

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
WHEATLEY HILL PARISH COUNCIL  
HELD ON MONDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2013**

**Present:** Councillor M Nicholls (Chair)  
Councillors Mrs E Carr, E Goyns, Mrs M Goyns,  
B Maddison, J Miller, Mrs M Nicholls and  
Mrs C Stogdale

**Apologies:** Councillor Mrs L Stewart

- 1 THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** held on 14 October 2013, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were approved and signed by the Chair.
- 2 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

**County Durham Plan Consultation – Local Plan Pre Submission Draft**

The Chair welcomed residents who were in attendance at the meeting to discuss the County Durham Plan Consultation – Local Plan Pre Submission Draft, in particular the inclusion of H77 – land west of Bevan Crescent, Wheatley Hill.

The Plan set out the County Council's policy framework up to 2030. The consultation was on the "pre-submission" draft version of the County Durham Plan. This version of the Plan would be submitted by the County Council to the Secretary of State for examination.

Residents pointed out that the Plan was at its final stage of consultation and had been under discussion since 2009. In previous drafts of the Plan there had been no mention of H77 – land west of Bevan Crescent. Residents stated they had been missed out of all previous stages of the consultation, this was the first opportunity they had been given to comment and express their objections. Residents felt the views and concerns of the local community had been overlooked and they had not been afforded the chance to participate in earlier discussions.

It was stated that the area of land under discussion was a green field site and there were many previously developed brown field sites available, particularly in the centre of the village where old housing stock had been demolished.

There was concern in relation to the demand for new housing in the village. It was felt that money could be better spent on improving existing facilities and services for the residents who had lived in the village for years. Residents did not want a situation where houses were left standing empty, unsold and falling into a state of disrepair.

Residents were concerned that if the land was developed for housing there would be a significant increase in traffic and pollution in the village. Durham County Council had spent millions of pounds building the bypass to divert traffic away from Wingate Lane, previously a busy road with many accidents and fatalities. The addition of a further 80 houses in this area would result in a significant increase of vehicles using Wingate Lane.

The land suffered from drainage problems which often resulted in flooding. There had also been a number of land slips and pit falls in the adjacent field. There was concern that neighbouring properties could be at risk from possible movement due to the extra stress placed on unstable land.

Concern was expressed that Wheatley Hill did not have the facilities, services or school

places to accommodate a further 80 residential properties.

The Chair advised that a programme of exhibitions and public consultation events were taking place across the County. The County Council had arranged a consultation event to be held at the Greenhills Centre on 22 November 2013 between 3.30pm and 6.00pm. Residents were urged to attend this event in order to make their views and concerns known to the County Council.

The Chair thanked residents for their attendance at the meeting whereupon they left.

Members expressed concern that a number of residents present at the meeting appeared to believe it had been convened to discuss this particular issue, they were unaware the meeting was the scheduled monthly Parish Council meeting. It was noted that the Parish Council had not been given prior notice of residents' intention to attend or what they wished to discuss, nor had they appointed a spokesperson.

A lengthy discussion ensued on the concerns raised by residents, details of which were summarised in a written document they had submitted. Following consideration it was agreed that Members of the Parish Council would submit their own representations to Durham County Council, as residents of Wheatley Hill.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

### 3 STREET WARDENS

There was no Street Wardens present at the meeting.

### 4 COMMUNITY POLICING

The Chair welcomed PCSO A Robson to the meeting.

Members were advised that since the last meeting there had been 92 incidents reported which included 17 anti-social behaviour, 4 burglaries, 3 thefts, 1 criminal damage and 1 theft from a vehicle.

It was explained that 9 of the anti-social behaviour incidents related to Burns Street. Councillor Miller pointed out that since the last meeting there had been considerably more than 9 incidents reported to the Police in relation to Burns Street. A Robson gave an assurance that all calls received in relation to Burns Street were responded to in the same way, no matter who reported the incident.

A lengthy discussion ensued and concern was expressed that the problems related to Burns Street had been on-going for a long time and there was no sign of it improving.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

### 5 CORRESPONDENCE

#### (1) Requests for Financial Assistance

##### (i) Wheatley Hill Community Association

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from Wheatley Hill Community Association.

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

Budget.

(ii) North East War Memorials Project

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from the North East War Memorials Project.

RESOLVED that no donation be made.

(iii) “Over 20’s” Club

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from the “Over 20’s” Club.

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

(2) Letters of Thanks

The Clerk reported the receipt of the following letters of thanks.

Wheatley Hill Mothers Club  
Great North Air Ambulance  
Wheatley Hill Constitutional Club

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(3) Haswell & District Mencap Society – Carol Service

The Clerk reported the receipt of an invitation from Haswell & District Mencap Society to attend the Mencap Carol Service on 21 December 2013.

RESOLVED that Mencap be advised that Councillors Mr and Mrs Goyns would attend.

(4) Bishop Auckland Town Council – Christmas Tree Switch-on and Service

The Clerk reported the receipt of an invitation from Bishop Auckland Town Council to attend the annual Christmas Tree Switch-on and Service on 22 November 2013.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(5) Dalton Le Dale Parish Council – Carols and Candles

The Clerk reported the receipt of an invitation from Dalton Le Dale Parish Council to attend a “Carols & Candles” event on 8 December 2013.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(6) East Durham Association of Parish & Town Councils

The Clerk reported that the next meeting of the East Durham Association of Parish and Town Councils would be held on 12 November 2013.

Councillors Mr and Mrs Goyns were unable to attend and asked for their

apologies to be submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the Clerk submit apologies on behalf of Councillors Mr and Mrs Goyns.

**(7) Durham County Council – Green Infrastructure Implementation Plan**

The Clerk reported that Durham County Council was developing a Green Infrastructure Implementation Plan for the Eastern area. The Plan would contain a programme of green space improvement projects and recommendations for green space improvements in conjunction with new development.

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

**(8) Premises Licence - Wheatley Hill Filling Station**

The Clerk reported that following the last meeting a letter of objection was submitted in relation to the application for a new premises licence, for the sale of alcohol, at Wheatley Hill Filling Station. The County Council had advised that the issues raised in the representation were considered relevant in relation to the promotion of the 4 licensing objectives and a copy of the letter of representation had been forwarded to the applicant.

Members were advised that since the original application was submitted the applicant had met with Durham Constabulary and agreed to amend the application as follows;

- Amend the hours for the sale of alcohol to Monday to Sunday: 06.00am to 11.00pm.
- Additional condition agreed that a CCTV camera would be fitted to the rear of the premises together with a PIR security light.

The applicant had provided a detailed Operating Schedule which outlined the steps they would take to promote the licensing objectives should the licence be granted. Details of the volunteer conditions were outlined to Members.

Following discussion it was suggested that the Parish Council continue with its representation on the basis that the granting of the licence would not promote the 4 licensing objectives.

**RESOLVED** that the Parish Council continue with its objection to the application on the grounds that it did not promote the 4 licensing objectives.

**(9) Review of the Statement of Licensing Act 2003 Policy**

The Clerk reported that under the Licensing Act 2003, Durham County Council was reviewing their current Statement of Licensing Policy.

The proposed changes to the current policy were outlined to Members and related to authorised licensing hours, licence conditions, Early Morning Restriction Orders (EMRO's), late night levy, fees, takeaway businesses, Councillors role, appeals and complaints.

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

**6 PLANNING MATTERS**

**(i) Applications**

CE/13/01221/FPA – Erection of canopy, store extension and widening of rear access at Wheatley Service Station, Durham Road, Wheatley Hill, Durham DH6 3LJ for Wheatley Service Station.

Members expressed concern that work at the service station started months ago, well before the planning application was submitted. It was understood that the applicant was asked by the County Council to stop all work on site until an application was made and approval obtained. The applicant completely disregarded this instruction and continued with the work. It appeared that work only stopped on site following an accident.

Residents living on Durham Road, to the rear of the premises, were concerned that widening the rear access would lead to increased traffic and disturbance. The purpose of the bypass was to divert traffic away from residential areas and by creating a wider access to the rear would enable and encourage larger vehicles to use Durham Road.

Concern was expressed at the applicant's complete disregard for the need to obtain planning approval.

Members asked for their concerns to be communicated to Durham County Council. If the planning application was subsequently approved then Members wanted regular checks to be undertaken, to ensure no work other than that for which permission had been granted was undertaken at the site.

**RESOLVED** that the concerns of the Parish Council be conveyed to Durham County Council.

**(ii) Approvals**

CE/13/00876/FPA – Alterations to existing rear extension including new roof, demolition of existing detached garage and rebuilding in revised location and replacement boundary enclosure at Lynn Garth House, Lynn Terrace, Wheatley Hill, Durham DH6 3QN for Mr M Spraggon.

**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**

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

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

(ii) **Annual Rents**

The Clerk provided an update on rent received to date.

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

(iii) **Road Planings**

The Clerk reported that road planings had been delivered to the allotments to allow repairs to the pathways prior to the bad weather.

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

(iv) **Fly Tipped Rubbish**

The Clerk reported an increase in fly tipping at the allotments. In addition rubbish was also being dumped in stable block 23. Stable block 23 did not have a secure boundary fence and there was concern that rubbish would continue to be dumped in this plot if it was not secured.

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

(2) **Standing Orders**

The Clerk reported that NALC had published new Standing Orders which had been revised to reflect the impact of the Localism Act changes.

**RESOLVED** that the revised Standing Orders be adopted.

(3) **Policies and Procedures**

The Clerk reported that the following policies and procedures had been reviewed.

Code of Conduct  
Financial Regulations  
Freedom of Information Publication Scheme  
Internal Audit Policy  
Data Protection Policy  
Public Participation Policy  
Equal Opportunities Policy  
Health and Safety Policy  
Grants and Donations Policy  
Complaints Policy

**RESOLVED** that the revised policies and procedures be approved.

(4) **Summer/Winter Bedding**

The Clerk reported that Durham County Council had provided limited information

in relation to the Parish Council's contract for summer and winter bedding. Investigations were underway to ascertain how many hanging baskets and flower beds were provided.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(5) Estimates of Expenditure 2014/2015

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council's final grant settlement for 2014/2015 would not be known until December when Durham County Council would confirm or amend the draft grant figure to allow the precept to be set.

RESOLVED that the Estimates of Expenditure for 2014/15 be considered at a Special Meeting of the Parish Council on 9 December 2013 at 5.30pm.

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.

..... Signed

..... Dated