

TOW LAW TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Tow Law Town Council held on Tuesday 18th February 2025, commencing at 6.30pm in the Community Centre, Tow Law.

PRESENT: Councillors F. Nicol (Chair), T. Bland, M. Craggs, J. Fowler, E. Mather and P. Stokes.

ALSO PRESENT: County Councillor R. Manchester and G. F. Smith (Clerk).

Residents:- M. Snowdon and Susan Snowdon

017/25 APOLOGIES

Apologies received from Councillors K. Duffy, J. Gale, M. Dyer and P. Eastwood.

018/25 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor Nicol declared an interest in agenda items Nos 12 Tow Law Community Centre, and item 13 Tow Law Food Bank.

Councillor Craggs declared an interest in agendas items Nos 10 Allotments, No 12 Tow Law Community Association and item No. 13 Tow Law Food Bank.

019/25 MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 15th October 2024

The minutes were not agreed by the Councillors, amendments still required.

020/25 MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 21st JANUARY 2025

Minutes were agreed by the Councillors and signed by the Chair.

021/25 ACTION LIST – Were circulated prior to the meeting, agreed as a true record by the Councillors.

022/25 COMMUNITY FUND

Thank you letter received from the Great North air Ambulance Service for the recent donation (£250) from the Town Council.

023/25 JOINT REPORT BY THE CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

The Chair reported on the last meeting of the 3 Towns AAP, also reported used needles on Millennium Green, but after a thorough search no needles were found.

Report of the PACT meeting (to be further discussed in the County Councillors Report)

Signed.....Chair

024/25 EXPENDITURE REPORT 1st APRIL 2024 TO 31st JANUARY 2025

The report was circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting:-

Total Expenditure £41398.19

Bank Balance as at 31/01/2025 £17519.57

Estimated Bank Balance as at 31/03/2025 £12878.91

Which the Community Fund stands at £3477.94

Members agreed to accept the report.

025/25 RESPONSE TO THE EXTERNAL AUDITOR FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2024

The report was circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting.

Members agreed to accept the report and noted the Clerk's comments.

026/25 ALLOTMENTS

Mr Snowden made a presentation to the Town Council on the Pigeon Loft Agreement and asked for the boundary fencing which was erected by the Town Council a number of years ago remain the responsibility of the Town Council. Members agreed with this request and for the Clerk to amend the document accordingly.

The Clerk read out a letter from Mr Michael Snowden and Mr James Snowden asking to purchase the two plots of land to continue to keep pigeons on this site. Mr Snowden gave assurances that the plots will continue to be maintained to a good standard and the use will remain for pigeon racing only.

Members requested that the Clerk make further investigations and report back to the Town Council as soon as possible.

Councillor Craggs was arranging an allotment inspection (previous meeting was cancelled due to snow), she will contact the committee with a suitable date.

027/25 LAND REAR OF HIGH STREET

Pot holes still outstanding. Weed Killer required to combat the excessive weeds on the site.

028/25 TOW LAW COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Car park resurfacing complete. An e-mail has been received from Jenny Flynn regarding the repairs to the external clock (following the power cut and adjusting for BST/GMT) is beginning to fail. The cost to attend and repair the clock is £665.00 + VAT £133.00 Total Cost £798.00, Jenny's comment "this might be beyond our budget". The Community Association committee is meeting on Thursday night to discuss this matter. Members suggested that £500.00 could be transferred from the Community Fund towards the cost of the repairs.

Signed.....Chair

029/25 TOW LAW FOOD BANK

Councillor Nicol reported that demand for the service is very high.

030/25 POLICE/PACT/SPEEDWATCH

No formal Speed watch reports. Still awaiting legal approval (Police).

031/25 COUTY COUNCILLORS REPORT

County Councillor Manchester reported on the following:-

- Children's Home in Tow Law (18 to 25 Young Women), self- contained flats, possible opening in March 2025, 24 hour support care, tenancy/licence?no consultation, responses? Contact details will be published.

032/25 BANK ACCOUNT (on-line banking) – Councillor Nicol to visit local bank branch to progress application.

033/25 PLANNING MATTERS – None

Discussion around Hamsterley Forest Theme Park, left to the individual Councillors should they wish to respond, no formal response from the Town Council.

034/25 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

The Clerk reported the following:-

- payments vouchers 69 to 72 sum of £1394.55

Members agreed to pay the above accounts.

035/25 CCTV IN TOW LAW

The Chair continues to discuss progress with the Police Commissioner.

036/25 BEEHIVE COKE OVENS

The gorse plants required further treatment and trimming back (still outstanding), Clerk to contact the Contractor regarding the setting-up of a yearly contract to maintain the Gorse each year (two visits).

037/25 TOW LAW MILLENNIUM GREEN

Documents awaiting return from the Charity Commission, Clerk to chase up.

Inspection of Play Equipment (Sovereign Design Play Systems Ltd), Clerk to chase up.

038/25 FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

No progress, Clerk to chase up details received from Councillor Mather.

Signed.....Chair

039/25 SKILL MILL – COUNTY DURHAM JUSTICE SERVICE NO UPDATE, REMOVE FROM AGENDA

040/25 VE DAY 8th MAY 2025

Councillor Craggs suggested booking the Community Centre for an Afternoon Tea event (Saturday) plus some form of entertainment.

041/25 CLERK’S REPORT

The Clerk reported on the following:-

- Tow Law TC e-mail, how to log in and password. It was agreed to defer until after the elections on 1st May 2025.
- Details on the next Parish Council Elections in May 2025, including Election Timetable; Pre-Election Period (starts 20th March) after the Election process; Declaration of Acceptance of Office; annual Meetings; CoOption; Casual Vacancies after normal elections; Key Facts; Important Registration Dates and Guidance for Candidates at Parish Council Elections. These notes were passed to all Councillors present at the meeting.

042/25 MEMBERS REPORTS - NONE

043/25 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 18th March 2025 in the Community Centre, commencing at 6.30pm

The meeting finished at 7.41pm

Signed.....Chair