

Seaton Valley Council

A Community Council

Minutes of a Full Council Meeting held on Wednesday 30 March 2022 in Seaton Delaval Council Offices at 7.00 pm.

The meeting started at 7.02 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors:	S Dungworth (Chair), G Eastwood (Vice Chair), E Coulson, L Bowman, A Stanners, S Bowman, E. Chicken, J Henderson and D Ferguson.
IN ATTENDANCE: S Potts – Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer D. Freeman – Engagement and Development Officer C. Dickinson – Temporary Admin Assistant and Receptionist One member of the public was present.	
CO015/22	1. Apologies for absence All present
CO016/22	2. Disclosure of interests There were no declarations of interest.
CO017/22	3. Chair's Welcome and Civic Announcements The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and in particular Cara Dickinson who had recently been appointed to the temporary position of Administration Assistant and Receptionist. The Chair then announced the result of the recent Seghill with Seaton Delaval County Council Bye Election and noted that Cllr Eve Chicken was now both the County and Community Council representative for that ward. And finally the Chair referred to the beginning of a County Council consultation exercise on both the design and location of a proposed new High and Middle School in Seaton Delaval – the Chair urged both Councillors and residents to submit any views they may have. There were no further civic announcements.
CO018/22	4. Public Question Time A resident from Holywell asked about the gulley cleansing schedule, particularly for the Holywell area, as some of the gulleys appeared to be full of leaves. The Chair asked the Clerk to raise the matter with NCC colleagues to see if a visit from the cleansing vehicle could be arranged in the near future. The same resident also asked about the Bates Welfare perimeter fence which had been damaged for some time – Cllr Bowman replied and said that NCC are aware of the damage and are hoping to have the fence repaired soon. An finally the resident asked about the consultation process on the new High/Middle School in Seaton Delaval – she was concerned that the initial events hadn't been widely publicised and had been difficult to access for some members of the community. The Chair replied that although the initial information sharing events had been targeted at

	<p>specific groups she was confident that the formal consultation process would be more wide ranging and give all sections of the community the opportunity to have their say.</p> <p>There were no further questions from members of the public.</p>
CO019/22	<p>5. County Councillors Update</p> <p>Cllr Bowman began by referring to the ongoing NCC Public Consultation on the proposed location and design of a new High/Middle School in Seaton Delaval. Four real options have initially been proposed. The first option is based on utilizing the existing site and the other three are based on locating the new school(s) land to the north of The Avenue and east of Manners Gardens. Each option has its pros and cons with the main issues being the location of car parks, drop off points and highways safety implications. Cllr Bowman urged residents to get involved so that the best option can be chosen but emphasised that state of the art buildings and community sports facilities would be delivered irrespective of which option is actually chosen. In terms of timescale Cllr Bowman said that he expected to see the new £40.2M school to be in operation within three to four years.</p> <p>Cllr Bowman then referred to the recent completion of highway improvement works at the Avenue Head roundabout – whilst the works had caused a little disruption for residents he welcomed the completion of the works and complimented the Highways Services Team on a job well done.</p> <p>Cllr Ferguson reported that funding has been provided in NCC's 2022/23 capital programme to refurbish the Fountain Head Bank Toilets and that NCC had now formally adopted (and had it approved) its Local Plan. He also referred to the NCC 2022/23 Revenue Budget and said that front line services had been protected and as a result had not seen any cuts to budgets. In answer to a question about whether or not the Youth Services budget had been cut, Cllr Ferguson reiterated that no front line services had been cut.</p> <p>Finally Cllr Ferguson referred to the recent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure consultation document issued by the County Council – Seaton Valley has now been specifically added to the main areas covered by the consultation (previously just the 12 main towns in Northumberland) and he urged residents to have their say on improving both cycle ways and footpaths in the Valley so as to ensure that they provide links with the new train station in Seaton Delaval.</p>
CO020/22	<p>6. Minutes of the Council's last Meeting</p> <p>The minutes of the Council's meeting held on 19 January 2022 were agreed and accepted as a true record of that meeting.</p> <p>Cllr Dungworth referred to item 10 of the those minutes and said that following discussions with representatives of the Kennedy family it had been agreed to hold a fundraising event in memory of Ray, at The Terrace Club, Seaton Delaval on Friday 25 June – all proceeds to be donated to Parkinsons UK. The Chair also said that the Seaton Valley Federation of School Governors is supporting a proposal to name the community sports facilities at the new high/middle school in Seaton Delaval after Mr Kennedy and asked the council to write to NCC in support of this proposal too – all members supported this suggestion.</p>
CO021/22	<p>7. Motion</p> <p>Cllr Ferguson read out the following motion that he had proposed and which Cllr Henderson seconded:</p> <p><i>Council should agree to add a standing agenda item to council meetings to allow</i></p>

	<p><i>members to submit questions to the chair of the council or chair of a sub committee. Any questions submitted by a member should be answered at the meeting, however if an answer is unable to be given at the meeting a full written answer should be provided as soon as practicable after the meeting.</i></p> <p><i>Questions must be submitted in writing to the clerk a minimum of 10 working days before the meeting. Only questions pertaining to the business of the council or sub committee will be accepted and a maximum of two question per member per meeting can be asked.</i></p> <p>In making his proposal Cllr Ferguson said that he felt that such a procedure was necessary to ensure proper accountability as the make-up of the council is now more politically diverse than it has been in the past.</p> <p>Cllr Eastwood opposed the motion and argued that section 8 of the council's current Standing Orders provide ample opportunity for Councillors to ask questions of Councillors at meetings. In reply Cllr Ferguson said that it thought it was important for the matter to be a standing item on the agenda, not something that specifically needs to be raised in advance of individual meetings.</p> <p>Cllr Dungworth acknowledged that the County Council does have such a procedure but supported Cllr Eastwood's argument and agreed that section 8 of the Standing Orders provides ample opportunity for Councillors to raise questions and went onto say that she didn't think a standing item was required in such a small council.</p> <p>After further debate Cllr Ferguson's proposal was put to the vote and was defeated by five votes to four.</p>
<p>CO022/22</p>	<p>8. Services and Partnership Update</p> <p>In reviewing the Service Officer's report the Chair highlighted the following matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning permission has been granted for the new pocket park at Northside Place and an order for the works will be placed once a small land sinkage issue in the area is resolved , • We still await a delivery and installation date for the replacement fence at The Dunes play area in Seaton Sluice, • NCC has raised concerns about the placement of a new bus shelter on Elsdon Avenue in Holywell, and • Given the recent creation of a number of litter picking groups in the Valley and the poor turnout at the council's own community litter picks, it was agreed to put further community litter picks on hold for the time being.
<p>CO023/22</p>	<p>9. Village Plan Review</p> <p>The Engagement and Development Officer's report outlined details of the tender process that was followed to commission the above work culminating with the company who developed the initial Village Plans, 'Your Back Yard', being reappointed to carry out the review.</p> <p>Your Back Yard has been asked to specifically seek the views of young people to feed into the review process and it is hoped that the review will be completed by the end of July.</p> <p>All members will be contacted as part of the review.</p>

<p>CO024/22</p>	<p>10. Request for Funding The Engagement and Development Officers outlined details of a funding application from a year 11 student at Whitley Bay High school. The student lives in New Hartley.</p> <p>The student is taking part in a volunteer trip to Mexico and will be undertaking a range of activities including helping to build durable housing, cleaning water supplies and visiting orphanages.</p> <p>All Councillors thought the student’s trip would make a difference to the lives of some of the poorer residents of Mexico and agreed to award a grant of £500 towards the total cost (£2,500) of the student’s trip.</p> <p>The council RESOLVED TO: award a grant of £500 to the applicant and agreed to fund the grant from its Community Fund budget.</p>
<p>CO025/22</p>	<p>11. Request for Support Council had received a written request for support from the Northumberland Citizens Advice Bureau (a copy of the Bureau’s letter was attached to the Engagement and Development Officer’s report as Appendix 5A). The Bureau has seen increased demand during the Covid/ post pandemic period and at the same time is experienced reduced support from its funders.</p> <p>After discussing the request and praising the Bureau’s work over the last 24 months COUNCIL RESOLVED TO: make a donation of £1,000 to Northumberland Citizens Advice Bureau.</p>
<p>CO026/22</p>	<p>12. School Holiday Sports Camp The Engagement and Development Officers report outlined the schedule of holiday sports camp events hosted on the councils behalf the NCC Sports Development Team and asked the council to consider whether an event should be held within the grounds of Seaton Delaval Hall on one of the five week days in each school holiday break.</p> <p>Whilst all Councillors appreciated the offer being made by Delaval Hall, which included free access for attendee’s families, a number of Councillors were concerned about some children being displaced from attending an activity that would normally take place on their doorstep.</p> <p>After a short discussion it was agreed to hold further discussions with the NCC Sports Development Team and Delaval Hall to see if it would possible to hold additional events at Delaval Hall rather than displacing scheduled events – members recognised that this would incur additional costs and asked officers to look at the possibility of providing transport from a central point within a village to Seaton Delaval hall too.</p>
<p>CO027/22</p>	<p>13. Review of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations The Clerk presented his report which sort re-approval of the Council’s Standing Orders and Financial Regulations which were attached to his report. The Clerk said that he was happy that the two documents remain fit for purpose other than some minor updates in section 1 of the Standing Orders(see bold type in Clerk’s report) and after a short discussion Council RESOLVED TO approve the versions of the Council’s Standing Orders and Financial Regulations attached as appendices 7A and 7B to the Clerks report for a further period of two years.</p>

CO028/22	<p>14. Councillor Code of Conduct</p> <p>The Clerks report asked Councillors to approve and adopt an updated version of the LGA's Model Councillor Code of Conduct and to formally adopt previous guidance issued on the Use of Social Media by Councillors. This guidance mirrored that issued and used by Northumberland County Council.</p> <p>All members agreed that the new code, although similar in many respects, is more useful as it contains significantly more advice and guidance on a number of topics than the last one and after a short discussion council RESOLVED TO: approve and adopt the use of the LGA's Model Councillor Code of Conduct and to formally adopt guidance issued by NCC on The use of Social Media by Councillors. The documents were appended to the Clerk's report as appendices 8A and 8B respectively.</p>
CO029/22	<p>15. Annual Investment Strategy</p> <p>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.</p> <p>RESOLVED: to approve the 2022/23 Investment Strategy attached to the Clerks report at Appendix 9A</p>
CO030/22	<p>16. Updated Asset Register</p> <p>The Clerk presented the Councils' latest Asset Register which identified all assets in Council ownership. Members asked a number of questions about specific assets and then:</p> <p>RESOLVED TO: approve the makeup of the Council's Asset Register attached as Appendix 10A to the Clerk's report</p>
CO031/22	<p>17. Updated Risk Register</p> <p>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.</p> <p>After considering and discussing some of the risks identified Council:</p> <p>RESOLVED TO receive and approve the Risk Register attached as Appendix 11A to the Clerk's report and to encourage all members to take an active role in the Council's risk management processes.</p>
CO032/22	<p>18. Budgetary Control Update</p> <p>In presenting his report the Clerk said that the projected underspend on this year's accounts was likely to be a little higher than previously estimated due to a refund on its Neighbourhood Partnership Contract offset by costs incurred on the May elections. The net underspend after allowing for carry forward and contributions to earmarked reserves is now likely to be in the region of £32,000 (previously £20,000). The Clerk said that he was very happy with this level of variance on a gross budget of over £600,000.</p>

	<p>His report identified the main reasons for the under spend, all of which had been previously drawn to Council's attention.</p> <p>RESOLVED: to note the budgetary control position presented in the Clerks' report.</p>																
CO033/22	<p>19. Bank Reconciliation as at 11 March 2021 Council agreed to receive the report, and noted that the Council's bank accounts had been successfully reconciled to its financial records.</p>																
CO034/22	<p>20. Resignation of Internal Auditor The Clerk's report informed the council that its internal auditor had had to resign his position for personal reasons. The report went on to seek authority to appoint a new internal auditor, Mr Tony Siney who has the relevant qualifications and experience in local government finance, to allow him to carry out the role of internal auditor.</p> <p>Council RESOLVED TO: appoint Mr Tony Siney to carry out the council's internal audit function and to pass on its thanks to Mr John Ainsworth who has carried out the role for three years.</p>																
CO035/22	<p>18. Dates of Future Scheduled Meetings</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>2020</th> <th>Committee/Council</th> <th>Time</th> <th>Venue</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Wednesday 27 April</td> <td>Full Council</td> <td>7.00pm</td> <td>Council Offices, Seaton Delaval</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wednesday 25 May</td> <td>Annual Meeting and Annual Parish Meeting</td> <td>6.30pm</td> <td>New Hartley Memorial Hall</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wednesday 27 July</td> <td>Full Council</td> <td>7.00pm</td> <td>Seghill Institute Memorial Hall</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	2020	Committee/Council	Time	Venue	Wednesday 27 April	Full Council	7.00pm	Council Offices, Seaton Delaval	Wednesday 25 May	Annual Meeting and Annual Parish Meeting	6.30pm	New Hartley Memorial Hall	Wednesday 27 July	Full Council	7.00pm	Seghill Institute Memorial Hall
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There being no other business on the Agenda the meeting closed at 8.15pm

Signed by the Chair: _____

Dated: _____