

SEDFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the proceedings of the **APRIL
MONTHLY MEETING** of the **Council** held

at 7pm

on

Monday 15th APRIL 2024

in

Sedgefield Parish Hall

Present

Cllr. Mel Carr (Chairman)

Cllr. Allan Blakemore (Vice Chairman) and

Cllrs. David Brown, John Finlayson, Elizabeth Flanagan, Jenny Haworth,
Peter Hinde, Dave Jasper, Julie Towler and Stephen Winter

Officer

Dr Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

1. Apologies:

Cllrs Mark Cant, Ann Carr, Kelly Dickerson and Mavis Wayman

2. Declaration of interest:

None.

3. STC Minutes / Committee Reports:

a. Minutes of the Monthly meeting held Monday 11th March 2024:

These were confirmed as a correct record. (PH / DJ)

b. Minutes of the P&R Committee held Monday 11th March 2024:

These were confirmed as a correct record. (JH / SW)

c. Minutes of the Environment Committee held Monday 11th March 2024:

These were confirmed as a correct record. (JF / M Carr)

**d. Minutes of the Community Development Committee held Monday 11th March
2024:**

These were confirmed as a correct record. (DJ / EF)

e. Minutes of Joint Sedgfield Town Council / Sedgfield In Bloom Group held Thursday 21st March 2024: M

These were confirmed as a correct record. (DJ / M Carr)

f. Minutes of the Personnel Committee held Monday 25th March 2024:

These were confirmed as a correct record. (AB / JF)

g. Minutes of the Finance Working Group held Thursday 28th March 2024:

These were confirmed as a correct record. (JF / AB)

RESOLVED:

To accept all of the minutes as above and recommendations contained therein.

4. Presentation by Ms Michelle Harland, CEO Creative Youth Opportunities - Detached Work Commissioned by Policy & Crime Commissioner in Sedgfield, Trimdon Village and Trimdon Grange:

The Chair, Cllr Mel Carr, welcomed Ms Michelle Harland, CEO of Creative Youth Opportunities, to the meeting to give a presentation about her organization, its work and specifically a project being undertaken currently in Sedgfield, Trimdon Village and Trimdon Grange.

Ms Harland thanked the Town Council for this opportunity. She explained the role of Creative Youth Opportunities and its history as well as current staffing structure. The organization delivers youth work with children and young people through working in communities. Ms Harland explained that youth work is a distinct education process adopted across a variety of settings to provide support to children and young people. The organization offers a wide range of services including detached youth work where services are brought to young people on their "own turf" and sees youth workers engage directly with young people to gain an understanding of what is going on, who is on the streets and why as well as what they might like to do as alternative. Youth workers have a key role to play in tackling some of the issues which are then discovered. Many of these detached sessions can take the form of pop up youth sessions where the youth workers bring along its of kit such as gazebos housing activities such as games, creative sessions, BBQs etc.

Ms Harland then focused specifically upon the local area and explained that Sedgfield had been identified as an area with ASB problems along with Trimdon Village and Trimdon Grange as a result of groups of young people gathering on Friday evenings. As a result of this a request was made by the Police & Crime Commissioner and Livin with 26 weeks of funding commencing on 26th January 2024 running until the school summer holidays with Creative Youth Opportunities delivering this project. Ms Harland had liaised with Ms Victoria

Robinson of Sedgefield Youth Club who had confirmed the Club did not have any capacity to undertake detached youth work. Ms Harland confirmed that in recent weeks Creative Youth Opportunities have had a visible presence on the streets in Sedgefield on Friday evenings engaging with young people as Friday evenings had been identified as being the key time period of concern. Through that it has been found that 80% of the young people in Sedgefield on Friday nights do not live in the town but travel in from the surrounding area and it is because they attend the Community College that they feel a connection with the town. This means that many of the young people in the town on Friday evenings are away from adults that they know. The Friday evening pattern appears to be numbers of young people increase from around 5.30pm either bringing alcohol with them or obtaining it from within the town and then they have a route they follow over to Hardwick Park. Whilst on that route many can be loud but not necessarily causing trouble just enjoying being with friends. When reaching Hardwick Park there is a pattern of older young people in cars joining them, with some bringing alcohol or other substances. Drinking is taking place at Hardwick Park and rubbish is being left behind. Ms Harland confirmed these weekly sessions have seen her staff engage with a significant number of young people with one week there being 82 young people in attendance. Ms Harland confirmed the sessions to date have identified the issues, locations etc and emphasis for the remaining 16 funded weeks needs to be tailored on delivering to try to meet needs and tackle issues. Ms Harland is keen to start to deliver pop-up sessions which include food as well as creative opportunities and sought the Town Council's support for this as well as suggested locations for such. Ms Harland confirmed that at the moment the ideal location would be at Hardwick Park. Town Cllrs expressed their support for this but said that Hardwick Park belonged to DCC and their permission was essential, however, hopefully local County Cllrs could help to progress that matter. Town Cllrs agreed that if at any point issues moved from Hardwick Park back into the centre of the town then they would be happy for pop-up sessions to take place on the central village green area. Town Cllrs also felt that residents would welcome this service and positive action being undertaken. The question was asked what happens if the sessions are so good that they attract more young people from outside the area? Ms Harland explained that this is not the intention as detached youth workers in Trimdon Village and Trimdon Grange are also undertaking similar work with the intention of trying to keep young people safe within their own localities rather than travelling. Detached youth workers liaise closely with the Police, and this is a two way process, with the aim of trying to deter certain behaviour and offer something different to young people. With the remaining weeks of funding Ms Harland's intention is to raise awareness of this work, seek support from local authorities and the creation of pop-up sessions at Hardwick Park initially, seek support from the local MP and identify what it is that young people want. Town Cllrs suggested Ms Harland also liaise with

Hardwick Hall Hotel as the immediate neighbour to where young people are currently gathering so that they are aware of this work and know who to contact if there are any issues.

Ms Harland explained Livin and the Police & Crime Commissioner do have further funding and it was hoped that when the 26 weeks of current funding provision ended there was sufficient evidence to prove a case to show that work should continue and be supplementary to the popular and well used Youth Club already ran in the town on Monday evenings. Ms Harland will continue to keep in touch with the Town Council and give regular updates with the hope that work can also be promoted through the Town Council's communication channels.

Cllr Mel Carr thanked Ms Harland for a very informative presentation and discussion. The Town Council looks forward to being kept up to date on this work and will submit a letter of support along with other suggestions. Ms Harland will share a copy of her presentation with the Clerk for subsequent dissemination to Town Cllrs.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

5. Matters of Information:

5.1 DM/23/02390/FPA – The Old Smithy, Sedgefield:

No further information has been received regarding this planning application. The Clerk has issued a further request to Mr David Richards, DCC Planning Officer, seeking clarification as to why the Town Council has not been made aware this planning application has been refused nor provided with a copy of the Planning Officer's report as previously requested. Mr Richards had replied stating that he had been advised the Local Planning Authority do not notify Parish/Town Councils of planning decisions nor provide copies of reports which should instead be accessed via DCC's website once uploaded. Cllr Brown expressed his dissatisfaction with this response and also that information had not been shared by DCC for this planning application or that referenced in agenda item 5.2. which was still to be determined. It was acknowledged that the Town Council cannot progress this matter any further and it was agreed that County Cllrs be asked to investigate this matter and that referenced in agenda item 5.2.

RESOLVED:

The local County Cllrs be asked to investigate this planning application and obtain the documentation which had previously been requested by the Town Council.

5.2 Planning application DM/23/02968/FPA – proposed two storey dwelling to land to the rear of 5 West End, Sedgefield and associated parking and the felling of 3 no trees:

The Clerk has informed Mr David Richards, DCC Planning Officer, that providing the recommendation is for this planning application be refused then the Town Council is happy for this to be an Officer delegated decision but if the recommendation is for the planning application to be accepted then the Town Council, as per its submitted comments, requests this application be called in for determination by Full Planning Committee. The Clerk has requested a copy of the Planning Officer's report regarding this planning application as it would like to see the reasons for refusing/accepting. The Clerk has also requested that if there is any appeal relating to this application that the Town Council's submitted objections feature in any report produced as a result. In light of comments made by Cllr David Brown in item 5.1, it was agreed to ask both local County Cllrs to investigate this matter on the Town Council's behalf.

RESOLVED:

The local County Cllrs be asked to investigate this planning application, its current status and obtain the documentation which had previously been requested by the Town Council.

5.3 Current Planning Applications:

The Clerk submitted to DCC Planners comments agreed in relation to planning applications 1-7.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

5.4 Additional Planning Applications:

No objections or comments were submitted by Cllrs to the Clerk regarding planning application DM/24/00440/PNA.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

6. Dates of Meetings:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all details of all meetings in April plus events until April 2024. The Clerk confirmed the Personnel Committee that had been scheduled to take place on Monday 22nd April 2024 had now been rescheduled for May 2024.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

7. Public Participation:

The Chairman, Cllr Mel Carr, closed the meeting for the public to give their views and comments.

County Cllr Chris Lines noted that his monthly report was to be considered under agenda item 9.1. He highlighted that within that references to bus services and the upcoming North East Mayor elections. County Cllr Lines had been pleased to note the bike racks on the central village green, installed last year via Towns and Villages Funding, had been well used on Sunday morning and hoped this would continue as the weather improved.

The Chairman thanked the public for their comments and re-opened the meeting.

8. Internal Reports:

8.1 Chairman's Report:

The Clerk circulated to all copies of the Chairman's report detailing his work since the last Monthly Meeting.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information in the Chair's Report.

8.2 Mayor's Report:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Mayor's Report which provided details of the Mayor's actions since the last Monthly Meeting as well as forthcoming plans.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information in the Mayor's Report.

9. External Reports:

9.1 Report From Durham County Councilor Chris Lines, Sedgefield Division:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a report from Durham County Cllr Chris Lines who represents the Sedgefield Division. This was accompanied by a series of attachments which had been referenced in the report by County Cllr Lines.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

10. Correspondence:

None.

11. Current Planning Applications:

A schedule of the current planning applications had been circulated prior to the meeting. Applications were considered, and the following comments were made (Note: number refers to the number on the circulated list):

11.1 DM/23/03320/FPA – proposed siting of modular building to provide additional fitness area including associated ancillary rooms, Alexander House, Fishburn:
Cllrs did not have any objection to this application.

11.2 DM/24/00627/FPA – first floor side extension and garage conversion with pitched roof canopy, 19 Belsay Court, Sedgefield:
Cllrs did not have any objection to this application.

11.3 DM/24/00716/FPA – single storey rear extension, 67 The Orchard, Sedgefield:
Cllrs did not have any objection to this application.

11.4 DM/24/00729/PNA – prior approval for erection of agricultural storage building (straw and fodder) 60.96m length x 15.24m wide, and 6m to ridge height pursuant to DM/24/00372/PNA including hedgerow removal and replacement, Bridge House, Butterwick Road, Fishburn:
Cllrs did not have any objection to this application.

11.5 DM/24/00785/PNA – erection of an agricultural general storage building, Grove Farm, Bradbury:

Cllrs did not have any objection to this application.

RESOLVED:

The comments on planning applications 1 – 5 above to be submitted to DCC Planners.

ADDITIONAL PLANNING APPLICATIONS:

The Clerk reported that earlier that day the latest list of planning applications published by DCC had been circulated to all Cllrs. This list included the following planning applications which needed to be considered by Cllrs:

DM/24/00749/FPA – demolition of church hall shed and replacement with annex extension, St Catherine's Church, Front Street, Fishburn

DM/24/00817/FPA – erection of a steel portal framed agricultural building for housing of livestock, Preston Tilery Farm, Ricknall Lane, Preston le Skerne

DM/24/00865/TPO – black pine (T1) removal of hanger slightly attached within crown over footpath to house. Lime (T2) crown lift epicormic growth at base and 3 lower small branches to allow more light in to the lower windows of the houses. Crown raise to around 2.5-3m of small soft growth only. Beech (T3) crown reduce on north side of the crown up to 2-3m of longest product. Long lateral limb in east side of crown growing into Maple tree (T4) to sympathetically end weight reduce (2-3m) to reduce the loading on this limb and allowing more space for the Maple to grow. Maple (T4) crown lift of 1 lower branch to allow more light in to the houses and promote growth of plants under tree, 9 to 10 Turnpike Walk, Sedgefield.

RESOLVED:

Cllrs to forward comments on the above planning applications to the Clerk by no later than 9am on Monday 22nd April 2024.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.48pm

SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY & RESOURCES



Minutes of the proceedings of the **APRIL**
POLICY & RESOURCES of the Council

held following the **Monthly Meeting**

on

Monday 15th April 2024

in

Sedgefield Parish Hall.

Present

Cllr. Allan Blakemore (Chair)

Cllr. Jenny Haworth (Vice Chair) and

Cllrs. David Brown, Mel Carr, John Finlayson, Elizabeth Flanagan, Peter Hinde,
Dave Jasper, Julie Towler and Stephen Winter

Officer

Dr Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

1. Apologies:

Cllrs Mark Cant, Ann Carr, Kelly Dickerson, and Mavis Wayman

2. Declaration of interest:

None.

3. Matters of Information:

3.1 Terrace Hill Discussion:

The Clerk and Head Gardener & Cemetery Superintendent met on-site in Ceddesfeld Grounds with Mr Martin Lowe of Historic England on 2nd June 2023. A follow-up meeting has now taken place with DCC's Conservation Officer and Tree Officer(s) who recommend the Clerk now liaises with DCC's Head of Ecology in order that appropriate specifications and costings can be sought so a further Discussion Meeting can be scheduled with Town Cllrs. Priority work relating to budget planning and community events has meant no further action has taken place in relation to this item. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.2 ASB Action Plan:

Ms Kate Ward of DCC is to contact the Town Council when she has scoped out a project to install a CCTV camera, new block paving, installation of bollards and a heavy-duty bin at the Youth Shelter. County Cllr Lines is also going to contact Ms Ward to request an update. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.3 Refurbishment of Turning Circle Centre:

This work has now been completed.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

3.4 InspectEDGE:

An official order has been placed to purchase InspectEDGE. It is envisaged that this system will be installed and training arranged once year-end procedures have been completed. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.5 Trees Near South View:

The Town Council has now submitted an official request to DCC for permission to work on its own trees and then schedule this work as soon as possible thereafter.

Note: Mrs Stubbings did not respond to the Town Council's offer of seeking permissions for additional tree works. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.6 Butterwick Road Cemetery Rules and Regulations:

The recently adopted Rules and Regulations are now displayed on the Town Council's website.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

3.7 Butterwick and Winterton Allotments Rules and Regulations:

The recently adopted Rules and Regulations are now displayed on the Town Council's website.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

3.8 Parish Hall User Policy:

The recently adopted Parish Hall User Policy has now been shared with Parish Hall regular users and is displayed on the Town Council's website.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

3.9 Timetable For Production of 2023/24 Year End Accounts:

A Special Town Council meeting will take place at 6.30pm in Sedgefield Parish Hall on Monday 22nd April 2024. The Clerk has now issued packs to all Cllrs for this Special Meeting.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.10 2023/24 Statement of Internal Control and Annual Review of Effectiveness of Internal Control:

The approved Statement is now displayed on the Town Council's website.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

3.11 Re-appointment of Internal Auditor:

The Clerk has signed the Internal Auditor's contract and informed him of his re-appointment for April 2024 – March 2027.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

3.12 Internal Audit Annual Plan 2024/25:

The Clerk has informed the Internal Auditor of approval of his Internal Audit Annual Plan for 2024/25. Note: see agenda item 6.6 for further update.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

3.13 Review of Statement of Policy Under The Licensing Act 2003:

Information has been circulated through the residents database informing residents of DCC's public consultation regarding the review of their Licensing Policy.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

3.14 Sedgefield Mediaeval Fayre:

The SCA's request has been added to the Community Chest agenda for their meeting on 15th April 2024. The Clerk has also suggested Mrs Guest write to the Mayor of Sedgefield seeking a donation.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

3.15 New Alarm Systems:

Work is now underway to schedule the installation and training on new alarm systems for the Parish Hall and Town Council Offices. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on these matters.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.16 Quotation for Village Green Repairs:

The Clerk has informed the contractor that their quotation has not been accepted. The Estates Working Group will review the area of village green near 40-42 North End in 12 months time. The Clerk has circulated to all Cllrs the Town Council's Village Green Policy with request that comments are submitted to her by no later than 30th April 2024. The Clerk has informed the resident who reported this matter of the Town Council's decision and they have in turn submitted further correspondence which will be considered at the next Estates Working Group meeting. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on these matters.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

4. Public Participation:

The Chairman, Cllr Allan Blakemore, closed the meeting for the public to give their views. The member of public in attendance did not wish to speak. The Chairman re-opened the meeting.

5. Reports:

5.1 Review of Exit Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Review of Exit Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee.

RESOLVED:

To adopt the reviewed Exit Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee with immediate effect and review this policy in a further 12 months.

5.2 Review of Dismissal Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Review of Dismissal Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee.

RESOLVED:

To adopt the reviewed Dismissal Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee with immediate effect and review this policy in a further 12 months.

- 5.3 Review of Welfare Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee:**
Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Review of Welfare Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee.

RESOLVED:

To adopt the reviewed Welfare Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee with immediate effect and review this policy in a further 12 months.

- 5.4 Review of Resolution Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee:**
Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Review of Resolution Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee.

RESOLVED:

To adopt the reviewed (now to be termed) Grievance Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee with immediate effect and review this policy in a further 12 months.

- 5.5. Review of Fixed Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee:**
Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Review of Fixed Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee.

RESOLVED:

To adopt the reviewed Fixed Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee with immediate effect and review this policy in a further 12 months.

- 5.6. Review of Working Without The Default Retirement Age Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee:**
Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Review of Working Without The Default Retirement Age Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee.

RESOLVED:

To adopt the reviewed Working Without The Default Retirement Age Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee with immediate effect and review this policy in a further 12 months.

5.7. Review of Flexible Retirement Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Review of Flexible Retirement Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee.

RESOLVED:

To adopt the reviewed Flexible Retirement Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee with immediate effect and review this policy in a further 12 months.

5.8. Review of Disciplinary Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Review of Disciplinary Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee.

RESOLVED:

To adopt the reviewed Disciplinary Policy Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee with immediate effect and review this policy in a further 12 months.

5.9. Review of Industrial Action Personnel Committee Guidance Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Review of Industrial Action Personnel Committee Guidance Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee.

RESOLVED:

To adopt the reviewed Industrial Action Personnel Committee Guidance Recommendation Report by Personnel Committee with immediate effect and review this guidance in a further 12 months.

5.10. Six Monthly Parish Hall Lift Inspection Update Report by Town Clerk:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Six-Monthly Parish Hall Lift Inspection Update report confirming the latest inspection had successfully take place in March 2024 to ensure legal compliance and the next inspection is due in September 2024.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

5.11. Annual Headstone Safety Testing 2023/24 Findings Update Report by Town Clerk and Head Gardener & Cemetery Superintendent:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all an Annual Headstone Safety Testing 2023/24 Findings Update Report by Town Clerk and Head Gardener & Cemetery Superintendent which confirmed that the one headstone of concern at Butterwick Road Cemetery had now been laid down.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

Note: Reports related to information exempt from the public are considered under agenda item 8.

6. Financial Matters:

6.1 Invoices for payment by cheques for approval after 11th March 2024:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all details of cheques for approval after 11th March 2024 numbered 110799 to 110827. The Clerk circulated to all an updated list which also included cheques numbered 110828 to 110838.

RESOLVED:

i) All cheques and invoices were approved for payment.

ii) Cllrs Mel Carr and Allan Blakemore plus the Town Clerk to duly sign the cheques.

6.2 Financial Budget Comparison as at 8th April 2024:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Financial Budget Comparison as at 8th April 2024.

RESOLVED:

To receive the financial budget comparison as at 8th April 2024.

6.3 Debtors List as at 3rd April 2024:

RESOLVED:

To receive the Debtors List as at 3rd April 2024.

6.4 Direct Debits and BACS List for 1st – 31st March 2024:

RESOLVED:

To receive Direct Debits and BACS List for 1st – 31st March 2024.

6.5 March 2024 Bank Reconciliations Plus March 2024 Imprest Account and February – March 2024 Public Sector Deposit Fund Reconciliations Report by Town Clerk:

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

6.6 Internal Audit 2023/24 Update Report by Town Clerk:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all an Internal Audit 2023/24 Update report by Town Clerk which was accompanied by copies of the Internal Auditor's reports relating to creditors (accounts payable), corporate governance arrangements for Sedgefield Town Council, main accounting system, risk management arrangements and budgetary control system which all achieved Full Assurance rating. Also attached was the latest follow-up audit report on the governance arrangements for Sedgefield Youth Club which achieved a Substantial Assurance rating. The Clerk reported that Sedgefield Youth Club will undergo a further internal audit inspection in 2024/25.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

7. Correspondence:

None.

At this point in the agenda the Committee were to consider reports that were exempt from the public so it was **RESOLVED to close the meeting to allow those members of the public present to observe/participate as they wished in the Environment Committee and Community Development & Engagement Committee meeting before then re-opening the P&R Committee meeting to consider Reports Exempt From The Public.** The meeting closed at 7.58pm.

The Chair, Cllr Allan Blakemore, re-opened the meeting at 8.09pm. The Chair explained that

due to the confidential nature of the following items these would be discussed under Exempt Information said that had any members of the public and/or press been in attendance they would have been asked to leave the meeting at this point (Section 1 Sub-Section (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission of Meetings) Act 1960).

8. Consideration of Reports Exempt from the Public:

8.1 Village Greens Update Report by Town Clerk:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Village Greens Update Report which was duly considered and a way forward agreed.

8.2 Butterwick Road Cemetery Expansion Project Funding Update Report by Finance Working Group:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated a Butterwick Road Cemetery Expansion Project Funding Update Report by Finance Working Group which was duly considered and a way forward agreed.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.18pm.

SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT

Minutes of the proceedings of the **APRIL ENVIRONMENT** of the **Council** held following the **P&R** in the **Parish Hall**, Sedgefield, on **Monday 15th April 2024**.

Present **Cllr. Stephen Winter (Chairman) and**
Cllrs. Allan Blakemore, David Brown, Mel Carr, John Finlayson, Elizabeth Flanagan,
Catherine Hart, Jenny Haworth, Peter Hinde, Dave Jasper and Julie Towler.

Officer Dr Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

1. Apologies:

Cllrs Mark Cant, Ann Carr, Kelly Dickerson and Mavis Wayman

2. Declaration of interest:

None.

3. Matters of Information:

3.1 Winterton Cemetery:

The Estates Working Group will research the precise responsibilities which the Town Council has in relation to Winterton Cemetery. The Estates Working Group to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RECOMMENDED:

To receive this information.

3.2 Pest Control Issues Near Ceddesfeld Pond:

No further information has been heard yet regarding confirmation of water voles. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on these matters.

RECOMMENDED:

To receive this information.

3.3 Potential Parson Sculpture:

Potential designs have now been drafted and shared with those who attended the on-site meeting for their consideration. Note: This is not a priority project for the Town Council. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RECOMMENDED:

To receive this information.

3.4 Trees in Old Beacon Lane Cemetery:

No quotation has yet been received regarding the wall remedial work. Note: When received this will be presented to a future P&R Committee meeting. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RECOMMENDED:

To receive this information.

4. Public Participation:

The Chairman, Cllr Stephen Winter, closed the meeting for the public to give their views. The member of the public in attendance did not wish to speak. The Chairman re-opened the meeting.

5. Reports:

None.

6. Correspondence:

6.1 Litter Picking (email from Ms K Turnbull, Sedgefield Young Farmers dated 22nd March 2024):

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all an email from Ms K Turnbull of Sedgefield Young Farmers dated 22nd March 2024 in which they Club were requesting permission to conduct a litter pick at their evening meeting on 23rd April 2023. They requested suggestions for a location within the Parish which was suitable for their membership age range of 10-28 years.

RECOMMENDED:

The Clerk to put Ms Turnbull in touch with the Sedgefield Ploggers so that a suitable location could be found and to convey to Sedgefield Young Farmers the Town Council's thanks for their litter picking work.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.02pm.

APPROVED

SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & ENGAGEMENT

Minutes of the proceedings of the **APRIL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE** of the **Council** held following the **Environment Committee** in the **Parish Hall**, Sedgefield, on **Monday 15th April 2024**.

Present

Cllr. Mel Carr (Chairman) and

Cllrs. Allan Blakemore, David Brown, Mel Carr, John Finlayson, Elizabeth Flanagan, Catherine Hart, Jenny Haworth, Peter Hinde, Dave Jasper, Julie Towler and Stephen Winter.

Officer

Dr Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

1. Apologies:

Cllrs Mark Cant, Ann Carr, Kelly Dickerson and Mavis Wayman

2. Declaration of interest:

None.

3. Matters of Information:

3.1 D-Day Commemorations:

No further progress has been made with this event, however, when organized promotional material will be issued. No Cllrs have indicated whether or not they will be attending this event at the Town's war memorial on Thursday 6th June 2024. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RECOMMENDED:

To receive the information.

3.2 Town Council Coach Trips:

The first coach trip will be to Keswick on 20th June 2024. Publicity has now been released and tickets are on sale and selling well. The Clerk will bring a feedback report to the Committee after this trip.

RECOMMENDED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

3.3 Citizen of the Year and Young Citizen of the Year Awards 2023:

The Clerk had circulated to all Town Cllrs details of the winners of previous Citizens Awards. The winners of the 2023 Awards will be announced at the Town Annual Meeting on the evening of Tuesday 7th May 2024.

RECOMMENDED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

4. Public Participation:

The Chairman, Cllr Mel Carr, closed the meeting for the public to give their views.

In response to the item on the previous meeting's agenda relating to Sedgefield Young Farmers Club's request to litter pick in the Town, County Cllr Chris Lines said the Sedgefield Ploggers would be happy for the Club to contact them in order to identify a suitable location for safe litter picking. He confirmed the Ploggers had been out at work over the last weekend and had included within that route Station Road Playing Field. County Cllr Lines said the Ploggers would also be happy to share litter pickers and refuse sacks with the Club and potentially see if any ploggers would be able to join the Young Farmers at their event.

The Chairman re-opened the meeting and thanked County Cllr Lines for his offer of assistance to the Young Farmers Club. The Clerk will liaise according between the Club and County Cllr Lines.

5. Reports:

None.

6. Correspondence:

6.1. Friends of Hardwick (letter from C Hearmon, Secretary dated 20th March 2024):

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a letter from Friends of Hardwick Secretary, Chris Hearmon, dated 20th March 2024 which detailed the Group's aspiration to restore the remaining Park gate and then display it in a location close to its original site on grassy land next to West Park Lane. The Group were seeking support and permission from Durham County Council and the Town Council. Cllrs agreed this was a very worthwhile project, however, the Town Council is not the

owner of the land upon which the gate is to be installed so the Group need to obtain permission from the County Council. The Town Council noted the envisaged costs with this project and it was agreed the Clerk refer the Group to funding opportunities via the EDRC AAP, local County Cllr funding and the County Durham Community Foundation.

RECOMMENDED:

The Clerk to write to Chris Hearmon in accordance with the Town Council's instruction.

6.2. Annual Town Meeting 7th May (email from Mrs Sarah Guest, SCA dated 4th April 2024):

An email had been received from Mrs Sarah Guest of SCA dated 4th April 2024 requesting permission for the SCA to have table at the forthcoming Annual Town meeting to promote their Mediaeval Fayre. Cllrs agreed that a table would be provided for such and be located in the Hall's lobby area.

RECOMMENDED:

The Clerk to inform Mrs Guest of the Town Council's decision.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.08pm.



SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the proceedings of the

APRIL

SPECIAL MEETING

To Approve Sedgefield Town Council's 2023/24

Year End Accounts

of the **Council** held at **6.30pm**

on

Monday 22nd April 2024

in

Sedgefield Parish Hall

Present

Cllr. Mel Carr (Chairman)

Cllr. Allan Blakemore (Vice Chairman) and

Cllrs. David Brown, Kelly Dickerson, John Finlayson, Peter Hinde, Dave Jasper and Julie Towler.

Officer

Dr Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

1. Apologies:

Cllrs. Mark Cant, Ann Carr, Jenny Haworth and Mavis Wayman,

2. Declaration of interest:

None.

3. To approve the financial accounts for 2023/24 including: -

a. Annual Governance Statement (2023/24 Annual Governance Statement Report by Finance Working Group):

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a 2023/24 Annual Governance Statement Report by the Finance Working Group which detailed the Council's scope of responsibility under the Account and Audit Regulations 2015, the purpose of the Council's system of internal control, an explanation of the Council's internal

control environment and a statement of the actual internal controls in operation.

RESOLVED:

To approve the Annual Governance Statement.

b. Year End Accounts for 2023/24:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all the Council's Income and Expenditure Account for 2023/24, the Consolidated Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2024 and the Council's Fixed Assets Schedule for 2023/24.

RESOLVED:

i) Cllrs approved the 2023/24 year end accounts including transfer from the General Fund to the Town Council's ear marked reserve for the expansion of Butterwick Road Cemetery.

ii) The Clerk to ensure the 2023/24 Income and Expenditure account plus Balance Sheet feature in the Town Council's Annual Report for 2023/24 which will be launched at the Town's forthcoming Annual Town meeting along with copies via the Town Council offices, on the website and through the residents database as well as promotion through X (formerly Twitter).

c. Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2023/24:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a completed copy of Section 2 of the Town Council's Accounting Statement for 2023/24 along with an explanation of differences between Boxes 7 and 8 on the AGAR and explanation of significant variances relating to Total Other Receipts (Box 3), Staff Costs (Box 4), Loan Interest/Capital Repayments (Box 5) and Total Other Payments (Box 6).

The Clerk then explained to Cllrs how Boxes 1 to 11 of this Statement had been completed using the year end account, balance sheet and fixed assets schedule considered under item 3c) as follows:

- Box 1 stated the Council's carried forward balance from 31st March 2023;
- Box 2 stated the Council's precept for 2023/24;
- Box 3 stated all Council income less the precept;
- Box 4 stated staff costs, i.e. salaries, PAYE, NI, pension contributions and employment expenses only. The Clerk highlighted that the amount stated in

the AGAR was less than that stated on the income and expenditure account as the "Personnel" heading also included PPE, travel costs, training costs and any AVC payments. The Clerk explained the difference between the Town Council's personnel budget heading and the information required for the AGAR. The Clerk confirmed that the other personnel costs had been included in Box 6;

- Box 5 reflected that the Town Council's Public Works Loan was fully repaid in 2022/23;
- Box 6 stated all other payments, i.e. total expenditure less staff costs stated in Box 4;
- Box 7 stated the total balances and reserves at the end of the financial year (this is confirmed by adding Boxes 1, 2 and 3 then subtracting Boxes 4, 5 and 6. The final figure matches the figure stated on the Council's balance sheet as at 31st March 2024);
- Box 8 stated the total value of cash and short-term investments (refer to financial summary – cashbook closing figure);
- Box 9 stated the Council's total fixed assets figure;
- Box 10 reflected that the Town Council does not have any outstanding loans;
- Box 11 is not applicable as the Town Council does not hold any Trust Fund(s).

The Clerk pointed out there were differences in the figures stated in Boxes 7 and 8 for 2023/24 and this difference is because the accounts are calculated on an income and expenditure basis rather than on a receipts and payments basis, i.e. Box 8 is cash whereas Box 7 includes the closing debtors, creditors, payments in advance and receipts in advance. Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a report explaining these differences.

The Clerk reminded Cllrs that when there is a +/- above/below a 15% variation between a box figure quoted in the last two financial years an explanation for such is required by the External Auditor. The Clerk reported when comparing 2023/24 with 2022/23 there was a significant variances in the aresa of Total Other Receipts (Box 3), Staff Costs (Box 4), Loan Interest/Capital Repayments (Box 5) and Total Other Payments (Box 6). Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all an explanation for these variances. Cllrs accepted these explanations and the Clerk confirmed these would be submitted to the External Auditor along with the AGAR.

The Clerk reports that as the Town Council has either an income or expenditure of over £200,000 it is required to submit to the External Auditor additional evidence as part of their intermediate audit work. The Clerk confirmed that each year the External Auditor requests different evidence and for 2023/24 such related to maintaining adequate systems of internal control, ensuring compliance with laws, regulations and codes of practice and maintaining throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit.

RESOLVED:

- i) **To approve the Accounting Statements 2023/24 for Sedgefield Town Council.**
- ii) **The Chair of the Council and Clerk to sign the AGAR on behalf of Sedgefield Town Council.**
- iii) **The Clerk to submit the AGAR and all necessary intermediate audit evidence to the External Auditor.**

4. VAT Reclaim Update For Period 1st October 2023 – 31st March 2024 Report by Finance Working Group:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a report detailing that a VAT reclaim for the period 1st October 2023 to 31st March 2024 for £12154.02 was submitted to HMRC via their on-line submission system on 4th April 2024. The Clerk will keep the Council, via the P&R Committee, updated on this matter. It was noted that since this submission there had been an overclaim of £610 as a result of a duplicate invoice and credit received. This will be declared when the next VAT reclaim is submitted and has been recorded on the Edge Financial system.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

5. Internal Audit Reports:

5.1 Internal Audit Report Sedgefield Town Council End of Year Accounts (2023/24) by Mr Gordon Fletcher:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all copies of Mr Fletcher's Internal Audit Report Sedgefield Town Council End of Year Accounts (2023/24) which provided the Council with a Full Assurance rating. The Clerk confirmed that subsequently Mr Fletcher had completed and signed the Internal Audit page of the

Council's AGAR.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

5.2 Internal Audit Annual Report 2023/24 Sedgefield Town Council by Mr Gordon Fletcher:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all copies of Mr Fletcher's Internal Audit Annual Report 2023/24 which provided the Council with a Full Assurance rating. Cllr Allan Blakemore expressed his thanks to the Town Clerk and Financial Assistant for their sterling work not only in producing the year end accounts but also in ensuring the integrity of the Council's financial governance arrangements throughout the year. Cllr David Brown echoed this and noted that many larger, and more well resourced, Councils do not achieve such high ratings.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

6. Exercise of Public Rights Dates Recommendation Report by Finance Working Group:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all an Exercise of Public Rights Dates Report by the Finance Working Group informing all the Clerk had set the Town Council's exercise of public rights dates as commencing on Monday 3rd June 2024 and ceasing on Friday 12th July 2024.

RESOLVED:

To approve the Council's Exercise of Public Rights dates commencing on Monday 3rd June 2024 and ceasing on Friday 12th July 2024.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.09pm.