

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING**  
**OF THE DISTRICT COUNCIL OF EASINGTON**  
**HELD ON THURSDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2008**

Present: Councillor R. Taylor (Chair)

Councillors Mrs M. Baird, E. Bell, S. Bishop,  
A. Burnip, Mrs E. M. Connor, A. Collinson,  
Mrs S. Forster, H. High, G. Johnson,  
D. Maddison, Mrs J. Maitland, K. McGonnell,  
D. Milsom, A. Napier, Mrs A. Naylor,  
G. Patterson, G. Pinkney, D. Raine, F. Shaw,  
R. J. Todd and C. Walker

**Members observed a one minute silence as a mark of respect for Councillor P J Campbell who had died recently.**

1. **THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE DISTRICT COUNCIL OF EASINGTON** held on 2 October 2008, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were confirmed.
2. **THE MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE DISTRICT COUNCIL OF EASINGTON** held on 30 September 2008, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were confirmed.
3. **THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE REGULATORY APPEALS PANEL** held on 21 October 2008, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the decision taken, be noted.

4. **ROYAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND (RNIB) – MOBILITY BENEFITS FOR BLIND PEOPLE**

The Head of Democratic Services reported the receipt of correspondence from the RNIB in relation to a national campaign launched in August 2006 to ensure that blind residents were given access to essential mobility benefits to enable them to travel safely and live independently.

The RNIB considered that the concessionary travel scheme had opened up more options for blind and partially sighted people but that they still faced significant difficulties when using public transport without support, thereby denying them independence and resulting in additional unaffordable costs.

The campaign sought to rectify an anomaly in the current eligibility criteria which would allow blind people to access the higher rate of Disability Living Allowance (mobility component) and had asked the Council to give consideration to a motion in support of this.

**RESOLVED** that the Council support the RNIB's campaign and the following Motion, be agreed:-

“This Council notes that blind people experience significant barriers to independent mobility, are often isolated and find it difficult to access basic

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services without mobility assistance/support and face additional costs as a result, such as using taxis or private hire vehicles.

The Council also notes that blind people are not entitled to the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance. The loss of usable sight clearly causes significant independent mobility problems and incurs significant additional and unmet costs. Blind people in many parts of England are excluded from social care support because their needs are not considered 'critical' or 'substantial'."

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that

- (a) a letter be sent to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions expressing these concerns;
- (b) a letter be sent to local MPs asking that they sign up to Early Day Motion 1982.

### **5. DARZI REVIEW OF HEALTH SERVICES**

The Head of Democratic Services reported the receipt of correspondence from Councillor Sir Jeremy Beecham of the Local Government Association regarding the Darzi review of health services. The correspondence stated that a misleading campaign was underway which implied that GP practices would close and be replaced by anonymous polyclinics.

Councillor Sir Jeremy Beecham had asked the Council to consider adopting a resolution which would clarify the situation.

The Council **RESOLVED** that

"This Council notes that thanks to investment in the NHS there are 5000 more GPs and 4000 more practice nurses than in 1997, and welcomes the Government's intention to accept the recommendations of the Darzi Review

- (a) to provide 152 additional GP health centres, one in each Primary Care Trust area, complementing and not replacing, existing GP provision, and providing a wide range of GP, diagnostic and other services open 12 hours a day all year;
- (b) ensuring that at least half of all GP practices offer extended opening hours in evenings and/or during weekends;
- (c) to establish at least 50 additional GP practices in under-served areas."

### **6. CASUAL VACANCY – DENESIDE WARD OF THE DISTRICT OF EASINGTON/SEAHAM HARBOUR NORTH WARD OF SEAHAM TOWN COUNCIL**

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Democratic Services which gave details of casual vacancies in the Deneside Ward of the District of Easington and the Seaham Harbour North Ward of Seaham Town Council arising from the death of Councillor Peter Campbell. The report also advised of arrangements for filling vacancies on a number of District Council Committees/Panels and sought approval of replacement appointments to two outside bodies. A copy of the report had been circulated to each Member.

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**RESOLVED** that

- (a) it be noted that, in accordance with Regulation 13 of the Local Government (Structural Changes) (Transitional Arrangements) Regulations 2008, the Council was not required to fill the vacancy in the Deneside District Ward;
- (b) the appointment of Councillor T Unsworth to the Appointments and Appeals Panel (core) and Councillor D Maddison to the Regulatory Appeals Panel (core), be confirmed and it be noted that the vacant positions on the Community Services Scrutiny Committee, Employee Welfare Panel (pool) and Regulatory Appeals Panel (pool) would not be filled;
- (c) Councillor A Collinson be elected Chair of the Regulatory Appeals Panel and Councillor K McGonnell be appointed Vice-Chair;
- (d) appointments be made to outside bodies, as follows, in accordance with Section 3.3 of the report:-

Durham Police Committee - Local Consultative Committee - Councillor Mrs A E Laing

Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee - Councillors R J Todd and D J Taylor-Gooby

- (e) it be noted that Seaham Town Council was required to give public notice of the vacancy in the Seaham Harbour North Ward, in accordance with Section 87(2) of the Local Government Act 1972.

### 7. **TREE PRESERVATION ORDER AT DAIRY FARM, LITTLETHORPE**

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Planning and Building Control Services in relation to a Tree Preservation Order at Dairy Farm, Littlethorpe, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

The purpose of the report was for Members to consider endorsing the decision of the Development Control and Regulatory Panel made at its meeting on 14 October 2008, by confirming a Tree Preservation Order in respect of land at Dairy Farm, Littlethorpe.

The Order was considered expedient having regard to the amenity value of the trees and the potential threat of felling which the trees could be under.

**RESOLVED** that the District of Easington (Dairy Farm, Littlethorpe) Tree Preservation Order 2008, be confirmed.

### 8. **TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 SECTION 257 – PUBLIC FOOTPATH STOPPING UP ORDER THE DISTRICT OF EASINGTON (WOODLANDS AVENUE, WHEATLEY HILL) (NO.1) PUBLIC PATH STOPPING UP ORDER 2008**

As a measure to help resolve problems of youths congregating and serious anti-social behaviour, planning permission for the closure of the footpath adjacent to No 12 Aged Miners Homes, Woodlands Avenue, Wheatley Hill and change of use to private garden was granted by the District Council on 16 May 2008 to Durham Aged Mineworkers Homes Association.

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The District Council was requested to make an Order under Section 257 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 because it was satisfied that it was necessary to stop up the footpath to which this order related to enable development to be carried out in accordance with planning permission granted.

A copy of the Order and Order map which showed the footpath to be stopped up as part of the Order was attached to the Agenda.

Accordingly, it was **RESOLVED** that the District Council hereby make the District of Easington (Woodlands Avenue, Wheatley Hill) (No1) Public Path Stopping Up Order 2008, and the Council's Governance and Risk Manager be authorised to undertake the necessary statutory order procedures.

### **9. TO SEAL DOCUMENTS**

**RESOLVED** that the action taken in affixing the Common Seal to documents numbered 19848 to 19863, as listed in the Council's Seal Register, be endorsed.

JE/CB/COM/DIST/081101  
12 November 2008