

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
NORTH AREA FORUM
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 25 OCTOBER, 2006**

Present: **Representing the District of Easington**
Councillor Mrs J Maitland (Chair)

Councillors B Burn, P J Campbell,
R Davison, J Haggan, Mrs S Mason,
A Napier, Mrs A Naylor, R Todd and
C Walker

Representing Parish/Town Councils

B Allen - Seaham Town Council
R Blair - Dawdon Regeneration Partnership
R Olaman – Dalton-le-Dale Parish Council
M Davison – South Hetton Parish Council
E Mason – Seaham Town Council/
Durham County Council

Residents

T E Campbell, D B Glover,
J Symonds and C Kelly

Apologies: Councillors C Patching and J Goodwin

1 CHAIR'S COMMENTS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the District Council's North Area Forum and introduced herself 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 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 28 June, 2006, were **AGREED**.

3 FOLLOW UP FROM LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

(i) **Excess Water - Mill Inn Bank/Lodge Garage - (Minute Number 3(i) refers)**

Mr D Glover explained that the gully at this location was blocked and during recent heavy rainfall the water had risen to kerb height.

P Penman, Environmental Services Operations Manager advised that the District Council's Highways Engineers had informed Durham County Council that the gully was in the wrong place and had been advised that works were due to be undertaken. It was explained that the District of Easington acted as Agents for Durham County Council who were currently reviewing all the gullies throughout the district. P

North Area Forum – 25 October, 2006

Penman agreed to refer the complaint once again to Durham County Council.

AGREED that the information given, be noted.

(ii) **Former Seaham Colliery Site - (Minute Number 3(ii) refers)**

Mr D Glover advised that there was still problems related to drainage at the former Seaham Colliery site and the problem had been reported to the owners of the site, One North East.

AGREED that the information given, be noted.

(iii) **Junction of North Railway Street/Vine Place - (Minute Number 3(v) refers)**

Mr D Glover advised that to date no work had been carried out on the property at the junction of North Railway Street/Vine Place which had an old sign erected on its gable end which was deteriorating. Mr Glover was worried that the deterioration of the sign was increasing and very shortly a piece of Seaham's history would be lost forever.

Councillor C Walker advised that the matter had been referred to Seaham Town Council who had discussed the property in question with the Story of Seaham Group who were investigating the situation with a view to having the sign repaired. However, it was noted that this was a privately owned property.

AGREED that the information given, be noted.

(iv) **Presentation by Empty Properties Officer - (Minute Number 5 refers)**

Mr D Glover made reference to the presentation given by Mr C Taylor, Empty Properties Officer at the last meeting where it was reported that there was 2,000 empty properties in the district, which equated to 5% of the total housing stock and queried how the remainder of the stock was made up.

Councillor A Napier advised that the District's housing stock was made up of approximately 75% owner occupied, 23% belonged to the District of Easington and 1.5% were registered to private landlords.

Mr R Blair made reference to the introduction of Empty Dwelling Management Orders, introduced by the Housing Act 2004 and felt this was a positive step forward in reducing the number of empty properties throughout the district.

AGREED that the information given, be noted.

(v) **Presentation on Core Strategy and Development Control Local Development Framework Documents - (Minute Number 6 Refers)**

Mr D Glover queried the position regarding Seaham Comprehensive School.

County Councillor E Mason advised that Durham County Council were currently going through the process of considering a number of possible sites for a new comprehensive school in Seaham. It was pointed out that the proposed new school would not have a swimming pool.

AGREED that the information given, be noted.

4 YOUR QUESTION TIME - YOUR SAY IN SERVICE DELIVERY - YOUR CALL

(i) College Courses

Mr T Campbell, a resident, advised that he had attended numerous courses at local Community Centres and referenced the apparent unfairness of the various charges made for such courses.

Mr Campbell was not in receipt of any benefits and therefore had to pay full price for any courses however, anyone in receipt of benefits only had to pay a nominal amount of £5.00.

AGREED that Mr Campbells concerns be forwarded to Durham County Council.

(ii) Seaham Colliery Site

Mr D Glover advised that there was a pathway that led from the High Colliery to Station Road through the former Seaham Colliery Site. Mr Glover explained that at the end of the footpath, at Station Road, there was a locked gate. This resulted in people entering the site at High Colliery and walking through to Station Road and being unable to exit the site due to the locked gate. This forced people to climb the locked gate or adjacent wall/railings to exit the site which caused damage. Mr Glover suggested that One North East either open the locked gate at Station Road or fence the off the entrance at the High Colliery.

Councillor A Napier pointed out that this was private land and anyone accessing the site would be trespassing.

D Glover explained that if this was the case then a permanent barrier should be erected by One North East to prevent access to the site or the path should be opened to the public.

AGREED that P Penman investigate.

(iii) Windfarm - Seaham

Mr D Glover queried what the current situation was in relation to the proposed wind farm at Seaham.

County Councillor E Mason advised that a meeting was held recently between Seaham Town Council and the proposed developers. There had been a number of objections on the grounds that the proposed location of the wind farm was heritage coastline. The Chair pointed out that the District Council's Development Control and Regulatory Panel would consider all planning applications.

North Area Forum – 25 October, 2006

AGREED that the information given, be noted.

(iv) **Dawdon Regeneration Partnership**

Mr B Blair, Dawdon Regeneration Partnership congratulated Councillor E Mason on his election to the Dawdon County Council Ward.

He also wished to place on record Dawdon Regeneration Partnerships' thanks and appreciation for the work undertaken by two District of Easington Community Development workers, L Jordan and F Ford.

Members were also advised that 1000 trees were to be planted in Hazel Dene.

AGREED that a letter be forwarded to the Head of Regeneration and Partnerships congratulating L Jordan and F Ford on the work carried out with the Dawdon Regeneration Partnership.

JW/MC/COM/NAF/061001
26 October, 2006