

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE DISTRICT COUNCIL OF EASINGTON
HELD ON THURSDAY 1 FEBRUARY 2007

Present: Councillor C Walker (Chair)
Councillors B Bates, E Bell,
S Bishop, Mrs G Bleasdale, B Burn,
A Burnip, R Burnip, Mrs E M Connor,
R Crute, R Davison, J Haggan,
Mrs J Maslin, D Milsom, D Myers,
Mrs A Naylor, M Nicholls, C Patching,
G Patterson, W R Peardon, G Pinkney,
B Quinn, D Raine, F Shaw,
Mrs B A Sloan, P Stradling and
R Taylor

1 NATIONAL CLEAN AIR AWARD

G Snell, Public Health Capacity Co-ordinator from County Durham Primary Care Trust was in attendance to present a National Clean Air Award to the Council for its implementation of an effective workplace smoking ban.

2 THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE DISTRICT COUNCIL OF EASINGTON held on 4 January 2007, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were confirmed, subject to Councillor E Bell being added to the list of Members in attendance.

3 REVISED PROCEDURES FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF HEADSTONES AND MEMORIALS IN CLOSED CHURCHYARDS

Consideration was given to the report of the Environmental Health and Licensing Manager which advised of proposals for the adoption of a revised procedure for fulfilling the Council's responsibility for the maintenance of headstones and memorials in closed churchyards, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

The wider element of closed churchyard maintenance was not contained within the report and the condition of pathways, walls, trees, edging and fencing were not taken into account. These were important issues which would be the subject of further reports to Members in due course.

The Environmental Health and Licensing Manager advised that the Council had engaged a Consultant from the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) to examine working procedures and identify options for improvement.

Service Delivery Scrutiny Committee had examined policies and procedures and respective works that had been undertaken in a number of closed churchyards but in particular St Saviours churchyard in Shotton Colliery. The Committee made a number of recommendations that had been incorporated into the revised procedure and draft policy.

In March 2006 the Public Services Ombudsman produced a special report which provided comprehensive advice to local authorities regarding best practice in dealing with memorial safety. This was set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

The Environmental Health and Licensing Manager explained that a decision was required from Members regarding the approach to headstones which failed safety tests. The options were to provide a limited service meeting statutory obligations or to provide an enhanced service exceeding statutory obligations. The implications of each option were set out in the report for Members consideration.

Whilst the Ombudsman report did emphasise that there was no obligation on Councils to carry out remedial work it nevertheless commended those that did pay for the work themselves or targeted assistance to relatives who could not afford the repair costs.

Service Delivery Scrutiny Committee had recommended that an enhanced service exceeding statutory obligations be adopted. This would involve the Council taking responsibility for the repairs to any memorials in the closed churchyards that it maintained and would entail where possible the Council securing upright any headstones that had been laid flat already and any new memorial found to be unstable after testing. This would not be possible for all memorials, but would cover the majority. 30 members of the public had already paid to have memorials repaired and therefore compensation arrangements may need to be considered.

Appendix 2 to the report detailed proposed revised procedures which were consistent with recommendations from the Ombudsman report and ICCM guidance, and subject to approval it was proposed to implement the new procedures with effect from 1 April 2007.

Following a number of questions, the Chair thanked Officers and Service Delivery Scrutiny Committee for the work carried out. A resident who had been involved when the matter was considered by Service Delivery Scrutiny Committee also thanked the Council for taking this issue on board.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) an enhanced service exceeding statutory obligations be agreed for the maintenance of headstones and memorials that failed safety tests in closed churchyards and improving the recording of test results;
- (b) the new improved best practice procedures as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report, be agreed and be revised to incorporate the approach adopted in (a) above.

4 TO SEAL DOCUMENTS

RESOLVED that the action taken in affixing the Common Seal to the following documents, be endorsed:-

- 19401 Transfer of Part of Registered Title(s) made between EDC (1) and Juliette Parsons (2) relating to 21 Ferndale Close, Station Town
- 19402 Transfer of Part of Registered Title(s) made between EDC (1) and Ann English and Toni Elizabeth English (2) relating to 9 Hawthorn Cottages, South Hetton
- 19403 Transfer of Part of Registered Title(s) made between EDC (1) and Elizabeth Hesslewood (2) relating to 26 Donald Avenue, South Hetton

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- 19404 Transfer of Part of Registered Title(s) made between EDC (1) and Olga Elizabeth Percival and Leslie Thornton (2) relating to 6 Smillie Road, Horden
- 19405 Transfer of Part of Registered Title(s) made between EDC (1) and Julie Preston (2) relating to 29 McGuinness Avenue, Horden
- 19406 Transfer of Part of Registered Title(s) made between EDC (1) and Bernadette Simpson (2) relating to 32 Hawthorn Square, Seaham
- 19407 Transfer of Part of Registered Title(s) made between EDC (1) and Lisa Cook (2) relating to 90 Bruce Glasier Terrace, Shotton Colliery
- 19408 Release of part of the land from a registered charge relating to Plot 22 High Croft, Thornley Lender - Title Number DU281627
- 19409 Release of part of the land from a registered charge relating to Plot 21 High Croft, Thornley Lender – Title Number DU281627
- 19410 Release of part of the land from a registered charge relating to Plot 20 High Croft, Thornley – Title Number DU281627
- 19411 Transfer of part of registered title(s) made between EDC (1) and Sharon Connor (2) relating to 44 Wheatley Terrace, Wheatley Hill
- 19412 Transfer of part of registered title(s) made between EDC (1) and Heather Davison and Graeme Davison (2) relating to Garage 7 Roseby Road, Horden
- 19413 Transfer of part of registered title(s) made between EDC (1) and Joanne Frost (2) relating to 40 Smillie Road, Horden
- 19414 Cancellation of entries relating to a registered charge relating to 31 Sledmere Close, Peterlee – DU274945
- 19415 Transfer of Part of Registered Title(s) made between EDC (1) and Lindsey Wood (2) relating to 98 Hatfield Place, Peterlee
- 19416 Transfer of Part of Registered Title(s) made between EDC (1) and Ian Donald Huntingdon (2) relating to 65 Yoden Road, Peterlee
- 19417 Transfer of Part of Registered Title(s) made between EDC (1) and Janice Burrell (2) relating to 19 Wharrier Square, Wheatley Hill
- 19418 Transfer of Part of Registered Title(s) made between EDC (1) and Three Rivers Housing Association Ltd (2) relating to Land at Hartlepool Street, Thornley
- 19419 Transfer of Part of Registered Title(s) made between EDC(1) and Gary Turns and Heather Susan Turns (2) relating to 17 Everton Drive Seaham
- 19420 Cancellation of Entries relating to a registered charge relating to 17 Glebe View, Murton - Title Number DU91988

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- 19421 Transfer of Whole of Registered Title(s) made between EDC (1) and Persimmon Homes Limited (2) relating to land and buildings forming part of the Thornlaw North Estate being numbers 28, 30, 32, 34, 36, 44, 46, 63, 65, 67, 71, 73, 75, 77, 86, 88 and 90 Thornlaw North, Thornley
- 19422 Licence made between EDC (1) and Barratt Homes Ltd (2) relating to premises at Pattison Gardens, Blackhall Rocks
- 19423 Transfer of Part of registered title(s) made between EDC (1) and Sharon Uttley (2) relating to 39 Webb Avenue, Seaham
- 19424 Transfer of Part of Registered Title(s) made between EDC(1) and Lee Robinson and Victoria Brown (2) relating to 11 Rydal Crescent Peterlee
- 19425 Deed of Release made between Leech Homes Limited (1) and Easington District Council (2) relating to land between 10 and 11 Dormand Drive, Peterlee
- 19426 Nominations Agreement made between EDC (1) and Three Rivers Housing Association (2) relating to land at South Parade, Hartlepool Street, Thornley
- 19427 Agreement for Lease made between EDC (1) County Council of Durham (2) and Haswell and District Mencap Society (2) relating to land and premises at Church Street, Haswell
- 19428 Transfer of Part of Registered Title(s) made between EDC (1) and Belinda Richards (2) relating to 22 Windsor Drive, South Hetton
- 19429 Transfer of Part of Registered Title(s) made between EDC (1) and Tracie Hamill and Frank Nicholson (2) relating to 19 Grisedale Road, Peterlee
- 19430 Agreement made between Chester-le-Street District Council (1) Derwentside District Council (2) Durham City Council (3) Durham County Council (4) EDC (5) Borough of Sedgefield (6) Teesdale District Council (7) and Wear Valley District Council (8) relating to the establishment of the County Durham e-Government Partnership Joint Committee
- 19431 Transfer of Part of Registered Title(s) made between EDC(1) and John Anthony Arrowsmith and Nicola Jane Arrowsmith (2) relating to 57 Neasham Road, Seaham
- 19432 Agreement made between EDC (1) and Redwood Homes (North East) Limited (2) relating to land known as former Vicarage, rear of Dene Terrace, Horden (in duplicate)