

# Seaton Valley Council

A Community Council

**Minutes of a Meeting held on Wednesday 30 January 2019 at 7.00 pm. at the Council's Offices, Seaton Delaval.**

The meeting started at 7.01 p.m.

## **PRESENT:**

Councillors: S Stanners (Chair), B Burt, S Dungworth, E Coulson, K. Collier, A Stanners and D. Nesbitt

## **IN ATTENDANCE:**

S Potts – Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

Members of the public - 10

### **CO001/19 1. Apologies for absence**

Cllr L Bowman and County Councillor B Pidcock submitted apologies for their absence.

### **CO002/19 2. Disclosure of interests**

Both the Clerk and Cllr Dungworth said that they had a Personal Interest in Item 19 on the Agenda and would, therefore, leave the meeting during consideration of that item.

There were no other declarations of interest

### **CO003/19 3. Chair's Welcome and Civic Announcements**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Council's first meeting of the new calendar year and then went on to pay tribute to former Councillor Jim Clough who had sadly died recently. Cllr Clough had served as a Councillor for over 35 years; firstly with the former Seaton Valley UDC, then Blyth Valley Borough Council, and then between 2009 and 2013 with Seaton Valley Council. Cllr Stanners said that Jimmy was a true gentleman and would be big loss to Seghill. At the end of his tribute Cllr Stanners asked all present to stand in silence for one minute in memory of Cllr. Clough.

The Chair then announced that the two Engagement and Development reports on the meeting's agenda would be moved forward to just after Public Question Time.

There were no further civic announcements.

### **CO004/19 4. Public Question Time**

A Holywell resident asked for confirmation on where a new cycle stand was going to be placed in Holywell – The Chair informed him that it would be placed between the Green Shelter at the entrance to Holywell Dene Road and the Milbourne Arms and that the location had been agreed with the Highways Authority.

There being no further questions Public Question Time closed at 7.05pm.

### **CO005/19 5. Youth Voices Animation Project.**

Emma Rudd, Natalie Richards and Josie Brooks of NCC's Youth Services Team were in attendance and introduced this item. They were accompanied by five young persons who had

taken part in the project.

Emma explained that as part of the ongoing work to establish a Youth Council in Seaton Valley, a Young Voices project had been set up to gather young people's views on the area where they live and go to school. The project started with a survey completed by students at Astley High School. The survey asked five basic question:

- Are there positive things you can see about your community and local area?
- What do you like about your area?
- What do you dislike about your area?
- Do you think a youth council would be useful to help you have your voice heard?
- If you had a budget of £5000 for Seaton Valley, what would you use it for to improve the area?

Following the survey a group of young people attended a workshop to decide how they would like to present the results of the survey to members of Seaton Valley Council. They decided that they would like to create an animation which they did with the help of Josie Brooks.

The two minute animation was then shown to Council members who responded with a round of applause at the end of the showing.

Members congratulated the students on their excellent work and said that the issues raised were very similar to those identified in the Council's Village Planning Process. With regard to a couple of the specific issues raised in the animation i.e. better schools and links to the Tyne and Wear Metro system, Cllr Dungworth said that she hoped that a replacement building for the Astley High and Whytrig Middle School Site would be built within the next few years, and was similarly hopeful that the Ashington Blyth Tyne line, giving Seaton Valley a link to the Metro via Northumberland Park, would be up and running within a similar timescale.

At the end of this item the representatives from NCC's Youth Services Team and the young people in attendance left the meeting.

**CO006/19**

## **6. Active Northumberland Activities**

The Chair introduced Kathy Keady and Jake Preece who had been invited to the meeting to provide an update on how Active Northumberland (AN) uses the Council's annual funding (£23,000) to support the provision of additional Leisure Activities for the residents of Seaton Valley.

They proceeded to give a summary of the activities provided.

AN provide five sessions of activities for thirty nine weeks, covering a range of different activities for young people and adults including;

- Tot Shots Advanced (Seghill)
- Tot Shots Beginners (New Hartley)
- Street Dance (Seaton Delaval)
- Adult Just Jhoom (Seaton Delaval)
- Adult Young at Heart (Seaton Sluice)
- Adult Dancercise (Seaton Sluice).

New activities are being considered for 2019 including Archery and Adult Table Tennis.

AN also facilitate a Holiday Activity Programme during all school holiday periods, other than Christmas. This consists of fifteen hours of activities per week over a total of eleven weeks. The activities are provided throughout Seaton Valley and are free for all to attend.

And finally the Council's funding is used to enable AN to provide activities at Seaton Valley's main village events with play archery and rowing machines being firm favourites.

Kathy and Jake said that they were very proud of the services provided by AN and thanked the Council for its continuing support, however, they were disappointed that user numbers appeared to have dropped off in 2018. Discussions are ongoing to identify the reasons behind this reduction in users and plans are already in place to increase marketing and promotion for 2019.

The Chair thanked Kathy and Jake for their attendance and said that he was very pleased with the level of service provided by AN especially in light of the recent management restructuring that has taken place within the organisation.

Mrs Keady and Mr Preece left the meeting at the end of this item

#### **CO007/19 7. County Councillor Update**

In Councillor Pidcock's absence Cllr Dungworth gave a brief update on current issues at NCC.

The 2019/20 Budget Process is coming to an end; with the Councils budget scheduled to be agreed when the County Council meets on 20 February 2019. Prior to this, NCC is holding a State of the Area Debate, however this clashes with one of NCC's Scrutiny Committee's and this, together with the starting time of the State of the Area Debate (11am) may make it difficult for some residents and Councillors to attend.

Cllr Dungworth praised the efforts of residents and local councils for objecting to the County Council's recent Car Park Charging proposals which has resulted in the proposals to introduce charges at Blyth, Cresswell and Seaton Sluice car parks, being withdrawn.

Cllr Dungworth then went on to welcome the recent announcement of £21M being set aside in NCC's 2020/21 Capital Programme to build a new school in Seaton Delaval. Cllr Dungworth expects discussions on the design of the new building to begin once the design of the new Hexham Schools have been finalised.

In concluding her update, Cllr Dungworth referred to recently agreed changes to NCC's 2019/20 Resurfacing Programme which appears to no longer include the resurfacing of Bradbury Court. Cllr Dungworth said she would be looking into the matter at her earliest opportunity.

Before moving on to the next item of the agenda Cllr Stanners referred to the distinct lack of NCC Local Area Council Meetings being held in Seaton Valley, with Bedlington appearing to be the most favoured venue. In this respect, he asked the Clerk to liaise with NCC Democratic Services Section to see if this anomaly can be rectified.

#### **CO008/19 8. Minutes of the Council's last Meeting**

The minutes of Seaton Valley Council's Meeting held on 28 November 2018 were agreed as being a correct record and were duly signed and dated by the Chair. In doing so the Chair referred to paragraphs 4,5 and 6 of item CO086/18 in those minutes and asked the Council to agree to purchase 100 Home Security Packs at a cost of £1,100 for distribution to vulnerable households in Seaton Valley. All present agreed with the Chair's proposal and it was therefore **RESOLVED TO: make a donation of £1,100 to Northumbria Police to allow it to purchase**

**100 Home Security Packs that will be installed in the homes of vulnerable Seaton Valley residents and to note that this funding will provided via the Council's Community Fund.**

**CO009/19 9. Minutes of Other Committee Meetings**

The minutes of the Planning Committee held on 11 January 2018 and the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 12 December 2018 were received for information.

In receiving the minutes of the Planning Committee, Cllr Burt referred to the need for anyone who has submitted comments on the Delaval Arms/Beresford Lodge Planning application to do so again via the Full application rather than the Listed Building Consent application.

Additionally, Cllr Dungworth said that the Council has been informed that the potential loss of another care home in Seaton Valley may now be taken into account as part of the case officer's assessment when considering this application.

**CO010/19 10. Services and Partnership Update**

In receiving the Services Officer's detailed report the Members made reference to the following:

- A new recycling bin has now been installed in the area of the Cat Park, Seaton Delaval. Its early days but the bin appears to be being used correctly; however a full review of its usage will be carried out in due course. If the trail is successful a further bin will be located in Seaton Sluice,
- Complaints about dog fouling have begun to increase again, probably due to the dark mornings and evenings. The Council's shared Enforcement Officer will target known hot spots, as will the Council's own Dog Fouling patrols,
- A self-closing gate is due to be installed (imminently) at Hartley Square Play Area and a review of the operation of the Memorial Park Self Closing gate is required,
- A new bus shelter is to be installed on Elsdon Avenue, at the junction of Cheswick Road. Discussions are taking place with Ward Councillors, our Bus Shelter supplier and NCC to agree the exact location of the New Hartley Bus Shelter (outside the shops), and a schedule of other potential locations for new shelters is to be drawn up,
- And a new schedule of Community Litter Picks has been agreed as detailed in the table below:

<b>Village</b>	<b>Date and Time</b>	<b>Meeting Place</b>
Seaton Delaval	23 February 9.30am	Lakes and Dales Double Row
New Hartley	16 March 9.30am	Community Centre
Seghill	27 April 9.30am	Deneside
Seaton Sluice	11 May 9.30am	Fountain Head Bank
Holywell	15 June 9.30am	Dale Top Notice Board

**CO011/19 11. Environmental Services Partnership Agreement**

The Chair introduced the Clerk's report which sought approval to renew the Councils Environmental Services Partnership Agreement with Northumberland County Council for a period of five years commencing on 1 April 2019.

The Chair highlighted the range of services provided under the agreement i.e. Grass Cutting, Weed Control, Hedge Cutting, Shrub Pruning, Path Edging, Street Cleansing including Litter Picking and basic Winter Maintenance tasks, and said that in his opinion the first five years of the Partnership had been a resounding success.

All members present agreed with this view and after a short debate Council **RESOLVED TO:**

- **Receive the report and agree to enter into a further 5 year Partnership Agreement with Northumberland County Council to provide enhanced environmental services in Seaton Valley,**
- **Note that the Council's first year contribution to the Partnership will be £186,000 and that this sum has been included in the Council's 2019/20 Annual Estimates, and**
- **Grant delegated authority to the Chair and Clerk to finalise the exact details of the Partnership Agreement and to sign it on behalf of the Council**

**CO012/19 12. Budgetary Control Update**

The Clerk presented his report which provided detailed and summary information on the Council's income and expenditure compared to budget as at 31 December 2018. In summary, the Clerk said that the Council's income and expenditure is more or less in line with budgets when known variations are taken into account and that he had nothing further to add that hadn't already been reported during the year.

The Clerk said that he was happy with the financial performance of the Council and that he anticipated that there would be a general underspend of circa. £20,000 at the end of the current financial year.

**CO013/19 13. Bank Reconciliation as at 31 December 2018**

Council agreed to receive the report, and noted that the Council's bank accounts had been successfully reconciled to its financial records.

**CO014/19 14. Budget Proposals 2019/20**

The Chair presented the Labour Group's 2019/20 Budget Proposals which had been circulated to all members as Appendices 10, 10A, and 10C.

In presenting the Labour Group's proposals he referred to the process that is gone through to arrive at the re priced base budget which becomes the starting point for the following year's budget discussions. He also referred to the process that is used to confirm the level of the Council's reserves and the reliance placed on the Clerk to recommend the minimum level of reserves the Council should hold.

Turning to the detail of his report the Chair said that he was very pleased to be able to propose a budget on behalf of the Labour Group that keeps Council Tax increases to a minimum and which continues to provide funding:

- to support the replacement of two bus shelters per annum (or new ones if replacements aren't required),
- to help contribute to the funding of new or replacement play areas,
- to support quarterly editions of its highly regarded Futures Magazine,
- to support community events in each of its 5 villages,
- to finance the acquisition of, installation and removal of Christmas lights and the holding of Christmas events in each of its villages, and
- to ensure the continuation of its successful Neighbourhood Partnership arrangements with Northumberland County Council providing enhanced environmental services to the community.



**EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**Resolved:** That under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting during consideration of items 15 on the Agenda as they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act relating to personal staff affairs and/or commercial matters.

**CO016/19 16. New Hartley Post Office**

The Clerk and Cllr Dungworth declared a personal interest in this item and left the meeting.

Discussions between the Post Office and New Hartley Community Services Ltd (NHCSL) are now nearing completion and all grants necessary to finance any alterations that will need to be carried out to the Post Office premises have now been secured.

The report considered by Council detailed the various negotiations that had taken place and confirmed that NHCSL intended to establish a café within the premises to run alongside the Post Office. The Post Office side of the operation is expected to make a small loss each year, however, NHCSL is very confident that the café will be able to generate sufficient surpluses to at the very least offset this loss.

Members welcomed the progress that has been made and were delighted that Post Office Services look likely to be secured in New Hartley. In agreeing the recommendation of the report Councillors were mindful that an element of risk is always attached to any new venture and as a consequence **RESOLVED TO: note the report and confirm its previous commitment to underwrite any potential losses NHCSL may make in the first two years of its operation, up to a maximum of £2,000 per annum.**

There being no other business on the Agenda, the meeting closed at 8.24pm

Signed by the Chair: .....

Dated: .....