

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
WHEATLEY HILL PARISH COUNCIL  
HELD ON MONDAY 10 DECEMBER 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 12 November 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 to the meeting.

Mr and Mrs Cairns referred to the request submitted to Durham County Council for a salt bin to be located at Cypress View.

Members were advised that during the recent bad weather a car had slid, on the ice, into the wall on the corner of Cypress View. Mr Cairns was concerned that it was only a matter of time before a fatal accident occurred at this location.

Mr Cairns reported that Durham County Council had advised that Cypress View did not qualify for a salt bin as it did not meet the County Council's criteria.

The Clerk advised that Durham County Council had been contacted regarding the possibility of the Parish Council purchasing salt bins for the village. The County Council had advised that if a particular location did not meet the County's criteria for salt bin, then a privately purchased salt bin could not be placed in this location.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

3 COMMUNITY POLICING

The Chair welcomed PCSO C McCombe and PCSO N Bowman to the meeting.

The Officer reported that since the last meeting there had been 73 incidences reported. This included 8 anti-social behaviour, 11 personal, 2 environmental, 3 theft, 1 criminal damage, 1 attempted burglary and 1 theft from a motor vehicle.

With regard to problems associated with youths on scooters, incidences appeared to have decreased and there had been fewer calls in relation to this. Hotspot areas had been patrolled by PCSO A Jepson and she was also speaking to the youths involved.

The untaxed vehicle parked to the rear of the Jet garage had been reported to the DVLA.

Members were advised that compared to last year general crime had reduced by 48% and anti-social behaviour was down 10%.

The Officer warned that during the recent cold spell there had been a number of incidences involving residents starting their cars and leaving them to defrost with the keys in the ignition. Subsequently these vehicles were stolen and Police were warning residents not to leave vehicles unattended with the keys in the ignition.

The Police provided details of operation “Hawkeye”. This involved the Police patrolling vehicles and if valuables were on display in the car then the owner would be contacted and advised that their car had been spotted with valuables on display. In addition, in the lead up to Christmas the Police were warning residents to keep their doors locked. Opportunist criminals were randomly trying doors and stealing household items if they managed to gain access.

Members were asked to follow Peterlee Police on Twitter and Facebook, where updates on various crimes and incidences were regularly uploaded.

The Chair thanked the Police for the good work and progress that had been made throughout 2012.

At this point the Chair introduced Inspector D Coxon, Durham Constabulary and Mr T Wood, Senior Anti-Social Behaviour Officer, Durham County Council.

Inspector Coxon proceeded to provide Members with an update on problems associated with properties in Burns Street and Shakespeare Street, Wheatley Hill.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

**4 STREET WARDENS**

There were no Street Wardens present at the meeting.

**5 CORRESPONDENCE**

**(1) Requests for Financial Assistance**

**(i) Wheatley Hill Heritage Society**

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from Wheatley Hill Heritage Society towards the cost of the publication of a booklet commemorating the birth of Peter Lee.

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

**(ii) Wheatley Hill History Club**

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from Wheatley Hill History Club to assist towards the cost of a local family history day to be held in September 2013.

The Chair suggested that as the local family history day was to be held in September 2013, the donation could be agreed in principle and the funds provided from the 2013/2014 Section 137 Budget.

It was further suggested that if no further requests were received by the end of the financial year then the money would be allocated from the 2012/2013 Budget.

**RESOLVED** that a donation of £300 be made from the Section 137 Budget for either 2012/2013 or 2013/2014.

**(2) Letters of Thanks**

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

Great North Air Ambulance  
The "Over 20's" Club  
Wheatley Hill Mother's Club

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

**(3) County Durham Plan**

The Clerk reported that Peterlee Town Council was hosting a meeting to discuss the County Durham Plan on 11 December 2012, at Shotton Hall, Peterlee.

Members were advised that Durham County Council had been requested to attend a meeting of the Wheatley Hill Parish Council, but this request had been declined.

It was suggested that the Clerk contact Durham County Council and request that an Officer attend the parish meeting in January 2013 to discuss with Members the County Durham Plan.

**RESOLVED** that the Clerk contact Durham County Council with a request for an officer to attend the January meeting of the Parish Council.

**(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 December 2012.

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

**(5) B1279 Thornley Road – Proposed Traffic Calming Alterations**

The Clerk reported that Durham County Council was undertaking a scheme to alter the existing traffic calming features on the B1279 Thornley Road, Wheatley Hill.

The purpose of the scheme was to encourage slower vehicle speeds along this section of road and improve road safety by reducing the number of accidents.

**RESOLVED** that Durham County Council be advised that Wheatley Hill Parish Council had no objections to the proposed scheme.

**(6) Dog Fouling Stencils**

The Clerk reported that the Neighbourhood Wardens, Durham County Council were piloting a scheme aimed to reduce the amount of dog fouling in public areas.

When Wardens undertake enforcement patrols in public areas, they will apply an educational stencil on the path in the area being patrolled.

The stencil would be applied with non-permanent water based paint, which would fade in 4 to 8 days, depending on weather conditions.

**RESOLVED** that the Neighbourhood Wardens be advised that Wheatley Hill Parish Council had no objection to the proposed scheme.

**6 PLANNING MATTERS**

**Approvals**

Retrospective application for the erection of 3 No. radio aerial antennas at 105 Johnson Estate, Wheatley Hill, DH6 3LH for Mr G Tuck.

Members expressed concern that since this application was approved Mr Tuck had erected more than 3 radio aerial antennas and had also erected an aerial in a neighbour's garden.

**RESOLVED** that the Clerk contact Durham County Council in relation to this matter.

**7 DELEGATES REPORTS**

There was nothing to report.

**8 HEAD GROUNDSPERSONS REPORT**

**(i) General**

The Clerk reported 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 all allotment rents had been paid.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(2) Salt Bins

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council had submitted a number of requests to Durham County Council for additional salt bins to be located in Wheatley Hill.

Unfortunately all of the requests had been refused on the basis that the locations requested did not meet the County Council's criteria.

As previously reported, the Parish Council had approached Durham County Council with a request to purchase salt bins. Unfortunately this request was declined by Durham County Council. The reason for the refusal was that if a particular location did not meet the County Council's criteria then a salt bin would not be allowed whoever provided it.

The Clerk advised that if the County Council continued to supply the Parish Council with salt, then all existing salt bins would be filled. In areas where there were no salt bins, the Parish Council would endeavor to provide salt to residents.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(3) Estimates of Expenditure 2013/2014

The Clerk reported that the Government had published its response to the consultation on the Localising Council Tax Support Scheme.

Members were advised that the Governments response to the consultation would change the basis on which Council Tax bases were calculated. Information previously supplied by Durham County Council would now change as a result of the release of the Governments response to the consultation.

It was reported that the County Association had a meeting with Durham County Council on 12 December 2012 to discuss the implications.

Durham County Council's Cabinet would be considering the outcome of the consultation process at its meeting to be held on 19 December 2012. The recommendations being put to Cabinet would have a financial impact on the Council, details of which were outlined.

With this in mind, Parish Councils had been requested to delay determining their precepts until the position regarding the Council Tax base and distribution of the grant had been resolved by the County Council and the County Association.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted and the Councils Estimates of Expenditure be approved at a Special Meeting to be held on 14 January 2013.

(4) Ex-Gratia Christmas Payments

The Chair suggested that an ex-gratia Christmas payment of £150 be made to J Davies, D Lamb and J Thompson.

RESOLVED that approval be granted for an ex-gratia payment of £150 to J Davies, D Lamb and J Thompson from the Chair's account.

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) Changes to Arriva Bus Services

The Chair made reference to changes to Arriva services which were implemented in October 2012.

Members were advised that the Chair had contacted Arriva North East in his capacity as Portfolio Holder for Adult Services at Durham County Council and suggested that the Parish Council send a similar letter.

RESOLVED that the Clerk write to Arriva North East expressing the concerns of the Parish Council at the changes made to Arriva services.

..... Signed

..... Dated