

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
WHEATLEY HILL PARISH COUNCIL  
HELD ON MONDAY 12 MARCH 2012

Present: Councillor M Nicholls (Chair)  
Councillors Mrs E Carr, Mrs M Goyns, E Goyns,  
J R Lamb, B Maddison, Mrs M Nicholls,  
Mrs L Stewart and Mrs C Stogdale

1 THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING held on 13 February 2012, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were approved and signed by the Chair.

2 ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR - FRONT STREET

The Chair welcomed Mr C Morrow, a resident, who was in attendance at the meeting to discuss problems related to youths congregating on the Front Street, particularly over a weekend.

Mr Morrow explained that over a weekend there could be as many as fifty youths congregating on the Front Street. Such a large group of youths was intimidating and Mr Morrow's car had been scratched and damaged resulting in £300 to £400 worth of repairs.

PCSO Bowman advised that whilst it was not illegal for youths to congregate the Police did endeavour to split them up and move them on. It was acknowledged that such a large group of youths could be intimidating to residents. PCSO Bowman stressed the importance of reporting such incidences and asked Mr Morrow, together with other residents, to dial 101 each time an incident occurred.

Mr Morrow explained that youths often congregated in the middle of the road and it was only a matter of time before there was an accident involving one of the youths or a motorist. The youths were also causing a nuisance by banging on residential doors and windows.

PCSO Bowman advised that there was CCTV on the Front Street and it was hoped that a further camera would be installed in the near future.

The Street Wardens present at the meeting reiterated that residents needed to report problems to ensure they were officially recorded. The more evidence there was of anti-social behaviour the more resources could be diverted into the village.

Mr Morrow explained that only 3 to 4 houses were affected by the youths, as the properties was located between commercial properties. Once again PCSO Bowman stressed the importance of reporting all problems. The Police would then be in a position to take the necessary action.

Mr Morrow agreed that in future he would call and report all incidences.

PCSO Bowman advised that she would undertake a leaflet drop in the immediate vicinity advising residents of the problems occurring with regard to anti-social behaviour and asking people to report any further problems.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

**3 COMMUNITY POLICING**

The Chair welcomed PCSO S Bowman and PCSO A Jepson to the meeting.

The Officer advised that since the last meeting there had been 61 incidences reported which included 1 report of anti-social behaviour and 1 attempted burglary. Members were advised that there had been a 47% reduction across all areas of crime.

PCSO Bowman referred to the one report of anti-social behaviour which demonstrated that residents were not reporting problems related to anti-social behaviour.

The Chair reported that youths were congregating and drinking near the dog track. PCSO Bowman advised that the Police had not received any reports regarding this location but would monitor the situation and if necessary they would undertake home visits, particularly if the youths involved were very young.

The Chair made reference to an incident on 9 March 2012 involving a stolen car. The driver of the stolen vehicle set fire to a number of vehicles in Percy Street and crashed the stolen car into a number of vehicles. PCSO Bowman advised that she was aware of the incident, however, as the vehicle had been stolen from the Bishop Auckland area it was not included in the crime statistics for Wheatley Hill. Members were advised that the culprit had been arrested.

The Chair reported that vehicles were speeding along Jack Lawson Terrace and the Sure Start Centre. This incident would be reported to Durham County Council for investigation.

Councillor Mrs Carr reported that she had witnessed 3 children on horses on the road and all they had to keep the horses under control was a stick. The Police advised that there was very little they could do but they would investigate.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

**4 STREET WARDENS**

The Chair welcomed F Daghish and K Topping, Street Wardens from Durham County Council, to the meeting.

Members were advised that since the last meeting there had been 5 reported incidences which included problems associated with youths congregating, snowballs being thrown at residential properties and a fire at an allotment at Sandwich Terrace.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

**5 CORRESPONDENCE**

- (1) Request for Financial Assistance

(i) **Wheatley Hill Mothers Club**

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from Wheatley Hill Mothers Club to hold a celebratory evening to mark the Queens Jubilee in June 2012.

The Chair suggested that as the event was to be held in June 2012, the donation could be agreed in principle and the funds provided from the 2012/2013 Section 137 Budget.

**RESOLVED** that a donation of £300 be made from the Section 137 Budget for 2012/2013.

(2) **East Durham Association of Parish and Town Councils**

The Clerk advised that the Annual General Meeting of the East Durham Association of Parish and Town Councils would be held on 13 March 2012.

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

(3) **Variation of Premises Licence**

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence from Durham County Council's Licensing Unit advising that there had been a variation to the premises licence for the Co-op Food Store on Quilstyle Road.

Members were advised that the premises licence had been amended to allow the sale of alcohol Monday to Sunday between the hours of 6am and 11pm.

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

(4) **Tree Planting Event – 24 March 2012**

The Clerk advised that a tree planting event, organised by the Woodland Trust, would be held on 24 March 2012.

Members were advised that planting would take place between 11am and 1pm to the rear of the greyhound track. The event was free and trees would be provided.

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

(5) **East Durham Citizens Advice Bureau**

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence from the East Durham Citizens Advice Bureau advising of potential changes to the outreach services in Wheatley Hill.

Members were advised that the Board of East Durham Citizens Advise Bureau had recently met to consider the impact of the ending of European Leader

Funding for an outreach worker on 31 March and the ending of the 1 year AAP Neighbourhood Budget Funding of another worker on 30 June 2012.

In April 2012 the Citizens Advice Bureau would be reorganising the rota to enable the outreach service to remain open at their current frequency but with less staff. The changes affecting Wheatley Hill meant that the outreach service at the Greenhill's Centre would stay fortnightly but would change from a 3 hour session on a Monday morning to a 2 hour session on Monday afternoon. These cutbacks were happening across the district and were not limited to Wheatley Hill.

From July 2012, if AAP funding was not renewed the Citizens Advice Bureau would be forced to close outreach services in Wheatley Hill.

Last year County Councillors came together to use the neighbourhood budget to save the outreach service. The service in Wheatley Hill had seen an increase in numbers over recent months as changes in benefit regulations had started to bite.

The Citizens Advice Bureau had contacted the AAP Team and outlined the need to receive around £25,000 to keep all the outreach services open. In order to keep the outreach service open in Wheatley Hill, the Citizens Advice Bureau would require funding of £3,450 from a combination of AAP neighbourhood budgets and Parish Council funding.

Members discussed at length the outreach service provided for residents in Wheatley Hill and the funding provided by the Parish Council as well as funding provided by other Parish/Town Councils throughout the district.

Following discussion it was RESOLVED that the Clerk contact the Citizens Advice Bureau and request further information on the level of funding provided by other Parish/Town Councils within the district and the level of outreach service they received.

## 6 PLANNING MATTERS

There were no planning matters to report.

## 7 DELEGATES REPORTS

The Chair provided an update on the new health centre and reported that there had been a number of issues in relation to the planning application for the new health facility.

Members were advised that an open day consultation event would be held on 22 March 2012 and those invited included staff, patients, residents and Councillors. The local MP had also been invited to attend.

Members were advised that residents living in the immediate vicinity of the proposed facility would be advised, by letter, of the planning application.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

**8 HEAD GROUNDS PERSONS REPORT**

The Clerk advised that routine work had been undertaken in the Cemetery and around the village since the last meeting, details of which were outlined to Members.

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

**9 CLERK'S REPORT**

**(1) Allotments/Stable Blocks**

Councillor B Maddison made reference to allotment number 16 which was fire damaged during a fire at the allotments on 28 November 2011.

The Clerk advised that the Parish Council had not been made aware of any fire damage to allotment number 16.

It was suggested that a meeting of the Allotment Sub-Committee be held to allow Members the opportunity to view the damage to allotment number 16.

**RESOLVED** that an Allotment Sub-Committee be held on 15 March 2012 at 11am.

**(2) Request for Grit Bin – Johnson Estate**

The Clerk reported that Durham County Council had advised that Johnson Estate did not meet the criteria for a grit bin and the request had been denied.

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

**(3) Heritage Centre Alarm – Engineer Callout**

The Clerk reported that the alarm at the Heritage Centre was falsely activated when a photograph board fell off the wall. The engineer attended at a cost of £90 and all the boards had now been secured to the wall.

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

**(4) Christmas Wreaths**

The Clerk advised that currently Christmas Wreaths were not removed from the Cemetery until 1 March each year. By this time most, if not all, of the wreaths were dead and unsightly.

It was suggested that Christmas wreaths be removed at the latest by 1 February each year.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that all Christmas wreaths be removed from the Cemetery on 1 February each year.

(5) Request to Purchase Burial Plots

The Clerk reported that a request had been received from Mr G Tempest to purchase 2 burial plots on a section of land at the top of the Cemetery adjacent to the memorial wall. It was explained that this section of the Cemetery had previously been earmarked for burial plots but it would only be used when there was no further space in the Cemetery.

Members were advised that currently the following space was available in the Cemetery: -

Church of England – 130 spaces

Methodist – 133 spaces

Catholic – 42 spaces

A site meeting was held to allow Members the opportunity to view the area in question and following a lengthy discussion, it was suggested that the space currently available in the Cemetery be used before moving onto the section adjacent to the memorial wall.

The Clerk advised that since the site meeting Mr Tempest had purchased 2 burial plots currently available in the Cemetery.

RESOLVED that the space currently available in the Cemetery be used prior to using the land adjacent to the memorial wall.

(6) Contract Renewals

The Clerk reported that Durham County Council had submitted the following contracts for renewal: -

	This Year	Last Year
<b>Summer Bedding</b>		
Supply	3,306.00	3,209.50
Maintenance	1,724.00	1,673.75
<b>Winter Bedding</b>		
Supply	3,306.00	3,209.50
Maintenance	1,724.00	1,673.75
<b>Hanging Baskets</b>		
Supply	1,440.75	1,398.75

Installation and Removal	315.50	306.25
Watering	3,055.75	2,966.75
Servicing of Dog Bins	585.00	546.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£15,457.00</b>	<b>14,984.25</b>

The cost to renew the contracts was £15,457.00 plus £3,091.40 VAT. The increase in the contracts received was £472.75.

Members were advised that the contract for trade waste had not been received.

Members pointed out that last year the Parish Council had advised that hanging baskets should not be erected at The Knoll as this was now a private property. Members were concerned that the quotations provided included the 6 hanging baskets previously erected at The Knoll which needed to be erected elsewhere.

The Clerk suggested that Durham County Council be contacted regarding the hanging baskets at The Knoll.

**RESOLVED** that the contracts outlined within the report be accepted.

(7) Policies and Procedures

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council's policies and procedures were in the process of being uploaded onto the Council's new website. During this process the policies and procedures had been updated and Members were requested to adopt the following updated policies and procedures: -

Standing Orders  
Code of Conduct  
Freedom of Information Publication Scheme  
Internal Audit Policy  
Data Protection Policy  
Public Participation Policy  
Equal Opportunities Policy  
Health and Safety Policy

**RESOLVED** that the policies and procedures outlined be adopted.

(8) New Pony and Tub – Roundabout

The Clerk reported that following the last meeting, £500 had been paid from the Section 137 Budget to the Mid Durham Projects Club for the new pony and tub to be erected on the roundabout.

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

**(9) Small and Medium Local Councils Forum**

The Clerk reported that the inaugural meeting of the Small and Medium Councils Forum was held on 17 February 2012. Twenty councils were represented at the meeting which was roughly just under a quarter of all the small and medium councils in the County.

Members were advised that the next meeting would be held on 17 May 2012.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

**(10) Cemetery Wall**

The Clerk reported that Direct Services had advised that the final account, for £77,894.19, in relation to the new Cemetery wall had been raised. Direct Services had asked the Parish Council to confirm approval of the amount or raise any queries within 7 days.

The Clerk reported that Direct Services had been advised that the Parish Council had a number of concerns and outstanding issues in relation to the work carried out and did not intend to pay the full tender amount.

No further correspondence had been received from Direct Services and it was suggested that the Clerk contact Mr Burr and request a meeting to allow Members the opportunity to discuss their concerns.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

**(11) April Meeting**

The Clerk reported that the next Parish Council meeting was scheduled to be held on 9 April 2012 which was Easter Monday. It was suggested that the meeting be re-scheduled to 2 April 2012.

RESOLVED that the next meeting of Wheatley Hill Parish Council be held on 2 April 2012.

**10 PAYMENTS AND ORDERS**

The Clerk presented Members with a written report of all payments and receipts made since the last meeting.

Members were also provided with details of the financial position of the Parish Council in comparison with the Annual Budget.

RESOLVED that the report be received and the payments itemised be approved.

**11 RISK ASSESSMENT**

The Clerk advised that there was nothing to report.

**12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**(i) Damaged Path**

Councillor Mrs Stogdale reported that the tarmac path between Nimmo Cottages was in a bad state of repair. Discussion ensued on whether the path was a public right of way or a public footpath.

The Chair advised that he would make enquiries in relation to the path.

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

..... Signed

..... Dated