

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE

WHEATLEY HILL PARISH COUNCIL

HELD ON MONDAY 28 JANUARY 2013

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

Apologies: Councillor Mrs E Carr

1 THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING held on 10 December 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 R Jackson to the meeting.

Mr Jackson raised the following issues: -

- Council Minutes – Mr Jackson requested that a copy of the Parish Council minutes be displayed at Wheatley House.
- Wheatley House – Heating – Mr Jackson made reference to the heating at Wheatley House. The Clerk advised that Wheatley House was not owned by the Parish Council and therefore any issues related to the heating was out of the Parish Councils control.
- Salt Bin – Mr Jackson requested a salt bin to be located at Weardale Park.

The Clerk explained that all requests for new salt bins had to be made to Durham County Council via their Highways Action Line. The County Council would then assess the location of each request against their criteria. 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.

The Clerk suggested that a resident from Weardale Park contact the Parish Council and provide details of where the bin was required to enable the Parish Council to submit a request on their behalf.

The Chair thanked Mr Jackson for his attendance at the meeting whereupon he left.

3 COMMUNITY POLICING

The Chair welcomed PCSO's I Goodwin and A Davis to the meeting.

The Officer reported that since the last meeting there had been 93 incidences reported, which included 9 anti-social behaviour, 8 nuisance, 2 burglaries, 4 thefts and 2 criminal damage.

With regard to the incidences related to anti-social behaviour and nuisance, PCSO A Jepson, had identified the youths involved and letters would be sent to their parents.

The Officer referred to the problems associated with vehicles parking outside schools in Wheatley Hill and advised that PCSO A Jepson would provide statistics at the next meeting.

With regard to parking problems being experienced at Johnson Estate it was proposed to undertake a leaflet drop which would also include Woodlands Avenue and East View.

Members were advised that figures related to both anti-social behaviour and crime overall were down on a month to month basis as well as on last year's figures.

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

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted and a letter of thanks be forwarded to Durham Constabulary

4 STREET WARDENS

The Chair welcomed K Topping, Street Warden, Durham County Council to the meeting.

K Topping reported that since the last meeting 11 calls had been received which included fly tipping, anti-social behaviour, dog fouling and nuisance complaints.

The Chair once again expressed concern at the number of empty properties in Wheatley Hill, particularly in Granville and Alexander Terrace.

The Chair advised that he had contacted Mr A Hunter, Durham County Council, to establish who owned the properties and if a property was rented out, who the tenant was. K Topping advised the Street Wardens were liaising with the Officers investigating these properties and Mr Hunter would be providing feedback to Councillor Nicholls.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

5 CORRESPONDENCE

(1) Requests for Financial Assistance

(i) County of Durham School Benevolent Fund

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from the County of Durham School Benevolent Fund.

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

(ii) Greenhills Centre

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from the Greenhills Centre to help with on-going operational costs, particularly those related to utilities and insurance.

Members discussed the financial position of the Greenhills Centre together with the current financial position of the Council's Section 137 Budget.

As the Parish Council was still to agree the final detail of its Section 137 Budget for 2013/14 it was suggested that consideration of this matter be deferred.

RESOLVED that the Clerk contact the Greenhills Centre and advise that consideration of the request for financial assistance had been deferred.

(2) Letters of Thanks

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

- Wheatley Hill Angling Club
- 2nd Wheatley Hill Scouts
- Wheatley Hill Heritage Society and History Club
- Wheatley Hill Constitutional Club – Women's Dart Club

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(3) Royal Garden Party 2013

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence from the County Durham Association of Local Councils advising that they had been allocated 2 places to attend the Royal Garden Party to be held on 30 May 2013.

RESOLVED that Councillor Mrs Stewart be nominated to attend the Royal Garden Party on behalf of Wheatley Hill Parish Council.

(4) Wingate Lane Post Office

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence from the Post Office advising of proposed changes to Wingate Lane Post Office.

Members were advised that the branch would close for approximately 3 days during March for refurbishment. Following the refurbishment Post Office services would be offered from a till on the retail counter in a modern open plan branch instead of from the separate security screened counter. The branch would also be open for longer hours and some services provided at the branch would change.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(5) Wingate Grange Wind Farm

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence from Infinis Wind Holdings Limited in relation to the proposed wind farm at Wingate Grange Farm.

Infinis had been made aware of letters of concern that had been submitted to Durham County Council regarding the planning application. The correspondence aimed to address those concerns and outlined what Infinis felt to be misconceptions surrounding the project.

The Clerk reported that a representative from Infinis Wind Holdings Limited would be attending the next meeting of the Parish Council to be held on 11 February 2013.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(6) Police and Crime Commissioner – Community Panels

The Clerk reported that the Police and Crime Commissioner, Mr R Hogg, proposed to establish a series of community panels to monitor local policing and crime issues. Each panel would comprise of a maximum of 50 people and would meet a minimum of 4 times per year.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

6 PLANNING MATTERS

(1) Applications

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

Proposed hardstanding and wooden boundary fence (part retrospective) at land south of Wingate Quarry, Wingate for Mr J Adamson.

RESOLVED that no objection or comment be made to Durham County Council.

(2) Enforcement

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

The Clerk reported that following the last meeting, Durham County Council's planning section was advised that Mr Tuck had erected more than the 3 radio aerial antennas he had approval for. Members were advised that an Enforcement Officer had undertaken a site visit and established that Mr Tuck would take down the unauthorised aerials by the end of January 2013.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

7 DELEGATES REPORTS

There was nothing to report.

8 HEAD GROUNDSPERSONS REPORT

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) Enforcement

The Clerk reported that the Police had contacted the Parish Council in relation to alleged criminal activity taking place at the allotments. The Parish Council had agreed to work with the Police to resolve some of the problems related to sub-letting and improper use of the plots.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(2) Heritage Centre

The Clerk reported that a meeting was held with Planning and Conservation Officers from Durham County Council on 16 January 2013, to discuss proposals to extend the Heritage Centre.

Members were advised that the Conservation Officer had concerns regarding the proposed conservatory type extension and had suggested that a brick extension to the rear of the building would be more suitable.

Discussions were ongoing and it was proposed to hold a joint meeting between the Parish Council and the Heritage Society to bring everyone up to date with the current proposals.

The Clerk advised that as an alternative to a costly brick extension portable office accommodation, for use by Parish Council staff, was being investigated. Portable office accommodation was a cheaper option and could be sited to the rear of the building. The portable office unit would provide a secure workplace for staff as well as secure storage.

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

(3) Winter Maintenance

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council had undertaken winter maintenance on behalf of the County Council during the recent spell of heavy snowfall.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(4) Dog Bins

The Clerk reported that Durham County Council had erected 2 new dog bins.

New bins were now located at the top of Quetlaw Road and in the vicinity of the demolished houses at Henderson Avenue.

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) Winter Maintenance

Councillor Mrs Goyns made reference to the work undertaken by the County Council in keeping the main roads open during the recent heavy snowfall.

RESOLVED that Durham County Council be thanked for the work undertaken in keeping the main roads open during the recent heavy snowfall.

(ii) Refuse and Recycling Collections

Councillor Mrs Goyns made reference to the work undertaken by the County Council in maintaining the refuse and recycling collections during the recent heavy snowfall.

RESOLVED that Durham County Council be thanked for the work undertaken in maintaining the refuse and recycling collections during the recent heavy snowfall.

..... Signed

..... Dated