

## **MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 29<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020**

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

Officers: Mrs D Rickaby (Town Clerk)  
P Fletcher (Deputy Town Clerk)  
Mrs J Knight (Finance Officer)  
Ms A Rountree (Minute Taker)

*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.*

### **FC116/20 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. Such interests must be submitted to the Town Clerk prior to the meeting.

### **FC117/20 ACCEPTANCE OF AMENDMENT**

RECOMMENDED that Members accept the amendment to the standing orders to incorporate the new regulations from the Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, to conduct virtual Council meetings.

### **FC118/20 OPEN SESSION**

In accordance with established policy the Council provided a fifteen minute opportunity for any members of the public to raise questions. During this period no issues were raised.

### **FC119/20 TO CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE EMERGENCY COUNCIL MEETING OF SEAHAM TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON 17<sup>th</sup> MARCH, 2020**

A Member stated that as Members had not been given the 3 days' notice of the Covid Response Emergency Meeting the title of the meeting should be changed to Emergency Meeting of available Councillors. This was agreed by all Members.

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.

**FC120/20 TO CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SEAHAM TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON 21<sup>ST</sup> JULY, 2020**

A Member requested an update on the Town Park Café which the Town Clerk stated she would provide a report to Members at the Clerks Advisory Sub-Committee meeting next week.

The Greenscape Community Garden lease was also raised which would be discussed further in the meeting as this was an agenda item.

Members briefly discussed the mobile CCTV on the Terrace Green and a Member noted that Police had informed him that the footage from the camera was not up to Police standard for evidence purposes and queried whether the Police had been consulted regarding the camera prior to the installation. The Deputy Town Clerk stated that he would contact the Police to discuss this matter further.

RECOMMENDED the Deputy Town Clerk speaks to the Police regarding the mobile CCTV footage.

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.

**FC121/20 TO CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 7<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2020**

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.

**TOWN CLERKS UPDATE**

**FC122/20 APOLOGIES**

A Member requested that there is further clarity around Councillor dispensations and the 6-month rule noted within the policy.

RECOMMENDED the Town Clerk makes the amendments and refers the policy back to the Clerks Advisory Sub-Committee meeting.

**FC123/20 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

RECOMMENDED that Members agreed to hold an Annual Meeting on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> October, 2020 at 6.30pm.

**FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES**

**FC124/20 PAYSHEETS 4 & 5 FOR JULY & AUGUST 2020**

RECOMMENDED that Members retrospectively approve paysheets 4 and 5.

**FC125/20 PAYSHEET 6 – SEPTEMBER 2020**

RECOMMENDED that Members approve paysheet 6.

**FC126/20 BANK BALANCES – SEPTEMBER 2020**

RECOMMENDED that Members note the information.

**FC127/20 GRANT APPLICATION**

a) **1338 (Seaham) Squadron Air Training Corps**

Members discussed grants in general and noted that there are a lot of organisations who will need support to restart following the Covid 19 pandemic. A County Councillor questioned whether the squadron had contacted the AAP for funding as other organisations had accessed grants via the AAP. The Finance Officer stated she had received some information regarding the AAP grants and had forwarded this to the squadron.

The Town Clerk suggested that the Town Council writes an article in the next addition of Seaham Today encouraging organisations to apply for grants from the Town Council.

It was noted that the Town Council grants should be distributed fairly amongst all organisations who may apply.

RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) the application is deferred awaiting a response from the AAP.
- (ii) an article is placed in Seaham Today magazine encouraging organisations to apply for a grant.

**TRUSTEES OF SEAHAM PARK AND DAWDON PARK CHARITY**

**FC128/20 SEAHAM PARK CHARITY – PAYSHEET 4 & 5 (JULY & AUGUST 2020)**

RECOMMENDED that the trustees retrospectively approve the payments made.

**FC129/20 SEAHAM PARK CHARITY – PAYSHEET 6 (SEPTEMBER 2020)**

Recommended that the Trustees approve the payments.

**FC130/20 DAWDON PARK CHARITY – PAYSHEET 4 & 5 (JULY & AUGUST 2020)**

Councillor Leanne Kennedy declared an interest and took no further part thereon.

RECOMMENDED that the trustees retrospectively approve the payments made.

**FC131/20 DAWDON PARK CHARITY – PAYSHEET 6 (SEPTEMBER 2020)**

Recommended that the Trustees approve the payments.

**PARKS AND EVENTS SERVICES**

**FC132/20 FIREWORKS DISPLAY 2020**

RECOMMENDED that the Fireworks Display be cancelled due to the Covid 19 pandemic.

**FC133/20 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH ON 2020**

The Deputy Town Clerk suggested that the audience aspect of the Christmas Light Switch On should be cancelled, however the lights and trees should still go ahead.

RECOMMENDED that the trees and lights are displayed as usual but there will be no audience participation for the Lights Switch On.

**FC134/20 REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY AND ARMISTICE DAY 2020**

Dave McKenna stated that there will a very small service which will include the vicar, standard bearer and bugler and suggested that the service should only last for approximately 10 minutes. Members of the public will be urged not to attend so strict Covid guidelines can be adhered to.

The Deputy Town Clerk stated he will contact the Police and ask them to attend Terrace Green and the Cenotaph at Seaham Town Park.

RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) a 10 minute service takes place with minimum attendees.
- (ii) the Deputy Town Clerk to contact the Police to ask them to attend the Terrace Green and the Cenotaph at Seaham Town Park.

**FC135/20 SEAHAM CARNIVAL 2021**

The Deputy Town Clerk suggested that the Carnival could take place on 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2021 if the current crisis has ended. These dates would then avoid the Miners Gala and the Sunderland Air Show.

RECOMMENDED that the Seaham Carnival takes place on 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2021 if it is safe to do so.

**FC136/20**     **CENOTAPH BENCHES**

The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that the Town Council had received enquiries regarding dedication benches from members of the public to be placed around the cenotaph. The Deputy Town Clerk proposes that members of the public pay for similar benches to which have been recently installed and memorial plaques can be placed on the benches. The RBL have approved the location.

RECOMMENDED that dedication benches around the cenotaph be approved.

**FC137/20**     **TERRACE GREEN - CCTV**

The Town Clerk stated that she had held a zoom meeting with Inspector Malkin from the Police regarding CCTV and the Police are going to come back to her with a proposal and costs so the Police and Town Council could potentially work in partnership. Durham County Council may also be involved. It was noted that the monitoring of CCTV is carried out at Chilton which the Police are keen to link into and the surveillance is carried out in live time. Currently a scoping exercise is being carried out which would entail 3 static cameras and 1 360 degree camera.

The Deputy Town Clerk stated that the mobile CCTV on Terrace Green has now been removed and he was suggesting installing CCTV on Kimmitt and Roberts building which would be more for a tourism element and to secure the Terrace Green. This camera would be broadcast on the internet for members of the public to view Tommy, the lighthouse etc and to promote Seaham in general.

A Member thanked the Town Clerk for liaising with the Police and noted the cameras would be strategically placed across Seaham and would be funded by Durham County Councillors. The Member also welcomed the proposal from the Deputy Town Clerk regarding the tourist camera.

RECOMMENDED that the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk bring back their proposals for the two sets of CCTV to a future meeting.

**FC138/20**     **FENCING AROUND VANE HALL – BLANDFORD PLACE, SEAHAM**

A request was received from the owner of Vane Hall to place fencing around the property which encroaches on Seaham Town Council land to prevent anti-social behaviour. The fencing to be installed would be similar to that which the Spiritualist church installed many years ago.

A Member stated he fully supported the idea providing that a legal document is drawn up by the Town Council's Solicitor and the owners agree to pay the Council's costs. The document should state that the owner of Vane Hall will never be entitled to the land and a peppercorn rent should be charged.

RECOMMENDED that the Deputy Town Clerk speaks to the residents of Vane Hall regarding the Town Council's stipulations.

**FC139/20 SALE OF SMALL TRIANGULAR PATCH OF LAND AT SEAHAM STREET**

The Deputy Town Clerk stated that there were two interested parties in purchasing this piece of land.

Members debated around both interested parties and agreed to sell the land to the party who has the funds readily available to purchase outright.

Members stipulated that there needs to be clauses in the sale agreement stating that no buildings or vehicles are allowed to be stored on the land and the area should be fenced off.

RECOMMENDED that the Town Council offer the land to the purchaser who has the funds available to do so with a caveat stating no buildings are allowed to be erected on the site.

**FC140/20 SALE OF LAND AT UNION STREET**

The Deputy Town Clerk stated that the current lease holder of the land has requested to now purchase the land.

Members debated the sale of Union Street land and noted that there will be a caveat placed on the land that there will be no buildings allowed.

Members then voted on the sale of the land.

14 For  
1 Against

RECOMMENDED that the sale of Union Street land be approved with a caveat stating no buildings can be erected on the site.

**FC141/20 ALLOTMENT ISSUES**

**New Allotment Agreements**

The Deputy Town Clerk updated Members regarding the new allotment agreements. He advised that Deneside Association had signed the new agreement and have provided the information of who the plot holders are on site. He also stated that Deneside would like to apply for external funding for fencing to stop any anti-social behaviour. The Deputy Town Clerk will assist the Association in looking for grants.

The Deputy Town Clerk stated that Ernest Field Association and Hall Street Association were both happy to sign the new lease and Ernest Field had indicated that they would provide information on plot holders shortly.

Fishbone and Parkside Associations have not signed, and Dawdon Hill Association are not happy with a number of things including the grandfather rights.

Wagon Works Association's main concern in not signing the agreement is regarding an elderly gentleman who tinkers with cars.

The Deputy Town Clerk requested guidance from Councillors on how to proceed with the current situation. It was noted that if the current Association Committees are not willing to sign the new lease then the Town Council could work with new Committees.

A member of an association stated that they have not had an opportunity to hold a meeting with plot holders. They have 90 plots and it is not currently feasible to hold a meeting. It isn't just one person saying no to signing they just can't do it at this moment in time. The Associations AGM was held in March and the plot holders said they didn't want to sign the draft lease and he didn't know if the lease had changed since then.

It was noted that a revised lease was approved at Full Council in July. A Member noted that another issue was with individual allotment tenants. Members had previously agreed that all allotments would operate under the new lease and individual tenants should be served notice and sent the new lease as the Council can't have 1 rule for associations and another rule for the Councils own tenants.

Following debate by Members the Deputy Town Clerk requested approval from Members to correspond with the associations to discuss how they can communicate the new lease with their members. Suggestions included printing individual copies and posting them, laminating copies to be placed around the site and placing a copy on the Councils website which plot holders could access.

Members agreed that the associations could have 1 month to sign the new agreement.

RECOMMENDED that the Deputy Town Clerk works with the associations on how their Members can be contacted to view the new lease and come to an agreement on whether they wish to sign the new lease. The Deputy Town Clerk to report this back to the next meeting of the Parks Committee.

**FC142/20**

**Fishbone Allotments Complaint about Caravans near to Neighbours Boundary – Hill Crescent**

The Deputy Town Clerk informed the meeting that he had written to the plot holder requesting him to move the caravan to the other side of the plot following instructions given by Members at a previous meeting. He noted that the plot holder received letters in 2006 and 2008 requesting the same thing but nothing further was done. The Deputy Town Clerk questioned whether the Town Council should now give the plot holder a deadline date to move the caravan with a view to involving a Solicitor/Bailiff.

A Member stated that Durham County Council have said that there is nothing wrong with where the caravan is sited, and it has been there over 10 years so there is no need to move it. The same owners still live in the property who lived there in 2006 so why is this being raised again in 2020.

A further Member stated that Durham County Council Planning are saying they cant take this any further as its over 10 years but the landlord requested these to be moved and nobody from the Council have done anything further and the Council are not discharging its duty.

At this point it was noted that the meeting was due to be timed-out and Members agreed to continue the meeting next week. The following agenda items will be deferred to the meeting next week.

- **Fishbone Allotments Complaint about Caravans near to Neighbours Boundary – Hill Crescent**
- **Complaints about Animals at Fishbone Allotments**
- **Greenscape**
- **Sports Fees and Charges**
- **Risk Management Issues**

The meeting was then closed by the Chair.