

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
WEST AREA FORUM  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 30 JANUARY, 2008**

**Present:**           **Representing the District of Easington**  
Councillor M Nicholls (Chair)  
Councillors B Bates, K McGonnell, Mrs J  
Freak and T Unsworth

**Representing the Parish Councils**  
J Higgins – Wingate Parish Council  
B Nutter – Castle Eden Parish Council

**Representing Durham County Council**  
A Cox

**Residents**  
Mrs M Simpson

**Apologies:**       Councillors R Taylor and D Carr

**1       CHAIR'S COMMENTS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the District Councils West Area Forum and introduced himself and the Officers present.

**2       CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 24 October, 2007, were confirmed.

**3       MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**(i)     Vandalism – Hesleden  
(Minute Number 3(ii) refers)**

O Sherratt, Director of Community Services reported that following the last meeting he had contacted Mrs Simpson and outlined the current position in relation to the garages at Hesleden. Mrs Simpson confirmed that she had been served notice to quit her garage.

Mrs Simpson pointed out that at the last meeting Councillor D Carr, Monk Hesleden Parish Council, had suggested that the Council lease an area of land to a private company and allow the company to manage the area as a business and lease the garages to residents.

O Sherratt advised that following internal consultation it was not considered that leasing an area of land to a private company was a viable option. As previously stated the Council would consider all reasonable suggestions and proposals put forward however to date no proposals had been received.

**AGREED** that the information given, be noted.

(ii) **Horses – Haswell to Hart Cycleway  
(Minute Number 3(iii) refers)**

O Sherratt advised that following the last meeting the District Councils Engineers were requested to inspect the surface of the Haswell to Hart walkway to ensure it was safe for public use. It was reported that following an inspection the walkway was found to be in good condition and maintained to an adequate standard.

With regard to horses using the walkway the Head of Asset and Property Management had advised that the process had been hampered by a slow response to the consultation. In addition to this the consultation had been widened to include the relevant Parish Councils. O Sherratt suggested that an Officer from the Council be requested to attend the next meeting to provide an update and possible timescale in relation to when the consultation process would be complete and a decision would be made.

It was pointed out that the consultation to date had produced a significant difference of opinion in relation to horses using the walkway and not everyone would be happy with the decision ultimately taken. It was reiterated that there were very few bridleways within the District for horses to use, which resulted in them going into built up areas. This resulted in complaints, which had led to the decision to allow horses to use the walkway on a trial basis. The District Council were consulting with local riding stables who encouraged horses to use appropriate areas, therefore, the challenge was to accommodate everyone. The issue of more bridleways was a matter which required further investigation.

Mrs Simpson advised that her son regularly cycled the walkway from Hesleden to the coast and reported that sections of the walkway had recently been re-surfaced. However, Mr Simpson had noted that within two days of the new surface being laid horses churned it up.

Following discussion it was **AGREED** that an appropriate officer from the District Council be requested to attend the next meeting of the West Area Forum to provide an update on horses using the Haswell to Hart walkway.

(iii) **Poop Scoop Bags – Walkway  
(Minute Number 3(iii) refers)**

O Sherratt advised that at the last meeting Councillor B Nutter, Castle Eden Parish Council had suggested that poop scoop bags be provided at access and egress points on the walkway.

O Sherratt advised that four new poop scoop bins had been provided between Castle Eden and Hesleden. Due to access problems the bins were not in the exact location requested, however, J Lowes, Senior Environmental Operations Officer would be contacting Councillor Nutter to arrange a site visit to the walkway to discuss the situation.

Councillor Nutter confirmed that Mr Lowes had contacted him prior to Christmas and a meeting had been arranged.

O Sherratt advised that through Pride in Easington a number of campaigns/initiatives had been launched in relation to dog fouling which included, education and awareness, utilising funds from dog fines to launch a £1m poop scoop giveaway, listening to suggestions in relation to dog fouling and surveys which had revealed a decrease in dog fouling and a positive trend in public perception of dog fouling.

Councillor Nutter referred to the recently introduced Dog Control Orders and advised that the Districts map which outlined the designated areas showed the whole of Castle Eden as a restrictive area. However, Durham County Council had recently re-painted the street lamps and all signage related to dog fouling had been removed. Councillor Nutter advised that Castle Eden was a 40 mph zone and the designated dog fouling areas could not be applied in areas over 40 mph.

O Sherratt advised that dog fouling signs would be re-erected in Castle Eden and confirmed that the District Council were unable to apply the designated dog fouling areas to villages with speed limits of 40 mph and over.

Mrs Simpson advised that the area to the rear of her property and the top of Eden Cottage bungalows was a particularly bad area for dog fouling.

**AGREED** that the information given, be noted.

(iv) **31-35 Morris Crescent, Thornley  
(Minute Number 5(i) refers)**

O Sherratt reported that at the last meeting Mr G Wilson had advised that a number of years ago the District of Easington had undertaken to provide car parking for properties in Morris Crescent but no work was undertaken.

It was explained that following consultation with the District Council's Engineers Morris Crescent was on a list in relation to verge hardening. However, the completion of works from the list was dependent upon resources and the list would be re-assessed during the 2008/2009 financial year.

**AGREED** that the information given be noted.

4 **YOUR QUESTION TIME, YOUR SAY IN SERVICE DELIVERY, YOUR CALL**

(i) **Garages/Hesleden**

Mrs Simpson referred to the provision of hardstanding for cars in Hesleden and advised that she had received correspondence from East Durham Homes outlining criteria which had to be met before hardstanding could be provided. Under the list of criteria Hesleden would not score highly and was unlikely to qualify. Mrs Simpson felt this was wrong as Hesleden was on a bus route and had schools etc which according to the criteria should score it higher.

O Sherratt advised that the list could be misleading and pointed out that when assessing a potential site for hardstanding Engineers would look at

a particular stretch of road and not the area in general. Whilst Hesleden as a village may hit all the criteria Engineers would have only assessed the area where the hardstanding was requested. Their conclusion, based on the limited finance available for the whole of the District, was that Hesleden did not hit the criteria and therefore did not qualify.

**AGREED** that the information given, be noted.

(ii) **3 East Terrace, Hesleden**

Mrs Simpson reported an incident on behalf of Mrs Musgrove, 3 East Terrace, Hesleden, who was picked up weekly by the Communicare bus to do her weekly shopping. Due to cars being double parked in the area the bus was unable to access East Terrace and eventually became stuck on the Village Green. It took over half an hour for the bus to be recovered and resulted in the Village Green being churned up.

Councillor B Bates advised that in the past grassed areas had had boulders placed around them to prevent cars from gaining access and parking on grassed areas. Councillor Bates confirmed that East Terrace and Church Street were particularly bad areas and felt they were suitable for hardstanding.

O Sherratt sympathised with the situation and agreed to highlight the situation with the Councils Engineers. Councillor Mrs J Freak advised that she would speak to Communicare on behalf of Mrs Musgrove to see if a resolution could be sought in relation to her being picked up from East Terrace.

**AGREED** that the information given, be noted.

(iii) **Police Attendance at Castle Eden Parish Council Meeting**

Councillor Nutter advised that the Police had failed to attend the last meeting of Castle Eden Parish Council and were therefore unaware of parking problems at Dene View. Residents in Dene View had reported motorists parking haphazardly and on the pavement.

J Morton, Senior Street Warden advised that she would report this matter to the Police on behalf of the Parish Council. In addition, the Chair advised that he would notify Durham County Council of the problem.

**AGREED** that J Morton, Senior Street Warden and the Chair report the matter to the Police and Durham County Council respectively.

(iv) **Scooters on Walkway**

Councillor B Nutter advised of the increased volume of scooters accessing the Haswell to Hart walkway. Councillor Nutter explained that the walkway was unlit and if an accident occurred it could go unreported.

O Sherratt advised that issues related to access would need to be investigated and possible restrictions imposed for scooters however, this would be difficult. It was pointed out that the matter should also be reported to the Police who had an off road officer who could respond to

## West Area Forum – 30 January, 2008

incidents such as these. Public reporting was however important so that a case for deployment of the Police could be established.

**AGREED** that the information given, be noted.

### (v) **Kerb It Collections, Wingate**

Councillor J Higgins, Wingate Parish Council reported the state of roads throughout Wingate following Kerb It collections by Premier Waste. Councillor Higgins advised that rubbish was left strewn all over the street by the operatives and bins were not replaced outside the correct properties.

O Sherratt advised that from 1 April, 2008 a new contract would be awarded and the contractor would no longer be Premier Waste. In addition to the Kerb it box the new contract would include the collection of plastic and cardboard and it was also proposed to extend the collection of green waste.

It was reported that Premier Waste had encountered a number of problems which included the loss of the contract, high sickness absence levels, low staff morale, greater tonnage to be collected and additional Christmas waste. This had led to the problems being experienced which the District Council were aware of and had taken measures to address. The new Contractor had agreed to take on the current workforce and was committed to recycling, however it may take a couple of months for the service to settle down.

**AGREED** that the information given, be noted.

### (vi) **Invitation to attend Wingate Parish Council Meeting**

Councillor J Higgins advised that Wingate Parish Council had extended an invitation to a Director from the District of Easington to attend a Parish meeting to discuss anti social behaviour in Wingate.

Councillor Higgins asked if all calls made to the Street Wardens were recorded. J Morton, advised that every call received by the Street Wardens was recorded.

Councillor Higgins queried if Street Wardens undertook training in the answering of telephones as the last conversation he had had with a Street Warden, over the telephone, had not been to the standard you would expect when speaking to a representative of the District Council.

J Morton confirmed that all Street Wardens undertook training and agreed to take further details following the meeting and reply direct to Councillor Higgins.

O Sherratt agreed to check if a letter had been received from Wingate Parish Council in relation to the invitation to attend a Parish Council meeting.

**AGREED** that J Morton speak to Councillor Higgins following the meeting and O Sherratt investigate the receipt of the invitation from Wingate Parish Council.

## **West Area Forum – 30 January, 2008**

### **(vii) Bus Shelter, Gray Avenue, Hesleden**

Councillor B Bates advised that a resident had reported a damaged bus shelter at Gray Avenue, Hesleden and no action had been taken.

**AGREED** that O Sherratt investigate.

### **(viii) Parking on Footpaths**

Councillor B Bates advised of the problems associated with cars parking on the footpath outside the local pub in Hesleden.

**AGREED** that O Sherratt investigate.

### **(ix) Clean Up – Hesleden**

Councillor B Bates advised that following a scheduled clean up by the Council in Hesleden a number of black bags had been overlooked and were left scattered throughout the village.

**AGREED** that O Sherratt arrange to have the black bags collected.

### **(x) Re-Surfacing of Footpath, Front Street, Hesleden**

Mrs Simpson advised that the footpath on Front Street had been re-surfaced and queried when the remainder of the work would be undertaken. Councillor A Cox, Durham County Council advised that he had received a number of queries in relation to the work on Front Street and was awaiting a reply from the County Council in relation to timescales for the remainder of the work.

**AGREED** that Councillor A Cox reply to Mrs Simpson direct.

### **(xi) Church Street, Hesleden**

Mrs Simpson advised that problems were being experienced at the back of Church Street, particularly at the lower part of the street, where grass was growing in the gutters.

**AGREED** that O Sherratt investigate.