

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE**

**WHEATLEY HILL PARISH COUNCIL**

**HELD ON MONDAY 8 OCTOBER 2012**

**Present:** Councillor M Nicholls (Chair)  
Councillors J R Lamb, B Maddison, Mrs M Nicholls  
and Mrs C Stogdale

**Apologies:** Mrs E Carr, Mrs M Goyns, E Goyns and Mrs L Stewart

**1 THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** held on 10 September 2012, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were approved and signed by the Chair.

**2 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

The Chair welcomed Mr and Mrs Cairns of 5 Cypress View, Wheatley Hill who raised the following issues: -

- Request for bollard – Members were advised that Mr and Mrs Cairns had requested a bollard to be located on the corner of Cypress View. The Chair explained that the request had been passed to Durham County Council and the bollard should be installed within the next 2 weeks.
- Request for Salt Bin - Mr and Mrs Cairns requested a salt bin to be located at Cypress View. It was explained that there was a slight camber to the road and in bad weather it caused problems to motorists. The Chair explained that Durham County Council had strict criteria to assess requests for new salt bins. All requests for new salt bins had to be submitted to the Highway Action Line for assessment. The criteria used to assess the location for a salt bin included, the gradient of the road, bends, traffic type and flow, pedestrian activity, if it was a priority 1 or 2 treated route and if it was a bus route, etc.

It was explained that the Parish Council could submit a request to Durham County Council for a salt bin at Cypress View.

- St Godric's Catholic School - Chicanes - Mr and Mrs Cairns explained that the chicanes at this location were continually being damaged and repaired by Durham County Council. It was felt that the chicanes were not doing their job and speed humps would be a better option.

The Police reported that a Speed Watch was undertaken at Durham Road and 30 out of 43 vehicles were found to be speeding. The same exercise was carried out on Woodlands Avenue and 1 out of 16 vehicles were speeding.

The Police would continue to monitor the situation and issue speeding fines where necessary.

The Chair advised that he would speak to M Stubbs, Traffic Management, Durham Constabulary and request a site meeting be held at this location to further assess speeding traffic.

- Co-operative Store - Mr and Mrs Cairns made reference to the steps at the Co-op which were strewn with litter, rubbish, glass and tyres. The Street Wardens reported that there were problems regarding ownership of this area of land. In the past Durham County Council had cleaned the area, but it was not their land and therefore not their responsibility. The Street Wardens agreed to investigate further.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

### 3 COMMUNITY POLICING

The Chair welcomed PC Pallas and PCSO Goodwin to the meeting.

The Officer reported that since the last meeting there had been 75 reported incidences, which included 1 theft, 1 vehicle damage, 2 assaults, 1 burglary, 1 criminal damage, 1 vehicle damage and 1 motor vehicle causing an obstruction. There had been a number of incidences related to anti-social behaviour, particularly on the Front Street. PCSO A Jepson was aware of the problem and was endeavouring to get the names of the youths involved and speak to the parents if necessary.

Members were advised that the number of incidences reported was down 46% on last year's figures.

With regard to off-road bikes, there appeared to have been an improvement in the situation. Mr and Mrs Cairns advised that they had witnessed 5 or 6 off-road bikes on a regular basis at Black Lane, between 4pm and 5pm.

The Officer referred to the problem of children riding pony and traps along the Front Street and once again advised that there was no specific legislation to deal with this unless they were causing an obstruction.

The Chair advised that he had received written advice in relation to this problem from Lord McKenzie, which inferred that the Police did have powers to deal with this problem. The Chair passed the information received from Lord McKenzie to the Police.

The Officer referred to the recent re-deployment of the PCSO for Wheatley Hill and advised that the Parish Councils concerns had been brought to the attention of the Inspector, who would speak direct to the Chair of the Parish Council.

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.

The Street Wardens advised that since the last meeting they had received 9 calls which included 1 related to anti-social behaviour, 4 rowdy/nuisances complaints, 2 fly-tipping and 1 clean-up request.

The Chair made reference to the continuing problem of the state of gardens at numerous properties throughout Wheatley Hill, particularly where there were absentee Landlords. The Street Wardens advised that they were aware of the problem and legal notices had been served and some of the properties had been referred to Environmental Health. It was acknowledged that the process was very slow and everything possible was being done to alleviate the problem.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

5 CORRESPONDENCE

(1) Requests for Financial Assistance

(i) Greenhills Centre - Children's Christmas Party

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from the Greenhills Centre towards the children's Christmas party.

RESOLVED that a donation of £150 be made from the Section 137 Budget.

(ii) Greenhills Centre - Elderly Members Christmas Parties

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from the Greenhills Centre towards the Elderly Members Christmas parties.

RESOLVED that a donation of £150 be made from the Section 137 Budget.

(iii) Greyhound Rescue North East

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request from Ms M Williams, requesting financial assistance towards a small family run rescue charity, based in Wheatley Hill, to help abandoned and neglected dogs.

Members were advised as Ms Williams had provided very little information about the charity. The Clerk had requested Ms Williams to provide further information regarding the charity such as an address for where the charity was based, the role of the charity, how long it had been in operation, what costs were involved and how many dogs were helped in Wheatley Hill.

Members were advised that Ms Williams had failed to respond to the request for further information.

The Clerk had undertaken some research and it was thought that the charity referred to was Greyhound Rescue North East, which was based in Sunderland.

Following discussion, and due to the lack of any information regarding the charity concerned, it was **RESOLVED** that no donation be made.

(iv) **Wheatley Hill Constitutional Club – Members Christmas Party**

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from Wheatley Hill Constitutional Club towards the Members Christmas party.

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

(2) **Letter of Thanks**

The Clerk reported the receipt of a letter of thanks from Wheatley Hill Constitutional Dart Club.

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

(3) **County Durham Association of Local Councils – Annual General Meeting**

The Clerk reported that the Annual General Meeting of the County Durham Association of Local Councils would be held on 3 November 2012.

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

(4) **Durham Rural Community Council – Autumn Meeting**

The Clerk reported that the autumn meeting of the Durham Rural Community Council would be held on 18 October 2012.

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

(5) **Parish/Town Council Update**

The Clerk reported that a Town and Parish Council update event would be held on 29 October 2012 at Bowburn Community Centre.

The event had been planned jointly between Durham County Council, the County Durham Association of Local Councils and Durham Rural Community Council.

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

(6) Community Conservation

The Clerk reported that Durham County Council Countryside Services were holding a conservation event on the Haswell to Hart railway path on 28 October 2012.

The purpose of the event was to cut and rake a section of the railway path to encourage a new area of wildflower meadow to develop.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(7) Haswell and District Mencap Society - Carol Service

The Clerk reported the receipt of an invitation for Members to attend the annual Mencap Carol Service on 8 December 2012.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

6 PLANNING MATTERS

Consideration was given to the following planning applications received from Durham County Council: -

Demolition of existing surgery and rebuild new two storey premises at The Surgery, Thornley Road, Wheatley Hill for Mr J Chandy.

Retrospective application for the erection of 3 no. radio aerial antennas at 105 Johnson Estate, Wheatley Hill for Mr G Tuck.

Proposed general purpose agricultural building on land to the east of Weardale Park for Mr W Howe.

With reference to the application for the 3 radio aerial antennas at Johnson Estate, the Chair advised that a number of residents had objected, however, most of the objections had been made verbally and it was unlikely that further representations, from residents, would be made in writing.

Members were advised that the erection of the aerials had affected television signals on the estate.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

7 DELEGATES REPORTS

There was nothing to report.

8 HEAD GROUNDSPERSONS REPORT

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

Members were provided with details of waiting lists for allotments and stable blocks.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(ii) Annual Allotment Rents

The Clerk reported that a letter requesting the annual allotment rent for 2012/13 had been issued to all tenants.

Members were advised that following the last meeting, the Parish Council had contacted Mr Stevenson regarding allotment number 14 and the poor condition of this allotment. Mr Stevenson was advised that the allotment must be kept in good condition, in line with the tenancy agreement, otherwise the Parish Council would look to terminate the tenancy.

Members were advised that Mr Stevenson had forwarded a cheque for the annual rent on allotment 14. However, there had been very little improvement at the allotment.

Following discussion it was suggested that Mr Stevenson be contacted and advised that the Parish Council would not accept his rent until he had undertaken improvements at the allotment. Members would then discuss the situation at the November meeting of the Parish Council and if there was no improvement at the allotment, Members may take the decision to terminate the tenancy.

It was also suggested that Mr Stevenson be invited to meet Members on site or alternatively he could attend the next meeting of the Parish Council.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(iii) Rats

The Clerk reported that a number of complaints had been received in relation to rats at the allotments.

The Clerk had contacted Durham County Council and was advised that they would send a Pest Control Officer to the site, but each individual allotment holder would be required to contact the County Council direct. This was so the County Council could make each allotment holder aware of any poison they put down in the area.

Members were advised that this information, together with the phone number for Durham County Council, had been included in the annual rent letter.

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

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

The Clerk reported that a meeting between Mrs M Hedley, representing the Heritage Society and a Planner and Conservation Officer from Durham County Council was held on 19 September 2012.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the proposal for the erection of a small conservatory to the side of the Heritage Centre.

Members were advised that the Planner and Conservation Officer did not have any initial objections to the proposals and discussions were ongoing.

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

**(3) Greenhills Centre – Skate Park**

The Clerk reported that the Greenhills Centre had advised that they were considering submitting an expression of interest to the Big Lottery regarding the possibility of a skate park at the Centre.

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

**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) Housing – Wheatley Hill**

The Chair reported that he had a meeting scheduled with Mr S Timmiss, Head of Planning, Durham County Council to discuss future housing provision in Wheatley Hill.

**(ii) Changes to Arriva Bus Services - 21/21A**

The Chair reported that proposals were underway to remove the 21 and 21A service in Wheatley Hill. The removal of this service would affect residents living in Wheatley Hill, particularly those wishing to get to Peterlee, Stockton and Middlesbrough. Residents needed to get to work either early morning or return late at night. Reference was also made to the services provided for wheelchair users and it was feared that the removal of this service would result in no low level bus service being provided for wheelchair users in Wheatley Hill.

The Chair explained that he was aware of a meeting that was held in Wingate to discuss the proposed changes to Arriva bus services but it was unclear who had arranged the meeting.

It was suggested that the Clerk contact Mr A White, Head of Transport, Durham County Council expressing the Parish Council's concern at the removal of this service.

**RESOLVED that:-**

- (i) the information given, be noted**
- (ii) the Clerk contact Mr A White, Head of Transport, Durham County Council regarding the proposed changes to the 21/21A service.**

..... Signed

..... Dated