

FIELD HOUSE SURFACE MINE COMMUNITY LIAISON COMMITTEE

I attended the preliminary meeting of the Field House Surface Mine Community Liaison Committee (CLC) on 26 April 2017 at Pitlington Village Hall. The agenda and proposed Draft Constitution and Agenda for future meetings are attached and minutes of this meeting will be produced in due course. In the meantime the following points may be of interest to members:

There are numerous planning conditions which have yet to be achieved and approved by Durham County Council.

Environmental and wildlife surveys are in the process of being conducted and are expected to be complete by the end of May. Archaeological surveys will follow.

There is no firm date for the extraction process to start and this will depend on the outcome of both of the above.

The attached Draft Constitution was accepted except that a representative from the West Rainton Village Partnership and a representative from a similar body in Pitlington will be invited to attend. There was concern that the Committee could become unwieldy and it may be that membership may be reduced in the future.

A subcommittee may be set up (see paragraph 1.4 of the Constitution) to determine the priority of requests for grants to the Community Fund. There was a consensus that this should probably include only elected representatives of the various communities (county councillors – parish councillors etc) given that the sums of money may well be substantial and there has to be public scrutiny of how the money is allocated. Certainly no Council Officers will be involved in this aspect.

There will be signage to indicate who to contact in the event of an incident or complaint so that these can be dealt with immediately. The CLC would cover more strategic issues and represent the more general concerns of those we represent. The existing complaints system to DCC would also apply where the response time is a few days.

Meetings of the CLC will not be open to the public. Elected members will represent the views of those that they represent. Various specialists may be invited to attend as and when necessary.

Iain Clifford
26 April 2017