that when the Bellway representatives were present at the last meeting of the Arts and Information Committee they had been specifically asked whether Dalton-le-Dale Parish Council were being consulted and they advised that Bellway would be providing the same presentation to the Parish Council. A Member commented that she believed that consultation with Dalton le Dale Parish Council had already taken place as the proposal given to the Town Council had been slightly modified from the proposal presented earlier in the month at Eastlea.

A resident extended thanks to the Town Council for allowing the residents to be present at this meeting. A list of questions which had been put together to be asked of Bellway, had they been present, was circulated. It was stated that this was not the first time this plot of land had been targeted, the last time being 1998 and even though at that time the development was not included within the Local Plan, Easington County Council's Planning Officers had supported the builders' application. Dalton le Dale Parish Council had subsequently taken it to a Tribunal and won and the application had subsequently been refused.

As residents of Dalton-le-Dale they wanted to draw attention to the things they had to cope with, such as traffic, noise, flooding etc. They believed the land could not take any more housing and the road itself had a history of accidents without the presence of additional traffic. They stated that they appreciated anything that Seaham Town Council could do to support the Parish Council in the fight against this proposal. The Chair stated that the questions posed by the Parish Council to Bellway echoed the comments made by the Town Council Members to the Bellway representatives when they presented their proposal. A resident stated that Bellway had distributed leaflets throughout Dalton le Dale however the two houses that adjoin the field proposed for the development did not receive one which meant that the people most likely to be affected were not consulted.

It was suggested that a joint working committee be formed with delegates from both Seaham Town Council and Dalton-le-Dale Parish Council and as a united group develop a strategy together. Bellway should be asked about their intentions from both the perspective of Seaham and Dalton-le-Dale. In the meantime it was suggested that the Clerk of the Parish Council ask Bellway the questions posed.

A Member commented that both Councils should not under-estimate Bellway; he believed that the reason for the consultation at Eastlea and the presentation to the Town Council was not to ascertain views but to generate interest from potential house purchasers. He stated that Bellway would know the history of this site and that planning permission had been refused in the past. The developer would have undertaken a great deal of research on this site with the intention of submitting a planning application. Durham County Council's website indicated there was to be an Inspectorate procedural enquiry later in the year by a Government Inspector and they may be awaiting the outcome of that.

It was agreed that the Town Clerk of Seaham Town Council would contact the Clerk to Dalton-le-Dale Parish Council to move progress on the formation of a Working Party.

At this stage thanks were extended to the Dalton le Dale delegation and residents and they then left the meeting.

**3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 20TH MAY, 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.

**4. CONFERENCE APPOINTMENTS**

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

**5. CONFERENCES, COURSES AND SEMINARS**

**a) Social Media Training for Councillors**

The Committee considered details of a social media training event arranged by Spennymoor Town Council to take place on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2014 for which there were limited places available.

RECOMMENDED any Elected Member who wishes to undertake Social Media Training contact the Town Clerk direct to enable the necessary arrangements to be made; such attendance will rank as an approved duty for payment of appropriate allowances.

**b) Planning Training Session**

The Committee considered details of a free Planning training session being organised by the County Durham and Cleveland Training Partnership on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2014.

RECOMMENDED any Elected Member who wishes to undertake the free Planning training session contact the Town Clerk direct to enable the necessary arrangements to be made; such attendance will rank as an approved duty for payment of appropriate allowances.

**6. NALC/CDALC ISSUES**

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

RECOMMENDED the latest E-Bulletins published by NALC, dated 6th and 20th June 2014 be noted.

**b) CDALC Executive Committee**

The Committee considered correspondence which detailed the latest appointments to the CDALC Executive Committee together with minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held 21<sup>st</sup> March 2014. Members were advised that Durham County Council were to withdraw funding for the Executive Officer post from the end of March 2016 and the options for the future were to be considered at the AGM to take place in November 2014.

RECOMMENDED consideration of this matter be deferred until after Recess.

**7. FLY A FLAG FOR THE COMMONWEALTH 9<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2015**

The Committee considered correspondence in relation to the Fly a Flag for the Commonwealth initiative which would be open to Town Councils from March 2015.

RECOMMENDED consideration of this matter be deferred until after Recess.

**8. REQUEST FROM SDVT BANNER FUND**

Prior to the consideration of this item, Councillor R Meir declared an interest. With the permission of the Chair he provided background information but took no part in the subsequent discussion or voting thereon.

The Committee considered a request from the Seaham Dawdon and Vane Tempest Banner Fund to display one or more of the Seaham miners' banners in the new Town Hall. In discussion it was suggested that the dimensions of a banner be obtained to ascertain whether there would be a suitable location within the new Town Hall for one or more to be displayed. Consideration should also be given to the security of the banner(s) and whether it or they should be housed in a display case. The Banner Fund have a display case and its dimensions and suitability are to be determined.

RECOMMENDED the dimensions of a banner be obtained together with costs for the provision of a possible alternative suitable display case and these be reported back to a future meeting for further consideration.

**9. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACT**

The Committee considered a communication, a copy of which was circulated, which advised of the first proposal by a Parish Council under the Sustainable Communities Act to distribute agendas electronically.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported.

**10. RESIGNATION OF COUNCILLOR G A SHEPHERD**

The Committee considered the resignation of Councillor G A Shepherd, a copy of which was circulated and was advised that the vacancy had been notified to Durham County Council and a notice was on display in the window of the Civic Offices.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported.

**11. PARTY FOR SCULPTURE**

A Member reported that she had been approached by business people within Church Street to advise of their proposal to hold some sort of tea party on the 20th July on the Terrace Green to celebrate the new sculpture. As one or more bands would be asked to perform, a stage and some form of generator would be needed and they asked whether the Town Council could provide any support. As the Terrace Green is owned by the County Council, the business people in Church Street should be advised that they initially approach the County Council to request to use the land on the date in question. Subject to this being granted the Committee felt that support in the form of the loan of a stage and a generator could be given.

RECOMMENDED subject to permission being given by Durham County Council in relation to the use of the Terrace Green, the Town Council agree to provide the stage and generator to enable this event to take place.

**12. PRESS OPPORTUNITIES**

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