

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
WHEATLEY HILL PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON MONDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 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 9 July 2012, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were approved and signed by the Chair.

2 War Graves

The Chair welcomed Mr L Winard who was in attendance at the meeting to discuss the war graves in the Cemetery.

Reference was made to 4 graves from the First World War that were dirty and in need of a clean.

The Clerk advised that the graves would be inspected and Mr Winard would be advised of the outcome of the inspection.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

3 COMMUNITY POLICING

The Chair welcomed PCSO's I Goodwin and D Edson to the meeting.

The Officer reported that since 10 August 2012, there had been 39 reported incidences of anti-social behaviour, made up of 17 personal, 18 nuisance and 4 environmental reports. In addition there had been 2 reports of criminal damage and 1 report of criminal damage to a motor vehicle.

The Chair made reference to the on-going problem of vehicles parking on the yellow lines, outside the pizza shop at Vincent's corner and the problems this caused motorists with regard to road safety.

Councillor Mrs Stogdale advised that she had witnessed 2 large delivery vans parked on Vincent's corner which had obstructed the view of motorists and caused a road safety hazard.

Reference was made to problems related to children, as young as 7, riding on pony and traps along the Front Street and not wearing a helmet. The Police advised that there was no specific legislation to deal with this and the only possible solution was to look at by-laws which related to dangerous and furious riding. However, in order for the Police to

take any action, the offence needed to be videoed as evidence. This was a country wide problem and the Police had very few powers to do anything about it.

It was reported that the A181 had recently been blocked off to allow horses to be raced up and down both lanes of the A181. The Police agreed to investigate this matter further.

Councillor Maddison made reference to road safety issues on Durham Road. Vehicles were parking along both sides of the road and restricting visibility for other motorists. Reference was also made to a vehicle which was not displaying any tax and had been there for over a year.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

4 STREET WARDENS

The Chair welcomed F DGLISH and P PARNELL, Street Wardens from Durham County Council to the meeting. The Street Wardens advised that they would forward their monthly report to the Clerk.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

5 CORRESPONDENCE

(1) Requests for Financial Assistance

(i) Wheatley Hill Workingmen's Club Football Club

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from Wheatley Hill Workingmen's Club Football Club.

RESOLVED that a donation of £200 be made from the Section 137 Budget.

(ii) Wheatley Hill Constitutional Dart Club

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from Wheatley Hill Constitutional Dart Club.

RESOLVED that a donation of £50 be made from the Section 137 Budget.

(2) Letters of Thanks

The Clerk reported the receipt of the following letters of thanks: -

Wheatley Hill Women's Section - Royal British Legion
Wheatley Hill Constitutional Club

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(3) East Durham Citizens Advice Bureau

(i) Annual General Meeting

The Clerk reported that the Annual General Meeting of the East Durham Citizens Advice Bureau would be held on 19 September 2012.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(ii) Annual Financial Contribution

The Clerk reported that following the last meeting of the Parish Council held on 9 July 2012, the Clerk had contacted the East Durham Citizens Advice Bureau to express the Parish Council's disappointment at the withdrawal of the outreach service in Wheatley Hill.

The Clerk had contacted neighbouring Parish and Town Councils to ascertain the level of grant funding they provided to the Bureau and the level of service received, details of which was outlined to Members.

Since the last meeting it had come to light that the Bureau were holding a monthly session at Wheatley Hill Sure Start Children's Centre. Members expressed concern that neither the Parish Council, the Parish Council's representative on the Bureau nor the Chair of the Parish Council had been notified of this service.

Following a lengthy discussion in relation to the withdrawal of the outreach service in Wheatley Hill it was RESOLVED that no further contribution be made to the East Durham Citizens Advice Bureau.

(4) East Durham Association of Town and Parish Councils

The Clerk reported that the next meeting of the East Durham Association of Town and Parish Councils would be held on 11 September 2012.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(5) St John Ambulance

The Clerk reported the receipt of an invitation for Members to attend the Annual Curry/Buffer Lunch on 14 October 2012.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(6) Standards Information Session

The Clerk reported the receipt of an invitation to an information session on the new Standards procedures which had recently been introduced. The session would be held on 11 October 2012 at County Hall.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(7) Durham County Council Standards Committee

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence which gave details of the County Council's revised Terms and Conditions for the "new" Durham County Council Standards Committee following the demise of the previous Standards for England regime.

Details of the composition of the Standards Committee together with its role and function were provided.

Members were also advised that the Standards Committee would appoint a Parish and Town Council Sub Committee comprising of 3 Councillors. The remit of the Sub Committee would be to support Parish and Town Councillors and their Clerks in maintaining high standards of conduct.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(8) Police and Crime Commissioner for County Durham and Darlington Workshop

The Clerk reported the receipt of an invitation to attend a stakeholder event to raise awareness of the changes and transition work in progress to enable a seamless handover of governance to the incoming Police and Crime Commissioner for County Durham and Darlington.

The workshop would be held on 25 September 2012.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(9) The County Durham Plan

The Clerk reported that the County Durham Plan would guide development and change in County Durham over the next 15 to 20 years. The plan focused on driving economic growth and therefore made important decisions and choices about how and where new development would be located.

The Preferred Options of the Plan included new strategic policies and proposed specific allocations for new housing, jobs, shops and infrastructure across the County.

The Preferred Options document was available to view at local libraries and customer access points across County Durham.

Members were advised that there was a programme of exhibitions and public consultations taking place across the County during September and October, details of which were outlined to Members.

The Clerk advised that the Parish Council would receive a hard copy of the plan and sections related to Wheatley Hill would be copied for Members information.

The Parish Council had until 2 November 2012 to comment on the plan.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(10) Emergency Footpath Closure

The Clerk reported details of the emergency closure of footpath number 7 Thornley Parish and footpath number 15 Wheatley Hill Parish.

The closure was necessary by reason of likelihood of danger to the public and to permit works to be carried out to the footpath.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(11) Wind Farm – Wingate Grange Farm

The Clerk reported that Infinis Wind Holdings Limited had submitted a planning application, to Durham County Council, for a 5 turbine wind farm on land at Wingate Grange Farm.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(12) Dog Fouling

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence from Mrs Stokoe of 15 Gable Terrace, Wheatley Hill expressing concern at the level of dog fouling in Wheatley Hill.

Members were advised that Mrs Stokoe had reported the problem to Durham County Council several times but nothing was being done to alleviate the problem.

RESOLVED that the issue of dog fouling in Wheatley Hill be referred to Durham County Council.

6 PLANNING MATTERS

There were no planning matters to report.

7 DELEGATES REPORTS

(i) Health Centre

The Chair reported that a planning application for the new health centre in Wheatley Hill had been submitted to Durham County Council.

(ii) Changes to Arriva Bus Services

The Chair reported that discussions were underway between the County Council and Arriva in relation to bus services that would affect residents living in Wheatley Hill, particularly services to Peterlee and Hartlepool.

Members were advised that the proposals to withdraw certain services were being instigated by Arriva and not Durham County Council.

It was suggested that the Clerk contact Mr Adrian White, Head of Transport, Durham County Council and request an update for Members.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

8 HEAD GROUNDSPERSONS REPORT

(i) General

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

(i) Waiting List

The Clerk reported that Mr F Walton, formerly of 4 Cain Terrace, Wheatley Hill no longer lived in the village and would be removed from the Parish Council's waiting list for an allotment.

Members were advised that an application for an allotment had been received from Mr S Harper of 36 Luke Terrace, Wheatley Hill.

RESOLVED that: -

- (1) Mr F Walton be removed from the Parish Council's waiting list for an allotment,**
- (2) Mr S Harper of 36 Luke Terrace, Wheatley Hill be accepted onto the Parish Council's waiting list for an allotment**

(ii) Vacant Plots

The Clerk reported that an Allotment Sub Committee was held on 6 September 2012 to discuss vacancies at the allotment site.

- Mr G Dilks – Allotments Numbered 2, 8 and 9

The Clerk reported that Mr Dilks, the tenant of allotments numbered 2, 8 and 9 had recently passed away. Mr S Townley, the tenant of allotment number 10 and joint tenant of stable blocks 11 and 12, had been assisting Mr Dilks with allotments numbered 8 and 9 prior to his death.

In addition, Mr S Harper of 36 Luke Terrace, Wheatley Hill had been assisting Mr Dilks with allotment number 2.

It had come to light that Mr Dilks had been sub-letting allotment number 2 to Mr Harper.

Mr Harper, in good faith, had been paying the rent on this allotment and had been assured by Mr Dilks that he was on the waiting list for an allotment.

Following discussion, it was RESOLVED that: -

- (1) Mr S Townley of 25 Granville Terrace, Wheatley Hill be allocated allotments numbered 8 and 9
- (2) Mr S Harper of 36 Luke Terrace, Wheatley Hill be allocated allotment number 2

- **Mr A Maughan – Allotment Number 13**

The Clerk reported that a request had been received from Mr Maughan, the tenant of allotment number 13, to transfer his tenancy to Mr B Walton of 43 Jack Lawson Terrace, Wheatley Hill.

Members were advised that Mr Walton was not on the Parish Council's waiting list for an allotment and was therefore not eligible to the tenancy.

Allotment number 13 was in a poor condition and appeared not to have been worked on in a long time.

RESOLVED that the Clerk contact Mr Maughan and advise that he was not authorised to transfer his tenancy to Mr B Walton and if his allotment was not kept in a good condition, in line with the tenancy agreement, the Parish Council would have no option but to terminate his tenancy.

- **Mr A Stevenson – Allotment Number 14**

The Clerk reported that this allotment was in a poor state and appeared not to have been worked on in a long time.

Members were reminded that there had previously been allegations with regard to this allotment being sold, or the tenancy being transferred.

RESOLVED that the Clerk contact Mr Stevenson with regard to the poor state of the allotment and advise that it must be kept in a good condition, in line with the tenancy agreement, otherwise the Parish Council would have no option but to terminate his tenancy.

- **Stable Block 23**

The Clerk advised that it had been the intention of the Parish Council to divide stable block number 23 into 2 allotments and allocate one each to Mrs J Dinsdale and Mr Barnett.

Members were advised that a site meeting was held to discuss the division of the stable block. However, Mrs Dinsdale and Mr Barnett failed to attend the meeting. Both have since confirmed that they are still interested in an allotment.

RESOLVED that the allocation of stable block number 23 be deferred.

(iii) **Allotment Rents**

The Clerk sought clarification from Members with regard to the annual allotment rents.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** that no increase be implemented and allotment rents remain at their current rate for 2012/2013.

(2) **Cemetery Wall**

The Clerk reported that the final invoice, in the sum of £70,000 plus £14,000 VAT, had been paid to Durham County Council for the new Cemetery wall.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(3) **Annual Audit 2012**

The Clerk reported that BDO LLP had completed the Annual Audit for the year ended 31 March 2012 and there were no separate issues that required attention.

In accordance with the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011, the Notice of Conclusion of Audit would be displayed for a minimum of 14 days.

The cost of the Annual Audit was £660.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(4) **Heritage Centre Extension - Update**

The Clerk provided Members with an update on proposals to erect a small conservatory to the side of the Heritage Centre.

Members were advised that the Heritage Society had contacted Durham County Council's planning section and had entered into pre-planning negotiations regarding the conservatory.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted and further developments be awaited.

(5) Annual Insurance Premium

The Clerk reported that the Annual Insurance premium for 2012/2013 had been received from Zurich Municipal in the sum of £6,568.17. The previous year's premium was £6,474.25, an increase of £93.92

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(6) Code of Conduct

The Clerk reported that at the last meeting of the Parish Council Members adopted the revised Code of Conduct, issued by NALC.

Members were advised that since that meeting and following the DCLG's guidance (A Guide for Councillors on Personal Interests) which was issued on 1 August, NALC had subsequently issued an updated version of the Code which incorporated the DCLG's latest definition of disclosable pecuniary interests.

It was therefore necessary for the Parish Council to approve and adopt the new Code of Conduct which included the updated Appendix A, which outlined the revised DCLG disclosable pecuniary interest definitions, details of which were outlined to Members.

RESOLVED that the revised Code of Conduct be adopted.

(7) ROSPA – Playing Field Safety Inspection Report

The Clerk reported the receipt of the annual ROSPA inspection carried out at the football pitch at Quilstyle Road. The Clerk took Members through the content of the report and outlined any actions that were required.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

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 MANAGEMENT

The Clerk advised that there was nothing to report.

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(i) Cemetery Fees

Councillor Maddison suggested that a copy of the Parish Council's Cemetery Fees be placed in the Noticeboard.

(ii) Planning Application – Durham Road

Councillor Maddison reported the receipt of a request from a resident in Durham Road for information regarding an extension to a neighbouring property. The Clerk advised that she would provide the details of Durham County Councils Planning Section to Councillor Maddison.

(iii) Overgrown Hedging

Councillor Mrs Stogdale reported that overgrown hedging, on the footpath opposite Office Street, needed to be cut back.

Councillor Mrs Goyns reported that a Hawthorne hedge, next to the Doctor's surgery, also required cutting back.

..... Signed

..... Dated