

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SEATON WITH SLINGLEY PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 16 FEBRUARY 2022**

Present: Councillor A Slater (Chair)
Councillors A Blacklock, S Faulkner, G Fuller,
S McAuliffe, H Middlemiss, A Taylor, D Temple,
J Theobald, A Vila, S Williams

Also Present: County Councillor D McKenna

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor K Batey.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Please refer to minute 7(1)

4 POLICE

The Police reported that since the last meeting there had been a theft of a vehicle.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

5 The minutes of the last meeting held on 19 January 2022 a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were approved and signed by the Chair.

6 CORRESPONDENCE

(1) Royal Garden Party 2022

The Clerk reported that Councillor Middlemiss and his wife were nominated to attend the 2020 Royal Garden Party which was subsequently postponed due to Covid.

The County Durham Association of Local Councils had advised that Councillor Middlemiss and his wife would be attending the Royal Garden Party on 11 May 2022.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(2) Complaint - Former Garden Centre Site

The Clerk reported the receipt of a complaint that rubbish was being burnt daily at the housing development on the former garden centre site. The complaint was referred to Durham County Council's planning section who carried out a site visit and opened a complaint. The site manager and the agents of the plots identified as burning on site were contacted and advised to cease all burning on site.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(3) National Grid - Scotland to England Green Link Project

The Clerk had previously reported of the National Grid's proposal for a Scotland to England Green Link (SEGL1), which was a High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) Link, an 'electricity superhighway', required to

transport clean green energy produced in Scotland to England. The proposed link would run under the sea for most of its length, between the Torness area in East Lothian and Hawthorn Pit. A second HVDC Link was proposed between Peterhead and Drax. Both projects were at the planning stage, and a planning application for SEGL1 would be submitted in Spring 2022.

Members were advised that a series of online events and a digital public information exhibition were planned to provide residents with an update on the project. The Parish Council had also been offered a briefing via video call.

Concern was expressed that some residents may not have access to the internet and would be unable to access the digital information exhibition or online events. The Chair had been approached by residents to ask if there would be an opportunity to attend a physical meeting. It was suggested that as the project involved work in the parish the Parish Council request a physical meeting to allow residents the opportunity to attend in person and discuss the proposals.

RESOLVED that a physical meeting be requested to allow residents the opportunity to attend and discuss the proposals.

(4) Police and Crime Plan – 2021/2024

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence from the Police and Crime Commissioner which gave details of the 2021/24 Police and Crime Plan, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

7 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

(1) DM/22/00039/FPA – 106 new homes including affordable homes and associated access, landscaping, and infrastructure at land to the east of The Meadows, Seaton for Avant Homes Northeast and Mr Gregson

The Chair welcomed two residents who were present at the meeting to discuss the planning application. They advised that they were representing the views of residents who had formed a group to object to the application. The residents spoke at length on the application and outlined the grounds on which they felt the application should be refused which included access, highways and road safety issues, sinkhole related problems, wildlife, overdevelopment, infrastructure, public transport and flooding.

The Chair thanked the residents for their attendance and advised that the Parish Council understood the depth of feeling from residents and that they were united in their opposition to this development. The Chair advised that the Parish Council would be submitting a letter of objection to the application following which the residents left the meeting.

Members discussed the application at length and raised the following concerns:

- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment - The site was referred to in Durham County Councils Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) as 100% greenfield. Its suitability for development under the SHLAA's traffic light suitability was amber. It stated that the development of the land would have a significant and unacceptable landscape impact. It also stated that the site was within the 6km buffer zone of a 'Special Conservation Area' and/or a 'Special Protection Area', a designation aimed at protecting rare and endangered birds and habitats.
- Access via The Meadows - There was only one point of ingress and egress to the proposed development which was via The Meadows. The single access road was narrow and inadequate to accommodate the increase in vehicles that would be generated by 106 additional properties.

There was concern that traffic would be backed up through The Meadows and unable to exit onto the B1404 during busy periods, especially if turning right. The increase in traffic and the impact on

the B1404 would be considerable.

- **Highways Issues** - The increase in traffic from the new development had been underestimated and would impact the already busy B1404. Access onto the B1404 from The Meadows, Hillrise Crescent and Seaton Lane was already difficult. The near misses and minor unreported accidents would increase, result in accidents, and seriously compromise highway safety. The Parish Council had previously made representations to the Police and Durham County Council regarding road safety on the B1404. There were no pedestrian refuge crossings or protected cycleways.

During busy periods traffic was regularly backed up Seaton Lane from the traffic lights at the Lodge junction. This had been a cause of concern for years and had resulted in Highways England re-developing the junction connecting the A19 southbound slip road directly to the A1018 for Sunderland bound traffic. The aim was to ease the traffic on Seaton Lane. The addition of 106 new properties with a possible two hundred vehicles would negate any benefit the junction upgrade would have given and increase the level of traffic.

The proposed new roundabout at the entrance to The Meadows would do nothing to improve road safety and could make matters worse due to the visibility from the junction onto Seaton Lane being compromised by a bend in the road.

- **Sink Hole** - There was a history of problems related to a sink hole on the B1404 at Seaton Lane. The most recent repair was undertaken in 2020 when the road was closed for weeks. Further movement at the sink hole was reported in September 2021 and Durham County Council were monitoring the road. The additional traffic generated by a new development would increase the possibility of further problems at the sink hole.
- **Wildlife and Ecology** - The proposed development was a significant threat to vulnerable wildlife in the area. Birds, bats, barn owls, small mammals, and larger mammals such as foxes and deer were gradually being "squeezed out" of the area.
- **Over Development** - Seaton Village was a small rural village. The initial consultation was for a development of 78 properties. The application was for 106 properties which was over development of the site and would have an adverse impact on the village.
- **Infrastructure** - There had been a lot of development in Seaham over recent years and the existing infrastructure had been unable to keep up with the number of new homes. An additional 106 properties would place unsustainable pressure on local nurseries, as well as primary and secondary schools. Doctors' surgeries were unable to cope with the existing population. Dentists were full and unable to take on any new NHS patients.
- **Public Transport** - The application failed to address the inadequate public transport links in the village and the lack of any protected cycleways. Seaton had one bus service, which travelled from Seaham to Chester Le Street. There was no bus service north or south. The closest rail station in Seaham was unreliable and at peak times was unable to meet demand.
- **Flooding and Drainage** - The current sewerage system in Seaton Village was inadequate and at times unable to cope with the existing number of properties. It would not cope with an additional 106 properties.

Members unanimously agreed that the Parish Council object to the application and request the planning authority to refuse the application on the grounds that the development was completely inappropriate for Seaton Village.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council object to the application on the grounds outlined and Durham County Council be asked to refuse planning permission.

- (2) DM/22/00193/FPA – Erection of single storey side extension, alterations to existing fenestration, and installation of new windows to facilitate conversion of garage at 12 Blaykeston Close,

Seaham for Mr Thubron

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

8 CLERKS REPORT

(1) Feeder Pillar

The Clerk reported that the Feeder pillar had been de-energised. Due to the problems associated with the de-energising of the feeder pillar e-on had credited the Parish Council with a £40 credit.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(2) Walkway

The Clerk reported that a meeting was held on 25 January with the Public Rights of Way (PROW) officer to discuss the installation of a barrier to prevent access to the Meadows. Whilst on site it was noted that a fence had been erected at the bottom of the steps leading into the Meadows and wooden stakes had been installed down the side of the steps to restrict access.

The PROW officer had advised that when the maintenance budget was renewed in April, a referral would be made for 1 or 2 boulders to be installed at the side of the steps. In addition, the steps would be re-filled, and a wooden stake installed where the stile used to be.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(3) Hillrise Crescent

The Clerk reported that following the last meeting Durham County Council were asked to provide a quotation for the work required on the track that crossed the village green to the rear of Hillrise Crescent.

Members were advised that County Councillors Batey and McKenna had both agreed to a financial donation of £1,000 from each of their Neighbourhood Budgets.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(4) Dog Fouling

The Clerk reported that following the last meeting Durham County Council were asked to undertake a clean-up of the grassed area at Hall Close and erect additional signage in the village. A letter was also forwarded to the Seaton Lane Inn asking them to remind guests not to allow their dogs to foul the grassed area at Hall Close.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(5) Green Waste Bin

The Clerk reported that last year Councillor Taylor, on behalf of the Parish Council, signed up for an additional green waste bin which would be located at the Community Centre. The bin was for use by residents who assisted with grass cutting in the village during the growing season. The cost for 17 collections was £35.

RESOLVED that Councillor Taylor be authorised to register an additional green waste bin at a cost of £35 which would be reimbursed by the Parish Council.

(6) Fence at the entrance to the Walkway

The Clerk reported that the fence at the entrance to the walkway had come down and had been reported

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to Durham County Council to inspect and repair.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(7) Damaged Bridge – Burdon Woods

The Clerk reported that a wooden bridge that crossed Sharpley Burn in Burdon Woods had been damaged and the handrail was missing.

Members were advised that the bridge was reported to Durham County Council who had advised that it was the responsibility of Sunderland Borough Council. The damaged bridge had been reported to Sunderland Borough Council.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

9 MEMBER ISSUES

(1) Welcome to Seaton Village Sign

Members suggested that a “Welcome to Seaton Village“ sign be erected at the entrance to Seaton Village.

RESOLVED that a request for a “Welcome to Seaton Village“ sign be referred to Durham County Council.

10 PAYMENTS

RESOLVED that the following schedule of payments be approved.

CHQ NO	PAYMENT TO	DETAIL	COST	VAT	TOTAL
100679	HMRC	PAYE - February 2022	139.80		139.80
100680	Payroll	Wages - February 2022	559.69		559.69
100681	JACS Accountancy Limited	Payroll Services - February 2022	8.80	1.76	10.56
100682	S McAuliffe	Repairs to Noticeboard	127.00		127.00
Sheet 138	HSBC	Bank Charges	6.20		6.20
		TOTAL	841.49	1.76	843.25

11 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED that the next meeting be held 16 March 2022 at 6.45pm.

.....Signed

.....Dated