

# Seaton Valley Council

A Community Council

**Minutes of a Meeting held on Wednesday 27 March 2019 at 7.00 pm. at the Council's Offices, Seaton Delaval.**

The meeting started at 7.04 p.m.

## **PRESENT:**

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

## **IN ATTENDANCE:**

S Potts – Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

Members of the public – 5

### **CO017/19 1. Apologies for absence**

Cllr Dungworth had submitted her apologies for being absent from the meeting.

### **CO018/19 2. Disclosure of interests**

There were no declarations of interest

### **CO019/19 3. Chair's Welcome and Civic Announcements**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and then had the sad task of reminding everyone about the untimely death of the County Councillor for Holywell Ward, Cllr Bernard Pidcock. Cllr Pidcock had been a Councillor for many years, firstly with the former Blyth Valley Borough Council, then with Seaton Valley itself and latterly with Northumberland County Council. In paying tribute to Bernard, the Chair said that he (Bernard) had always worked hard on behalf of Seaton Valley residents and would be sadly missed by everyone at the Council's and by many residents. At the end of his tribute the Chair asked everyone to stand in silence for one minute in memory of a friend and colleague.

### **CO020/19 4. Public Question Time**

There were no direct questions from residents although two members of the public congratulated the Council and the Services Officer in particular for arranging the clearance of some accumulated rubbish from the back street behind the Holywell Pizza Shop and for the general appearance of Seaton Valley's spring floral displays.

There being no further questions Public Question Time closed at 7.10pm.

### **CO021/19 5. County Councillor Update**

Given Cllr Dungworth's absence, nothing was reported under this agenda item; however the Chair took the opportunity to mention that the County Councillor for Seghill with Seaton Delaval Ward, Cllr Margaret Richards had been unwell for some time and along with everyone else present, wished her a speedy recovery.

### **CO022/19 6. Minutes of the Council's last Meeting**

The minutes of Seaton Valley Council's Meeting held on 30 January 2019 were agreed as being a correct record and were duly signed and dated by the Chair. Prior to agreeing the minutes the Clerk provided an update on progress towards the acquisition of the New Hartley Post Office Services Contract by New Hartley Community Services Ltd.

Progress is being made at a steady pace, so much so that a provisional completion date of 26 May has been set. Adverts have been placed for two new part time members of staff and agreement has been reached with a local resident for him to operate a café from the post office premises. Legal formalities are also now under way and New Hartley Community Services Ltd has now accepted Post Office Plc's offer for it to run post office services in New Hartley from a date to be agreed in the future. (Likely to be 26 May 2019).

#### **CO023/19 8. Services and Partnership Update**

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

- Allotment invoices have been sent out,
- Spring bedding is looking particularly good this year,
- The new equipment installed at the Junior Play Area in New Hartley is being very well used,
- A new bus shelter for New Hartley (outside the Post Office) has been ordered and a new shelter to be located at Tillmouth Avenue will be ordered as soon as tree works required at the site are completed (the bird nesting season may delay this work),
- The litter pick at New Hartley had to be cancelled due to the weather but will be rearranged in due course,
- Disappointment was expressed about Northumbria Health Watch's recent decision to withdraw the Action for Hearing Loss clinic which takes place on the first Tuesday of each month at the Council's offices. Members asked the Clerk to write to the appropriate body to express the Council's concern at the loss of this valued service.

#### **CO024/19 10. Community Fund Request**

The Keel Row Public House had submitted a request for a contribution of £500 towards its annual Community Summer Fayre, the proceeds from which are donated to local charities. In considering the request members were reminded that the Council had supported the event in 2018 with a similar sum and that the event is very well supported by Seaton Valley residents.

**RESOLVED: to approve a contribution of £500 towards the running of the Keel Row Community Summer Fayre to be met from the Council's Community Fund.**

#### **CO025/19 11. North East War Memorial Project**

The Clerk presented the Engagement and Development Officers report which informed Council about a funding request from the North East War Memorial Project (NEWMP) who are seeking funding to further develop and run their existing website. In considering the request Council noted the Engagement and Development Officers concern about the amount of funding being requested and the existence of an alternative organisation and website that provided a very similar service.

**RESOLVED: not to support NEWMP's request for funding**

#### **CO026/19 12. Sewer Gas Lamps**

Again the Clerk introduced the Engagement and Development Officers report which sought authorisation from the Council for him to do some preliminary work to look into the possibility of accessing some funding to restore the lamps to their original condition. The Council has five Sewer Gas Lamps, four of which are in Seaton Sluice and one in Seaton Delaval and all of which are Grade II listed structures.

The first step will be to seek planning permission for the restorations to take place and then to

seek funding from Heritage Lottery Fund to finance the restoration works (re painting and cleaning the glass lamp shades).

All members were happy to support the proposal and looked forward to seeing the lamps in their restored condition in the not too distant future.

**CO027/19 13. Annual Investment Strategy**

The Clerk presented his own report which set out a strategy for investing the Council's day to day cash balances. In essence the strategy recognised that as return levels are abnormally low all investments for the foreseeable future will be made over the very short term and that should a decision be made to invest for periods of over six months then a separate report will be submitted to Council prior to such an investment being authorised.

**RESOLVED: to approve the 2019/20 Investment Strategy attached to the Clerks report at Appendix 6A**

**CO028/19 14. Updated Asset Register**

The Clerk presented the Council's latest Asset Register which identified all assets in Council ownership. Members asked a number of questions about specific assets and then:

**RESOLVED TO: approve the makeup of the Council's Asset Register attached as Appendix 7A to the Clerk's report.**

**CO029/19 15. Updated Risk Register**

The Clerk presented his report which highlighted the main risks facing the Council analysed across a number of categories. The report assessed the likelihood and potential impact of such risks and described the control actions that are in place to mitigate the identified risks. After considering the risks identified Council:

**RESOLVED TO receive and approve the Risk Register attached as Appendix 8A to the Clerk's report and to encourage all members to take an active role in the Council's risk management processes.**

**CO030/19 16. Bank Reconciliation as at 28 February 2019**

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

**CO031/19 17. Budgetary Control Update – 2018/19 Projected Outturn**

In presenting his report the Clerk said that the projected underspend on this year's accounts was likely to be in line with previous estimates i.e. circa £25,000 after adjusting for and required budget carry forwards. The Clerk said that he was very happy with this level of variance on a gross budget of over £560,000.

His report identified the main reasons for the under spend, all of which had been previously drawn to Council's attention.

**RESOLVED: to note the budgetary control position presented in the Clerks' report.**

**CO032/19 18. Dates of Future Meetings**

<b>2019</b>	<b>Committee/Council</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Venue</b>
Wednesday 24 April	Full Council	7pm	St Mary's Church, Holywell
Wednesday 29 May	Annual Meeting and Annual Parish Meeting	6.30pm	New Hartley Memorial Hall
Wednesday 31 July	Full Council	7pm	Seghill Community Centre
Wednesday 25 September	Full Council	7pm	Seaton Sluice Community Centre

There being no other business on the Agenda, the meeting closed at 7.42pm

Signed by the Chair: .....

Dated: .....

DRAFT