

West Cornforth Residents Association
Minutes of General Meeting held 9th January 2006 7pm

Present: S. Pennick (CH), J. Pennick, S Eltringham, E. Chalk, J. Chalk, I. Eltringham, D. Harrington, J. Harrington, N, Cook, N. Tate, R. Barton. R. Miller, C. Lynsey

Cllr. G. Porter (Durham County Council)

Paul Ferguson (Cornforth House)

Apologies: T. Wells, M. Pennick.

Minutes discussed and agreed on from the previous meeting.

Matters arising

Durham County Councillor - Cllr George Porter attended the meeting to hear residents concerns.

Rubbish on DCC land - It was Cllr Porter's understanding that Sedgefield Borough Council were responsible for the clearance of rubbish, which was on Durham County Council land. Cllr Porter read out an email from K. Telford (Environment Dept DCC, dated 9th January 2006) stating "*I have reported the flytipped tyres on footpath 15 Cornforth Parish to the relevant department at Sedgefield Borough Council. I will conduct a follow up site visit in 1-2 weeks time to check on any progress made, and if necessary submit a written request to the Borough to remove the tyres.*"

Traffic Calming on Station Road - Residents aired their concerns about the speed at which vehicles travel down Station Road and it was stated that there had been two high profile deaths on the road involving children, however no measures appeared to have been taken to prevent similar accidents. Cllr Porter stated that there were not sufficient funds available to place a chicane on the road but would look into other measures which could be taken. Apparently there is only £6,000 set aside each year in respect of traffic calming for the whole district (a chicane costs around £12,000). A traffic survey is planned and we will hear results shortly. Discussed possibility of Parish Council 'match-funding' with DCC in order to pay for improvements.

Access Roads to Verdun and Coronation Terraces - The Chair stated that the access roads were displayed as public highways on the D.C.C. 'G.I.S' computer system, which suggested that the responsibility for maintenance lay with D.C.C. Cllr Porter stated that this was more than likely to be a mistake on the information system and that the roads were in-fact unadopted and therefore the responsibility for maintenance lay with the landowners either side of the roads. Cllr Porter also stated that residents may be liable for damages if somebody sustained an injury, on the land outside the residents home, as a result of the uneven surface. It was noted however, that residents may contravene planning regulations if they were to interfere with the road surface individually. The cost of a full resurface for the access roads would be approximately £70,000 per street- £600 per metre. It was noted that the area has a high proportion of elderly residents and low income families who could not afford to make that kind of financial commitment therefore, under the circumstances, the only viable option remaining for the residents would be to look into possible 'regeneration' funding from a grant giving body.

Extending the pathway from Reading Street to Verdun Terrace - It was pointed out that elderly residents from Reading Street regularly used their pathway to get to the Post Office on the High Street. However, the pathway on Reading Street ended in a patch of mud and it would be of great benefit to those elderly residents if the pathway could be extended over the mud. It was explained that there have already been incidents of residents from Reading Street slipping and falling in the mud. Cllr Porter stated that the land at the end of the path was unadopted and therefore could not take the matter any further. It was requested if the council could adopt the land at the end of the path thereby allowing them

to extend the path but Cllr Porter seemed reluctant to take the matter further.

Cllr Porter was thanked for his attendance and he stated that he would like to stay for the remainder of the meeting.

Trees on Station Road - Further to the S.B.C email, which we had been given in November stating that clearance work at the bus shelter nr. Thurstan Grange would be conducted by mid December. It was noted that the work had not yet been done.

Cllr. Porter said he would look into the problem of trees obscuring a street light further down Station Road, which hadn't been resolved despite numerous complaints made to D.C.C.

Correspondence

Streets Ahead Newsletter - Copies of the current 'Streets Ahead' Newsletter had been received from Sedgefield Borough Council and were distributed to the group.

Letter from County Council regarding extending the path from Reading Street to Verdun Terrace stating it was not their responsibility.

Other Business

Questionnaire - Mr P Ferguson had asked to attend the meeting and distributed questionnaires to the group. Mr Ferguson was studying for a Community Development Worker qualification and the results from his questionnaire would form part of his course work.

Fire at the 'Scrap Yard' - There had been another large fire at the Scrap Yard in December. Two fire engines had attended.

It was also noted that the skips, which had been placed around the perimeter of the scrap yard, had been removed since our last meeting.

Unemptied Bins - In between Christmas and New Year there had been a fall of snow, which had prevented approximately 40 bins from being emptied on Verdun Terrace and Coronation Terrace. The driver of the wagon explained that the snow on the roads would make it very difficult to control the vehicle. The Chair had complained to our borough councillor and Mr A Suggett from SBC telephoned the Chair and stated that there would be a 'back up' vehicle around in the next 24-48 hours to attend to the un-emptied bins in the village. This never arrived in our area and the bins were not emptied until the next scheduled pick-up. Mr Suggett stated that in the event of similar situations, it would assist the council if residents could arrange to take their bins to the top of each street.

It was understood that the snow had also prevented the utility truck from emptying most of the bins in the village North of the High Street and also Poplar/Hawthorn Terrace.

It was noted that in previous years there had been workers on a "council flatbed wagon" scattering salt on the access roads but this had not happened this year. It was also noted that it was the responsibility of Durham County Council to scatter salt on the roads but, for obvious reasons, they would concentrate their efforts on the bus routes. In this instance, the access roads were considered to be unadopted and therefore the responsibility for snow clearance was understood to be with the householders.

2006 Meeting Dates - We had been requested by SBC to submit a timetable for our 2006 meeting dates. It was agreed to hold meetings on the third Monday of each month in the Salvation Army hall.

Freedom of Information request - We had received a reply from DCC to our request for information. It was agreed that due to the lack of time available, we would discuss this at the next meeting.

Next meeting(s)

The next Meeting will be 20th February 2006 at 7p.m.

Meeting closed at 8.30 pm