

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 13TH DECEMBER, 2016**

Present: The Mayor, Councillor Miss S Morrison (Presiding) and Councillors, B Allen, Mrs B E Allen, R Arthur, E Bell, B Burn (Snr), B Burn (Jnr), S Cudlip, Mrs S Forster, I Paul, C Snowball, R Whitehead, K Younger

Apologies: Councillors Mrs J A Bell, Mrs H Cahill

*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**

The Chair welcomed a member of the public to the meeting. He was informed that if the Town Council are in a position to give an answer to his questions they will be answered there and then or if the questions require a more detailed response a note of the question will be taken and a more detailed response will be made following on from the meeting.

Mr Robert Whitehead informed the meeting that he had initially attended a Council meeting six months prior to this meeting to discuss dog waste and he would now like an update on what is being done with regards to the problem especially in his local area where he resides at Deneside which he reports is gradually getting worse. Mr Whitehead questioned Members on what initiatives are in place, if any, to tackle the problem.

A Member stated that the Town Council did receive Mr Whitehead's complaint and as a result of that there was a detailed report sent to Durham County Council's Clean and Green Team who sent out staff to clear areas as well as Seaham Town Council's staff who went out to clean up also. This is now carried out on a regular basis due to irresponsible owners. Dog Wardens are often in the area as well to try and catch owners who are not picking up after their dogs. Members requested that if Mr Whitehead sees any particular person who is doing this on a regular basis at specific times of the day that he inform the Council. A Dog Warden can then be contacted to attend the area to try and catch the people involved and issue them with an on the spot fine.

It was also stated that the Town and County Council are in the process of carrying out a clear up which everyone is aware of which means signage being erected

illuminating the fact that people can be fined on the spot. It was noted that the problem of dog waste is across the whole of Seaham and is one of the most complained about issues. The Member informed the meeting that Pauline Proud from the Pride Team is dealing with the signage and there will be a plethora of information to notify residents of Seaham of the initiative. Talks are going to be held at Seaview School to educate children on this particular problem.

Mr Whitehead requested Ms Proud's contact details which the Council will provide as he informed the meeting that he had a few ideas himself on initiatives which have been carried out across other areas of the country.

A Councillor stated that he did not feel there were sufficient dog bins in the area especially in the Westlea area. It was noted that discussion would take place around this at a future meeting.

Mr Whitehead thanked Members for allowing him to attend and discuss the problem and stated that he was pleased that an initiative was about to take place.

The Chair thanked Mr Whitehead for attending the meeting and noted that he would be provided with contact details as requested.

Mr Whitehead left the meeting.

RESOLVED that Mr Whitehead be provided with contact details for Pauline Proud at Durham County Council.

3. **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING OF SEAHAM TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON 15TH NOVEMBER, 2016**

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.

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 Town Promotion and Development Committee held on 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2016 subject to a Member questioning whether any of the 450 homes to be built around the new school and on the land of the old school would be council housing as a lot of people are private renting at present as they can't afford to purchase homes. The Town Clerk informed the meeting that Mr Forster had stated that a percentage of the houses would be affordable housing. Discussion took place around the fact that a law was introduced that Local Authorities cannot build houses they must be built by private businesses or housing associations.

- b) Report of Arts and Information Committee held on 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2016.
- c) Report of Parks and Events Committee held on 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2016.
- d) Report of Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2016.
- e) Report of Planning and Environmental Committee held on 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2016; subject to the Town Clerk informing the meeting that he had tabled the amended drawings and plans for the Harbour View building application. The applicant had reverted to using traditional windows as suggested by the Town Council and had also agreed to having double yellow lines painted on the road adjacent to the building. He had already contacted the Highways Department to carry out this work, however the Planners cannot add this on as a condition of the application should it be approved.

A Member raised the issue with regards to the removal of street lights consultation. He questioned whether the consultation had been held with people who lived in the area or with Seaham Town Council. The Town Clerk advised the Member that Durham County Council would be able to provide that information. The Town Council had not raised an issue with Durham County Council with regard to this. The Member stated that a lot of young ladies go jogging and cycling in this area so he cannot understand why these lights would be taken out. It was suggested that Durham County Council Highways Department should be contacted to ascertain the rationale behind the removal of the lights. It was noted that the concerns were valid and this should be raised with Durham County Council as the particular route was intended for joggers and cyclists who tend to exercise at night time.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk contacts Durham County Council Highways Department to ascertain the rationale for removing the street lights.

- f) Report of Twinning Committee held on 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2016.
- g) Report of the Establishment Sub-Committee held on 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2016.

**5. ADDITIONS TO KEY STRATEGIC REGISTER**

RESOLVED that the two further risks circulated at the meeting be added to the register.

**6. CONSULTATION ON SECTION 106 APPLICATION**

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk seeks further information on the application as the Town Council haven't previously been consulted on this matter.

**7. COUNCILLOR B TAYLOR – SOCIAL MEDIA**

Discussion took place with regard to the activity of a Town Councillor on Facebook. . A letter was sent to the Councillor with no response received to

date from him as an individual. It was recommended at the Establishment Sub Committee meeting that the Councillor be reported to the Standards Committee at Durham County Council as the Facebook posts are not considered to be in line with the Nolan Principles and may bring this Council into disrepute.

It was noted that further recommendation at the Establishment Sub-Committee was to send out an enhanced version of the Seaham Reporter in the New Year to better inform residents.

**RESOLVED:**

- a) That the Councillor be reported to the Standards Committee at Durham County Council due to his activity on social media.
- b) An enhanced version of the Seaham Reporter be sent out early in the New Year.