

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
NORTH AREA FORUM
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 16 FEBRUARY, 2005**

Present: Representing the District of Easington

Councillor C Walker (Chair)
Councillors Mrs G Bleasdale, E Bell, D J
Taylor-Gooby, Mrs A Naylor, A Napier, C
Patching, Mrs S Mason, B Burn, B Bates,
R Davison, J Goodwin, R Todd, P J Campbell,
D Myers and F Shaw

Also present: J Walker – Seaham Town Council
R Jordan – Seaham Town Council
B Allen – Seaham Town Council

Residents: J E Campbell, D B Shaw, W A Place
and M Coulson

**PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF BUSINESS A ONE MINUTE SILENCE WAS
OBSERVED AS A MARK OF RESPECT FOR OUNCILLOR W E GUSTARD**

1 CHAIRS COMMENTS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the District Council's North Area Forum and introduced himself and the officers present. A representative from the Customer Services Section was also present to take any individual queries or problems at the end of the meeting.

2 THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING held on 10 November 2004, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were confirmed.

3 YOUR QUESTION TIME – YOUR SAY IN SERVICE DELIVERY – YOUR CALL

I Forster explained that the format of this meeting was a pilot following the Council's decision to re-brand the Area Forums in order to stimulate better discussion, participation and attendance at meetings.

It was explained that the authority held a conference in October, 2004 titled "Your Community, Your Call". The purpose of the conference was to look at all the services provided by the authority and discuss how it consulted with its partners.

The purpose of the Area Forum was to allow the public a chance to comment on the services provided by the district council and how the public could be better engaged. It was intended that in future meetings would be less formal and venues would be improved. As part of the pilot, hand held voting equipment would be available at the meetings to allow those present to participate in the meeting, vote on issues that were being discussed and see the results instantly.

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The Chair opened the meeting to questions.

Mr D Glover made reference to a complaint relating to a void property on behalf of a neighbour. The gentleman concerned had contacted the council on a number of occasions but had made little progress. I Forster advised that he would take the details of the complaint following the meeting and investigate the matter on behalf of Mr Glover.

Mr B Blair, Dawdon Regeneration, queried the council's policy in relation to charging for special collections. He felt that the district already suffered considerable problems relating to fly tipping and if the Council took the decision to charge it would only make matters worse as people would be unwilling to pay for collections.

K Parkinson advised that the authority had introduced a policy whereby special collections would be charged for. This had been a difficult decision but was based on the fact that year on year the service had escalated. He explained the policy in detail and explained who it would apply to. On the evidence available it was not felt that fly tipping would increase, however, the situation would be closely monitored.

Councillor A Napier advised that the authority had no other option but to start charging for special collections. He pointed out that the charge for collections was nominal and Easington was one of the last authority's to implement such a charge.

B Blair explained that there were currently problems with tyres being dumped around the Hazeldene area. This was a common problem and a permanent solution was needed.

K Parkinson advised that the authority employed 18 Street Wardens and 5 Environment Wardens and had undertaken two prosecutions relating to the dumping of tyres. It was explained that the authority had attempted to involve the Environment Agency in its investigations but little progress had been made to date.

B Blair gave details of a scheme whereby all tyres sold were marked and logged by the garage and if the tyres were subsequently dumped they could be traced back. K Parkinson advised that he was unaware of any such scheme but it was something that could be considered in the future.

B Blair asked for an explanation of the County Councils policy for charging at civic amenity sites. Residents with small trailers were now banned from taking their rubbish to the sites without an appropriate licence.

K Parkinson gave an explanation of the permit scheme introduced by the County Council and the charges that were made. It was pointed out that the district council had no control over the County's decision to charge at civic amenity sites.

D Glover explained that he was aware of other authorities that were recycling waste into fuel pellets and queried if the district council were able to do this.

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K Parkinson advised that the authority were working in partnership with neighbouring authorities and were looking at an aerobic digester which could remove cans and glass from waste material and convert it.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

4 BETTER AREA FORUMS – YOU DECIDE

I Forster advised that the reasons behind the decision to re-brand the Area Forums was to better engage and consult with the community to obtain their views on issues which directly effected them. Details were given of initiatives being introduced to better engage with the community, which included youth and the Youth Strategy. The authority was also looking at Focus Groups and Citizens Panels as well as e-Government issues, which would allow services to be provided on line.

It was explained that the authority proposed to develop a Consultation and Engagement Strategy by the end of September 2005.

It was hoped that in future the Area Forums would be less formal, receive better publicity, be held in more accessible venues, which complied with the Disability Discrimination Act, and the content of the meetings would be relevant to the area it was being held in. The use of voting technology would also be used if available and appropriate.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

5 TOGETHER – REDUCING ANTI - SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

G Lodge and I Mc Clean gave a detailed presentation on anti-social behaviour.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

6 GOING GREEN – OUR RECYCLING SERVICE

K Parkinson gave a presentation on the District Council’s recycling service.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

CERTIFIED TRUE RECORD

CHAIR

Date