

**Billingham Town Council
Minutes of Town Council Meeting**

**Tuesday 17th February 2009
6.30 pm,
Council Chamber, Billingham**

- Present:** **Councillor Mike Smith (Chairman)**
Councillors; Helen Atkinson, Jane Dobson, Alan Gallimore, Ray McCall, Ann McCoy, Olive Milner, Eleanor Mockler, Colin Pollard, Sue Skilbeck, Paul Smith, Mick Stoker
- Apologies:** Apologies were received from, Councillors; Jean O'Donnell & Sharon Scott
- Official:** Dianne Rickaby – Town Clerk
- In Attendance:** Vicky Lloyd (note taker)
Kevin Bowler North Billingham Residents Association

272/09 NOTICE OF MEETING

The notice convening the meeting was taken as read.

273/09 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies of absence were submitted from Councillors: Jean O'Donnell & Sharon Scott.

274/09 CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair asked if there were any declarations of interests.

No declarations were made.

275/09

GRAHAM CLINIGAN – COUNTRYSIDE AND GREENSPACE

Graham was in attendance at the meeting to consult with members regarding the development of Stockton Borough Council Green Infrastructure.

Graham gave members an overview of SBC Green Infrastructure. Stockton Borough Council are currently looking at ways to improve local parks, play areas, allotments, greenspaces, trees and woodlands, wildlife and conservation areas, cycle ways and walkways within the Borough. Graham stated that this is not just a Greenspace Strategy but how we plan and manage these areas and links as networks i.e. not just a recreational experience but exercise opportunity and how people walk or bicycle to these areas. A Green Infrastructure Strategy had been produced for the Tees Valley in 2008 which identified eleven broad infrastructures across the Tees Valley. The new strategy for SBC is to look at allotments, sports fields and local parks across the Borough. A number of strategic corridors have been identified i.e. Castle Eden Walk Way and Billingham Beck. This has resulted in a number of broad areas and local issues been identified with a number of priorities within the surrounding urban areas of Billingham, Seal Sands and Wynyard. SBC are to draw up an action plan which takes into account the views of the public.

A number of local drop-in sessions have been organised across the Borough. This is an opportunity for members of the public to hear SBC plans for the future and to put forward their own suggestions on what improvements or changes they would like to see taking place. Graham stated that it has not been practical to set up drop-in sessions in all 45 ward areas and therefore a range of venues have been identified. However SBC are more than happy to come along to Town Council meetings or public sessions to give further information on the Green Infrastructure.

After the presentation a questions and answers forum was opened to members.

Councillor Mockler stated that this issue had been ongoing for a number of years and does not have seemed to move forward. Graham stated that ideas have to change over the years with new planning systems.

Councillor Atkinson stated that Doctors at the new Health Centre are keen to have cycle routes into John Whitehead Park. Councillor Skilbeck agreed with this point about linking cycle routes within the area. Kevin Bowler asked if the scheme will include Charlton's Pond which the Billingham Environmental Group has been looking at. Councillor McCoy stated that this needs to be linked to the project.

The Clerk advised that she had been working alongside Billingham Partnership on this environmental project and Osborne Park. Graham stated that his team had undertaken a walkabout Charlton's Pond.

Councillor Paul Smith stated that at Billingham Nature Park the pathway near the allotments is down beaten. Did Stockton Borough Council have any thoughts for developing the pathway? Graham stated that it was difficult to include all areas within the scheme. Graham advised that he is currently drafting a strategy which will be publicised before the local consultations are finished and will be a separate document from the action plan which will pick up projects.

Councillor Stoker mentioned that the Old Garage sites within Billingham would be an ideal site for allotments or a communal garden would these sites be considered within the scheme? Graham stated that unfortunately every garage site within the Borough could not be included. Kevin Bowler mentioned improvements at Cowridge Beck which had been initiated by the North Billingham Residents Association. The Chair stated that this is an example of how resident associations tie in with the Council.

Councillor Atkinson stated that this was once a nice walk. Councillor McCoy stated that it is important that the Green Infrastructure Strategy links into the Obesity Strategy and individuals can hire or borrow bikes to cycle within the area. Graham stated that it is a community action document and not just about the Council. He stated that farmers can obtain grants and it would be useful to include within the Strategy case studies of examples of partnership working from community organisations and partnerships. The Strategy would include sustainable links to health & wellbeing and travel and transport. Councillor Pollard mentioned an issue with signage of dedicated cycle routes. Signs had been put up stating a cycle route when in fact it wasn't. Graham advised that Jonathan Kibble was the best person to speak too however resources are limited. Graham appreciated that the network was fragmented but within new housing estates such as Ingleby Barwick cycle route signs had been put up as the estate was being developed. The cycle routes within Billingham are linked to the regeneration project. Councillor Stoker stated that he had attended a meeting this morning. At the meeting a Cassy Strategy was mentioned which included monies for walking routes for older people. Councillor McCoy stated that the Obesity Strategy already includes mile walks and guided walks within the Borough.

The Chair thanked Graham for his attendance and informative presentation as the scheme is in the early stages of development. The next step for the Town Council would be to publicise the dates of the drop-in session.

The Chair stated that the Town Council are currently looking at a number of projects. Members would be given the opportunity to put forward any suggestions at a later meeting. Concern was raised in respect of Rievaulx Avenue and parking due to the football. Also the cycle route at Billingham bottoms.

276/09 MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 20th JANUARY 2009

Consideration was given to the minutes of the Town Council meeting on the 20th January 2009.

It was resolved:

The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

277/09 MATTERS ARISING – (discussion only) From the minutes of the Town Council meeting on 20th January 2009.

Minutes DC34/09 Billingham Train Station

Councillor McCoy asked if the Town Council had been consulted in respect of the Train Station. The Chair stated that he had spoken to Louise McDonald, Regeneration Project Manager at SBC that the Town Council must be involved as they initially raised the issue. The Clerk advised that she had raised an e-mail to Mike Robinson, Head of Technical Services to attend the next Town Council meeting. Councillor McCoy stated that the Town Council should not be excluded. The Chair stated that Louise Mc Donald had contacted him and asked for a closed meeting. He had informed Louise that the Town Council had initiated the project and should continue with it. Councillor Pollard asked if it was a closed meeting were there sensitive issues? The Chair stated that it had been a bit vague and he had not been forwarded an agenda for the meeting.

278/09 MINUTES OF THE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 3rd FEBRUARY 2009.

The meeting of the Development Committee due to be held on 3rd February 2009 was cancelled due to the number of apologies received.

279/09 MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE HELD ON 10th FEBRUARY 2009

Consideration was given to the recommendations from the minutes of the Environmental Committee on 10th February 2009.

It was resolved:

The minutes were accepted as a true record of proceedings and the recommendations made by the Committee are to be accepted.

280/09 MATTERS ARISING – From the minutes of the Environment Committee on the 10th February 2009.

**EC29/09 – CLERKS UPDATE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS
Entrance signs to Billingham**

Councillor Pollard expressed concerns in respect of the proposed entrance signage between Cowpen Bewley village and Stockton Borough Council Depot on left hand side. This suggests that Cowpen Bewley is not part of Billingham. Councillor Pollard asked where the signage for Port Clarence would be suited as the notes state that the exact location is to be confirmed. He asked if this would be near the Transporter Bridge? The Clerk advised that the sign in place says “welcome to the Clarences” and there is not enough room to place another sign. Councillor Pollard stated that we need to be careful as it could be construed that Clarences and Cowpen Bewley are not part of Billingham. Councillor Skilbeck stated that the committee had discussed this and do not foresee a problem as the signs do not have to be on the outer perimeter. Councillor McCall stated that there is a sense of identity at the Clarences & Cowpen Bewley and the committee are aware a degree of tact is needed.

It was resolved:

A vote was taken and the proposed eight entrance signs into Billingham agreed by members.

281/09 MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 12th FEBRUARY 2009.

The meeting of the Finance Committee due to be held on the 12th February 2009 was cancelled due to adverse weather conditions.

282/09 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the Finance Committee.

283/09 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No public were present at the meeting.

Kevin Bowler stated that a number of projects are currently being undertaken by different organisations which need to be linked together. The Clerk advised that she meets on a regular basis with Kevin from the Partnership to ensure that work is not duplicated and compliments each other.

At this point Councillor McCall declared an interest as he is an active member of organisations within the Clarences.

284/09 CLERKS REPORT

The Clerk advised that she had been consulting with potential lead providers for the Communities Fund Bid. As a part of the consultations she had identified that the Town Council would have a fundamental role in the effective delivery of the worklessness project. The Town Council would play an instrumental part in the engagement with residents and developing individual's action plans, and then be sign posted to the lead providers/partners.

To assist the Town Council in this role the Clerk advised that she had intended and discussed with all three of the interested leads the possibility of a Development Workers post to be funded by the bid. This post would compliment the work of Billingham Partnerships Engagement Officer who will also be working outreach within Billingham but the post would be a Town Council member of staff.

The Clerk advised that the three organisations she had liaised with who are bidding for Billingham area are Newtown/Norton Resource Centre, Stockton Borough Council Training & Resources and Riverside College. All three have agreed to include our proposal into their bids. The Town Council have agreed to support Newtown should they win the bid for Billingham. However the Clerk proposes to the Council tonight that we also support the other two organisations who have also a foot print within Billingham (SBC & Riverside College) should any of them win the project, bearing in mind that ultimately all organisations would potentially have to work together.

The Clerk stated that this is a fantastic opportunity for the Town Council to have a fundamental part in the well being of our community. We can be instrumental in ensuring the project is delivered effectively. The Clerk advised that she sees this as an excellent project to raise awareness of our presence in Billingham and heighten our profile.

Councillor Mockler expressed concerns in respect of the Town Council employing another member of staff when two members of staff are already employed.

Councillor McCoy stated that we must ensure that the Development Officer is employed on our Terms & Conditions. As we are growing as a Council she stated that it may be advisable to join the Association of Employers which costs approximately £200 per year.

Councillor Dobson asked when a decision would be made in respect of the award of the Communities Fund. The Clerk advised that bids needed to be complete by Monday 9th February 2009. The Clerk advised that the post should commence in April 2009.

The Chair advised that the organisations cannot deliver the project without the Town Council.

The Clerk advised that we are rapidly running out of office space. In conjunction with the Chair she has negotiated an extra room in the Old Billingham Business Centre at a reduced monthly rent. The room is based in the ground floor which enables us to conform to Disability Discrimination Act regulations. It has a store room and is big enough to have a conference table to hold meetings in.

Kevin Bowler stated that in respect of the Communities Fund he had been advised that there will not be one single winner. Potentially it could be a maximum of five or a minimum of three. The Clerk advised that there would be one lead for Billingham Partnership.

It was resolved:

A vote was taken to the Clerks proposal to support the other two organisations who have a footprint within Billingham (SBC & Riverside College should any of them win the project in respect of the Communities fund. An objection was received by Councillor Mockler who expressed concerns in respect of paying another salary from the precept budget. The Chair advised that the Development Workers salary would not be funded from the precept but part funded from the Communities Fund Project.

Members agreed to support SBC Training & Resources & Riverside College should any of them win the project.

285/09 FINANCE

The members considered the monthly Schedule of Accounts previously circulated.

It was resolved:

The monthly accounts are accepted for payment.

286/09 REGNERATION MATTERS

Councillor Stoker advised that Osborne Park a new housing development being built at Greenwood Road is a viable piece of land. However he has been advised at a meeting that £90, 000 was transferred for the up keep and maintenance of the ground. The Clerk advised that she is not sure of the sum of £90,000 but the Town Council has a strong interest in the land possibly being handed over to the Town Council. Councillor McCoy asked if as a Town Council a decision had been made to purchase the land. The Chair stated that we need to know what is happening to the land and once this has been clarified it will be discussed at a future meeting. Councillor Stoker advised of a legal document agreements 106 which would have to be changed by both parties.

It was resolved:

The Clerk will chase this issue up and clarify the ownership of the land.

The Clerk displayed a draft of the master plan for John Whitehead Park however it should be noted that this is not the final plan. Kevin Bowler stated that he noted some things on the plan which had been previously discussed with the supporters group and disregarded two years ago by the group. This was in respect of the citing of the muga and taking the noise away from the residents. Councillor Dobson asked how the information is channelled back to the residents? The Clerk advised that she will speak to the supporting members of John Whitehead Park. Kevin advised that he is no longer a member of the group.

At this point Councillor Milner declared an interest as she is an active member of organisations within John Whitehead Park.

Kevin raised the issue of the skateboard park missing from the plans. Councillor Mockler advised that when the Council visited schools within the area only one school expressed an interest in a skate board park.

The Chair advised that members can review the plan tonight and forwarded any thoughts or suggestions to the Clerk.

It was resolved:

Members to forward any comments on the plans to the Clerk.

The Clerk advised that following a query from a member of the public in respect of the kiosk within the Town Centre being used by organisations to raise funds. We had been advised by Ian Hirst from Finford Management that the kiosk has now been let as a café/s'wich bar which is due to open shortly. The Clerk stated that it would be good practice for Ian to keep the Town Council and residents up to date.

Councillor McCoy stated that she had been advised that the kiosk would remain for charities.

287/09

PLANNING

The planning application report (previously circulated) was reviewed/discussed by members.

Councillor Atkinson raised concerns in respect of a planning application for 1 Elton Road, Billingham. The proposal was for the conversion of a garage into a habitable room. Councillor Atkinson expressed concerns in respect of parking.

It was resolved:

The Clerk advised that the planning application file had been checked and this application was on the planning application register week ending 10 October 2008.

The Clerk advised that the submitted objections to the previous application from Ashdale Barn had been taken on board and a visit to the area is planned.

288/09

CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk advised that a questionnaire on a Scrutiny review of neighbourhood policing/neighbourhood watch CCTV had been forwarded to members on 29 January 2009 for comments. Any comments should be forwarded to the Clerk to collate a response.

Information received from Sarah Edwards, Environmental Development Officer at SBC was circulated to members. This was a questionnaire on Landscape Character Assessment for Stockton Borough.

The Clerk advised members to forward any comments to her so that a response could be forwarded to Sarah by the end of February 2009.

Dates of the Countryside & Greenspace drop-in sessions were circulated to members.

The Clerk advised that we had received five queries from members of the public on the Town Council Website.

289/09 OTHER BUSINESS

No further business was discussed.

290/09 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is **17th March 2009 at 6.30 p.m.**

There being no further business the meeting was closed.

Signed.....
Chairman to Billingham Town Council